

Genesis 25:19-34  
Our Response to the Revealed Will of God

**Introduction:** In this section we will see Isaac (25:19-27:46, 35:28-29) and Jacob (28-35). These are men with whom God restates the covenant which He had made with Abraham. The people of Israel need to know that Yahweh keeps His covenant faithfully, despite human failure.

**1) Yahweh continues to fulfill His promise to Abraham** (the birth of Isaac and his sons)—**25:19-26**

- John Sailhamer writes: Isaac is an important link in the line of Abraham, but as an individual character within the narratives he is given little attention.
- a) The generations of Abraham's son Isaac—25:19-20
  - i) This is the 8<sup>th</sup> use of this marker in Genesis. (25:19-35:20)
    - (1) Isaac is born @ 2065 BC.
    - (2) He will die at the age of 180 @ 1885 BC. (cf. Gen. 35:28)
  - ii) In a culture where the normal age to marry was late teens, Isaac is over double that age. **But it is more important to marry the right person than to marry early.** (MBC) (25:20)
    - (1) Isaac gets married to his second-cousin Rebekah @ 2025 BC.
- b) The obstacle for Isaac and Rebekah—25:21
  - i) Rebekah is barren, like Sarah before her in 11:30.
    - (1) This increases the tension in the story line. Will God's promise be fulfilled? If so, how?
    - (2) How awkward, considering her family's optimistic blessing in Gen. 24:60.
  - ii) Isaac prays for his wife.
    - (1) Unlike Abraham ...
      - (a) It is not recorded that Abraham prays (16:1-4).
      - (b) Isaac does not resort to the fleshly choice of the concubine.
    - (2) Isaac apparently recognizes that the fulfillment of the promised seed to Abraham was not to accomplished by mere human effort.
    - (3) He **MUST** depend on God. There are no other options.
      - (a) The test is for Abraham, Abraham's servant who "found" Rebekah (chapter 24), Isaac, Rebekah, and us.
  - iii) Yahweh eventually answers Isaac's prayer 20 years later. (25:26)
    - (1) The twins are born @ 2005 BC.
- c) Rebekah's pregnancy—25:22-23
  - i) Rebekah's pregnancy is marked by significant unsettledness. (25:22)
    - (1) "Children" is literally "sons."
    - (2) The fear of miscarriage is real.
    - (3) Following her husband's wise example of prayer, Rebekah turns to Yahweh instead of human wisdom.

- (a) Perhaps looking for an answer as to why God's **frown** has suddenly replaced God's **smile**. (Kidner)
- ii) Yahweh reveals His will poetically to Rebekah. (25:23)
  - God doesn't always do this for everyone.
  - (1) How many children she will give birth to.
  - (2) What their futures will be like **generally**.
    - (a) The sons will eventually become distinct nations and ethnic groups.
  - (3) What their futures will be like **specifically**.
    - (a) Suggests ongoing rivalry and conflict.
      - (i) It is one thing for children to fight in the womb, it's quite another when they fight in the back seat on the way to get groceries, and yet another when they fight as teens and adults.
      - (b) Indicates the supremacy of Jacob over Esau.
- iii) The oracle reveals that all of Jacob's scheming was unnecessary in the final analysis. He would have become the dominant nation without using deception to steal his brother's blessing. (NET)
- d) The birth of Abraham's grandsons, Jacob and Esau—25:24-26
  - i) We learn here that Isaac married thirty-five years before Abraham died, that Rebekah was barren for twenty years, and that Abraham would have lived to see Jacob and Esau begin to grow up (to @ 15 years old). The death of Abraham was recorded in the first part of the chapter as a "tidying up" of one generation before beginning the account of the next. (NET)
  - ii) God's grace to Rebekah and Isaac, Abraham, and us.

## 2) Esau scorns Yahweh's covenant—25:27-34

- Esau's *life* is more important to him than the covenant; he shows contempt for his birthright (and his part in the covenant?): it is no more important than a bowl of beans: "What do I care? I am about to die!" (David Dorsey)
- a) Remember the warning from this story in Heb. 12:14-17.

## 3) Things we need to remember:

- a) Psalm 31:15—*My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who pursue me.*
- b) Psalm 34:1—*I will bless Yahweh at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*
- c) Psalm 62:8—*Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.*

Genesis 26:1-23  
Living With Unbelieving Neighbors

**Introduction:** Similarities to Gen. 12:10-20 and 20:1-18. These events seem to take place before the birth of the sons in 25:24-34.

**1) Yahweh restates His covenant to Isaac—26:1-5**

- a) The circumstances—26:1
  - i) We haven't heard of the Philistines since Gen. 21:32, 34.
  - ii) Remember, Abraham had a total of eight sons through three different women. This chapter focuses on the chosen one, Isaac.
  - iii) Abimelech, like Pharaoh, is a title/throne name.
- b) The commands—26:2-3a
  - i) Negative: Don't go down to Egypt for immediate satisfaction
    - (1) This seems to indicate Isaac was planning to do as his father had done years earlier. (cf. 12:10-20)
      - (a) God knows his plans before he puts them into practice.
      - (b) Remember Prov. 16:9: *The heart of man plans his way, But Yahweh directs his steps.*
    - (2) His less-than-perfect faith shows that he cannot earn the right to inherit the covenant. It is all of grace!
  - ii) Positive: stay where you belong for the long-term, yet now unseen, satisfaction
    - (1) Dwell in the Land (where there is a famine)
    - (2) Sojourn (temporary resident, no legal rights) in this Land
      - (a) Israel gains custody of the Land 600 years later.
- c) The promises restated from God's covenant with Abraham—26:3b-4
  - i) God's presence with Isaac, God's blessing of Isaac, God's gift of the lands, God's fulfillment of the oath, God's multiplication of descendants, God's gift of the lands, blessings from the nations (lit. "they will bless themselves") through Isaac's descendants.
  - ii) This includes the lands mentioned in Gen. 15:19-21.
  - iii) Quoted in Acts 3:25.
- d) The reason—26:5
  - i) Abraham obeyed God comprehensively by exercising genuine faith. Isaac must also now obey God comprehensively by exercising genuine faith.

