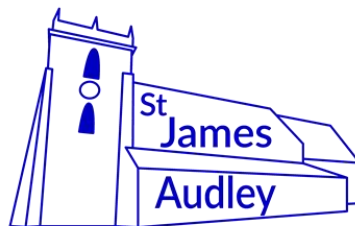


Bible Reading Notes

October 2019 –

Genesis 25-35



Bible Reading Notes

October 2019 – Genesis 25-35

These notes are easy to install on most phones or tablets.

Install the 'PrayerMate' App and you'll find it under 'subscribe to online feeds' and 'Devotional'. It's called St Philemon's Bible Notes. If you have any problems, email alicecornes@gmail.com

How to use these Bible reading notes

These Bible reading notes are a resource to help you dig into God's word and allow it to change your life. 'A little and often' is a good motto. If you miss a day (or several!), don't feel guilty or try to catch up; just pick up wherever the notes have got to. Here's a guide to get the most out of these notes:

1. Find a time and place where you can be quiet but awake.
2. Ask God to help you understand.
3. Use the notes to help you think about the passage:
 - 'Read' sections get you thinking for yourself about the verses.
 - 'Apply' sections suggest how they make a difference to you and how to pray in response.
4. Pray about what you have read.
5. Look for an opportunity to share with someone what God has told you.

Tuesday 1st October

God's election

We all need hope. Genesis teaches us that hope for humanity is only found in the promises of God. Our focus this month is on the story of Isaac's family.

Read Genesis 25:19-26

- Why does Rebekah inquire of the LORD? (v21-22)
- How surprising is the LORD's answer? (v23)
- What does this teach us about Jacob and Esau?

Romans 9:11-12: Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger."

Jacob is the son God will favour. He is the one God will bless. God says it before they do good or bad. He says it before they're born! God guarantees His promises by choosing people.

Apply

- God chooses people. How do you feel about this?
- If you're a Christian, God chose you. How does that make you feel?

- What hope is there for humanity, according to these verses?

Wednesday 2nd October

Godless Esau

Genesis teaches us that hope for humanity is only found in the promises of God. Yesterday, we saw God choose Jacob to inherit those promises. Today, we'll see Esau's part in forfeiting them.

Read Genesis 25:27-34

- What differences are there between Jacob and Esau? (v27-28)
- In what way does Jacob take advantage of Esau? (v29-31)
- How does the author reach his verdict on Esau? (v32-34)

Hebrews 12:16: See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.

Esau is godless. He trades God's promises (included in his birthright) for the immediate pleasures of bread and stew. The writer to the Hebrews warns against doing likewise.

Apply

- When are we tempted to be godless like Esau?
- What pleasures tempt us to stop listening to God?

- How can we make sure that we are not godless?

Thursday 3rd October

God's sworn oath

The most significant promises in the book of Genesis are made to Abraham, Isaac's father. He's since died (25:7), but God's commitment to those promises very much remains.

Read Genesis 26:1-6

- List everything the LORD promises Isaac.

Read Genesis 12:1-3, 6-7

- How do they compare with His promises to Abraham?
- What does this teach us about God and His promises?

God will make good on His promises to Abraham. He's sworn an oath, and He is totally committed to fulfilling it. Ultimately these promises are "the gospel announced in advance" (Galatians 3:8).

Apply

- When do we doubt that God will keep His promises?
- Why is it good that God is committed to His promises?
- How should we respond when we hear God's promises?

Friday 4th October

"I will bless you"

We saw yesterday that Isaac is the man God has promised to bless (26:3). Today, we'll see God blessing him despite his sin.

Read Genesis 26:7-13

- What lie does Isaac tell? (v7)
- How is Isaac's sin exposed? (v8-11)
- Is the LORD's response surprising? Why/why not? (v12-13)

As God has promised (v3), so Isaac is blessed (v12). The LORD will keep His promises despite His people's sin. "He who did not spare his own Son... [will] graciously give us all things" (Romans 8:32).

