

Through the Bible - Genesis 32-36

by Chuck Smith

The sermon explores Jacob's journey of fear, prayer, and ultimate surrender to God through his encounters with angels and his wrestling match, highlighting the importance of reliance on divine strength over personal abilities.

Scripture: Genesis 32 - 33, Genesis 35:1-15, Genesis 36:1-7, Psalm 91:11, Hosea 12:3-4, Matthew 18:20, Galatians 6:7, Philippians 4:19, Revelation 2:4-5

Topics: "God's Promises", "Surrender"

Description

Chuck Smith explores Genesis chapters 32 to 36, focusing on Jacob's journey back to his brother Esau and the transformative encounter he has with God. Jacob, fearful of Esau's potential wrath, prays earnestly, reminding God of His promises while also preparing gifts to appease his brother. The sermon highlights Jacob's struggle with self-reliance and the eventual crippling encounter with an angel that leads to his surrender and a new identity as Israel. Smith emphasizes the importance of honesty in prayer and the need for complete reliance on God, illustrating how God can use imperfect people for His purposes.

Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles to Genesis chapter thirty-two?

Now in the thirty-first chapter we had the parting of Laban, Jacob's uncle as he kisses his grandchildren goodbye, as he sets up the stone and as he gives a heavy-duty charge to Jacob saying, "you take care of my girls and my grandkids. And if you do anything wrong, may God watch over you and take care of you".

And so Laban departed with his host and returned back to Padanaram.

And Jacob [chapter thirty-two] went on his way, and the angels of God met him (Gen 32:1).

So he's just left the host of Laban and he starts on his way again towards Esau. And the angels of God met him. No doubt this was very encouraging to Jacob at this point to meet the angels of God. Now it is interesting, it doesn't tell us in what form or whatever. We do know that angels did in many cases take on human form in the Old Testament. In what form the angels met him here is not declared, just that the angels of God met him. Angels, it seems, are able to materialize and to speak to people.

Actually in the book of Hebrews, we are told to be careful to entertain strangers. You might be entertaining angels without even knowing it. Now to my knowledge, I have never seen an angel in my whole life. My

wife gets upset when I say that but I mean, really, truly angel. She's an angel but not a really truly one, I don't think.

There is a pastor up in Boise, Idaho that declares that Gabriel's been visiting him over a period of time. From the things that Gabriel has supposedly told him, I doubt that it's Gabriel. Now we are told that we are not to believe every spirit but to "try the spirits if they be of God" (1 John 4:1). And we are told that Satan is able to transform himself into an angel of light in order to deceive. And Paul says, "If an angel of heaven preaches any other gospel than that which you've already received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

So if an angel would come along and say, "Hey, God loves everybody and it doesn't matter what you might do, God will accept you and receive you, you don't need to pray, you don't need to come by Jesus Christ"; hey, let that angel be accursed. The angels of God would not reveal or say anything that would be contrary to the already revealed word of truth that we have in the Bible. So though I've never seen an angel, I'm open. I would--I would enjoy the experience very, very much, I'm sure.

There are angels, the Scriptures said, "who have been given charge over us to keep us in all of our ways", (Psalm 91:11), sort of guardian angels. I do believe in them. Mine has been with me on several occasions and has helped me out. I'm very conscious and aware of my angel's presence with me on occasion and of his help. And there have been occasions when I turned and said, "thanks, buddy. Appreciate that one", you know, that was really you know, I don't know how I got out of it myself. But except that the angels of the Lord delivered me and it was very obvious that it was just the hand of the Lord that delivered.

So Jacob met the angels.

And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host (Gen 32:2):

He just saw Laban's host; they were a rough host. But "this is God's host:"

and he called the name of that place Mahanaim (Gen 32:2).

"Mahanaim" means the place of two hosts. So it was the host of Laban and the host of angels.

And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall you speak unto my lord Esau; [Tell him] Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: And I have oxen, and asses, and flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight. And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him (Gen 32:3-6).

So the reception committee with Esau was on their way. So it was the third host now. There was the host of Laban, that was very uncomfortable. There was the host of angels, that was comfortable. There is now the host of Esau coming with four hundred men and that again is uncertain. But it seems to be uncomfortable at the moment because the last time he saw Esau, Esau was threatening to kill him. Why would he want to bring four hundred men with him unless he intended him harm? And so the news is disrupting to Jacob. He doesn't like the news that he hears of the four hundred men that Esau is bringing with him.

