


Messy Life:
The Story of Jacob
Part 2
The God "of Jacob"

TALKING WALKINGPOINTS

Leader's Guide

2025-2-16



A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation—*What do I see?*

- {
① Read Exodus 3:14-15. God's proper name is Yahweh. What does "Yahweh" mean?
What descriptors does Yahweh use of himself here? Does that surprise you? Why or why not?
- ② How do Exodus 2:11-15 and 3:6-10 reveal Yahweh to be a God of **sovereign, gracious choice**?
- ③ How do Exodus 3:11-12 and 4:1 & 10-13 reveal Yahweh to be a God of **infinite patience**?
- ④ How does Exodus 10:21–29 reveal Yahweh to be a God of **transforming power**?

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- ⑤ In Exodus 3, God talks with Moses about the **exodus** he will lead, liberating the Jews from slavery. In Luke 9:30–31, Moses talks with Jesus about the **exodus** He will lead (in v. 31, "departure" is the Greek word, **exodos**) liberating us from slavery to sin. How do you see the features of **sovereign, gracious choice, infinite patience, and transforming power** at work in **our exodus** from sin?
- ⑥ How do the features of **sovereign, gracious choice, infinite patience, and transforming power** suggest a divine origin and God-centered nature of our faith, in comparison to other world religions?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- ⑦ Man-made religions always have mankind playing a determinative role in his salvation (through good works, performing religious duties, or self denial). According to 1 Corinthians 1:30–31, what contribution do we make to our salvation? Do you find this fact emotionally calming or disturbing—and why?
- {
⑧ Read Exodus 34:6-7. How do you see **infinite patience** in God's self-disclosure?
According to Exodus 34:7, does God's **infinite patience** absolve us of human responsibility? Explain.
- {
⑨ When you look at your growth and change as a Christian, are you ever tempted to despair?
How are you currently seeing God's **transforming power** at work in your life?

- ❶ “Yahweh” is from the Hebrew verb “to be”, but its tense is purposefully obscure so that it can point to the past, present or future. God is telling Abram, *“My name is ‘I am who I was and who I will be! I’m unchanging!’”* God further identified himself as “the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”, thus pointing out that in addition to being eternal and unchanging, he also is personal/relational and faithfully committed to Abraham’s family line.
- ❷ Exodus 2:11-15 and 3:6-10 reveal Yahweh’s sovereign, gracious choice in that he did not he chose a murderer to lead his people out of slavery, and in choosing that murderer, he did not give him any choice. God simply said “Go do this.”
- ❸ Exodus 3:11-12 and 4:1 & 10-13 reveal Yahweh’s infinite patience in that he put up with Moses’ endless resistance and excuses for why he was the wrong choice to lead Israel out of slavery.
- ❹ Exodus 10:21–29 reveals Yahweh’s transforming power in that he transformed Moses into a bold, confident leader who stood up to Pharaoh, the most powerful ruler in the world at that time.
- ❺ The Jews’ exodus from slavery under Moses’ leadership was a foreshadowing of our exodus from enslavement to sin under Jesus’ leadership. We see sovereign, gracious choice in that we were chosen for salvation before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). We see God’s infinite patience with us in that, although chosen and redeemed, we still sin (1 John 1:5—2:2). We see God’s transforming power in that he has promised to perfect us (Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:30).
- ❻ Every other world religion is based upon works; I must do something in order to merit God’s salvation. Christianity, on the other hand insists that we can’t and don’t contribute anything to our salvation. Christianity says that God’s standard is absolute perfection, and one sin (or a million sins) merit hell. The God-centered, man-humbling nature of salvation is a stumbling block to man’s ego; sinful man never would have or could have devised such a religion!
- ❼ According to 1 Corinthians 1:30–31, **“by God’s doing** we are in Christ Jesus”, so we make no contribution whatsoever to our salvation! All we do is “receive Christ, thus we are given the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name”—and all of this originated in the will of God, not man (John 1:12–13).

After clarifying that, don’t forget to ask group members whether they find that fact emotionally calming or disturbing—and why?

- ❽ In Exodus 34:6-7, we see God’s infinite patience in that he is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness, forgiving; he is a God of covenant loyalty.

Yet, God’s infinite patience does not absolve us of human responsibility since if we refuse his forgiveness, God will by no means leave the guilty unpunished (v. 7).

- ❾ Be ready with your own response—you likely will need to “prime the pump” on this one. Model humility, honesty and transparency.