Apply

- How do these verses give us comfort when we sin?
- Are there sins we're afraid to confess to God? Why?
- Why can we be confident in all the promises of God?

Saturday 5th October

Room to flourish

The promise of God's blessing is the envy of the nations. Last time we saw Isaac being richly blessed by God (v12). The nations, however, don't much like it.

Read Genesis 26:14-22

- Why is Isaac opposed? (v14)
- In what ways is he opposed? (v15-21)
- How does the LORD fulfil His promises? (v22)

The progress of God's kingdom never goes unopposed. Nevertheless, God's promises will be fulfilled. "[Nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39).

Apply

- In what ways are Christians opposed today?
- When does it seem God's promises are thwarted?
- How do these verses give us confidence in His promises?

Sunday 6th October

The faith of Isaac

Hope for humanity is only found in the promises of God. We've seen these promises being made to Isaac (26:3-5). But trusting God's promises is easier said than done.

Read Genesis 26:23-33

- Why might Isaac be afraid? (v24)
- How does Isaac show his faith? (v25)
- How does God fulfil His promises? (v26-33)

The New Testament uses Isaac to illustrate faith in God's promises. "By faith [Isaac] made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country" (Hebrews 11:9).

Apply

- When does trusting in God's promises seem scary to us?
- What would it look like for us to copy Isaac's faith?
- Why need we not fear, as we trust God's promises?

Monday 7th October

Blind faith

The family of Isaac is a total mess. As promised, God's blessing will ultimately go to Jacob, but it's no thanks to Isaac or Rebekah or the brothers. Only in God's promises is hope found for humanity.

Read Genesis 26:34-27:4

- What do these verses teach us about Isaac?
- How does he compare with the man in chapter 26?

Read Genesis 25:23, 25:28

- Is he right to bless Esau? Why/why not?

Isaac is weak. He may have been acting in good faith, but his physical frailty is clear. Here, as elsewhere, God chooses to work through obvious human weakness.

Apply

- Why does God choose to work through weakness?
- How does knowing this keep us from pride?
- What do these verses reveal about God?

Tuesday 8th October

Same old tricks

Today's verses describe the scheming of Jacob and Rebekah. There are no human heroes in this story – Jacob lives up to his name. Hope for humanity is only found in the promises of God.

Read Genesis 27:5-17

- What is Rebekah's plan? And how does she pursue it? (v8-10, v15-17)
- What is Jacob's role? And how does he fulfill it? (v11-12, v14)
- Who is more culpable: Jacob or Rebekah?

God works through human sin to accomplish his purpose. The death of Jesus provides the perfect example. For those of us conscious of our sin, this should be a great comfort.

Apply

- What sins are we most conscious of?
- Do we believe God could work through our sin? Why?
- How do these verses provide comfort for us?

Wednesday 9th October

Isaac blesses Jacob

If we've read the previous chapters of Genesis, we'll know lots rides on Jacob getting Isaac's blessing. God has promised He will favour Jacob (25:23). Today, that promise moves closer to becoming true.

Read Genesis 27:18-29

- How worthy is Jacob of God's blessing? (v18-24)
- How aware is Isaac of who he's blessing? (v22-27)
- What is the blessing that Jacob receives? (v27-29)

Read Genesis 25:23

As God has promised, Jacob gets blessed. Esau will bow down to him, those who bless him will be blessed by Him. The LORD will extend to Jacob His promises to Abraham and Isaac.

Apply

- Why is it so extraordinary that God would bless Jacob?
- How is God fulfilling His promises about Jacob?
- In what way do these verses show us God is in control?

Thursday 10th October

Too late to change

Hope for humanity is only found in the promises of God. Yesterday we saw God's blessing being passed to His chosen man Jacob. Today, we see the consequences of Esau's past misconduct.