Notice, Jacob in his message to Esau is pointing out his own wealth in order to cause Esau to be comfortable not thinking that Jacob is coming back to claim his inheritance. Coming back to claim his

birthright. Coming back to take away from Esau or to try to take from Esau. I don't need anything. I'm very rich. I have servants, menservants, maidservants, cattle, oxen, the whole thing, and I'm returning now and the addressing of him as "lord". Though his father said, "And your brother shall be your servants", yet Jacob is addressing him as the lord.

Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that were with him, the flocks, the herds, the camels, into two bands; and he said, If Esau comes to one company, and smites it, then the other company which is left escape (Gen 32:7-8).

He immediately began to prepare. The first thing was just to divide the whole company into two bands. Figuring if Esau strikes one, while they are fighting and all, it would give the other band an opportunity to escape.

And then Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, the LORD which said unto me, Return to thy country, and to your family, and I will deal well with you (Gen 32:9):

Now Jacob as he begins to pray is immediately reminding the Lord of what the Lord said to him. How oftentimes in prayer I remind the Lord of what He said. Lord, You said, "Where two or three are gathered together" or "where two or three agree" (Matthew 18:20). Now the Lord knows He said that and I know He said it but I just like to remind Him that He said it every once in a while, you know. I like to remind the Lord of His promises.

Now Lord, "You promised if we ask anything" and just remind Him that "Lord, this is what You said. I didn't say this, Lord, You said this". And so Jacob is doing much the same thing. He's reminding the Lord of what the Lord said. "Lord, You're the One that said return and I will deal well with you. Now Lord, I'm returning and here comes my brother" and the acknowledgment in verse ten.

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which you have showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I have become two bands (Gen 32:10).

He is returning now to the area where Jabbok enters into the Jordan river and as he looks down into the valley and he sees the Jordan river before him, he remembers twenty years earlier when he was fleeing from his brother. All he had was just a walking stick, just my staff. Coming back now twenty years later, God has been so good and blessed him so abundantly that he's had to divide his whole group into two companies of people. Two bands. "Lord, I don't deserve anything. I'm not worthy the least of Your mercies. You've blessed me abundantly. When I passed over Jordan, all I had the staff. Now I've become two bands".

Now to give you a little idea of how large a group he had with him, in his present to Esau he sent to him five hundred and fifty animals. Now that was just a small part of one of the bands of animals. So I mean, this was a big drive of cattle, and sheep, servants and all that Jacob is coming back with; a wealthy man. And he attributes the wealth unto God. "I'm not worthy, I'm not deserving. And yet, look what You've done". And then his real request.

Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And you said,[again reminding God what He said] I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude (Gen 32:11-12).

I do think that there's tremendous value in the promises of God's scripture and as we remind ourselves of what God has said; "Lord, You have said I will supply all your needs according to my riches in glory by Christ Jesus"(Philippians 4:19). The Lord likes you to take Him at His word. Stand upon His promises.

The real prayer is "deliver me from the hand of Esau". Now the honest confession, "I am afraid", and it's an honest confession. It may be a negative confession but it's honest. And I think an honest, negative confession is probably better than a dishonest, positive confession. "Oh, I'm not afraid, everything's all right". And you're trembling; that isn't honest. Jacob is honest with God. "I'm afraid that he's going to come and kill me." Very negative confession but it was true. Jacob was afraid. And it's best to be honest. Honest especially when you're talking with God.

It's who do you think you're kidding when you're not really honest with God? He knows your heart, He knows what's in your heart. You're not fooling God at all. So it's best to be honest with God, totally honest and open. I love a frankness with God. I love being just blunt and frank when I talk with God. I love to tell Him exactly how I feel.

I'm more open with God, I think, than I am with anybody else because I know that I might as well be. I know it's ridiculous for me not to be open with God. I know that there is not any hiding of anything from God. That everything is open and naked before Him. And thus, any endeavor of mine to disguise or to color or to in anywise alter the true feelings of my heart are just absolute folly. It's just deceiving myself. And so a great openness with God, a great honesty.

"Lord, I am afraid. I don't know what I'm going to do. Lord, I'm just really disturbed over this thing. But God, I'm angry, I'm mad, I can't stand what they're doing, Lord." And just be honest with God about your emotions, about your feelings and then God can deal with them.

