

Bible Studies in Genesis

The rights and wrongs of Jacob

READ Genesis 25:19-34

1. Discuss any questions you have about this passage.
2. Jacob “steals” the birthright ...
 - a. The “birthright” has to do with both position and inheritance. In terms of position, the firstborn son inherited the authority of the father and leadership of the family. In terms of inheritance, see what Deuteronomy 21:17 says.
 - b. What do you make of Jacob? Consider ...
 - i. His motives in wanting the birthright?
 - ii. His actions in persuading Esau to give over the birthright?
 - iii. His later actions in Genesis 27:1-40?
3. What do you make of Esau? Consider ...
 - a. His attitude towards his birthright?
 - b. His later behaviour in Genesis 26:34-35?
 - c. The assessment of him in Hebrews 12:15-16?
4. Compare and contrast the brothers ...
 - a. Which was worse (or better)?
 - b. Does Esau’s foolishness excuse Jacob’s deceitfulness?
5. How do you think God should treat Jacob, based on his actions towards his brother (and father)?
 - a. Do you think the events of Genesis 29:1-30 are some kind of poetic justice – or divine “reward” – for Jacob’s deceitfulness? Do you think God works that way – giving us “karma”, or the punishment (or reward) that fits our crimes (or good deeds)?
 - b. Is the angel’s message of Genesis 28:10-17 just (in the sense of fair) reward for what Jacob has done? If not, how else might you explain it?
6. What does the story of Jacob and Esau tell us about the way God works (see Romans 9:6-16)? How does this apply to our lives, and the way that God deals with us?