

Session 11: The Jacob Cycle (25:19-35:22)

Key texts: Genesis 25:19-35:22; Hebrews 12:16-17; Malachi 1:2-5

Announcements

→ Upcoming EquipMEN† events:

- *Fight Club*, THIS SATURDAY, May 1 (\$25) Sign up tonight!
- *Exponential2:2* applications now available. Due on 5/12!

The Jacob Cycle (25:19-35:22)

Grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to bestow it in the presence of human merit... Grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to withdraw it in the presence of human demerit. (Sam Storms)

Grace is the good pleasure of God that inclines Him to bestow benefits upon the undeserving. It is a self-existent principle inherent in the divine nature and appears to us as a self-caused propensity to pity the wretched, spare the guilty, welcome the outcast, and bring into favor those who were before under just disapprobation. Its use to us sinful men is to save us and make us sit together in heavenly places to demonstrate to the ages the exceeding riches of God's kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (A.W. Tozer)

The Cyclic Structure of the Jacob Narrative²⁰

- A. Oracle sought; struggle in childbirth; Jacob born (25:19-34)
- B. Interlude: Rebekah in foreign palace; pact with foreigners (26:1-35)
- C. Jacob fears Esau and flees land (27:1-28:9)
- D. Heavenly messengers (28:10-22)
- E. Arrival in Haran (29:1-30)
- F. Jacob's wives are fertile (29:31-30:24)
- F'. Jacob's flocks are fertile (30:25-43)
- E'. Flight from Haran (31:1-55)
- D'. Heavenly messengers (32:1-32)
- C'. Jacob returns to land and is reconciled to Esau (33:1-20)
- B'. Interlude: Dinah in foreign place; pact with foreigners (34:1-31)
- A'. Oracle fulfilled; struggle in childbirth; Jacob becomes Israel (35:1-22a)

The passage spanning 35:22b-37:1 serves as a *janus*—a passage looking both backward and forward, connecting the Jacob Cycle to the Twelve Sons Cycle (37:2-50:26)

What does the cyclical structure of the narrative emphasize?

²⁰ Bruce Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 313.

Introduction: “Jacob I Loved, But Esau I Hated” (see Mal. 1:2-5; Rom. 9:13)

“[Jacob’s] reprehensible features are rather strongly brought out. This is done in order to show that the divine grace is not the *reward* for but the *source of* noble traits.”²¹

Three Key Scenes: The Birth of Jacob and Esau and the Sale of Esau’s Birthright (25:19-34); The Blessing of Isaac on Jacob (27:1-46); Jacob Fears Esau and Wrestles the Angel of I AM (32:22-32)

Man-o-logue: What do you think the author intended to convey to the reader in your assigned scene?

- What is/are the main point(s)?

- What are some themes in your scene that you’ve seen in other scenes in Genesis?

- What else do we need to see in this scene?

The Birth of Jacob and Esau and the Sale of Esau’s Birthright (25:19-34)

The Blessing of Isaac on Jacob (27:1-46)

Jacob Fears Esau and Wrestles the Angel of I AM (32:22-32)

²¹ Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*, 93.

Some Summarizing Theological Reflections on the Jacob Narrative

- God's _____ reigns over man's _____ and _____.
- God's _____ and _____ ensures our _____.
- The _____ are those who are committed to God's plans as revealed in the _____.
- _____ and _____ between fathers and sons are _____.
- Despite God's _____ purposes, _____ remains massively important.
- God is both _____ and _____ ; both beyond us and near us.

Suggested reading for next week's seminar discussion

Scripture to study: Genesis 37:12-50:26

Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*, pp. 481-628 (skim)

Joyce G. Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50*, pp. 157-221 (skim)

Worship: *Jesus! What a Friend for Sinners* J. Wilbur Chapman

Jesus! What a Friend for sinners!
Jesus! Lover of my soul;
Friends may fail me, foes assail me,
He, my Savior, makes me whole.

Refrain

Hallelujah! what a Savior!
Hallelujah! what a Friend!
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,
He is with me to the end.

Jesus! what a Strength in weakness!
Let me hide myself in Him.
Tempted, tried, and sometimes failing,
He, my Strength, my victory wins.

Jesus! I do now receive Him,
More than all in Him I find.
He hath granted me forgiveness,
I am His, and He is mine.