

Trusting God for Reconciliation

Genesis 33

It's the day Jacob has dreaded for twenty years – he is meeting his brother Esau. He was prepared for the worst, but God had changed Esau's heart. Jacob reflects the struggle with faith many Christians experience today...and reminds us that our God can be trusted!

A Difficult Meeting, An Answered Prayer

- Jacob has guilt and fear, but Esau greets him with joy (1-7)
- God restores a relationship, Jacob shares his blessing (8-11)

A Difficult Parting, An Altar of Worship

- Jacob and Esau go their separate ways in peace (12-17)
- Jacob acknowledges God's faithfulness (18-20)

A Lesson for All Times

God is a God of reconciliation!

We who have received God's gift of spiritual reconciliation should trust Him when we seek reconciliation with others.



1. Genesis 33 brings to a close the lengthy “Jacob-Esau narrative” that began in Genesis 25 at their birth! Jacob is a deceiver from the start: His trickery in stealing his brother's blessing resulted in his exile in Haran for 20 years. Now, finally, he is reconciled with his brother. But before meeting him, he sent ahead lavish gifts (see Gen 32.13-21); when they met, he indicated he was trying to ‘make things right’ by returning the ‘blessing’ he had stolen (the word translated ‘gift’ in Gen 33.11 is the same word translated ‘blessing’ in Gen 27.35-36). Jacob has changed from a conniving trickster, and is now willing to trust in God to bless him. What other changes in Jacob's character are there between his early years and now? What character flaws remain which he is still struggling with?
2. As this episode of the Genesis story comes to a close, Jacob is back in the land God has promised to him, his enmity with his brother is resolved, and he has a large family – the beginning of what will become the nation of Israel. If we look at the ‘big picture’ of Genesis, this is a revelation of God's gracious work in history to bring about His plan to bless all the families of the earth through the descendants of Abraham (cf. Gen 12.3; 22.18; 26.4; 28.14) – a plan which led directly to the birth of Messiah Jesus, our Savior! Reflect back over the story of Jacob. What evidences of the Lord's hand do you see? How many times can you see His ability to change hopeless situations to fulfill His preordained plan? Now reflect on your life – look back to those things you've come through, to where you are now spiritually, and look ahead to the unknowns in the future: How does God's sovereign ability to lovingly and graciously provide for Jacob affect your willingness to submit to His will in your life today?

