

Monday

Genesis 32:22–32

Jacob was the son of Isaac and the grandson of Abraham. The name Jacob means “heel grabber.” This was Jacob’s name because he was born holding on to the heel of his twin brother Esau. God had chosen Jacob to carry on the family line of the promised Savior through his descendants.

One night after Jacob had gotten married and already had eleven sons, God came to Jacob in the form of a man. God physically wrestled with Jacob all night long. Finally, in the early morning, God told Jacob to let him go. Jacob answered, “I will not let you go until you bless me.” The wrestler (who was God) agreed and blessed Jacob and gave him a new name. Now Jacob would be called Israel, which means “struggled with God.” Jacob said, “I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been spared.” Israel (or Jacob) had many descendants and they grew and multiplied into their own nation called Israel.

Several hundred years later, God kept his promise by indeed sending a Savior through the family line of Israel. That Savior’s name was Jesus, which means “The Lord saves,” because that’s exactly what he did.

- **Would you rather be named Jacob, Israel, or Jesus?**
- **Do you know what your name means?**

Close with prayer

Tuesday

Genesis 49:1–28

God renamed the patriarch Jacob and his descendants Israel. When they grew into a large nation of many people, the nation was broken down into twelve tribes. Israel had twelve sons. The twelve tribes were named after the twelve sons of Israel and designated for their descendants, except Levi. Levi's descendants were to be the priests of the people. The Levites did not have a tribe and they would not own any of their own land. Joseph was the son of Israel who received two tribes that were named after his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

The rest of the sons and tribes of Israel were Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, and Benjamin. Before he died, Israel spoke blessings over his sons that looked forward to success of the people of Israel that God had promised.

The tribe of Judah would go on to be the most prominent, producing kings including David and Solomon. The tribe of Judah's reign over the nation looks to a glorious future with the king from that tribe who is the greatest of all, Jesus. People the world over will obey that king from the tribe of Judah.

The Old Testament had twelve tribes of believers. The New Testament has twelve disciples of Jesus. The Bible speaks of the number twelve as the number of the church. In the book of Revelation, the number 144,000 refers to all believers of all time. That number is $12 \times 12 \times 1,000$, which is all believers of the Old Testament combined with all believers of the New Testament. We are included in that figurative number of 144,000, because we are grafted into the spiritual nation of Israel by faith when we trust in Christ according to God's promises to his people. We can be assured that we will enjoy the future glory promised to Israel.

Close with prayer

Wednesday

Exodus 25–30; 35–40

Long ago, God led the Israelites from Egypt through the desert to the Promised Land. God loved them very much and wanted to have a relationship and presence with them as if to live among them. So God gave Moses instructions about building a tabernacle – a large tent for worshiping God – so that he could have a dwelling place in the midst of his people. God told Moses that he must be careful to make the tabernacle and everything in it exactly the way God said it should be.

To make the beautiful furnishings, the Israelites brought gifts of wood, gold, animal hides, and linen cloth. Once they were made, God wanted them to be set apart, to be used only in a specific way, for the worship of God. So God told Moses to anoint them with a special oil, to show that they had been set apart by God to be holy and to serve him in a very unique way.

Moses told the people how God wanted them to set up the tabernacle. In one room – called the Most Holy Place – was a golden chest called the ark of the covenant. Inside the chest were treasures, including the stone tablets on which God had written the Ten Commandments. Carved on the top of the ark were two golden angels, called cherubim. An ornate curtain, or veil, divided the Most Holy Place from the next room.

A golden lampstand was placed in the other room of the tabernacle. Each day, morning and evening, the priests were to trim the wicks and make sure there was plenty of oil for the lamps. There was also a golden altar on which sweet-smelling incense was to be burned.

On the outside of the tabernacle tent was a large area – a courtyard that was fenced around with walls of fabric. In the courtyard was a basin that held water that the priests would use for washing. At the entrance to the tabernacle was an altar for sacrifices of grain and burnt offerings.

The high priest, who ministered as the leader of the Levite priests for the people at the tabernacle, wore a special colorful garment with twelve stones on a breast plate. The twelve stones represented the twelve tribes of Israel. Whenever the high priest entered the Holy Place, he would bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastpiece.

Jesus is our great high priest and he is the only sacrifice and only intercessor with God we will ever need. Jesus wears our names close to his heart.

Close with prayer

Thursday

1 Kings 5:1–6:38, 7:13–8:66

King David wanted to build a temple where the Israelites could worship God. But God told David that his son, Solomon, would be the one to build the temple. David collected all the materials so that everything was ready for Solomon to begin building the temple according to the Lord's plan and instructions.

Solomon enlisted many thousands of workers in his country and from the city of Tyre to do the work. Solomon traded wheat and olive oil from his country for fine logs from Lebanon. In the hill country, thousands of workers cut big, white stone blocks to make the outside walls of the temple. Other workers cut cedar and cypress wood to cover the inside of the walls with fine wood. The temple was 90 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet high. A large porch went across the front of the temple.

After the large white stones were all in place, Solomon's workers finished the inside rooms of the temple. The "Most Holy Place" or "Holy of Holies" was in the back of the temple, separated by wooden doors that were covered with gold. The temple's main room, the "Holy Place," was 60 feet long and was located in front of the "Most Holy Place." On all the walls inside the temple, workers carved beautiful pictures of angels, palm trees, and flowers. Then Solomon had the workers cover all the walls and all the floors with pure gold. This would show that the temple was a very special building – the central place for the people of Israel to worship the one true God!

Other workers made curtains, furniture, bowls, and lamps for the temple. All the bowls, lamps, and furniture inside the temple building were also covered with pure gold. The temple was amazingly beautiful – the magnificent house for worshipping the Lord, the great God of Israel!

It took seven years to build the temple. When the temple was completed, King Solomon called the people together, and they brought their best offerings to God. Many sang songs and played musical instruments to praise and thank God.

Then King Solomon stood before the bronze altar in the courtyard – the place where sacrifices would be offered to God – and began to pray: "O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you." Solomon praised God for his great goodness to his people. He asked that God would hear the prayers offered from this temple. Solomon prayed that when the Israelites sinned against God, they would repent and pray toward the temple – and God would hear their prayers and forgive their sin.

The people praised and thanked God for seven days. On the eighth day they went home with joyful hearts for all the goodness that God had shown to King Solomon and to all the people of Israel.

God loves us and is good to us, too. He gives us everything we have. God gives us good gifts when. God has given us a church to go and worship him. God forgives our sins for Jesus' sake. God talks to us through his Word, the Bible, and answers our prayers. He gives us thankful hearts to praise him.

Close with a prayer of thanksgiving.

Friday
1 Kings 5–8

King David loved the one true God. He wanted to build a temple for God. But God wanted Solomon to build the temple. Solomon was David's son. David made plans for the temple. He asked the people to give money and other things for the temple. The people gave gladly. Now his son Solomon could build the temple. Like David, Solomon loved and served the one true God. He wanted to build a beautiful house for God.

King Solomon paid workers to build the temple. He bought the best wood, stone, and gold. Workers used the stone to build high walls. Inside, they used beautiful wood. They wanted God's house of worship to be very special. It took seven years to build the temple. They built a room called the Most Holy Place (or "Holy of Holies"). They hung a beautiful curtain across the entrance to the Most Holy Place. Behind the curtain, they placed the ark of the covenant – the golden box that held the Ten Commandments. Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place, but only once each year. It was a special place for the only true God. God showed he was happy with the temple. He came in a bright

Dear Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you alone can save from sin and death. Use me to invite others to hear your message proclaimed and taught so that they may believe your love for them. Amen.