

Jacob and His Family

Preface

Dear Bible Student,

This booklet has been created to assist you in your personal study of the life of Jacob. It is meant to give you a foundation upon which to begin your studies and to encourage you to continue to study Bible books and characters throughout your life.

This workbook is not meant to be a study in itself—and that is important. Again, it is meant to be a supplement to your own study. Therefore, the questions that are asked are not ones that have a simple answer—instead, many of the questions could become studies in themselves. And, if you want to pursue some of those studies further, we encourage you to do so.

We hope that, in the course of going through this booklet, you will be inspired to take some of the topics even further and that you will spend time pursuing answers to other questions you may develop throughout this study.

The benefit you draw from the pages that follow depend upon you. You have a choice when working through each section: will you rush through it simply to get through the book? Or, will you see this as a foundation for your own personal Bible study?—and therefore, merely an introduction to something much greater. Additionally, this workbook will be the basis for the workshops at YCC, so whatever you put into this study will also impact your experience in the workshops.

This study help is made up of four sections and a short introduction about setting goals. Each section focuses on a Bible study technique that can help you in your own studies. **The four parts of the workbook must be completed by June 18th in order for you to attend YCC (if they are not submitted by June 18th, your registration will be canceled).**

Part 1 - Creating a Foundation

Part 2 - Gathering Information

Part 3 - Asking Questions

Part 4 - Answering Questions

These four techniques can create a powerful backbone in your study of the life of Jacob—and really, in your study of any Biblical topic.

All in all, this foundational workbook should take you approximately 20-25 hours if you do it thoroughly. From there, may you continue to use its techniques to further your own study, so that

you may grow in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord—a privilege that brings great grace and peace (2 Peter 1:2).

Completed workbooks can be emailed to californiayouthconference@gmail.com.

Jason Hensley, Caleb Osborn, and Justin Reich
Simi Hills and Thousand Oaks, 2023

Introduction - Beginning a Study

Setting Goals

One of the first steps in beginning a study is developing a goal—both for the study and for how you are going to complete it.

So, take a minute to develop an intention for this study. After studying Jacob with the aid of this booklet, what do you hope to have achieved?

Ex. - I want to have thought for a number of hours about Jacob.

Ex. - I want to feel as though I know Jacob and his family.

Ex. - I want this study to inspire me to have a deeper relationship with God.

Ex. - I want to be able to identify more closely with the experiences of these characters.

Just a quick note: Simply finishing the workbook isn't really the kind of goal that you want to make. If you rush through the workbook just for the purpose of getting it done, you will have learned very little. And isn't the purpose of the book to bolster your own Bible study habits?

My intention for this study:

Now, create a precise goal for how you are going to complete this booklet. A good goal will be specific, measurable, attainable, repeatable, and time-bound (SMART).

For example:

Every weekday from now until June 18th, I will work through the YCC workbook for 20 minutes.

Specific - Working through the YCC workbook

Measurable - 20 minutes every weekday

Attainable - It's just 20 minutes a day

Repeatable - Every day

Time-bound - from now until June 18th

Here is another example:

Every Friday from now until June 18th, I will work through the YCC workbook for 2 hours.

Try to develop your own goal here:

Perhaps once you finish this workbook, this specific time that you have consistently allotted to Bible study each week will become something that you can continue. You can use the foundation provided in this booklet to do your own Bible study in the future.

Part 1 - Creating a Foundation

Estimated Completion Time: 3 hours

One of the first steps in Bible study is to become familiar with the passage that you are studying. Therefore, to begin, simply read through Genesis 25–35, 48–49 two or three times (or listen to it)—and read it in different versions.

- The first time, read the eleven chapters and pay particular attention to the story—try to remember the narrative and the events that occur.
- The second time, consider Jacob’s feelings and emotions as he experienced these events. How would he have felt? Why? What would have motivated him to act and react as he did? Ask yourself these questions as you read.
- Throughout the entire process, pay attention to key characters, places, themes, and possible principles and lessons.