As long as I'm trying to cover and, you know, try to fool God and say, "Oh, it's all right, Lord, everything's okay, I feel great. Oh, it doesn't bother me, no, no". Then I'm not, then God can't deal with the real issues of my life, until I get just really frank with Him and honest in my dealings with God.

Jacob was honest. And then he reminded as I said God of His promise, "You said 'I will surely do thee good and make thy seed as the sand of the sea.' Now Lord, how can my seed be as the sand of the sea if Esau wipes us all out?" You see, that's the idea, "You made the promise that I'm, you know, my descendants are going to be unnumbered and Lord, that'll never be if Esau comes and wipes me out".

And so he lodged there that same night; and he took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother; two hundred she goats, twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, twenty rams, thirty milch camels with their colts, forty cows, ten bulls, twenty she asses, ten foals. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and he said to his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space between the droves and drove. And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, saying, Who are you? and where are you going? Who do these animals belong to? Then you shall say, They are of thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, he is behind us. And so he commanded the second, the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall you speak unto Esau, when you find him. And say moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept me (Gen 32:13-20).

So Jacob prays and then he does his best to set things up. Now as I told you, one of Jacob's problems was that he felt that God couldn't do His work without his help. In other words, Jacob always was trying to help God out. Jacob wasn't a man to just trust the Lord alone. He was the kind of a fellow who would pray and then do his best to set things up. He was a very wise man and a very clever man.

And he always was scheming, always conniving, always manipulating people, and this is just another one of Jacob's manipulations, having prayed, rather than just leaving it there with God. Then he does his best to help God work out the situation by setting up this whole appeasement program, sending out the servants with all of these droves of cattle and sheep and rams and goats and so forth. So that by the time Esau gets to him, he's sort of just overwhelmed by all of the presents that he has received from Jacob. And he is hoping that the anger of Esau will surely be appeased by all of these gifts.

You say, "Well, God wants us to do something, doesn't He?" Yes, I do not believe that faith is really passive. I think that faith is active and I believe that God does expect us to use our heads and use the wisdom that He has given to us. But I do believe that God wants us to be trusting in Him in His ability to do His work. I think that too many times we get into problems where we shouldn't really get involved at all where we're trying to help God out and God doesn't need my help.

And so he went the present over before him: and he stayed that night in the company. And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, [that is, Bildad and Zilpah] and his eleven sons, and he passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over all that he had. And Jacob was left alone (Gen 32:21-24);

I really feel that he sent them all away so he could get a good night's sleep. Others think that he sent them away so he could spend the night in prayer. That doesn't sound like Jacob. He's a practical man and as I say, he really is trusting in himself more than God at this particular point. Yes, he takes God into account, he asked God to help him but then he does his best to help himself.

And so I think that he knew that this has been a rough day. It's been an emotional day. Laban is upset and I can't go back that direction. Esau is coming; I don't know what his attitude is. And so he thinks, I better get a good night's sleep. Get all these little kids out of here, because you remember all and they were eleven boys and how many girls; we don't know. There were girls also and they were all under thirteen years of age.

So a lot of racket, you know, and a lot of cutting up and a lot of playing and a lot of movement in the night. And Jacob felt he needed a good night's rest. And so Jacob was left alone but rather than getting a good night rest,

there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him (Gen 32:24-25),

That is, this angel that was wrestling with Jacob, Jacob would not give up. He could not prevail against Jacob. Jacob was a strong, iron-willed man, and that was Jacob's weakness was his strength. He was so strong; he was prone to trust and rely upon himself rather than to trust in the Lord completely. And so here is a night in which he really needs rest more than any other night, and rather than being able to get rest, the Lord sends an angel to wrestle with him all night long. But he still wouldn't give up. He still wouldn't surrender. And so when the angel saw that he would not surrender,

he touched the hollow of his thigh; and it went out of joint, as he wrestled with him (Gen 32:25).

He deliberately crippled Jacob. Using the divine power, he crippled this man. Now Jacob's one thought was always he could flee. He set things up so that Esau would meet the other company. If Esau was still angry and started to smite the company, then he could flee. And always in the back of his mind, if all else fails, run.

Now the Lord has closed out that door of escape. He's crippled, how can he run? And so the angel touched the hollow of his thigh, the thing shriveled, he became a cripple. God shut him off from escaping now. And this is what finally brought Jacob to the place of giving up. "That's it, I've had it". Jacob finally surrendered. That which God was wanting him to do all along, surrender his life, surrender his will unto the Lord finally came with the crippling. It took the crippling to do it. That's tragic. Sometimes a person's greatest strength can be their greatest weakness.