Read Genesis 27:30-41

- What does Esau want? (v30-31)
- How does Isaac respond? (v32-40)
- Do you have sympathy with the way Esau retaliates? (v41)

Esau's care free attitude to God's promises has come back to bite him. Remember: he was godless! "Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done" (Hebrews 12:17).

Apply

- How does Esau's story warn us against being godless?
- Are there particular sins that we need to be repenting of?
- Do you know of others in danger of copying Esau?

Friday 11th October

Go at once!

As God promised, Jacob has been blessed. He will be a strong nation. Those who curse him will be cursed. Even Esau, his brother, will serve his younger sibling. Yet life for Jacob is about to get tough.

Read Genesis 27:42-28:9

- What is Jacob's problem? (v42)
- What is Rebekah's solution? (v43-46)
- How does Isaac act to protect his son? (v1-5)

Being God's chosen man does not mean life will be easy. Jacob is banished to protect him from Esau. Jesus is forsaken, to bring us salvation.

Apply

- What are our expectations of the Christian life?
- How does Jacob's experience challenge them?
- When do we feel entitled to prosperity?

Saturday 12th October

God reveals Himself

Jacob is in trouble. He's homeless, he's helpless, he's fleeing. And yet the LORD will be the God of those He has chosen. Humanity finds hope in His promises!

Read Genesis 28:10-15

- What is Jacob's situation? How do we see he's desperate? (v10-11)
- What is Jacob's dream/vision? (v12-13a)
- What does the LORD God promise him? (v13b-15)

In the midst of all his hardship, God reveals Himself to Jacob. He shows that He is present. He promises His blessing. Still today in Jesus Christ His presence and promises are clear.

Apply

- How can we take comfort from God's revelation in Jesus?
- In what kind of circumstance are we tempted to doubt God's presence?
- Why must we remember God's promises in Jesus?

Sunday 13th October

"The LORD will be my God!"

The LORD will be the God of those that He has chosen. In the moment of Jacob's greatest distress, God's revealed Himself at Bethel. We now see Jacob respond to God as he wakes up from his slumber.

Read Genesis 28:16-22

- What does Jacob realize from his dream of heaven's stairway? (v16-17)
- How does Jacob act in light of all that God has promised? (v18-22)

Jacob makes a solemn vow following from God's revelation. The man that God has chosen from birth, in weakness bows the knee to Him. His response is clearly appropriate to God's amazing mercy.

Apply

- What does it involve to take the LORD to be your God?
- Why is this the right response to God's amazing mercy?
- Which of God's three promises do you think gives greatest comfort?

Monday 14th October

Family connections

Jacob may have turned to God, but he's still a man in trouble. He's homeless, he's single, he's fleeing from his brother. For God to bring His promises to pass, he must provide Jacob with a partner.

Read Genesis 29:1-14a

- Who is Jacob looking for on his journey eastward? (v1-8)
- Who does Jacob come to meet while he's with the shepherds? (v9-12)
- How does Laban treat Jacob? How does this mark progress? (v13-14)

God will ensure that His promises come good. This is the start of a romance! Jacob goes on to take Rachel as his wife. Laban houses Jacob for a decade.

Apply

- God has promised He will grow a people. Where have you seen Him doing that?
- How have you experienced God's faithfulness in your life?
- Thank God for how He's been working.

Tuesday 15th October

“Why have you deceived me?”

God has promised Jacob both a land and some descendants. Yet now in Haran the deceiver is deceived. The man that God's chosen is abused.

Read Genesis 29:14b-30

- What does Laban ask of Jacob? How does Jacob answer? (v14b-20)
- How does Laban deceive Jacob? Why is that outrageous? (v21-24)
- What does Laban gain from Jacob? How does he get Rachel? (v25-30)

No amount of human cunning will stop God fulfilling His promises. God will go on to use Laban's trickery to grow the family of Jacob. We see it here in Jacob's life. We see it of course with Jesus!