What to Submit

After reading through the record (or while reading through it), write a short 1-3 sentence summary of each main event (you decide where each event begins and ends).

Once you have finished these summaries, put together a one-sentence summary of Jacob’s spiritual journey.

Conclusion

For Part 1, please turn in your summaries (or photos of your summaries, if you wrote them by hand) to californiayouthconference@gmail.com.

Part 2 - Gathering Information

Estimated Completion Time: 8-12 hours

A helpful practice in Bible study is gathering information, or learning what others think about the subject. Two useful ways of gathering information can be found below—choose one way and work through that in order to finish Part 2 of this booklet.

Ultimately, both of the ways below can be utilized for a thorough study—and so in your continuing studies of this epistle, you are encouraged to come back and try both of these techniques once you have finished this workbook.

Technique #1 - Christadelphian Books

Our community has a number of extremely helpful resources on Jacob. Going through the studies of other brothers and sisters who have considered the topic is an exceptionally helpful way of getting insight into a Biblical subject. As you go through these books, take notes (or mark in your Bible).

Some helpful books are listed below.* Read through one of the books and take notes (and if you want to study the topic even more thoroughly later, you can come back and read through all of these books):

- *Wrestling Jacob - Harry Whittaker*
- *Story of the Bible Volume 1 - Pages 140-176 - HP Mansfield*
- *Jacob and Samuel - Pages 1-70 - John Taylor*

What to Submit

The end result of this would be a set of notes, or Bible marking, based on the book that was read. If you choose Technique #1, you will turn in your notes or a photo of your Bible marking as your submission for Part 2.

Technique #2 - Christadelphian Classes

Just like reading Christadelphian books, listening to classes can help give quite a bit of insight on a topic. As you listen to the class (or afterward, if you want to listen to the classes while you exercise or while you drive), take notes on (or mark in your Bible) the points that you want to remember—again, how many you take is up to you, but the more notes you take, the more information you will have for your own study.

If you like to listen to classes, consider listening to one of the following choices.* All are available at christadelphianbibletalks.com, Christadelphian Bible Video Channel on Youtube, Glenlock Bible Camp, and Christadelphianvideo.org:

- Journey with Jacob - Harry Tennant (Christadelphian Bible Talks)
- Jacob: Prevailing with God - John Martin (Christadelphian Bible Talks)
- Jacob's Surrender - Ben Brinkherhoff (Christadelphian Bible Talks)
- Jacob: Growing with God (Christadelphian Video)
- Jacob - Carl Parry (<https://glenlockcamp.net/audio-2/>)

What to Submit

The end result of this would be a set of notes, or Bible marking, based on the series of classes that was heard. If you choose Technique #2, you will turn in your notes or a photo of your Bible marking as your submission for Part 2.

Conclusion

Send a copy of your notes (or pictures of your Bible marking) to californiayouthconference@gmail.com. Once you have submitted your work for part 1 and part 2, you will be given access to the YCC Google Group, and you will use this access for part 3.

*If you would like to read a different book or listen to a different series of classes, please email californiayouthconference@gmail.com beforehand in order to have that book or that series approved for the workbook.

Part 3 - Asking Questions

Estimated Completion Time: 30 minutes

Once you have gathered some information about a Biblical topic, then you are in a position to start asking some in-depth questions about it. Questions power Bible study; they are what cause you to look deeper and to see some of the powerful meanings that Scripture holds beneath its surface.

The most effective kinds of questions are generally “Why?” questions because they help you to look below the surface level. But, other kinds of questions (who, what, how?) can also be useful in the study process. While you study, you can look for answers to these questions.

Ex. - Why did Jacob not recognize Leah until the morning after their marriage?

Ex. - What was Jacob doing with those rods, anyway?

