

Jacob Flees & Returns

Genesis 27:41 - 35:29

PPT Title

Jacob Flees & Returns

Main Point: God is faithful to keep His promises, even when people fail.

PPT Verse

Key Verse: *Lord, You are my God. I will honor You. I will praise Your name. You have been perfectly faithful. You have done wonderful things. You had planned them long ago.* - Isaiah 25:1

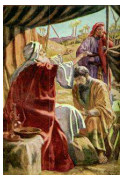
Props: bandana, candy bar, broccoli

REVIEW

Say: Last week, we learned about Isaac and Rebekah's twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Esau was born just moments before Jacob. The boys were very different from each other. Esau was a hunter who did not care about the things that should have been most important to him. Jacob was very concerned with his heritage and the blessing of his father. Rebekah came up with a plan to ensure that Jacob received the blessing from the aged Isaac. Jacob went along with his mother's deceptive plan. Together, they tricked Isaac, and Jacob received the promise that had been handed down from his grandfather, Abraham. Jacob's twin brother, Esau, felt that he should have the blessing. He was furious with Jacob and vowed to kill him.

JACOB FLEES (Genesis 27:41 - 28:9)

Say: Esau said that as soon as his father died, he would kill Jacob. Rebekah feared for Jacob, so she told him to leave home at once. She told him to go stay with her brother Laban for a little while, until Esau was no longer angry. Rebekah did not mention Esau's threat to Isaac. Instead she told him, "I'm sick and tired of these local Hittite women! I would rather die than see Jacob marry one of them." (Genesis 27:46) So Isaac called for Jacob and told him not to marry a Canaanite woman. He told him to go to Rebekah's family to find a wife. Then Isaac gave Jacob the blessing that God had intended for him to have (Genesis 25:23).



"May the Mighty God bless you. May He give you children. May He increase your numbers until you become a community of nations. May He give you and your children after you the blessing he gave to Abraham. Then you can take over the land where you now live as an outsider. It's the land God gave to Abraham." - Genesis 28:3-4

When Esau heard that Isaac sent Jacob so far away to find a wife, he realized how much his parents disliked the women of Canaan. So Esau went to his Isaac's half-brother, Ishmael and married one of Ishmael's daughters. Again, Esau made a foolish decision by going to Ishmael to find a wife. Ishmael was not in the family line of God's promise and blessing.

Application: Here we see that God is in control of all things. God wanted the promise He had made to Abraham to pass down to Jacob and it did. We also see that God uses imperfect people to bring His plans to pass. If God did not use imperfect people, who would He use? However, do not miss the fact that sin always has consequences. Rebekah

and Jacob had sinned by tricking Isaac. Rebekah paid for her deception by losing her beloved son Jacob when he had to run very far away to escape the wrath of Esau. Likewise, Jacob paid for his deception by having to leave his home. Remember, he was a "homebody" who always stayed near to his mother. The Bible does not tell us if Rebekah and Jacob ever saw each other again.

JACOB'S JOURNEY (Genesis 28:10-22)



So Jacob set out to go to the home of Rebekah's brother. Let's look at our map again. Remember, Rebekah's family lived in Paddan Aram. It was about 500 miles from where they were living in Beersheba. **Show the route from Beersheba, north to Paddan Aram.** As the sun was setting, Jacob stopped for the night. **Point to Bethel.** He laid his head down on a long stone and fell asleep. God came to him in a dream and spoke to him.

The Lord stood above the stairway. He said, "I am the Lord. I am the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your children after you the land on which you are lying. They will be like the dust of the earth that can't be counted. They will spread out to the west and to the east. They will spread out to the north and to the south. All nations on earth will be blessed because of you and your children after you. I am with you. I will watch over you everywhere you go. And I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." - Genesis 28:13-14

When Jacob woke up, he was amazed at the things God had said. He turned the stone that was under his head up on its side to be a pillar. He named the place Bethel, which means "house of God." Then Jacob made a vow to the Lord. He promised to give back to God one tenth of everything God gave to him.

Application: We must take note of another characteristic of God. He is the great Pursuer. To **pursue** is *to go after something, to follow closely*. We have seen this over and over in Genesis. God searched for Adam and Eve after they sinned. God went after Cain. God chose Abraham, and God found Hagar in the desert. So, too, He appeared to Jacob. God never changes. He is still the great Pursuer. God is the One who pursues us (1 John 4:19). The Bible says that no one looks to find God on his own (Romans 3:10-11). No one comes to God unless God draws him or her to Himself (John 6:44). While we were still sinners, God sent His Son to die for us, to make the way for us to be right with Him (Romans 5:8).

Also, it is important that God met with Jacob **personally**. It was not enough that Jacob's father and grandfather knew the Lord. Jacob had to know and trust God for himself. Just the same, it is not enough for our parents, grandparents, brothers, or sisters know the Lord. We each must have our own relationship with God. You are only made right with God when you, personally, place your trust in Jesus and believe that He has taken away all of your sin.