Mark 15:9-11: “Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate, knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd.

Apply

- Where do we see Christians being abused?
- When do we think this might thwart God?
- Why is it good news that God can't be stopped?
What does this mean for his promises?

Wednesday 16th October

The battle of the brides

Jacob is married to Rachel his sweetheart, but life at home isn't happy. God's blessing for humanity is dependent on this family, but just full of backbiting, deception and envy.

Read Genesis 29:31-30:13

- What do the names of Leah's kids reveal of Jacob's family? (v31-35)
- What is Rachel's plan of attack? How should we feel about it? (v1-8)
- Why does Leah respond like this? What does it say about her? (v9-13)

God chooses to grow His promised kingdom through wholly unlovable sinners. Amazingly, these bickering sisters top our spiritual family tree!

Ruth 4:11: Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel.

Apply

- How do these verses challenge our pride?
- How do they give us confidence?
- What do they say to the Christian who thinks they're too bad for God to use them?

Thursday 17th October
God remembered Rachel

Yesterday, He gave Jacob children. Today he gets boys numbers nine, ten and eleven. Here starts the family of Israel.

Read Genesis 30:14-24

- Madrakes were thought to help with conception. How does this explain Rachel's actions? (v14-15)
- How's Jacob treated? And what does he do? (v16)
- How do we see God working? (v17-24)

From this sinful mess God's deliverer would come. From Rachel came Joseph, who stopped Israel starving. From Rueben came Moses, who led them from Egypt. From Judah came Jesus, who brings us salvation.

Apply

- Where do we see God's grace in this story?
- How should this make us thankful?
- How does this challenge our view of God's character?

Friday 18th October

Review

We've reached half-time in the story of Isaac's family. Now seems like a good time to reflect on all we've learnt.

Look back over Genesis 25:19-30:24

- What have you learnt so far about...
 - a) God?
 - b) His promises?
 - c) the state of humanity?
- Why must we keep trusting God?

Pray (some suggestions)

- Thank God for His promises, in which we find hope.
- Praise God for His faithfulness and commitment to His word.
- Ask God for help to keep trusting Him and relying on His promises.

Saturday 19th October

Jacob prospers exceedingly

From now on for Jacob his heart's set on home. His family have grown in accordance with God's promise. He wants to leave Laban and head back to Canaan. But it doesn't go as Jacob had wanted.

Read Genesis 30:25-43

- How does Laban mistreat Jacob? (v25-36)
- How does Jacob respond to this? (v37-42)
- To what extent does God prosper him? (v39-43)

The LORD will prosper His oppressed people. He's not promised us assets or material success. But we're "rich" (Rev 2:9) if we're Christians, "every spiritual blessing" is ours (Eph 1:3).

Apply

- List all the blessings of being a Christian believer.
- Which are you most grateful for?
- How do they encourage you to keep being faithful even in moments of suffering?

Sunday 20th October

“Do whatever God has told you”

Jacob now has twelve sons, four wives and lots of camels! He's materially hugely prosperous, yet his life is still in danger. Hope for humanity is found only in the promises of God.

Read Genesis 31:1-21

- What does God command Jacob? Why would that be scary? (v1-3)
- How has God helped Jacob already? What is His track-record? (v4-13)
- Is Jacob right to obey the LORD? Why/why not? (v14-18)

God can be trusted to take His people home. He is with us, He is for us, He will not let us go. The cross of Christ gives us even more reason to trust God with our eternity.

Apply

- When is it hard to trust God with our eternity?
- Why is it hard to do so?
- How can we be certain God will take us safely home?

Monday 21st October

God has seen me!

Laban is a scary man. In today's verses, he pursues Jacob. Jacob's fled from him, Laban's cross with him, but God steps in to help him. Hope for humanity is found in God's promises.

