

# (Genesis) Genesis 35:3-13

by J. Vernon McGee

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*God's faithfulness to Jacob is a reminder to recognize wasted years and to begin a new life, trusting in God's promise to give the land to Jacob's seed after him.*

**Duration:** 6:18

**Scripture:** Genesis 35:2-3, Genesis 35:5, Exodus 13:21, Joshua 1:2, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Genesis"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not wasting our lives as Christians. He draws parallels to the story of the children of Israel who wasted 40 years wandering in the wilderness instead of entering the promised land. The preacher highlights the need for believers to rid themselves of idolatrous practices and fully commit to God. He also emphasizes the significance of the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and now Jacob, as a symbol of God's faithfulness and provision.

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## Transcript

Listen to him now in verse 3, "...and let us arise, and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God." Abraham had made the altar, Isaac had, now Jacob is, and thank God for that, he'll have a witness now for God. "...who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." Now that is the thing that he remembered that when he was running away from home as a young man, homesick and lonesome, he'd come to Bethel, and God had been faithful to him. God says, I will be faithful to you.

And now the years have gone by, and God had been faithful to him. Now God says, you've got to go back to Bethel. You have to go back where you started.

You have to begin there. I'm of the opinion that a great many people today need to recognize that the years that we spend in living a shoddy, shabby Christian life, just a waste of time, absolutely a waste of time. You find that the children of Israel, you will recall, God called them to get out of Egypt and get into the land.

And if you'll notice, God appeared to them and told them to go into the land. They didn't go in. Forty years they wandered around.

God appeared to Joshua. He says, now go into the land. Picks up right where he left off, where he told them.

They've wasted 40 years. How many people today are wasting their lives as Christians? My, the tremendous spiritual lessons that are here for us. And I think one of the reasons they're here for us, some of us, now I don't know about you, but some of us are just like Jacob, you see.

And that's the reason they're so applicable to us today. And thank God, he says he's the God of Jacob. I love that.

If he'll be the God of Jacob, he'll be the God of J. Vernon McGee also. And that's wonderful. That's wonderful.

This chapter is a great encouragement to us today. Now, will you notice what happened? He's taken over in his home, which is interesting. Verse 4, they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears.

And let me pause and say that earrings were associated with worship in that day. There's a great deal said in Scripture about that. I can't stop to develop that sort of thing.

But may I say there's so many wonderful, precious truths that are in the Word of God that even in a five-year program, friends, you can't dig it all out. After we get through working this mine, there'll be a great deal of gold and precious stones left here, I can assure you. And all their earrings which were in their ears, that identified them as idolatrous, and they're going to get rid of them.

And Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. He got rid of them. They're not stored away.

They're buried. They must be put away. Because it's going to be now a new life.

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 Bethel. He and all the people that were with him.

You remember that place was called Luz before Jacob changed the name to Bethel. And the people in that day knew it as Luz, not as Bethel. We know it today as Bethel.

And he built there an altar. He called the place El Bethel because their God appeared unto him when he fled from the face of his brother. You remember that was the name he gave to it before.

Now, here's a very interesting sidelight. But Deborah, Rebecca's nurse, died and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak. And the name of it was Alon Bakuth.

Now, the important thing about this is that we assume, since Deborah was with Jacob at this time, that Rebecca had died. And it's not only a natural assumption, it's a very real thing that she had died. Poor Jacob never saw his mother again.

That part is not as tragic as she never saw him again. She just sent him away for a little while, you know. And the burial of this nurse means that when she died, the nurse had apparently brought a message and

had come to stay with Jacob.

And now she dies. Verse 9, And God appeared unto Jacob again when he came out of Padon Aaron and blessed him. Now, you see, all those years, God had been trying to deal with this man.

Now, he picks up right where he had met him when he came to Bethel as a young man. Wasted years. Those years he spent down there with Uncle Laban, in many ways, were wasted years.

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. And God said unto him, I'm God Almighty.

It's what he had told Abraham, you remember. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation, 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 I'll give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. The Lord considers that pretty important property, by the way, because this now is the third time. First Abraham, then to Isaac, and then now to Jacob.

And each one of these men, the Lord had to tell them about it two or three times. In fact, Abraham many times.

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