Write down two questions you developed during your study of Jacob so far:

Question 1:

Question 2:

And now, log in to the YCC Google Group and share your questions. Post one forum post per question. The goal of the Google Group is for you to start sharing your study process with other YCC attendees. You will be required to post your best answer to at least two of your peers' questions after completing part 4..

Part 4 - Answering Questions

Estimated Completion Time: 15+ hours

Now that you've asked some questions, it's time to start thinking about getting answers.

As you think about answering your own questions, take some time now to answer the questions on the next few pages.

This section will consider the story of Genesis 25–35 and 47–49. There are three questions for each chapter. Again, questions power Bible study, so as you continue your study after this booklet, we encourage you to pursue some of these questions further.

These questions are purposefully not exhaustive—much is left for you to discover on your own. These are simply to stimulate your thinking.

Do not feel as though you must answer *every* question. Some questions might not seem entirely relevant to you—and that is okay. So, in order to complete this section, you must answer at least **25** of the questions.

Each of your 25 answers should be at least a paragraph long to properly address each question.

Make sure that you use scriptural reasoning based on supporting Biblical passages.

Chapter 25

1. Take a look at the Hebrew of Genesis 25:30. What do you notice that is odd about the way Esau refers to Jacob's stew? Explore some reasons Esau might talk like this.
2. In Genesis 25:28, why does Rebekah love Jacob? How does this relate to his relationship with Esau in chapter 25?
3. Research the concept of the birthright in the Bible and in historical sources. Summarize your findings to describe what was involved in the rights of the firstborn. What aspects of Esau's birthright might have made Jacob want to negotiate for it?

Chapter 26

1. When a famine struck Canaan at the beginning of Genesis 26, God tells Isaac not to go down to Egypt for relief.
 - a. Use the similarities to the situation of Abraham in Genesis 12 to suggest why God didn't want Isaac to go to Egypt.

- b. What influence might the experiences of Abraham and Isaac have had on Jacob's approach to dealing with the next recorded famine in Canaan (Gen. 41:54-46)?
2. Jacob isn't mentioned at all in Genesis 26, but the mention of Esau being 40 years old at the end of the chapter seems to indicate that the events of chapter 26 took place while Jacob was growing up. How do you think these events may have affected Jacob? How do you think they may have affected Esau? Why?
3. In chapter 26:30, they made a feast and ate and drank. In Genesis 31:54, Jacob eats bread with his brethren. Look into feasting in the Bible to determine the significance of this situation. Was this something a leader did during the time of the Law?

Chapter 27

1. Read Genesis 27:28-29. What was this blessing? Is it similar to the birthright? What about the promises to Abraham? Do you think this is a passing on of the promises made to Abraham? Why or why not?
2. What can we learn from the relationship of Esau and Jacob? Esau's hatred of Jacob led Jacob to flee the Promised Land. Explore lessons we can draw from this. How should we address feelings of hatred among our friends and family?
3. In Genesis 27:36, Esau accuses Jacob of living up to his name by "supplanting", or cheating him. Do you think Rebekah and Jacob were justified in using deceit and manipulation to achieve a goal they thought was God's will? Discuss how Jacob continued to use similar methods to get what he wanted throughout his life. How did it affect his spiritual health and that of his family?

Chapter 28

1. In Genesis 28:20-22, Jacob vows a vow to God. Is this a bargain with God? Is this vow he kept? If so, how? Think of Biblical examples of others who made a vow with God that was based upon circumstances that happened in their lives.
2. Consider the vision Jacob received in Gen. 28:10-17.
 - a. How did the imagery of the angels ascending and descending relate to the message God gave to him in v.13-15?
 - b. What is significant about Jacob's response to the vision in v.16-17?
 - c. God's angels play a major, often visible role in the life of Jacob. Find 3+ verses that describe the role of the angels in relation to God's family.
3. Research the city of Bethel. How is its history throughout the Old Testament relevant to this story?

