

STUDY GUIDE: WEEK TWO

In the Beginning: Exploring the Origin Stories of Genesis

Fall 2024 ~ Pastor Cieslik

Class Title: *Jacob: The Heel to Israel***Overview**

Jacob is a jerk. He's sneaky and conniving. His name literally means the heel, because he came out of the womb grasping at his brother's heel, foreshadowing of the struggle to come. If you follow professional wrestling, you'll know that there are often characters, described as "heels," whose sole purpose is to antagonize and thwart the good guys. Jacob is a heel.

For some unknown reason God has chosen Jacob, the younger brother, the trickster, the manipulative gamesman to become Israel, the father of God's nation. This unlikely character is the bridge between God's promise to Abraham and the fulfillment of that promise that we've come to know in Jesus. We don't know why. But God has chosen this peculiar character, so maybe there's hope for us all!

Scripture

The whole Jacob cycle is found in Genesis 25:19-36:43.

- a) [Genesis 25:19-36:43](#), The Story of Jacob
- b) [Genesis 25:19-34](#), Jacob and Esau
- c) [Genesis 26:1-33](#), Stories About Isaac
- d) [Genesis 26:34-28:9](#), Jacob, Esau, and the Blessing
- e) [Genesis 28:10-22](#), Jacob's Dream at Bethel
- f) [Genesis 29:1-31:55](#), The Birth of Jacob's Children
- g) [Genesis 32:1-21](#), Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau
- h) [Genesis 32:22-32](#), Jacob Wrestling with God
- i) [Genesis 33:1-17](#), Jacob's Meeting with Esau
- j) [Genesis 35:1-29](#), The Journeys of Jacob
- k) [Genesis 36:1-43](#), The Future of Esau

Questions

We often think of God's blessing as an unequivocally "good" thing, but Jacob's story shows that sometimes the collision of blessing and humanity can create pain and friction. Have you ever experienced that yourself? We also see God working to create opportunities for forgiveness and reconciliation, where have you experienced that?