

**“Poetic Justice in the Life of Jacob”**  
**Genesis 25:19-34, 27:1-40, Galatians 6:7**

Introduction: In God’s dealings with people there is a principle we call poetic justice. Poetic justice occurs when God allows us to behave in a certain way and then sees to it that someone behaves toward us in just the same way. We see this principle at work in the life of Jacob. (John Phillips)

1. Jacob Stole Esau’s Birthright Genesis 25:19-34
  - a. The Soup of Jacob v. 29
  - b. The Strength of Esau vs. 29-30
  - c. The Strategy of Jacob v. 31
  - d. The Supposition of Esau v. 32
  - e. The Swearing of Jacob v. 33
  - f. The Selling of Esau v. 33
  - g. The Satisfaction of Esau v. 34
2. Jacob Stole Esau’s Blessing Genesis 27:1-40
  - a. The Desire of Isaac vs. 1-4
  - b. The Devising of Rebekah vs. 5-17
  - c. The Deception of Jacob vs. 18-29
  - d. The Disappointment of Esau vs. 30-40 (v. 36)

Body: Let us notice the poetic justice in the life of Jacob.

- I. The Salvation of Jacob Genesis 28:10-22
  - A. The Accusation toward Jacob Genesis 27:41-43
  - B. The Apathy of Jacob vs. 10-11
    1. “There was no thought about God in Jacob’s mind beyond the fact that he was going where Isaac had told him to go, no hint of repentance or remorse for what he had done.” (Phillips)
    2. “That night Jacob went to sleep beneath the stars. He had the moss for a mattress, a stone for a pillow, and the black canopy of heaven for a covering.” (Phillips)
    3. In verse 11, Jacob is in the dark asleep. “As we behold him there on the bare ground with nothing but the stones for his pillow, enshrouded by the darkness of night, asleep—symbol of death—we obtain a striking and true picture of man in his natural state.” (Arthur W. Pink)
  - C. The Appearance of Jehovah vs. 12-15
    - What did Jacob do to deserve this high honor? Absolutely nothing.
    - It was only God’s grace...He selects those who have nothing and gives them everything: He singles out those who deserve naught but judgment, and bestows on them nothing but blessing. (Pink)
1. The Revealing of a Connection v. 12
  - a. Because of the ladder, Jacob learned that heaven was not only an actual place; it was also an accessible place. (Phillips)

- b. Jacob learned that there was a way back to God from the dark paths of sin. (Phillips)
- c. John 1:51- *“And he [Jesus] saith unto him, [Nathanael] Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”*
- d. Jesus Christ is the link between earth and heaven...He bridges the immeasurable distance between Deity and humanity, heaven and earth. (Phillips)
- e. We can approach God and reach heaven only through Jesus. (Phillips)
- f. Notice the ladder:
  - (1) Its Provision- That the ladder reached from earth to heaven, told of the complete provision which Divine grace has made for sinners. (Pink)
  - (2) Its Position- Right down to where the fugitive lay, the ladder came, and right up to God Himself the ladder reached! (Pink)
- 2. The Revelation of a Continuation v. 13
  - a. It was a reconfirmation of the original promise made to Abraham, reaffirmed to Isaac, and now coming to rest on Jacob... (Phillips)
  - b. In his vision, Jacob heard the voice of God speaking to him about the Lord and about the land and about his life. (Phillips)
  - c. Would Jacob receive the God of Abraham and Isaac?
- 3. The Remembrance of a Covenant vs. 13-15
- D. The Acceptance of Jacob vs. 16-22
  - 1. His Realization vs. 16-17
  - 2. His Remembrance vs. 18-19
  - 3. His Reception vs. 20-21
  - 4. His Redistribution v. 22 (Jacob and Zaccheus were not saved because they gave; but they gave because they were saved.)
  - 5. His Recognition Genesis 35:1-3, 6-7
    - a. Years later Jacob brought his headstrong boys back to the place that the Lord saved him. (Phillips)
    - b. He probably said to them, “Boys, this is where I first met God.” (Phillips)
    - c. Praise God, I remember the place and time where the Lord saved me!