But Paul the apostle, he was another Jacob in a sense. The guy with an iron will. When Paul wanted to do something, it was almost impossible to stop him. He was preaching in Lystra and the people got angry and they stoned him. They thought they killed him. They dragged him out of town, even as friends thought he was dead and Paul himself doesn't know if he was dead or alive. And his friends were gathering around his body weeping over Paul. Oh, the great soldier of the cross. What a loss you know to the kingdom of God. And pretty soon, Paul began to move, stood up, shook himself. Let's go back into town. Man, how do you stop a guy like that? You don't. That iron will.

But it also became a problem. For Paul was in Galatia and he intended to go over into Bithynia with the Gospel. He had a desire to get into Asia there. "Oh, I want to go into Asia and preach". God didn't want him to go to Asia. But Paul was determined to go to Asia.

So God had to make Paul so sick he couldn't get out of bed until He got Paul's attention. Paul said, "Where is it You wanted me to go, Lord? Over to Greece? Oh, but I wanted to go to Asia, Lord". "Greece, Paul". But he was so sick he couldn't go on into Asia. The Lord just put--had, but he had to put him in bed; he had to, you know; that's sad. But Paul probably could never have endured all of the things that he endured unless he had that great will. It was a great strength but yet so many times the natural abilities are the very things that get in our way in our attempt to serve God.

And God has to deal and bring us to a dependence upon Him in all things. He doesn't want me to depend upon my natural abilities. He wants me to depend totally upon Him. And with Jacob, it took the crippling in order to bring Jacob to the place of surrender, in order that God might really do all for Jacob He wanted to do. He couldn't do it as long as he was this clever, conniving kind of a guy. God couldn't do what He was wanting to do. And so He brings him to the place of weakness. Brings him to a crippling situation.

Jacob is surely not a good example for us. It's just a good illustration and demonstration of what God has to do to some people to bring them into a complete surrender of themselves to God, so that then God can take them and begin to work through them. And they have that understanding, that deep understanding that I have to depend upon the Lord. And so the angel crippled him. And Jacob, at this point, defeated according to Hosea, began to weep and plead with the angel.

You know, you have to hear a person's tone of voice many times to know what they're really saying. You cannot put the tone of voice in words on a page. You've got to hear it. And as we read the words on the page, it sounds like Jacob is demanding, coming from a position of victory or power saying, "I'll not let you

go except you bless me".

As the day was breaking,

The angel said, Let me go, the day is breaking. And Jacob said, I will not let you go (Gen 32:26),

It sounds like he's coming from a position of power and all. Not so. Hosea says he was at this point broken. He was weeping. He was crying. He was pleading. He was actually saying in essence, "please don't go without blessing me. I can't let you go".

unless you bless me (Gen 32:26).

I've had it. I'm destroyed. I can't run. I've had it. Please don't go without first of all blessing me.

And so the angel said unto him, What is your name (Gen 32:27)?

Reminding him of his character. For his name was a reflection of his character.

My name is Jacob (Gen 32:27).

"My name is heel catcher because I caught my brother's heel and I've been at everybody's heel. I've been clever. I've been able to get by because of my dogged determination. I don't give up. I'm a self-governed man. I'm the master of my destiny. I'm the master of every situation. My name is Jacob."

Your name (Gen 32:28)

And here's the blessing; the blessing is just the change of a name.

Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel (Gen 32:28):

But the name change indicates the change of nature. You're no longer to be a self-governed, clever heel catcher; but you're now to be a man whose life is governed by God, Israel. And it indicates the change of character. Actually it is the new birth; it's being born again. No longer being mastered by self, by the flesh. And now being mastered by the spirit of God. Living now a life after the Spirit. What a beautiful blessing. The greatest blessing he could ever receive. It was the blessing that was to last the rest of his life.

God wants to bless you. He wants to change your nature from a self-governed, independent, self-sufficient individual into a person who is relying and trusting in God whose life is governed by the spirit of God. And so the change in Jacob, the blessing was the change of nature that God gave to him.

for as a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed (Gen 32:28).

God is changing your nature, making you a prince. Giving you power with God and power with men.

