

9 • The Beginning of Descendants From Jacob

When we last left Jacob, his brother Esau was taking comfort in his plan to *kill* Jacob for cheating him out of his blessing (27:42). In [Genesis 28](#), Isaac encourages his son Jacob to go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Jacob's uncle, [Laban](#).

“God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!” (28:3-4)

On his way, Jacob has an incredible dream.

...behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the LORD stood above it...



And the LORD had a message for Jacob:

“I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (28:12-14)

In [Genesis 29](#), Jacob reaches his destination and meets his uncle Laban.

Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was [Leah](#), and the name of the younger was [Rachel](#). Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. Jacob loved Rachel. (29:16-18)

But in the next few verses, the cheater gets cheated as Laban gives Leah as a wife to Jacob instead of Rachel! Throughout [Genesis 29-30](#), we read all about the beginning of many descendants being born:

Leah

- (1) [Reuben](#)
see, a son
- (2) [Simeon](#)
heard
- (3) [Levi](#)
attached
- (4) [Judah](#)
praise
- (9) [Issachar](#)
wages or hire
- (10) [Zebulun](#)
honor

Bilah,

Rachel's servant

- (5) [Dan](#)
judged
- (6) [Naphtali](#)
wrestling

Zilpah,

Leah's servant

- (7) [Gad](#)
good fortune
- (8) [Asher](#)
happy

Rachel

- (11) [Joseph](#)
may he add

[Genesis 31](#) documents strife between Jacob's growing family and Laban, but also the LORD's call to “Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you” (31:3).

For Class & Family Discussion:

- What is Isaac referring to as he mentions “the blessing of Abraham” to Jacob in [Genesis 28:4](#)?
- What do we learn about Esau in [28:6-9](#)? Take a moment to remind yourself of the choices Esau had already made in [26:34-35](#) and the effects of those choices in [27:46](#). What can we learn?
- Describe in your own words what Jacob experiences in [28:10-17](#).
- Is there anything we can learn about Jacob from his reaction the next morning to what he has experienced ([28:18-22](#))?
- What can we learn about Leah from the names she gives to her children in [29:31-35](#)?
- What can we learn about Rachel from her attitude and actions in [30:1-8](#)?
- Why does tension seem to develop between Laban and Jacob in [30:25-43](#)? How do both men handle the tension?
- What small insight might we have about Jacob and the way he perceives his relationship with God in [31:5](#)?
- Notice again how Jacob describes God in [31:42](#). How would you describe his present frame of mind and faith? [Genesis 31:53](#) might also be helpful here...
- We covered a lot of ground in this lesson. What stands out to you?