JACOB'S WIVES (Genesis 29:1-30)

Say: Jacob continued on his journey. Finally he arrived in the area of Paddan Aram. He came to a well near Haran. **Show Haran on the map.**

Note to Teacher: This might have been the very well at which Abraham's servant met Rebekah (Genesis 24:11).



Several shepherds were at the well, waiting to water their sheep. Soon a young woman named Rachel came to the well with her father's sheep. Jacob helped Rachel water her sheep. Rachel was the daughter of Laban, Rebekah's brother. Jacob was overjoyed to meet his uncle's daughter. He told her who he was, and Rachel ran home to tell her family about him. Laban ran out to greet his nephew. Laban brought Jacob home to



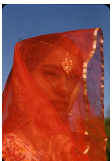
stay with him. Jacob told his relatives all about himself. Laban was very glad to have his nephew with him. Laban had two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Leah was older, and she had weak eyes. Rachel was the younger daughter, and she was beautiful.

Optional illustration (if time allows): This “trick” might take a little practice. You may want to practice in front of a mirror. Before class starts, secretly hide a big piece of broccoli under your bandana. Hold up a candy bar in one hand. Tell the group that you will give the candy bar to the first person who can look up a specific Bible verse. **Say:** When I tell you which verse, you look it up. As soon as you find the verse, stand up. The first person who stands gets to read the verse and wins the candy bar. **Hold the candy so everyone can see it well. Take the bandana (hiding the broccoli) in your other hand, and place it over the candy bar. Secretly grasp both the candy and the broccoli under the bandana. Say:** Okay, look up Psalm 33:4 (*For the word of the Lord is right and true; He is faithful in all He does.* NIV) **As soon as the first child stands, have him read the verse. Then invite him to come get the candy. Use your free hand to pull away the bandana (AND pull away the candy hidden by the bandana). Offer the broccoli to the winner.** He may say, “That’s not fair!” or you can ask the group, “Is that fair?” **Say:** I promised him the candy if he found the verse first. Then he did not get what he was promised. Instead he got something he really did not want. **Ask:** What if I said he could have the candy only if he looks up another verse? Would that be fair? **No! Say:** No, it wouldn’t. I went back on my word. This is just like what happened to Jacob. **Thank your winner - and give him the candy bar.**



Jacob had stayed and worked for Laban for a month. Laban asked Jacob what amount he wanted to be paid for his work. Jacob was in love with Rachel, so he told Laban he would work for seven years in exchange for Rachel’s hand in marriage. Laban said it would be very good for Rachel to marry Jacob.

So Jacob worked for seven years to get Rachel. But they seemed like only a few days to him because he loved her so much. - Genesis 29:20



After the seven years, it was time for Jacob to marry Rachel. Laban held a big feast in honor of his daughter’s wedding. But when it came time to get married, Laban did a terrible thing! Laban secretly gave **Leah** to Jacob instead. Jacob did not realize what Laban did until after he was married to Leah.

So he said to Laban, "What have you done to me? I worked for you to get Rachel, didn't I? Why did you trick me?" - Genesis 29:25b

Jacob did not like being the object of a deceitful plot. We must wonder if this experience made him regret the way he had deceived his own father. After all, Jacob had switched himself (the younger brother) for the older brother, and Laban had switched the older sister for the younger sister. Still, Laban should not have deceived Jacob. He explained his behavior by saying it was the custom for the older daughter to get married before the younger daughter did. Even if this was true, he should have explained that to Jacob beforehand, and let Jacob make up his own mind about who to marry. It seems that even after seeing the amazing way in which God provided a godly husband for his sister Rebekah, and now for his daughter, Rachel, Laban did not trust that God would provide the right husband for Leah, or provide for her needs if she remained unmarried. Laban’s lack of trust caused him to take matters into his own hands, and trick Jacob.

Laban told Jacob that he could also marry Rachel. Jacob was allowed to marry Rachel one week later, but Jacob had to stay with Laban and work another seven years for her. So Jacob married Rachel, and he loved her more than Leah.



Ask: How do you think Laban’s plot made his younger daughter, Rachel, feel? *Cheated, angry.* How do you think the plot made his older daughter, Leah, feel? *Sad that her*

father had to trick someone into marrying her, sad that she was married to a man who didn't love her. **Say:** Laban's sin hurt Jacob, Rachel, and Leah. We will see that in the years that followed, the two sisters suffered greatly because of Laban's deceptive plot.

Application: We must remember that sin always hurts people. Not only does our sin break our relationship with our heavenly Father, but it also hurts innocent people around us.