And Jacob said to him, What is your name? And he said, Why do you ask me my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for he said I have seen God face to face (Gen 32:29-30),

"Peniel" means the face of God.

and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he [was limping or] halted upon his thigh (Gen 32:30-31).

He was crippled. The crippling was an experience that lasted.

Therefore the children of Israel eat not the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank (Gen 32:32).

Chapter 33

And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and the two handmaidens (Gen 33:1).

In other words, each of the mothers with their children that they had born.

And he put the handmaids and their children in the front, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph were behind. And he passed over before them, and he bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near his brother (Gen 33:2-3).

Now according to the Tel Amarna Tablets, it is proper when greeting a king to bow to the earth seven times in approaching him. So Jacob was approaching his brother Esau and greeting Esau as a king, which indeed Esau was. He had become the ruler and the king, so to speak, over the area of Mount Seir, the area known as Edom. And so he is giving honor to his brother's position, bowing before him seven times, a custom in those days.

And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept (Gen 33:4).

So that prayer of Jacob's was answered. His brother's anger was assuaged. And the meeting, rather than being tense, rather than being bitter, rather than with great recriminations and anger, it's a sign of acceptance, a sign of forgiveness, a sign of love as they embraced each other. They kissed each other. They wept together. The work of God's spirit had been wrought.

It is my opinion that Esau, when he was coming, was intending to fulfill his threat of killing Jacob. And even as Laban when he was pursuing Jacob intending to by force take back everything that Jacob had and to do Jacob harm; and even as God spoke to Laban and said, "Don't touch him, don't do him harm, don't speak to him good or evil" and God protected Jacob. I believe that God changed the heart of Esau so that by the time they met, all of the anger and the bitterness of the years gone by flowed out and there was that beautiful reunion of the two brothers.

And he lifted up his eyes, he saw the women and the children; and he said, Whose are these that are with you? And Jacob said, The children which God has graciously given thy servant. And the handmaidens came near, and their children, and they bowed themselves [to their uncle actually]. And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after that came Joseph with Rachel, and they bowed themselves. And he said, What is the meaning of all of these droves of animals that I met when I was coming towards you? And he said, These are to find grace in thy sight. And Esau said, Hey, I have enough, brother; keep that to yourself. And Jacob said, No, I pray you, if I have found grace in your sight, receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, [he insisted,] so that Esau took it. And he said, Esau said, Let us take our journey, let's go, we'll go before you. And Jacob said to him, My lord knows how that the children are tender, [they're young actually, thirteen and under], and the flocks

and the herds with the young are with me: and if the men should overdrive them even one day, the flock will die. So let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will come on softly or slowly, according as the cattle that go before me and the children are able to endure, until I come to my lord unto Seir. So Esau said, Let me now leave with you some of my men that they might be with you. And he said, I don't need it. Let me find grace in the sight of my lord. So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and there built a house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Booths or Succoth (Gen 33:5-17).

Now the fact that he built booths and all indicates his intention to just sort of stay there awhile which he no doubt did. Now one of the things of the book of Genesis does not really keep us up with and that is the time lapses between. Jacob did not go directly to Mount Seir to where Esau was. He stopped first at Succoth for a period of time. Built booths there, stayed there for a while and then he moved on to Shechem, the area of Shechem where he no doubt stayed for maybe eight to ten years.

The Bible doesn't give up these time passages except that we note the ages and the events and we know that many years had to transpire. So probably eight or more years transpired between the time that he saw Esau and before he ever started journeying down toward Hebron. He stayed up in the area of Shechem for many, many years.

So Jacob came [verse eighteen] to Shalem, a city of Shechem (Gen 33:18),

The word "Shalem" is actually the Hebrew word Shalom and it probably would be better translated that Jacob came in peace to the city of Shechem. There is no record of any city called Shalom in that area and the translation could easily read, "And Jacob came in peace onto Shechem".

which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and he pitched his tent before the city. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money. And he erected an altar there, and called it Elelohe-Israel (Gen 33:18-20).

Or God, the God of Israel. So he here adopts his new name. A name that God had given to him. And in building the altar he builds it unto the God not of Jacob but to the God, the God of Israel. And so he purchased now this field, planning to remain in this area indicated by the fact that he purchased the field; and did remain here for many years.

Chapter 34

Now there's a time gap between chapters thirty-three and thirty-four because at the time that they had left the land of Padanaram, Dinah was less than six years old. And now she comes into the story at this point and obviously is older than that.