Sermon Summary Genesis 25-50

Last week we began a study of the life of Jacob. He was a liar, a cheat, a coward—an unsavory character! Jacob's messy life came from a messy family. The story starts with Abraham and Sarah, who had a son named Isaac, who then married Rebekah. Isaac and Rebekah had twin boys, Jacob and Esau. God gave priority to the younger twin, Isaac—which occasioned a domino-effect of messy events. Jacob married two sisters—more mess—through whom (with the help of two servant girls) he had twelve sons. The messiness multiplied as he favored one of those sons over his brothers. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are referred to as the “patriarchs”—the “father-leaders” of our faith.

Scripture often refers to God as “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”. Based on the biblical principle of elders receiving more honor, one would assume that God would be referred to as “the God of Abraham” more often than as the God “of Isaac” or “of Jacob”—but this is not the case. God is called “the God of Abraham” only once, never simply “the God of Isaac”, but fifteen times he is called “the God of Jacob”! Why is this? While I'd assumed that surely Jacob's elders, Abraham and Isaac, would out-shine him—but I was pointing the spotlight in the wrong direction! When the spotlight turns toward God, it becomes clear that God shines more brightly when he's known as “the God of that scoundrel, Jacob!” What do we learn about God, by virtue of the fact that he most often is identified as the God of the most unsavory of these three men?

I. The God of Jacob is the God of SOVEREIGN, GRACIOUS CHOICE. Jacob gives us the clearest illustration of God's sovereign choice. The biblical term for this is “election”. The Bible teaches that the eternal choice of certain individuals for salvation has nothing to do with our worthiness, but flows solely from God's sovereign gracious choice (1 Corinthians 1:27-30a; Romans 9:10-13). The God of Jacob is the God who singles-out the most unlikely and unworthy objects. But election is not, as some imagine, harsh and unjust. It is a merciful action of God, because if he didn't choose some for salvation, all would perish (Romans 9:27-29)! Yes, every believer chooses to believe in God, but election means that God chooses us so that we can chose Him (2 Timothy 2:24-26). We freely choose God because he's chosen us (John 15:16). Election means that we believe because He made us willing and able to believe (1 Corinthians 2:14; John 6:44 & 65; Romans 8:5-8). Aren't you grateful that God is the God of the undeserving? I know I am!

II. The God of Jacob is the God of INFINITE PATIENCE. For most of his life he lived a most God-dishonoring life. He took advantage of his brother Esau when he was hungry and weak. Jacob lied to and tricked his blind father (Leviticus 19:14). Jacob resorted to lying and trickery to obtain what God had already promised. Jacob had more confidence in his own sneaky means to accomplish God's plan. Shame on him—but God was patient with Jacob. Throughout his life Jacob defaulted to human scheming to get his way, but the God of Jacob continued to be patient with this faithless man.