## II. The Surrender of Jacob Genesis 32:24-32

- A. Jacob’s Confinement v. 24
- B. Jacob’s Contest vs. 24-25
  - 1. Jacob did not wrestle with the visitor, but the visitor wrestled with Jacob (v. 24). (Pink)
  - 2. The hollow of the thigh is the hip socket and, of course, nobody can wrestle with the hip socket broken. (Phillips)
  - 3. Jacob went from wrestling (v. 24) to clinging (v. 26). (Phillips)
  - 4. Jacob had to lean his entire weight on the visitor. He was a powerless, helpless creature now. (Pink)

5. Jacob had contended for the birthright and succeeded. He had contended for the blessing and succeeded. He had contended with Laban and succeeded. Now, he contended with God (the wrestler) and fails. (Pink)

C. Jacob's Conditions v. 26

1. That night was the climax of twenty years of God's patient dealing with Jacob. (Phillips)
2. We are in such a hurry; God never is. The old, carnal, stubborn, fighting, self-sufficient, unyielding Jacob was very much alive that night.
3. We can have instant everything today—instant meals, instant entertainment, instant transportation, instant communication—but we cannot have instant holiness. (Phillips)

D. Jacob's Confession v. 27

1. With all his faults, deep down in his heart all Jacob wanted was the blessings of God; Esau never did.
2. The last time that Jacob was asked that question, he told a lie. (Wiersbe)

E. Jacob's Change v. 28

F. Jacob's Confrontation vs. 29-30

1. A sense of awe and amazement swept over Jacob's soul. He had seen God! (Phillips) Hosea 12:2-6
2. At Bethel Jacob saw the ladder, but at Jabbok Jacob saw the Lord. (Phillips)
3. At Bethel Jacob became a believing man, but at Jabbok Jacob became a broken man. (Phillips)
4. At Bethel Jacob became a son of God, but at Jabbok Jacob became a servant of God. (Phillips)
5. At Bethel Jacob died to sin, but at Jabbok Jacob died to self. (Phillips)
6. Jabbok is the place of emptying. v. 22

G. Jacob's Crippling vs. 31-32

1. It was a crippling that crowned. (G. Campbell Morgan)
2. A man that is broken by God can be blessed by God. (Phillips)
3. The sinew only shrank, it was not removed. Nor is the flesh eradicated from the believer! (Pink)

III. The Sorrow of Jacob Galatians 6:9- *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."*

- The refining process in Jacob's life did not occur all at once. The process took the rest of Jacob's life. There are no shortcuts to holiness. (Phillips)
- "God in His grace forgives us, but God in His righteous government sees to it that we reap what we sow." (Wiersbe)
- Notice the four basic principles in the law of the harvest:
  - You reap what you sow
  - You reap after you sow
  - You reap more than you sow
  - You reap according to how much you sow II Corinthians 9:6- *"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."*

- A. The Dishonesty of Laban Genesis 29:9-30
  - 1. Concerning Jacob's Wives
    - a. "Uncle Laban was just like Jacob only he was older and had more experience." (Phillips)
    - b. "For the next twenty years, God held up Uncle Laban before Jacob and said to him, 'There you are, Jacob! That's you! How do you like being on the wrong end of a dirty deal?'" (Phillips)
      - (1) We find Jacob Searching vs. 1-5
      - (2) We find Jacob Seeing v. 6, vs. 9-10
      - (3) We find Jacob Strutting v. 10
      - (4) We find Jacob Smooching v. 11
      - (5) We find Jacob Seeking vs. 15-18
      - (6) We find Jacob Serving v. 20
      - (7) We find Jacob Stressing vs. 21-25
        - (a) Now go back to the day when Jacob disguised himself as Esau, deceived his old blind dad, and conned him into giving him the valuable patriarchal blessing. (Phillips)
        - (b) What had Jacob cared that he was trampling on the most tender and most sacred feelings of Isaac's heart? He had not cared. (Phillips)
        - (c) Line for line, what Jacob had done to his dad, this uncle now did to him. Thus, in the matter of his wives, God dealt with Jacob concerning his ways. (Phillips)
  - 2. Concerning Jacob's Wages vs. 26-27
    - a. What did Laban care that he was taking ruthless advantage of a weaker man temporarily in his power. To Laban, Jacob was a mere tool to be used and thrown aside once he had been made to minister to Laban's own personal ambitions. (Phillips)
    - b. But go back to the day when Esau returned home, faint and weary from the hunt. (Phillips)
- B. The Defilement of Dinah Genesis 34:1-5
  - 1. She Left to Visit v. 1
  - 2. She Lost her Virginity v. 2
- C. The Deception of Simeon and Levi Genesis 34:5-7, 13-31
- D. The Death of Rachel Genesis 35:16-20
- E. The Disgrace of Reuben Genesis 35: 21-22
- F. The Disappearance of Joseph Genesis 37:15-35
  - 1. "Jacob used a kid to deceive his father, and Jacob's sons used a kid to deceive their father (37:29-35)." (Wiersbe)
- G. The Degradation of Judah Genesis 38:1-26
- H. The Demand for Benjamin Genesis 42:1-4, 14, 20, 33-36

Conclusion: Jacob, like David, paid fourfold for his sins. II Samuel 12:6