And Dinah the daughter of Leah (Gen 34:1),

Who was, of course, the first wife that Laban had given to him, the older sister and after Dinah--Leah actually, had born several sons to Jacob, she finally bore a daughter. And so she had a lot of big brothers, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah and all. "And Dinah the daughter of Leah,"

which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land (Gen 34:1).

And so what it was is of course being a little girl or a young girl now, perhaps at this point maybe in her teens or at least getting close to it, she had girlfriends. Well, where you going to get girlfriends? She's just started making acquaintances with the girls from the area of Shechem.

And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and laid with her, and defiled her. And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spoke kindly to the girl. And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this girl as my wife (Gen 34:2-4).

His action was wrong, but he seemed to be an honorable person. Having done it, having wooed her and having had intercourse with her, he now is in love with her and desires that she be his wife and asked that his father make these arrangements for him.

Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: and his sons were with the cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come home. And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to commune with him. And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very angry, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done. And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter: I pray that you would give her to him as a wife. And let us make marriages with each other, give us your daughters (Gen 34:5-9).

Notice, plural, so Jacob had other daughters that are not named. "Give your daughters"

unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade therein, and get your possessions here. And Shechem the son of Hamor said unto Jacob and to her brothers [that is, Dinah's brothers], Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. Ask me whatever you want for a dowry and a gift, and I will give it to you accordingly and as you shall say unto me: but give me this girl for my wife.

And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister: And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that's a reproach unto us: But if you'll consent unto this: and you'll be as we are, every male of you be circumcised; then we'll give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.

If you will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone. And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father. And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, they communed with the men of their city, saying, Hey, these people are peaceable; we ought to live with them, the land is large enough for us all; let us take their daughters, they can have our daughters. [We'll have intermarriage, we'll become one people with them.]

And they'll do this under one condition, that we be circumcised, as they are circumcised. And then shall not their cattle, their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us. And unto Hamor and Shechem all of the men of the city gave ear, they hearkened unto them and they came to pass, that they were all circumcised. But on the third day, when there was a soreness, the two sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, who were Dinah's brothers, [they were the sons of

Leah] they each man took his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all of the men.

They slew Hamor and Shechem the son with the edge of the sword, they took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. And the sons of Jacob came upon the slain, they spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their sheep, their oxen, their asses, and all that which was in the city, all that was in the field, all of their wealth, all of their little ones, their wives, they took captive, and spoiled all that was in the house. And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, You have troubled me to make me stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they'll gather themselves together against me, and kill me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot (Gen 34:9-31)?

So again, we notice that the sons were acting deceitfully. It is interesting how that again, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Jacob was guilty of deceiving his father in receiving the blessing; he was then deceived by his uncle Laban. And now he sees the deceitful acts of his sons as they make this league with the people but dealing treacherously and deceitfully with them and moving in and killing them. Killing the men, taking the women as slaves and so forth, the sons of Jacob had done that which was reprehensible.

Now God is really very plain and very open in showing to us that the people that He chose were not a perfect people at all. Now Simeon and Levi are to come into a judgment for this later on. Years later in the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis, it's recorded when Jacob was about to die, he gathered his twelve sons around him, around his bed. And he began to prophesy over these sons and tell them each one why they didn't receive the birthright really.

We'll get into Reuben's sin a little bit further as we go along. We'll find Judah's sins. We see here the sins of Levi who was to be the father of the priestly tribe. He was deceitful, he had a horrible temper and anger, and when Jacob gathered his sons around him, turning to Simeon and Levi he said, "Cursed be thy anger for you slew a city" and all. And he was still rebuking them years later for this horrible action of theirs.

The Bible does not condone what they did. Does not declare it as right. In fact, their father later on rebukes them sternly for this thing and they are--they do not receive the birthright or the blessing because of their cursed anger and temper in which they went in and slew the men of the city. Their deeds are brought up against them even later on.

And so we find that God is open. He doesn't try to hide the sins of men. He doesn't in any wise come off with the idea that He uses just perfect people. If God used only perfect people, He wouldn't have anybody to work with. And so God has to use what He can, and that's us, with all of our imperfections.

