

Jacob Returns to Canaan

Genesis 32, 33, 35



The Story

Jacob lived with his Uncle Laban for many years. He worked for his uncle to earn a wife and livestock. Jacob left his Uncle Laban's home. Jacob took Leah and Rachel, all his children, servants, and animals. They had to travel a long way back to Canaan. To get to Canaan, they would have to travel through the country where his brother Esau lived. It had been a long time since Jacob had seen Esau. The last time they were together, Esau wanted to harm Jacob.

Before seeing Esau, Jacob wanted to find out if his brother still wanted to kill him. He sent messengers to tell Esau he was coming with his family. The messengers returned and reported that Esau was coming to meet Jacob with 400 men. Jacob became afraid. He did not ask the Lord what he should do, but made his own plan to divide his family into two groups. Jacob thought that if Esau attacked one group, the other group would escape. Then Jacob prayed and asked the Lord to be with him. Jacob also got a large present of livestock ready for Esau.

That night, Jacob took his whole family and two female servants across the Jabok River. Jacob slept away from his family. During the night, the Lord came and wrestled with Jacob all night long. The Lord gave Jacob a sore hip as a reminder of the time that they wrestled. Jacob realized that he was wrestling with the Lord and asked for a blessing. The Lord gave Jacob a new name, Israel, and a blessing.

The day came for Jacob to meet his brother Esau. Jacob forgot to trust in the

Lord and followed the plan he had made to divide his family. Jacob's servants and their children went first, then Leah and her children, and last Rachel and her children. When Jacob was close to Esau, he bowed seven times. He wanted to show Esau that he was sorry for cheating and stealing the birthright from him. Esau was so happy to see his brother again. He did not want to kill Jacob anymore. Esau wanted to travel with Jacob, but Jacob was still not sure that he could trust Esau even after the Lord had promised to be with him. Jacob tried to get Esau to leave his family to travel alone. So Esau went to his home and Jacob went in the opposite direction to Canaan.

After living in Canaan for a time, God wanted Jacob to move to a place called Bethel. While in Bethel, God came to bless Jacob and remind him that his family would become a mighty nation. Jacob and his family moved from Bethel to Bethlehem. In Bethlehem, Rachel died while having a baby. This was Jacob's last son, named Benjamin. Jacob then went to visit his father, Isaac. Isaac was very old and he died at age 180. Esau and Jacob buried their father.

God helps Jacob realize that it is He who has preserved and blessed him.

God helps us realize that He preserves and blesses us.

Activity One - Circle the words in the word-find puzzle below. All letters will only be used once. Talk about why the words belong to today's story.

BETHEL
 CANAAN
 DIED
 ESAU
 GIFT
 GROUPS
 HIP
 ISAAC
 JACOB
 LORD
 MESSENGERS
 PRAYER
 RACHEL
 TWO
 WRESTLED

S	G	J	E	E	J	H	B	W	D	N	P
I	M	R	A	S	B	I	E	R	I	W	R
I	W	E	O	C	A	P	T	E	E	H	A
D	L	V	S	U	O	U	H	S	D	X	Y
E	E	O	F	S	P	B	E	T	Y	G	E
J	T	T	O	K	E	S	L	L	G	R	R
C	A	N	A	A	N	N	V	E	U	Q	C
R	R	A	C	H	E	L	G	D	X	A	E
V	N	L	O	R	D	T	O	E	A	T	O
G	S	Q	K	F	F	W	J	S	R	M	W
A	T	H	W	I	T	J	I	A	U	R	Y
N	W	U	G	X	Z	O	U	B	L	U	R

Activity Two - Discuss the following questions.

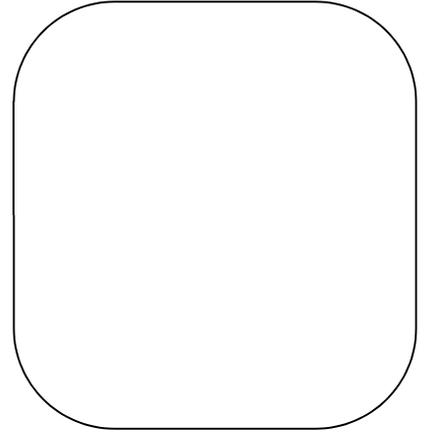
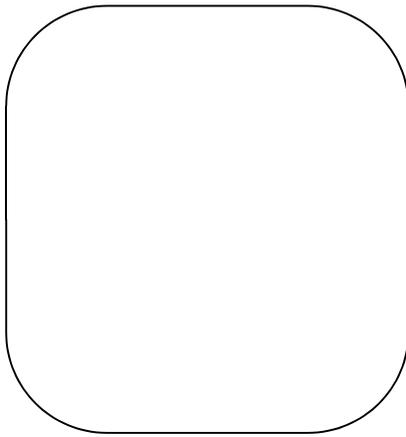
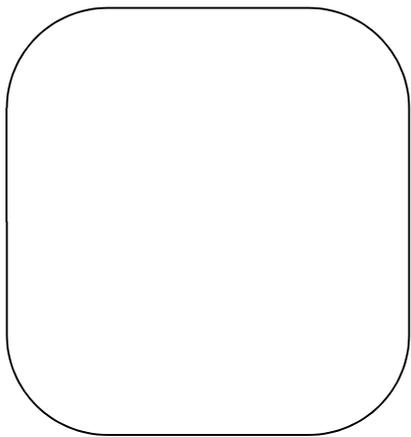
1. Why didn't Jacob want to see Esau?
2. What did Jacob's messengers find out about Esau? How did this make Jacob feel?
3. Who came to visit Jacob the night before he was to meet Esau? What happened to Jacob?
4. Why did the Lord wrestle with Jacob?
5. How did Jacob decide to go to see Esau? Why did he divide his family into groups?
6. Why do you think Jacob took a very large gift to Esau?
7. Who died at the end of the story?

Passages

Psalm 50:15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.

God tells us in the Bible that we are to pray to Him when we are in trouble. In our story, Jacob prayed when he was troubled over meeting his brother again. Jacob remembered that Esau wanted to kill him and he was afraid.

Draw three pictures of times when you are in trouble and could pray to the Lord for help.



Hymn - TLH #428 v.1, 6

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
Trusting only Thee;
Trusting Thee for full salvation,
Great and free.

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus;
Never let me fall.
I am trusting Thee forever
And for all.

What should Jacob have trusted in the Lord to do for him?

What should you trust the Lord to do for you?

Talk about things that you trust the Lord to do for you. Don't forget the most important thing that the Lord did for you.

Prayer

Dear Jesus,
Thank You for giving us Your Word. Please help us to remember to trust that You will always be with us. Help us to remember that we should pray when we have a problem because You promise to hear us and help us. In Your name we pray, Amen.