**2) Isaac struggles to remember the covenant—26:6-23**

- a) Isaac obeys Yahweh's commands—26:6 (cf. 26:2-3a)
  - i) He stayed in Gerar which is in the Promised Land, just like Abraham (cf. 20:1)
  - ii) They apparently lived close to the king's palace. (cf. 26:8)
- b) Isaac initially yields to the temptation of fear and self-preservation and lies about Rebekah—26:7

- i) Just like Abraham in Gen. 12:13-19 & 20:2-5.
    - (1) At least with Abraham the lie was half true.
  - ii) Do the men of Gerar have evil intentions? There is no mention of it. This seems to be an imagined danger rather than actual.
  - iii) Lying is one evidence of unbelief. It is our feeble attempt to protect ourselves because we think God is not doing enough.
- c) Isaac's sin is exposed by an unbeliever—26:8-11
- i) Play on words: Isaac was Isaac-ing with his wife. (26:8)
  - ii) Did the Philistine leaders track Abraham and Isaac and remember what Yahweh had said to an earlier Abimelech in 20:7?
  - iii) Abimelech acknowledges the reality of communal guilt and the possibility of appropriate judgment.
    - (1) He also admits that his people might easily have participated in such a sin. Their moral standards are low.
    - (2) This show that Abimelech understood that Isaac was a force to be reckoned with and not a mere transient.
  - iv) In His wise providence, Yahweh uses the conscience of this man to restrain their sinful behavior. This is common grace in action!
- d) Yahweh rapidly prospers Isaac, resulting in internal jealousy and the external battle of the wells—26:12-22 (cf. promised blessing in 26:3-4)
- i) Isaac leaves the city of Gerar—26:12-17
    - (1) Yahweh grants him an abundant harvest in time of famine. A normal harvest was 25-50-fold. This partially fulfills 26:3. However, the blessing is not due to Isaac's faithful obedience.
    - (2) God's blessing of the elect may result in feelings of distress for the unrighteous.
    - (3) The Philistines are prevented by their king from abusing Isaac and Rebekah, so they eventually resort to vandalizing the wells.
    - (4) The king orders Isaac to leave due to Yahweh's blessing. Perhaps this is rooted in concern for their well-being.
  - ii) Isaac has several wells dug—26:18-22
    - Naming something indicates a claim of ownership.
    - Filling a well says to the transients, "You are not welcome here."
    - (1) Esek—the well of legal contention/argument (26:19-20)
    - (2) Sitnah—the well of enmity/opposition (26:21)
    - (3) Rehoboth—the well of broad/wide open places (26:22)
  - iii) Isaac relocates to Beersheba (the well of seven)—26:23
    - (1) This is @ 20 miles to the east-southeast.
  - iv) While God's blessing is a wonderful thing, it does not necessarily eliminate conflict with other people.

### 3) Things we need to remember:

- a) A faith that can't be tested can't be trusted. (Wiersbe)

- b) You may be able to run from famine, but you can't run from yourself. You take your flesh and your sin with you wherever you go.
- c) Remember Romans 5:1-5

Genesis 26:23-35  
Living Well with Your Neighbors

**Introduction:**

**1) Yahweh restates His covenant to Isaac—26:23-25**

- Beersheba is @ 20 miles to the east-southeast of Gerar from last time. This had been his father's home area earlier (cf. 21:33ff)
- a) Yahweh's activity—26:24
  - i) Yahweh appears to Isaac at night.
  - ii) Yahweh identifies Himself—*I am the God of your father, Abraham;*
  - iii) Yahweh restates His covenant promises.
    - (1) Yahweh's command—*Do not fear*
      - (a) Yahweh's presence is the reason—*for I am with you*
    - (2) Yahweh's blessing of Isaac personally—*I will bless you*
      - (a) The third statement of Yahweh blessing Isaac. (cf. 26:3, 12)
    - (3) Yahweh's fruitfulness of descendants—*and multiply your seed*
      - (a) Yahweh's servant is the basis—*for the sake of My servant Abraham*
  - iv) This is designed to reassure Isaac considering the **past** jealousy, vandalism, and hostility experienced in Gerar.
  - v) This is also designed to reassure Isaac considering the **future** visit from Abimelech in 26:26-33)
- b) Isaac's response, both acts demonstrate his faith—26:25
  - i) Expressing devotion and submission to Yahweh—like Abraham (cf. 12:7-8; 13:3-4, 18; 22:9)
    - (1) Built an altar.
    - (2) Called upon the name of Yahweh.
  - ii) Expressing his right to an unclaimed portion of the Land.
    - (1) Pitched his tent.
    - (2) Begins the process of digging a well, which is completed in 26:32.

**2) Isaac agrees to a covenant with his neighbor—26:26-33**

- a) Abimelech comes to Isaac. (26:26-31)
  - i) The entourage includes the king, his trusted political advisor, and his military commander. (26:26)
    - (1) They appear to be uncomfortable with a powerful, prosperous neighbor such as Isaac. He is viewed as a potential threat.
    - (2) Abimelech appears to be vulnerable.
  - ii) Isaac asks a legitimate question. (26:27)
    - (1) He perceives their earlier actions as hostile.
  - iii) The unbelievers acknowledge Yahweh's blessing of Isaac. (26:28a, 29b)
    - (1) As with Abraham earlier (cf. 21:22)
    - (2) This is an observation, not a pronouncement.