Read Genesis 31:22-42

- Why might Jacob be afraid of Laban? (v23, v38-41)
- Do you believe Laban (v27)? Whose side are you on?
- To whom is Jacob indebted for his safety? (v42)

God sees the hardship of all His chosen people. When His people are abused, God is far from indifferent. When His people are pursued, God is far from being ignorant.

Apply

- What hardship are you facing in your life at the moment?
- Why is it encouraging to know that God sees it?
- How does this encourage you to put your trust in God?

Tuesday 22nd October

A heap of witness

These verses are the last time we meet Laban in Genesis. He's pursued Jacob, he's abused Jacob. He'd have sent him home with nothing! But God has seen Jacob's hardship and stepped in to rebuke Laban.

Read Genesis 31:43-54

- Why is Laban angry? How come he's pursued Jacob? (v43)
- What is the agreement that leads to heaps and pillars? (v44-54)
- How does this arrangement protect all Jacob's family?

God will save His people from their enemies. In Christ, one day our enemies will be a footstall for our feet (Psalm 110:1, Romans 16:20). There is hope for humanity in the gracious promises of God.

Apply

- Who are the opponents of God's people today?
- In what ways have you been opposed as a Christian?
- Why is it important to know our enemies won't triumph?

Wednesday 23rd October

Faith in fear

With Laban gone there's one more fear Jacob's family will have to confront: Esau, Jacob's older brother, from whom he needs forgiveness. Until the men are reconciled, the land will not be safe.

Read Genesis 31:55-32:21

- From earlier in the month, why is Jacob fearful of meeting his brother Esau? (v3-6)
- How does Jacob plan to appease his brother's wrath? (v7-8, 13-21)
- How does Jacob demonstrate his dependence on the LORD? (v9-12)

Jacob depends on the LORD for salvation. There's nothing wrong with making plans or being pragmatic in the face of fear. But Jacob prays to God because his fate is ultimately in His hands.

Apply

- "I am afraid... but you have said". Why is this a good model for prayer?
- "I am unworthy of all [your] kindness and faithfulness". Why is this a good starting point for prayer?
- When do we act as if we can save ourselves?

Thursday 24th October

Wrestling with God

Before Jacob meets Esau there's the strange incident of the wrestling in the night. It's puzzling for us and the story comes as a surprise, but the episode makes one very simple point: God is on Jacob's side.

Read Genesis 32:22-32

- What do we learn about the man who wrestles with Jacob? (v25-30)
- Why do you think he spares Jacob, when he's clearly so strong? (v30)
- How might this incident give confidence to Jacob?

If Jacob can come face-to-face with God and yet retain his life, Jacob can be confident of meeting his brother Esau. God is on Jacob's side. And if we are Christians God is on our side too (Romans 5:8-11).

Apply

- How can we be certain as Christians that God is on our side?
- How can we take confidence from knowing God is for us?
- When do we doubt this claim to be true? What implications does that have for us?

Friday 25th October

Like seeing God's face

This is the moment we've been waiting for; the moment Jacob's been dreading. Jacob sees Esau and goes out to meet him. Will the LORD answer his prayer to save him and his family?

Read Genesis 33:1-17

- How does Jacob approach Esau? Is he confident? Why might that be? (v1-3, cf. 33:17-21)
- How does Esau receive Jacob? How surprising do you find that? (v4-11)
- In what way is seeing Esau 'like seeing the face of God'? (v10-11)

Given God is on his side, Jacob's rescue prayer is answered. The LORD saves those who depend on Him in weakness. There is hope for humanity in God's promises.

Apply

- When do we forget God alone is able to save us?
- Why can we be confident in God's ability to save?
- What would it look like to depend on God in weakness?

Saturday 26th October

An outrageous thing

Jacob has returned to the promised land, Canaan. He's safe from Esau. But what's next shows the evil of the world. This is not the ultimate home for God's people.