JACOB'S CHILDREN (Genesis 29:31 - 30:45)

Say: Laban gave each of his daughters one of his servant girls when they got married.

The Lord saw that Jacob didn't love Leah as much as he loved Rachel. So He let Leah have children. But Rachel wasn't able to have children. - Genesis 29:31



God saw the broken heart of Leah. In His kindness, He gave her four sons. The oldest was Reuben, then there was Simeon. Next, Leah had Levi, and then she had Judah. Then she stopped having children.

Rachel saw that she couldn't have any children by Jacob. So she became jealous of her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!"

Jacob became angry with her. He said, "Do you think I'm God? He's the One who has kept you from having children." - Genesis 30:1-2

Rachel insisted that Jacob marry her servant girl so she could have children through her. **Ask:** Who else did we learn about who did this same thing? *Sarah and Abraham.*

Say: When Sarah grew impatient waiting for God to give her children, she also told her husband to marry her servant girl.

Jacob was wise to recognize that God was in control of whether or not Rachel had children. But, then he agreed to marry Rachel's servant girl. Just like his grandfather had, he took matters into his own hands. Rachel's servant had a son and Rachel named him Dan. Then the servant had a second son named Naphtali.

Sadly, Rachel and Leah felt they had to compete for the love of Jacob. Because Leah had stopped having children, she also gave her servant girl for Jacob to marry. That servant had two sons, Gad and Asher. Then Leah was able to have two more sons named Issachar and Zebulun. Leah also had a daughter who she named Dinah.

By this time, Jacob had ten sons and one daughter. But Rachel had never had a child of her own.

Then God listened to Rachel. He showed concern for her. He made it possible for her to have children. She became pregnant. She had a son. She said, "God has taken my shame away." - Genesis 30:22-23



God hears the cries of His people (Exodus 3:7). In His kindness, He gave a son to Rachel. She named her son Joseph.

JACOB RETURNS HOME (Genesis 31 - 35)

Say: Jacob stayed and worked for Laban for several more years. God blessed the work of Jacob's hands and, even though Laban was not fair to Jacob, Jacob became a rich man (Genesis 31:7-9,12). Laban's sons became jealous of Jacob. All together, Jacob



worked for Laban for 20 years. Then one day God spoke to Jacob and instructed him to leave Paddan Aram and return to the land of his father. **Using the map, point to Paddan Aram, and show the general direction (southwest) toward Canaan.** God assured Jacob, "I will be with you." (Genesis 31:3) **Ask:** Can anyone remember why Jacob left the land of his father? *Esau wanted to kill him.* **Say:** Surely, one reason God reassured Jacob that He would be with him was so that he would not be afraid to return home.

Jacob packed up his wives, his children, and all their belongings, and headed south toward his homeland. Jacob sent a messenger to Esau who lived in the land of Seir to tell him he was coming. **Refer to map.** Esau sent back a message that he was coming to meet Jacob. Esau had 400 men with him. Jacob was very afraid, so he prayed earnestly to God. He asked God to protect him from Esau.

When Jacob met Esau the next day, Esau welcomed him with open arms. God hears the cries of His people! God answered Jacob's prayer and kept His promise to be with him. Then Jacob settled in the city of Shechem, but God did not allow him to stay there (Genesis 34). God told Jacob to go to Bethel, the place where God first appeared to him more than 20 years before. God told Jacob to build an altar there. God appeared to him again. God repeated His blessings and then He changed Jacob's name. God said Jacob's new name would be **Israel** (Genesis 35:10). God said kings would come from him, and that they would inherit the land of Canaan (Genesis 35:11-10).

Jacob continued to travel toward his father's home in Hebron. Along the way, Rachael had another son and Jacob named Benjamin. Sadly, Rachael died just after she gave birth, and Jacob buried her. Jacob finally arrived at his father's home. Isaac lived to be 180 years old. Then Jacob and Esau buried him.



So Jacob had 12 sons which became the **12 tribes of Israel**. Through these tribes, the nation of Israel was formed. The nation of Israel was key in God's rescue mission for mankind. It was to the nation of Israel that God gave the Law, to show us that we do not meet up to God's perfect standard so we need a Savior. And it was to the nation of Israel (into Jacob's direct family line) that the Messiah, the Savior, Jesus Christ, would be born. By sending the Savior through the line of Jacob, God would keep his long-standing promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: "Through you all nations will be blessed." (Galatians 3:8)

Application: Throughout Jacob's life story, we see people who do right and then do wrong. We see people when they rely on God, and then rely on themselves. From all of their triumphs and failures, we can learn that when we **abide** with God, we will have peace and things will go well for us, but when we take matters into our own hands, it is sin and there will be consequences. But above all else, we learn that God is great, loving, and kind. He is faithful to keep His promises, even when people fail.

PPT Main Point

Main Point: God is faithful to keep His promises, even when people fail.