And so lest we get the concept in our minds, which we so easily do, that God just uses perfect people or God will just bless perfect people, God is careful to show us that these people aren't perfect at all. And yet, God chose them and God used them. And that's to encourage you because you know that you're not perfect and yet, God has chosen you and God wants to use you. And so it helps me to yield myself to God to know that I don't have to be perfect, yet He wants me to be perfect. I'm not. But He has provided for my imperfections through Jesus Christ. And thus God will use me and that to me is always an exciting thing.

So God doesn't try to gloss over and give you the picture of, you know, just perfect individuals. Man, these guys are horrible. What they did was horrible. And yet God is going to use them to be the father of the nation.

Chapter 35

And so God said to Jacob, Arise, and go up to Bethel (Gen 35:1),

Now Jacob is afraid. Hey, the kings are going to get together. They're going to attack me and wipe me out. And so "God is saying to Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel,"

and dwell there: and make an altar unto God, God that appeared to thee when you were fleeing from the face of Esau your brother. So Jacob said to his household, to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, be clean, change your garments (Gen 35:1-2):

And so Jacob institutes now a sort of a religious reform in the family. Put away the strange gods. We're going to have to really just go back in a renewal of our dedication unto God and a renewal of ourselves unto God. Jacob is afraid. He has been in the land now for many years, he's come back, just settled.

And it's amazing how in times of prosperity we can sort of let spiritual things slide. And things can creep in and other interests that become idols in our hearts. And it begins to take away from our devotion and our commitment to God. And we find ourselves taken up in this delight or in this endeavor. And all of these things that come in and sort of rob that place of God within our lives.

And so here is a tragedy. Once again it brings them back to a renewing of a commitment of, "Come on, put away your idols, your images, your strange gods; let's change our garments. We're going to go to Bethel. Go back to the place where God met me. We're going to go back to that place and meet with God once more".

And how many times God calls us back to that place of our first consciousness? You remember the message of Jesus to the church of Ephesus where He said, "Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent and do your first work over" (Revelation 2:4-5). The Lord said, "You've lost your first love". It was a call back to the first love, back to that first consciousness of God. Back to that thrill and the joy, that place where you first met God.

And God is calling him back now to that place where he first had a real consciousness of God's presence in his life. And it's a call now from God to come back to Bethel, very beautiful call indeed.

Let us arise, let us go to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under an oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, to Bethel, and the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place The God of Bethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother (Gen 35:3-7).

So coming back, builds now an altar, and recommits himself. Worships God and calls the place "The God of Bethel."

Now here Deborah Rebekah's nurse died (Gen 35:8),

So Rebekah was the mother of Jacob and when Rebekah died, Jacob probably took her servant, her handmaid and said, "Hey, you come live with us". And so Deborah had come to live in Jacob's household. And being an older woman, probably was sort of a guide and all to a lot of the younger women and to the young women servants and so forth. And so she was with Jacob at this point; she died.

and they buried her beneath an oak there at Bethel: and the name of the place was called Allonbachuth (Gen 35:8).

Which actually means the oak of weeping. So evidently, she had really endeared herself to the whole group and though she was an older woman, an elderly woman at this point, yet there is just a lot of weeping over her death.

And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and he blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel (Gen 35:9-10).

And so God confirmed the change of character again from Jacob to Israel.

And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he had talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering on it, and poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel (Gen 35:11-15).

So a second time God appeared unto Jacob here in the area of Bethel. Renewed the covenant, renewed the promise.

And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was just a little way, they came to Ephrath (Gen 35:16):

Now Ephrath is the area of near Bethlehem. Actually, it is the area of Bethlehem.

and there Rachel travailed, for she was in a hard labour. And it came to pass, that the midwife said unto her, Don't be afraid; you're going to have this son also. And so as her soul was departing, (for she died) she called the name of her son Benoni (Gen 35:16-18):

Now she was of course quite a bit older by now. And she died in childbirth with her second son Benoni, which means the son of sorrow.

but Jacob graciously changed his name to Benjamin (Gen 35:18).

"Son of my right hand," lest the boy would bear forever the name "Son of sorrow" and all, and be reminded of his mother's death in childbirth. They called him the "Son of my right hand."

Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave (Gen 35:19-20):

Now at this point, you probably have a little commentary by Moses because he was the one that assembled these records and wrote these first books. And so Moses adds a little commentary here.

that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day (Gen 35:20).

So years later, some four hundred years after this, the pillar was still there that Jacob had erected. And so Moses makes mention of the fact it's the pillar that is still there to this day.