Chapter 29

1. In Genesis 29:8, Jacob could not gather the flock until the stone was rolled from the well's mouth. What do you think this suggests spiritually? Think of spiritual shepherds in the Bible.
2. In Genesis 29:31-35, we find that Leah struggled deeply with her relationship with Jacob. Look up the meanings of the names of the 4 children she bore in these verses. Trace her reactions to each birth to identify the stages of her spiritual growth throughout this trial.
3. Why do you think Rachel was taking care of Laban's sheep? Why not Laban? Why not one of her siblings?

Chapter 30

1. Genesis 30:1. Compare Rachel's reaction to barrenness to Rebekah and Sarah's reactions. What do you make of Rachel's reaction?
2. Genesis 30:1-24 tells the story of the growth of Jacob's family.
 - a. Based on the details recorded in this section, how would you describe the relationship dynamics between Jacob, Rachel, Bilhah, Leah, and Zilpah?
 - b. What impacts might this family environment have had on the development of the children who grew up in it?
 - c. Using this story as a warning, what behaviors and tendencies should we avoid in our relationships?
3. In the end of Genesis 30, we see Jacob's increasing prosperity. Does this have any impact on his life? What dangers does this change present?

Chapter 31

1. In Genesis 31:3, the LORD tells Jacob to return to the land of his fathers, and that He will be with him. Is this the first time that The LORD says He will be with someone? Dig a little further to see what impact this has on Jacob and his faith. Look at some examples of others in scripture who were told similar things and how it impacted them.
2. In Genesis 31:7, Jacob says that Laban had deceived him and changed his wages 10 times. What do you think God was trying to teach Jacob by bringing him into the family of a person like Laban who consistently deceived and cheated those around him?
3. In Genesis 31:13, God identifies Himself as "the God of Bethel." Why do you think He calls Himself this? Is this a title that He gives Himself?

Chapter 32

1. Genesis 32:1 says that the "angels of God met" Jacob at a place he called Mahanaim (Heb. "two camps"). Ever since his vision at Bethel in chapter 28, angelic intervention in his life has become more and more obvious.

- a. Look through the preceding and following chapters to list as many examples of the involvement of angels as you can find.
- b. Look at Jacob's words in Genesis 40:15-16. When he reflected on all the extraordinary events of his long and difficult pilgrimage, how has he learned to see the work of the angels in his life?
2. In Genesis 32, Jacob wrestles with a man at night.
 - a. Is there any significance to this occurring at night time?
 - b. What is the implication of wrestling here?
 - c. Do we wrestle with God? If so, how?
 - d. How does this wrestling have an impact on Jacob?
3. Genesis 32:30-31 describes Jacob renaming the place where he wrestled with the angel. Why do you think he gave the place this name? Where does this place show up again? Why do you think these instances are significant?

Genesis 33

1. Genesis 33 records the final confrontation between Jacob and Esau. What impact did Jacob's meeting with Esau have on the relationship between their descendants? Are there any lessons we can learn about reconciliation from this story?
2. Throughout the conversation between Jacob and Esau, Jacob emphasizes his gratitude and contentment with what God has given him. (v.5, 15, 10). How does this contrast to his attitude in previous situations? What does this suggest about Jacob's spiritual growth to this point?
3. Genesis 33 tells the story of one group of people coming to meet another, potentially hostile group. There is a similar situation in 1 Samuel 25. What connections can you find between these two chapters?

Genesis 34

1. Genesis 34 tells the awful story of how Dinah was defiled by Shechem, a Canaanite prince. Contrast Jacob's response to this crime to his sons' reaction. Why do you think Jacob seems to avoid dealing with the situation? Compare his response here to the way he dealt with conflict and confrontation in the past (i.e. with Esau and with Laban).
2. Look up the name "Hamor." What does it mean? Explore the significance of this.
3. In Genesis 34:30, is there any significance to why Jacob mentions the Canaanites and the Perizzites? Research these two groups and discuss the significance of what Jacob says about them here.