Read Genesis 33:18-34:4

- How does Shechem treat Dinah? And why is that shameful? (v1-2)
- How does Shechem speak of Dinah? And what does that tell us? (v4)
- What does Shechem feel for Dinah? How far does this excuse him? (v3)

What Shechem does is shameful. It is wicked. It is evil. God's brought His people to the land according to His promise, but He's got planned somewhere better for Jacob and for Christians.

Hebrews 11:39-40: These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Apply

- Where do we see evil in the world?
- Why is it important to know heaven will be perfect?

- Are we ever tempted to think this world will do?

Sunday 27th October

"He did nothing"

Hope for humanity is found only in the promises of God. We saw yesterday Shechem's evil, raping Dinah (Jacob's daughter). We see today that sin and evil also run within God's chosen people.

Read Genesis 34:5-12

- What do you make of Jacob's response? (v5)
- Is his sons' rage more appropriate? (v7)
- What proposal does Hamor make? And why does Jacob stay silent? (v8-12, cf. v30)

Jacob seems minded to compromise with Hamor. His reaction is strange to the rape of his daughter. He's concerned to keep the peace in Canaan (v30). He doesn't rule out joining Israel to the world.

Apply

- When are we tempted to compromise with sin?
- How do we justify blending into the world?
- Do we think compromise is needed for the gospel?

Monday 28th October

Fierce, furious, cruel

Wherever we look, there is sin in the world. There is compromise, there is wickedness, there's abuse of God's people. But that does not give us license to respond by seeking vengeance.

Read Genesis 34:13-31

- Why are Dinah's brothers mad? What is their proposal? (v13-17)
- How do the Hivites respond to their word? (v18-24)
- How do the sons of Jacob treat them? (v25-29)

It's very easy in an evil world to pursue justice ourselves. "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord" (Romans 12:19). Simeon and Levi's actions are wrong. Their revenge was inappropriate.

Apply

- When are we tempted to seek vengeance for ourselves?
- Do we trust God to repay sin?
- What does this teach us about the state of the world?

Tuesday 29th October

Home sweet home

Jacob has finally come back to the land, complete with a family and some livestock. Hope for humanity is only found in God's promises. God is a God who will keep them!

Read Genesis 35:1-8

- Where is Jacob told to go? And why is that significant? (v1, cf. 28:15)
- How does God watch over Jacob? (v2-5)
- Where does Jacob settle? (v6-7)

God has been faithful to His promises to Jacob. He's been with him, He's watched over him, and He's returned him to Canaan (28:15). We can be confident in all God's promises however unlikely they seem.

Apply

- Which of God's promises do we struggle to believe?
- Why do we struggle to believe them?
- Why can we be confident that God will come good? What have we learnt from Jacob?

Wednesday 30th October

A picture of the promise

Jacob might be home but the story's far from over. The promises of God are for humanity! Yes – God has been faithful, but there's much more still to come. We still await completion of these promises.

Read Genesis 35:9-29

- List what's imperfect about the land of Canaan. (v15-29)
- What is Jacob's hope for the future? (v9-14)

God's promises don't end with Jacob in Canaan. They're ultimately of our heavenly home (Hebrews 11:16). Canaan was simply a taster for Jacob. The reality, we too can look forward to!

Apply

- When is it hard to keep going as a Christian?
- What reason do we have to persevere?
- Jesus knows what it's like to keep going through the hard times (Hebrews 12:2). Spend some time thinking about Him.

Thursday 31st October

Review

When we reach the end of any Bible study, it's good to reflect on all we've learnt. We won't remember everything, but it's helpful to consider the big things. That's the aim of today's study.

Look over Genesis 25-35

- What has Genesis taught you about...
 - a) God?
 - b) His promises?
 - c) the state of humanity?
- Why must we keep trusting God?

Pray (some suggestions)

- Thank God for His faithfulness and that we can trust His promises.
- Pray that we would persevere however hard following Christ is.
- Ask that we would know the hope that only comes from His promises.