- iv) The unbelievers want Isaac's promise (a curse-oath and a covenant) not to destroy them. (26:28b-29ab)
  - (1) He reminds Isaac of the events earlier in 26:7-11.
  - (2) Renewing their earlier covenant with Abraham. (cf. 21:23-24, 31)
- v) Isaac validates the covenant with a ceremonial banquet. (26:30)
  - (1) Illustrates Prov. 16:7, *When a man's ways are pleasing to Yahweh, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.*
- vi) The covenant is made by both parties. (26:31)
- b) Isaac names (establishing ownership of) the fourth new well. (26:32-33)
  - i) Imagine the excitement of finding water in near-desert territory.
  - ii) Cf. with Abraham's action in 21:31.

### 3) Things we need to remember:

- a) Unbelievers can perceive God's gracious sovereignty displayed in our lives.
- b) God's common grace can be displayed in unbelievers wanting to live in peace with believers.
- c) Isaac illustrates what Romans 12:17-21 instructs us: <sup>17</sup> *Never paying back evil for evil to anyone, respecting what is good in the sight of all men,* <sup>18</sup> *if possible, so far as it depends on you, being at peace with all men,* <sup>19</sup> *never taking your own revenge, beloved—instead leave room for the wrath of God. For it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.* <sup>20</sup> *"BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD."* <sup>21</sup> *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Gen. 26:34-27:29  
Isaac and Jacob the Deceiver

**Introduction:** To be understood in light of 25:28.

**1) ISAAC IS GRIEVED by his son Esau—26:34-35**

- This will demonstrate how unfit Esau is for the blessing, but also how foolish Isaac is to attempt to bless Esau in 27:1-40. (Allen Ross)
- a) Isaac is currently @ 100 years old. (cf. 26:24; 25:26)
- b) Bracket # 1: Esau marries two women who are not worshippers of Yahweh.
  - i) Note that the later instructions to Jacob (28:1, 6-9) imply that Isaac had not instructed his sons earlier.
  - ii) Nahum Sarna makes three observations:
    - (1) Broke the family expectations by getting married apart from his parents' directions.
    - (2) Broke the family expectations by marrying outside the distant relatives.
    - (3) Dishonored the clan by intermarrying Gentile women, saying they were more desirable than the clan's women.
  - iii) Judith does not appear in the list of Esau's wives in 36:2-3.
- c) Bracket # 2: Esau will eventually marry a third wife, Mahalath. (28:9)
- d) Thirty-seven years will pass between 26:35 and 27:1.

**2) ISAAC IS DECEIVED by his son Jacob—27:1-29**

- This will demonstrate how unfit Jacob is for the blessing, but also how foolish Isaac is to attempt to bless Esau in 27:1-40.
- Shows the suspenseful realization of the promise in 25:23, the older will serve the younger.
- Isaac is now 137 years old. He will live another forty-three years. He will live long enough to see his 12 grandsons by Jacob. (cf. 35:22-27)
- His twin sons are now 77 years old!
- The word "bless/blessing" is used 28x in 26:34-28:9.
- Perhaps Esau has broken his earlier oath to Jacob. (cf. 25:33)
- a) **Scene 1: the ceremonial meal is ANTICIPATED—27:1-4**
  - i) This chapter portrays an entire family attempting to carry out their responsibilities by their physical senses, without faith. (Allen Ross)
  - ii) Perhaps Isaac is motivated by the death of his half-brother Ishmael, who died at the age of 137, 14 years earlier. (cf. 25:17)
  - iii) "My soul may bless you" indicates that the blessing will be made with all Isaac's desire and vitality. (NET)
  - iv) Isaac's intention is contradictory to the previous revelation from God. (cf. 25:23)
- b) **Scene 2: the ceremonial meal is PREPARED—27:5-17**

- i) So Rebekah, rather than trusting God to accomplish His purposes, when overhearing Isaac's intention, initiated a plot to deceive her husband into blessing her favored son Jacob instead (27:5–13). (Moody BC)
- ii) All four characters are guilty: (Moody BC)
  - (1) Isaac: overlooks God's intended recipient of the blessing, chooses to ignore Esau's earlier sale of the birthright and God's earlier revelation about his sons,
  - (2) Rebekah: guilty of eavesdropping, deception using food, Esau's ceremonial clothes, and animal skins,
    - (a) Rebekah is careful to identify Isaac and Esau in relation to Jacob and not to herself. Thus, Isaac is *your father* (not "my husband") and Esau is *your brother* (not "my son"). (Victor Hamilton)
    - (b) Apparently very skilled with cooking and handwork.
  - (3) Esau: overlooks God's intended recipient of the blessing,
  - (4) Jacob: guilty of deception and impersonation, kiss of treachery, lack of faith that God would fulfill his earlier revelation.
    - (a) Jacob's concern wasn't "Is it right?" but "Is it safe?" He was worried about the eleventh commandment: "Thou shalt not get caught." (Warren Wiersbe)
- c) **Scene 3: the ceremonial meal is FULFILLED—27:18-29**
  - i) Jacob lies to counter Isaac's three-fold suspicion. (27:20, 22, 24)
  - ii) Note the description of Yahweh as Isaac's God but not Jacob's God. (cf. 28:21)
  - iii) The blessing entails:
    - (1) Jacob's relationship with creation: prosperity—27:28
    - (2) Jacob's relationship with others: authority—27:29

### 3) Things we need to remember:

- a) All the human senses are mentioned in this section, and all the senses fail Isaac. So much for "trusting your gut", "trust your feelings", etc.
  - i) **Sight** (27:1), **taste** (27:4, 9, 25, 31), **hearing** (27:1, 5-6, 22), **touch** (27:11-12, 21), and **smell** (27:27).
- b) We don't need to help God out. There is no place for lies or deception in our lives. Ps. 32:2.