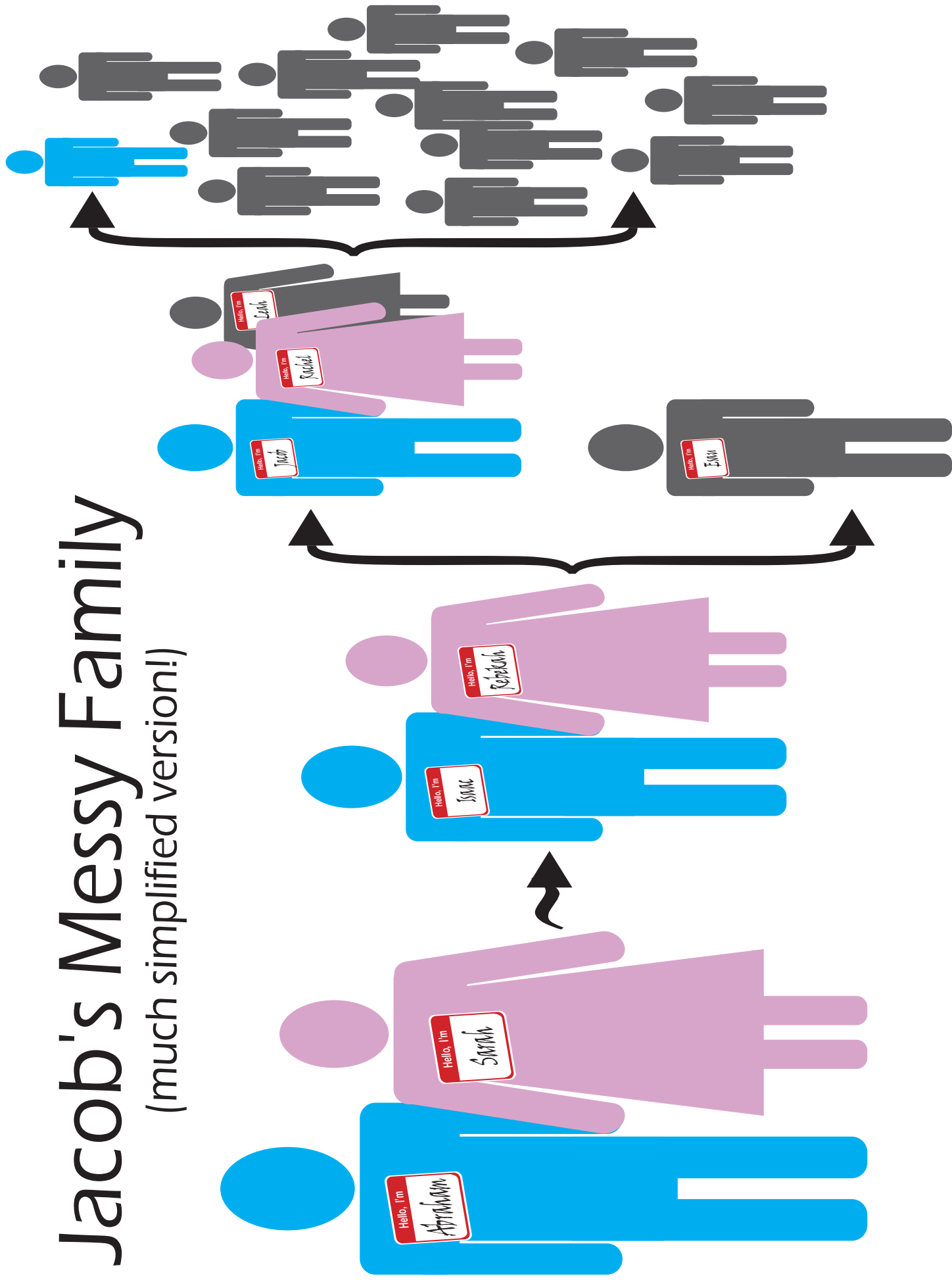
Like Jacob, we are ever planning and scheming, and then asking God to bless our human scheming. Like with Jacob, God has promised us that “nothing can separate us from the love of God”, but we're so slow to learn. I'm grateful that God is a God who is patient with slow learners—like me.

III. The God of Jacob is the God of TRANSFORMING POWER. “The God of Jacob” proved powerful enough to take life-long doubters and scoundrels and transform us into godly, trusting saints. The end of Jacob's life reveals the triumph of God's mighty grace. Jacob became a worshiper (Genesis 46:1 & Hebrews 11:21). Whereas earlier in life Jacob was terrified of his brother, late in life he knew himself to be blessed even above Pharaoh, the most powerful king on earth (Hebrews 7:7).

I'm glad that God is the God who wins in the end, who succeeds in remaking us into his image (Philippians 1:6). God chooses average, flawed people such as us, God patiently puts up with our mediocre performance, and he's the God who eventually transforms all of his true children into the spitting image of his special Son, Jesus. The God of Jacob is the God who sovereignly chooses, not based at all upon our merit or actions. The God of Jacob is the God of infinite patience, bearing with years—decades—of faithlessness on our part. And the God of Jacob is the God who is so powerful that he transforms schemers into saints. Aren't you glad he's your God?!

Jacob's Messy Family

(much simplified version!)



Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*The Bible teaches that God sovereignly chooses to bless one, and pass over another.
Let's use the "Five Question Bible Study" method to delve into this mystery...*

Monday— Study Romans 9:10–12 & 11:4–6. What do you learn about God's "choice" (ie. "election")?

Tuesday— Study 1 Corinthians 1:26–31. What do you learn about those whom God elects/chooses?

Wednesday— Study Ephesians 1:4–6. When and how does election occur?

Thursday— Study 1 Peter 1:1–2. For what purpose does God elect people to salvation?

Friday— Study 2 Peter 1:2–11. What can we do to "make our calling and election sure"?

Saturday— Study Romans 8:33–39. What do you learn about the elect?

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]