

Contract or Covenant?  
Genesis 28:10-22

Review:

1. God made unconditional promises to Jacob, promises that he valued enough to cheat his brother and deceive his father to obtain
2. Jacob responded to God's unconditional covenant with the "if-then" language of a contract, making his love and obedience conditional on God keeping His promises
3. But God made those promises to Jacob, knowing all the evil things he had done, because of His love and grace

Reflect:

1. Thinking back over your life, what have you done that makes it hard for you to believe that God could love you?
2. How does knowing that Jesus died to pay for those very same sins help you to accept God's gracious promises?

Go further: Read Genesis 33

1. In verse 1, who does Jacob see coming to meet him? What did he do with his children in response?
2. In what order did Jacob assemble his family? How does this express Jacob's priorities?
3. According to verse 3, how did Jacob behave as he went to meet Esau?
4. According to verse 4, how did Esau react when he saw Jacob?
5. How did Jacob describe his family to Esau in verse 5?
6. In verses 6 and 7, how did each group of Jacob's family greet Esau?
7. Chapter 32:13-21 describes an elaborate and expensive gift of livestock that Jacob sent ahead of him to give to Esau. What reason does Jacob give in verse 8 for making such a gift?
8. In verse 9, what is Esau's initial response to this gift?
9. In verses 10 and 11, what four reasons does Jacob give for Esau to accept his gift? What did Esau eventually do with Jacob's gift?
10. What does Esau suggest that he and Jacob do in verse 12?
11. What excuse does Jacob give in verse 13 for not travelling with Esau?
12. What does Jacob promise to do in verse 14?
13. What does Esau offer to do for Jacob in verse 15? Why does Jacob say he refuses this offer?
14. According to verse 16, where did Esau go?
15. According to verse 17, where did Jacob go?
16. According to verse 18, where did Jacob go? What did he buy there?
17. According to verse 20, what did Jacob build?

Summary and Application:

1. Why do you think Jacob gave Esau such expensive gifts? In light of the way Esau greeted him in verse 4, do you think such gifts were really necessary?
2. In Ancient Near Eastern culture, people brought tribute to more powerful nations or rulers as a way of expressing their submission or loyalty to them. How does this help to explain Jacob's

actions? How would giving gifts be a way for Jacob to apologize for the way he treated Esau in the past?

3. The end of chapter 33 makes it clear that Jacob had no intention of living close to his brother. Why do you think he broke the promise he made in verse 14? Why would it have been hard for the brothers to live close together?
4. Think of someone that you have hurt. What can you do to try to heal your relationship and make up for what you have done?