Isaac and Esau the Profane  
Genesis 27:30-40

**Introduction:** This is the last of the four scenes introduced last time in 27:1-29. Isaac and Esau respond to Jacob's deception. Remember that the concept of bless/blessing occurs 22x in this chapter, 17x as a verb, 5x as a noun.

**1) The timing—27:30**

- a) Soon after the events of 27:18-29, but long enough for Jacob to escape detection by Esau.

**2) Esau's ceremonial meal—27:31**

- a) This picks up the story from 27:4.
- b) Esau has resolutely obeyed his father, just as Jacob has resolutely obeyed his mother. (Victor Hamilton)

**3) Isaac's legitimate questions—27:32-33**

- a) Identification question: Who are you?
- b) Clarification question: Who was it that came to me earlier?

**4) Esau's bitterness expressed—27:34-36**

- a) Emotional distress—27:34a *exceedingly great and bitter cry/yell*
  - i) While Esau did not much care for the spiritual ramifications and benefits of this blessing, he did want its material blessings and promise of military superiority. (Arnold Fruchtenbaum)
- b) Intense desire—27:34b *Bless me, me also, O my father!*
  - i) Isaac makes a distorted observation: Jacob had come with deception, but Jacob had NOT taken Esau's blessing. It belonged to Jacob all along.
  - ii) He knows his father cannot cancel the blessing on Jacob. Words can never be unsaid.
- c) Accusatory outburst—27:35-36a *Is he not rightly named Jacob [ya'aqob], for he has supplanted [aqab] me these two times?*
  - i) Remember the explanation earlier in 25:26 [aqeb, heel]. He changes the focus of Jacob's name from neutral to negative.
- d) Inaccurate interpretation—27:36b
  - i) Of the **past**: *He took away my birthright.*
    - (1) Remember, Esau deliberately sold it!
  - ii) Of the **present**: *Now he has taken away my blessing.*
  - iii) His wrong assumptions lead to his wrong interpretations.
- e) In other words: I've lost EVERYTHING and my brother has gained EVERYTHING.
- f) Note that there is no hint of repentance, because he plans to kill his brother as soon as their father is dead. (cf. 27:41)

**5) Isaac's blessing explained a second time—27:37-38**

**6) Isaac's blessing explained a third time—27:39-40**

- a) As John Sailhamer writes: The point of these repetitions of the various aspects of the blessing is primarily to underscore the irretrievability of the lost blessing and hence the certainty of the fulfillment of the blessing itself. By showing that the blessing was irrevocable, even by the father who gave the blessing, the writer underscores an important feature of the blessing—its fulfillment is out of human hands. It cannot even be revoked. It will come to pass, just as it was given.
- b) Esau's descendants live in a region far less fertile than the Land of Israel.
- c) Esau's descendants live in a violent relationship with their neighbors.
- d) Esau's descendants will have a relationship with Israel.
  - i) Edom/Esau was defeated by Saul (1 Sam. 14:47) and dominated by David (2 Sam. 8:14).
  - ii) In @ 850 BC, Edom/ revolted against the southern kingdom in 2 Kings 8:20-22.
  - iii) An entire book of the OT is devoted to God's punishment of Edom/Esau, Obadiah.
- e) This is not what Esau was hoping for, but it does fulfill what Yahweh had said in 25:23.

**7) Things we need to remember:**

- a) Jacob is never condemned by God; only by his enemies (Esau & Laban).
- b) Isaac did not bless Jacob in faith, but he did have faith that his blessing on Jacob would be fulfilled (Heb. 11:20).
- c) Remorse is never the same as genuine repentance (Heb. 12:14-17).

Genesis 27:41-28:5  
The Unworthy Experience God's Blessing

**Introduction:** Jacob has proven he is not worthy of the blessing. Grace is not dependent on our performance.

**1) REBEKAH'S plan for the threatened Jacob—27:41-45**

- a) Esau's responses—27:41
  - i) Strong hostility—27:41a
    - (1) Hostility can be **real**—Gen. 27:41; 49:23; Ps. 55:3
    - (2) Hostility can be **imagined**—Gen. 50:13; Job 16:9; 30:21
  - ii) Internal conversation—27:41b
    - (1) He meditated (said in his heart) on this situation and his intentions.
    - (2) Rooted in the wrong assumption that his father will die soon.
      - (a) Isaac lives for another 43 years. (cf. 35:28)
    - (3) He must have shared this with someone because of 27:42.
- b) Rebekah's plan communicated to Jacob—27:42-45
  - i) She becomes aware of Esau's plan to murder Jacob—27:42
  - ii) She issues four commands to Jacob—27:43-44
    - (1) What are the commands? Listen/obey, Arise, Escape to mom's relatives, Reside/settle for a few days
    - (2) Remember that Jacob is 77 years old!
  - iii) She explains the assumptions behind her reasoning—27:45
    - (1) She assumes Jacob's relocation will be short-term.
      - (a) Jacob is gone for over 20 years.
    - (2) She assumes:
      - (a) Does "both" refer to Jacob and Isaac?
        - (i) The distressing news about Esau's murderous plan could cause Isaac's death or be put into action at Isaac's death.
      - (b) Does "both" refer to Jacob and Esau?
        - (i) Her relationship with Esau is permanently damaged.
        - (ii) Esau will succeed with his plan, and he will need to be executed for murdering Jacob.
    - (3) So, she assumes the death of those she loves but not her own death. She will never see him again in this life. She will die before Jacob returns.