Genesis 35

1. In Genesis 35:1, God tells Jacob to go to Bethel. Jacob's two visits to Bethel can be seen as bookends to a major epoch in his life. Compare these two visits to Bethel (Gen. 28 & 35):
 - a. What similarities can you find?
 - b. In what ways has Jacob grown spiritually between these two visits?
 - c. In what ways has his life circumstances changed between these two visits?
 - d. Explain how God has kept and confirmed His promises from the first visit.
2. Genesis 35:10 shows God changing Jacob's name to Israel. But, God had already changed his name! Where did God change Jacob's name previously? Why do you think he does it again here?
3. In Genesis 35:4, Jacob hid the earrings and strange gods under the oak by Shechem. Why does he do this? In verse 2, he says to put away the strange gods. Is this what he is doing? What does it mean by putting them under the oak? What is the significance of this event occurring in Shechem?

Genesis 47

1. Jacob talks about his life as a "pilgrimage" in Genesis 47:9.
 - a. What does this word mean? (Strong's # H4033)
 - b. Explore its use in the lives of the patriarchs.
 - c. Read Hebrews 11:9-10 & 13-16. Explain what it meant for the patriarchs to be strangers/pilgrims/sojourners.
 - d. Reflect on how you can live as a pilgrim today.
2. Why do you think Jacob describes the days of his life in such terms as Genesis 47:9? The ESV says "few and evil"—but Jacob had just been reunited with Joseph! What events do you think he was thinking about?
3. What does it mean to bless Pharaoh? How does this "blessing" help Jacob and his family?

Genesis 48

1. In Genesis 48:4, Jacob expresses the promise of the land while he is in Egypt. How do you think Jacob can believe in this promise despite being so close to death and in a foreign country? How can you prove it?
2. Genesis 48 records the blessings Jacob bestows on Joseph's two sons: Ephraim and Manasseh.
 - a. Compare and contrast the blessings Jacob bestows on Joseph's sons to the blessings that Isaac bestowed on Jacob and Esau back in Genesis. 27.
 - b. Both of these blessings are referred to in Hebrews 11:20-21 as the key moments of faith in the lives of Isaac & Jacob. Why do you think God chose to highlight

these particular events as especially faithful moments in the lives of these Patriarchs?

3. In Genesis 48:3, Jacob uses the term “God Almighty”. Explore the meaning of this title and its relevance to the context of this chapter. Where has this title been used before?

Genesis 49

1. Consider the names of each of Jacob’s sons and what those names mean. How does Jacob include the meaning of their names in their blessings? Does he do this for all of his sons?
2. Genesis 49:28-33 records Jacob’s last words and death.
 - a. Why do you think it was so important to Jacob that he be buried in the cave of Machpelah?
 - b. Is there any significance to the fact that he was buried beside Leah?
3. Why does Jacob want to be buried in the cave with his fathers? What does this suggest about his spiritual state at the end of his life?

Google Group

You're almost done! Now that you've answered our questions and primed your mind for seeking answers, log back into the Google Group and answer two or more of your peers' questions—give each question a solid answer of at least a paragraph using scriptural reasoning (and supporting passages).

Also check out what your peers have said about your own questions. At camp, we will be discussing and presenting the Google Group questions in the workshops. **So make sure that you bring your workbook materials with you to camp!**

Conclusion

To submit part 4, email your answers to californiayouthconference@gmail.com.

Remember that you must have parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 completed and submitted by June 18th in order to attend YCC. **If you have not submitted these portions by June 18th, you will be notified that your registration for camp has been canceled.**

You've made it to the end of this workbook! But your study of Jacob and his family has just begun—so, with the inspiration that you have found in this introductory study, we hope that you will continue to gather information, ask questions, and discuss Scripture with one another—growing in your knowledge and love for Our Father and for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.