And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar. And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve (Gen 35:21-22):

So here Reuben now goes in. He's the oldest son. He's not married. He probably, you know, had a thing going and, of course, Bilhah is quite a bit older than Reuben so she's not totally innocent in this thing. They probably had sort of a relationship going with each other and they started having intercourse with each other. Jacob found out about it and it's interesting Jacob sort of passes over it. Doesn't really say any heavy thing here that Jacob did about it.

In fact, it just goes on to name the sons of Jacob now and those that were born from each of the mothers. But again, later on when Jacob is addressing his sons at that time of his death and the blessings, Reuben is passed over because he's unstable as water. He went to his father's bed. So Jacob brings that as the disqualifying character of Reuben's life that disqualified him from the birthright and the blessing.

So the sons of Leah; Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun: The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali: The sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, that were born to him while he was in Padanaram (Gen 35:23-26).

Of course with the exception of Benjamin which was born there in the land.

Jacob came to Isaac his father unto Mamre (Gen 35:27),

Now Isaac was still alive. He lived to be one hundred and eighty years old.

unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac journeyed, sojourned. And the days of Isaac were a hundred and eighty years. And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and being gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: his sons Esau and Jacob buried him (Gen 35:27-29).

So he was an invalid for over fifty years, blind and so forth. It's a sad way to end your life.

Chapter 36

Now in chapter thirty-six, we're not going to bother to go into it in any detail because in it we have the generations of Esau. And they are given in chapter thirty-six just to drop out of the picture. But just to show you the descendants of Esau, the Scripture lists their names and all here in chapter thirty-six.

The generations of Esau, who is Edom (Gen 36:1).

Which means red, and he was the father of the Edomites. In verse six, it says,

And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, his cattle, and all of his beasts, and his substance, which he got in the land of Canaan; and he went to the country went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob (Gen 36:6).

So when Jacob came down into the area, Esau moved out over to the area that was south and somewhat east of the Dead Sea region going down to the Gulf of Akaba, the area that later became known as Edom. And that is the area where Esau and his descendants settled. Their riches were so great they could not dwell together.

Their riches were so great they could not dwell together (Gen 36:7);

Now one of the sons of Esau, verse ten, is Eliphaz. And one of Eliphaz's son in verse eleven is Teman. Now you remember in the book of Job, one of the comforters of Job was named Eliphaz, the Temanite. And so it is very possible that this Eliphaz that we have here, one of the sons of Esau was in actuality one of the comforters of Job. And so this probably dates for us the book of Job; which means that it is one of the oldest books in the Bible. For Genesis was written by Moses some five hundred years later. But the book of Job poetry was kept intact and it makes Job one of the oldest books in man's literature.

So the name of Eliphaz, whose son was Teman and in Job, Eliphaz the Temanite; it is very possible that here is the time of Job. It is interesting also that we have in verse thirty-three,

And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead (Gen 36:33).

We know that Job was a ruler, a king over an area. It could be that this Jobab here is actually the Job of that book. And of course, Eliphaz then being one of his uncles who came to visit him at the time that he was going through such great personal loss and problems.

So it's very likely that chapter thirty-six we have the names of those involved and the timing at least of the book of Job and the life of Job. He lived about this time which helps you to get things now sort of in perspective. It means that Job was living at the same time as Jacob and Esau and these events.

I thought we would get chapter thirty-seven tonight but we'll let that go until next Sunday night and we'll start next Sunday in chapter thirty-seven. I really thought I could make it but I don't think I'm going to. So next Sunday night we'll begin in chapter thirty-seven and take the next five chapters as we continue now in this account. We get into some of my favorite parts of Genesis as we get into the story of Joseph, and I really feel that Hollywood has really passed up a tremendous one in not that really doing a really--they've done some, you know, gussied-up accounts, which aren't so good. But just the story of Joseph, the drama, the intrigue, the whole thing that is there is just--I love it. I love to read it. It just is one of my favorite parts of the Bible. So next Sunday night we begin with thirty-seven.

Shall we stand?

God bless you and keep His hand upon your life. May He watch over you daily and may you be conscious of His presence. Not just a thing from your head knowing, but in your heart experiencing the nearness, the closeness of God. May the Lord give you strength for every trial and testing. And may you come to that place of a total reliance upon his strength. The acknowledging of your own weakness. The surrendering and the committing of yourself completely into His hands. And thus, may your week be blessed and anointed by God. In Jesus' name.

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