**2) ISAAC'S plan for the providentially protected Jacob—27:46-28:5**

- a) Isaac's commands are rooted in Rebekah's plans for Jacob—27:46
  - i) This reminds us of 26:34-35.
- b) Isaac's commands are consistent with his father's commands—28:1-2
  - i) Cf. 24:3
  - ii) This is not about racial purity, but spiritual purity, i.e. loyalty to one's family and to one's God.

- c) Isaac's blessing—28:3-4
  - i) The Source: El Shaddai (the God who is enough, God's omnipotence) is referenced as the source of blessing.
    - (1) Associated with Abraham in 17:1
    - (2) Fulfilled in 35:11 and 48:3.
  - ii) The specifics: The blessing not only includes family but the Land.
    - (1) Isaac's blessing is rooted in God's revelation to Abraham.
    - (2) The promises of Abraham and the promises of Isaac were now the promises of Jacob. (John Sailhamer)
- d) Jacob obeys both his parents—28:5
  - i) Jacob the home-lover (cf. 25:27) goes away from home, not as a fugitive but with his father's blessing. (summary of Derek Kidner)
  - ii) Note the order of the names Jacob and Esau.

**3) Things to remember:**

- a) The lack of present fulfillment does not deny the certainty of promised fulfillment.
- b) Even though Yahweh's plans may appear to be threatened, He will always, in His wise providence, accomplish His purpose. (Dan. 4:34-37)

Genesis 28:6-22  
Sibling Rivalry on Display

**Introduction:** This is the beginning of the section that will focus on the next chosen patriarch, Jacob. He is @ 77 years old. The year is @ 1928 BC.

**1) Esau displays his need for reconciliation—28:6-9**

- a) With his **brother**—28:6-7
  - i) Esau saw his father do three things: he blessed Jacob, he sent Jacob, he commanded Jacob.
  - ii) Esau saw his brother do two things: he listened [*shama*], he went.
  - iii) But keep in mind 33:1-5.
- b) With his **father**—28:8-9
  - i) Nothing is said about his attitude toward his mother.
  - ii) This reinforces that Esau was also unworthy of Isaac's blessing.
    - (1) Esau marries his cousin, the daughter of his father's half-brother Ishmael, or, if you will, a granddaughter of Abraham.
      - (a) Both Abraham (62 years ago) and Ishmael (14 years ago) are dead by this time.
      - (2) Allen Ross writes, Ironically the unchosen son of *Isaac* married into the unchosen line of *Ishmael*!
      - (3) Esau lacks spiritual perception.
        - (a) It's not a simple bloodline that matters, but rather those who follow after the revealed will of the one true God.

**2) Jacob's displays his need for God—28:10-22**

- a) The **setting**—28:10-11
  - i) He lacks many things: a wife, children, a home, a job, companions, or many possessions.
  - ii) His total trip to Haran will be @ 500 miles. He stops about 50-60 miles north of Beersheba or @ 7-10 miles north of Jerusalem.
  - iii) The stone is not for comfort (not under his head) but for protection (at his head).
- b) The **dream**—28:12-17
  - This is all of grace. Jacob did not ask for this or earn it.
  - This is the first of Yahweh's five recorded appearances to Jacob.
  - i) Like Abraham in Gen. 15:12. (28:12)
    - (1) Perhaps referred to by Jesus in John 1:51.
    - (2) He sees three things: a stairway, angels, and Yahweh Himself.
  - ii) Yahweh was either beside Jacob or at the top of the ladder. (28:13)
  - iii) A three-fold promise: the Land, numerous offspring, and a blessing to/by all nations. (28:13-14)
    - (1) As with Abraham (12:1-3) and Isaac (26:3-4).
  - iv) Promise of Yahweh's protective presence. (28:15)

- (1) Presence, protection, and return in safety.
- v) Jacob begins to be re-oriented toward God. (28:16-17)
  - (1) Jacob's life is laced with fear. **First**, when God draws near he is frightened (28:17). **Second**, Jacob gives as his reason for stealing away from Laban in the night that he was afraid of Laban (31:31). **Third**, he is afraid of his brother, apprehensive of what Esau may do in the way of retaliation (32:7, 11). Afraid of God, afraid of one's employer/father-in-law, and afraid of one's brother. (Victor Hamilton)
- c) The **vow**—28:18-22
  - i) He commemorates God's presence. (28:18)
    - (1) The piece of limestone is similar in purpose to an altar. Later, Yahweh will forbid Israel from doing this sort of thing. (cf. Deut. 16:22)
    - (2) Years later, Jacob will build altars. (cf. 33:20; 35:7)
  - ii) He renames the city of Luz as Bethel. (28:19)
  - iii) He restates five conditions: God's presence, God's protection, God's provision of food, God's provision of clothing, God return him in safety. (28:20-21a)
    - (1) In other words, will God keep His promise from 28:15?
  - iv) He vows. (28:21b-22)
    - (1) Reorientation toward God: *then Yahweh will be my God.* (28:22)
      - (a) From this point forward until his return from Paddan-aram, Jacob never calls Yahweh his God but always identifies Him as the God of Abraham and/or Isaac. (Moody BC)
    - (2) Recognition of God's presence: *Now this stone ... will be God's house,*
    - (3) Determines to reveal his dependence on God: *and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.*
      - (a) To whom will he give this future, voluntary tithe? There is no tabernacle/temple or priest currently.
      - (b) Perhaps he will offer sacrifices from his flocks later.

