

Scripture Text

Genesis 28-31

Context

Having deceived his father Isaac and cheated his brother Esau of the blessing, Jacob must now flee for his life. Isaac sends him to Haran, to look for a wife from among his own people. These chapters tell of how God continues to work in Jacob's life while he is in Haran.

Observation and Meaning

1. What does Jacob see in his dream (28:10-17)? What does it reveal about God? How does Jacob respond to his dream (28:18-22), and what does that tell us about him?
2. Compare the accounts of Jacob meeting Rachel (29:1-20) with that of Abraham's servant meeting Rebekah (Genesis 24). What similarities and differences do you observe?
3. How would you describe the state of Jacob's family in 29:31-30:24? How does God continue to work in the midst the challenges?
4. How do the events of 30:25-31:55 demonstrate that God is faithfully keeping His promise to Jacob?

Big Idea

Because God is faithful to His covenant promises, Jacob grows into a man of faith through a period of testing and trials.

Connecting to the Bible's storyline

God sovereignly and faithfully works in the lives of His people, in order to accomplish the promises He made to Abraham. The fulfillment of these promises culminates in the person and work of Jesus Christ, who is the promised offspring of Abraham.

Applications

1. Where in your life is God working to grow your maturity as a Christian? What would it look like for you to trust Him?
2. God's promise to be with His people has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ and the subsequent giving of the Holy Spirit to all who are in Christ. How does the presence of God with us through the Gospel encourage us daily?
3. How can we respond to the trials in our lives in a way that glorifies God, and shows that we trust and obey Him?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?
What is the situation of the author and of the readers?
Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?
Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.