### 3) Things we need to remember:

- a) Your current situation is not the final chapter of your story.
- b) When God invades our life, we will never remain the same.
- c) It is an immense privilege to call Yahweh "my God." Is He your God?

Genesis 29:1-30  
When Your Plans Unravel

**Introduction:**

**1) Jacob meets Rachel—29:1-14**

- a) Arrival at the well—29:1-8
- i) “Took up his journey” is lit. “Jacob lifted up his feet”, a very unusual expression. (29:1)
    - (1) Found nowhere else in the Bible.
    - (2) For Jacob, marriage is not merely an option, it is a necessity if he is to see the fulfillment of God’s covenant with him.
  - ii) The stone cover is for at least four reasons: (hints at the stone from 28:11, 18, 22)
    - Reduces evaporation
    - Keeps contamination (either accidental or deliberate) out
    - Keeps unauthorized people away from the water
    - Keeps people and animals from falling in.
  - iii) Jacob asks three questions:
    - (1) Location: where are you from?
    - (2) Acquaintances: do you know Laban?
    - (3) Familiarity with Laban: is it well with him?
  - iv) Parallel to Abraham’s servant seeking a wife for Isaac. (Gen. 24)
    - (1) Note how the emphasis shifts from fleeing from Esau to searching for a bride. (Allen Ross)
  - v) Is Jacob remembering the promise of God’s presence from 28:15?
  - vi) Jacob assumes he is an expert on sheep. (29:7)
- b) First impressions—29:9-12
- i) Note God’s providence in the timing of these events.
    - (1) 97 years have passed since Rebekah left. (cf. 24:59-67)
  - ii) Rachel’s occupation of shepherdess would be rare in Israel. That’s why it is noted. (29:9)
    - (1) Her name means “ewe lamb.”
    - (2) Her brothers are younger and not old enough yet. (cf. 30:35; 31:1)
  - iii) Jacob, at age 77, is still physically impressive. (29:10; cf. 29:2)
    - (1) He does by himself what normally takes several others to do.
    - (2) “Proves” he would be a good provider for Rachel. He may be helpful to the family.
    - (3) Like Moses in Exod. 2:17
  - iv) Note the three-fold repetition of “his mother’s brother.” (29:10)
  - v) Jacob’s emotional response is like that of Abraham’s servant. (29:11; cf. Gen. 24:27)
- c) Introductions—29:13-14

- d) Throughout the Jacob narratives, God's guidance is shown in Jacob's strength and cunning. No attempt is made to glory in that strength as such; rather, the author uses it as a sign of God's protective presence. It was the fulfillment of God's promise to be with Jacob in all that he did (28:15). (John Sailhamer)

## 2) Jacob is deceived by Laban—29:15-30

- a) The original agreement—29:15-20
- i) Jacob becomes a day-laborer working off his debt.
  - ii) The root word for “serve” is used 7x in 29:15-30. (29:15, 18, 20, 25, 27, 30)
    - (1) If the annual wages of a shepherd was 10 silver shekels, and if the average bride price was 30-40 silver shekels, then Jacob is paying a higher price, almost double.
  - iii) The phrase “few days” echoes his mother's comment in 27:44.
- b) The deception—29:21-30
- This deception has many parallels to Jacob's earlier deception of Isaac. (cf. Gen. 27)
  - Fourteen years pass quickly in Gen. 29:21-30.
- i) Jacob demands his wife from Laban. (29:21)
    - (1) His reason is rooted in sexual desire.
  - ii) Leah would have been veiled and the tent darkened, which explains why he didn't recognize the deception until it was too late. (29:25)
    - (1) Others argue that perhaps Jacob was also drunk. (cf. drinking feast in 29:22)
  - iii) Notice that Laban's explanation relates directly to why Jacob is with Laban in the first place. (29:26)
    - (1) It almost makes you want to point the finger at Jacob and laugh at him for what he is experiencing.
    - (2) Imagine the teasing on the second-seventh days of the feast.
  - iv) Parental favoritism is now replaced with marital favoritism. (29:30) (Victor Hamilton)
  - v) Marrying two sisters is later forbidden under the Law. (Lev. 18:18)
  - vi) The Bible demonstrates over and over the principle that what a man sows he reaps (Gal. 6:7-8). Some have called this irony or poetic justice, but it is more than that. It is divine retribution in which there is often a measure-for-measure turn of affairs. God orders the affairs of people to set things right. (Allen Ross)

## 3) Things we need to remember:

- a) Ideas have consequences (think wisely).
- b) Appetites have consequences (desire wisely).
- c) Choices have consequences (choose wisely).
- d) Actions have consequences (act wisely).

Genesis 29:31-30:24

The Partial Fulfillment of Yahweh's Promises to Jacob

**Introduction:** Yahweh graciously fulfills His promise of many descendants to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob primarily through Leah. (cf. Gen. 28:13-14, 20-21)

**1) Leah's sons # 1-4—29:31-35**

a) The situation in light of 28:14—29:31

- This appears to contrast with the long delays for both Abraham and Isaac as they awaited the births of their sons.
- Note that for three of the four births, Leah mentions Yahweh.
- Jacob's schemes come crashing down.

i) Yahweh's **knowledge** (He saw and heard) displayed toward Leah's circumstances.

(1) This is Yahweh's first noted activity since 28:13.

ii) Yahweh's **mercy** displayed toward Leah's misery of being unpreferred.

(1) Like Yahweh's mercy toward the despised Hagar in 16:11.

iii) Yahweh's **wisdom** displayed toward both Leah and Rachel.

iv) Yahweh's **power** displayed by enabling Leah to conceive and by preventing Rachel from conceiving. (cf. 30:2)

b) The first four sons—29:32-35

- Leah's unfavored status is related to the first three births. Does Jacob begin to favor her by # 4?

i) **Reuben** [# 1] ("*Look! A Son!*")—29:32

(1) Leah is not the last woman to discover that her pregnancy is not a guarantee of a spouse's support and love. (Victor Hamilton)

ii) **Simeon** [# 2] ("*Heard*")—29:33

(1) Emphasizes her prayers to Yahweh, like Rebekah (cf. 25:22)

- Years later, Jacob will replace Reuben and Simeon with Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48:1–6). They were replaced because Reuben was guilty of sexual sin (35:22; 49:3–4) and Simeon had participated in the massacre at Shechem (Gen. 34:24–31; 49:5–7).

iii) **Levi** [# 3] ("*Attached*")—29:34 [religious institutions]

(1) From whom Moses, Aaron, the priests, and the Levites descend.

iv) **Judah** [# 4] ("*Praise*")—29:35 [royalty]

(1) From whom king David and Jesus descend

(2) This eventually becomes the name of the people of Israel, the Yehudim of Yehudah.

**2) Rachel's/Bilhah's two sons—30:1-8**

- Rachel may be attractive, but she does not have Leah's fertile womb.
- Rachel has what Leah longs for—Jacob's love. Leah has what Rachel longs for—Jacob's children.
- This does not reflect the type of faith Leah expressed.

- a) The situation—30:1-5
    - i) The short-sighted mindset “or else I die” echoes Esau’s words from 25:30, 32.
      - (1) Die of shame or grief, perhaps?
    - ii) Rachel responds to her barrenness like Sarah. (cf. Gen. 16:2)
    - iii) His response (angry rebuke) to Rachel’s barrenness differs sharply from his father’s response to Rebekah’s barrenness. Both men consider their wives’ ability to conceive to be within God’s purview, but Isaac petitions God for help, whereas Jacob deflects blame away from himself (cf. Gen. 25:21). (FSB)
    - iv) Bilhah was a servant girl but also a concubine. (cf. Gen. 35:22)
  - b) The first two surrogate-born sons—30:6-8
    - i) **Dan** [# 5] (“*Judge*”)—30:6
      - (1) She senses that God is righting a wrong she has suffered.
    - ii) **Naphtali** [# 6] (“*Wrestling, Struggling*”)—30:7-8
      - (1) Note how she admits fighting with her sister.
- 3) Leah’s/Zilpah’s two sons—30:9-13**
- a) The situation: Leah had stopped bearing—30:9
    - i) Related back to 29:35.
    - ii) Cf. 30:18. She apparently assumed this would please her husband.
  - b) The surrogate-born sons—30:10-13
    - i) **Gad** [# 7] (“*With good fortune/luck*”)—30:10-11
    - ii) **Asher** [# 8] (“*Happiness*”)—30:12-13
  - c) Note well the absence of the name of Yahweh compared with the births of Leah’s four sons. (cf. 29:32-35)
- 4) Self-orientation exposed—30:14-16**
- a) These first 8 sons are born within the first 6 years of marriage.
    - i) Reuben would be about 5 years old.
  - b) This appears to have taken place in approximately April-May.
  - c) Apparently by this time Leah has lost some of her wifely privileges. (30:15)
  - d) She rents her husband’s attention for the night. (30:16)
- 5) Leah’s fifth and sixth sons and daughter—30:17-21**
- a) **Issachar** [# 9] (“*Wages*”)—30:17-18
    - i) Wordplay similar to husband + wages
  - b) **Zebulun** [# 10] (“*Gift + to dwell*”)—30:19-20
  - c) **Dinah**—30:21
    - i) No explanation given about her name.
    - ii) She re-appears in Gen. 34.
  - d) Leah returns to acknowledging her children are from God. (30:18, 20)

**6) Rachel's first son—30:22-24**

- a) The situation—30:22
  - i) God does three things: He actively responds [*zakar*], He listens [*shama*], He opens [*pathach*] Rachel's womb.
- b) The son—30:23-24
  - i) **Joseph** [# 11] (“*To increase*”)
    - (1) Wordplay with “taken away,” [*asaph*] “Joseph,” [yoseph] and “give” [*yasaph*].
- c) She recognizes Yahweh's providence.

**7) Things we need to remember:**

- a) This rivalry between the wives helps explain the later rivalry between the tribes.
- b) How dangerous jealousy and envy are in our lives.
- c) God faithfully keeps His promises, despite our futile attempts to help Him get the job done.
- d) When God's wisdom allows what we ask, or even if not for His kind reasons, in either case a heart thankful to Him is fitting. (James Rosscup)
  - i) One does not in every case get what he prays to receive, and while he may not grasp God's reason the heart yet can trust that He is good. Who are we to think that we know what is best along the whole way, or to doubt the One who has our finest interests at heart? (Rosscup)

Genesis 30:25-43  
Yahweh Prospers Jacob

**Introduction:** This section reminds us that God gives each aspect of His covenant. (cf. Gen. 28:13-15, 20-21) Will Jacob return to his father's house with good to eat and garments to wear? Will he return in peace?

**1) Jacob the Negotiator—30:25-36**

- a) The timing—30:25
  - i) Jacob has now spent 14 years with Laban.
  - ii) Both wives have now birthed children, shifting her status from her-father's-daughter to her-husband's-wife.
- b) The three-fold request—30:26
  - i) Requests: send me away, give me what is mine, let me go.
  - ii) Reason: ordinarily Jacob's wives and children would belong to his master, Laban.
- c) Laban's counter-offer—30:27-28
  - i) While Laban the Pagan did not express genuine faith in the one true God (he uses divination to receive a Yes or No answer), he was still able to perceive that Yahweh's blessing of Jacob had impacted Laban.
- d) The negotiations continue—30:29-34
  - i) In the Near East, sheep are generally white and goats are dark brown or black.
  - ii) Does Jacob really have a dream about this proposal? (cf. 31:10-12)
- e) Preparations are made—30:35-36
  - i) Not satisfied with the unlikelihood that Jacob would then receive many sheep, Laban unscrupulously removed the speckled and spotted animals and transported them **three days journey** away from Jacob (vv. 35–36). This would make it far less likely for the remaining animals to give birth to speckled, spotted, and black ones. (MBC)
- f) This section sounds very similar to Israel's time in Egypt years later under the Pharaohs.

**2) Jacob the Prosperous—30:37-43**

- Remember what he owned when he arrived at Laban's house. (cf. 32:10)
  - This will take place over the remaining six years of Jacob's 20 years with Laban. (cf. 31:41)
- a) Note the wordplay for Laban and the exposed white part of the branches (*laban*)—30:37
    - i) Jacob's peeled sticks belonged in the same category as Rachel's mandrakes. (W. Wiersbe)
  - b) Summary of God's blessing—30:43
    - i) Like Abraham (12:16; and Isaac (26:12-14).
    - ii) Fulfilling 28:14.

**3) Things we need to remember:**

- a) God is fully aware of what Laban is trying to do to Jacob. (31:12)
  - i) God knows, God sees, God acts in just the right time
- b) Perhaps to Laban's dismay, Jacob's prosperity comes from Yahweh's blessing, not Laban's generosity.
- c) Later, Jacob tells his wives that this material prosperity was from God. (31:9, 17)
  - i) This is a huge concession for a manipulator like Jacob.

Genesis 31:1-32:2 (part one)  
Yahweh Enables Jacob to Return to the Land

**Introduction:**

**1) The circumstances—31:1-16**

- a) Jacob interprets his experiences—31:1-2
  - i) What he **heard**: his brothers-in-law resentment
  - ii) What he **saw**: his father-in-law's facial expressions
    - (1) Remember Laban's statement from 30:27.
  - iii) Just as Isaac's wealth had made the Philistines jealous (26:14), so now Jacob learned that Laban was angry and jealous of his wealth. (Sailhamer)
  - iv) He had considered leaving six years earlier. (30:25)
  - v) If these first two verses were all we had, Jacob is responding to circumstances out of frustration, fear, and unbelief. But there is more.
- b) Yahweh reveals His will to Jacob—31:3
  - This is the second time Yahweh has appeared to Jacob. (cf. 28:12-15)
  - i) A **command**: *return to the land of your fathers and to your kin*,
    - (1) Both a command and a warning
  - ii) A **promise**: *and I will be with you*. (cf. 28:15, 20)
- c) Jacob explains things to his wives—31:4-13
  - i) He takes the initiative—31:4
    - Is he assuming that the women will not be willing to move?
      - (1) He involves the wives in the decision-making process.
      - (2) He asks them to move hundreds of miles away from their family and everything familiar to them.
  - ii) He explains the **present** circumstances—31:5
  - iii) He explains the **past** circumstances—31:6-13
    - (1) What his **father-in-law** has done: he has cheated Jacob—31:6-9
      - (a) He recognizes that Laban has “made a fool” of him. (31:7)
      - (b) Recognizes that it was God's providence that brought the prosperity, not Jacob's great animal husbandry. (31:9).
    - (2) What **God** has done: He has proven faithful to Jacob—31:10-13
      - (a) Note Jacob's submission (“Here I am”; lit. “Behold, myself”). (31:11)
        - (i) Similar to “Okay, I'm listening.”
      - (b) God's compassion is noted by “I have seen.” (31:12)
      - (c) “The angel of God” (31:11) identifies Himself as “the God of Bethel” (31:13).

(d) Three commands: arise, leave, return (3:13)

(e) Reminding Jacob of his vow at Bethel 20 years earlier.

- d) His wives agree (despite past rivalry) with Jacob—31:14-16
- i) Two rhetorical questions seemingly rooted in bitterness—31:14-15a
  - ii) A statement seemingly rooted in bitterness—31:15b
  - iii) The agreement recognizing God's providence—31:16
  - iv) Their loyalty to their husband trumps their loyalty to their father.

## 2) The departure—31:17-21

- a) Jacob's **preparations**—31:17-18
- i) Jacob's **people**: minimum of 16 people (4 wives, 12 children) (31:17)
    - (1) The mention of camels explains the camel cushion/saddle bags in 31:34.
  - ii) Jacob's **possessions**: livestock and things (31:18)
- b) Jacob's **deception and stealing** continues—31:19-20
- i) **Rachel steals** (the irony of godnapping!): she waits for Laban to leave for sheep shearing (springtime, before the summer heat) before stealing the household idols (*teraphim*) without Jacob's knowledge. (31:19; cf. 31:32)
    - One letter from the Mari archives records the need for 300–400 men for a period of three days, while another states that the shearing would have to take as long as a week and a half due to rains and an inadequate labor force. The completion of the arduous work would be marked by festivities. (Nahum Sarna)
    - Unclear of the exact function of these *teraphim*.
      - (1) They may have represented the right to inheritance.
        - (a) This would be an attack on her brothers.
        - (2) They may have represented the right to leadership/prominence.
        - (3) They may have represented hope in protection.
        - (4) They may have represented guaranteed fertility.
  - ii) **Jacob steals**: he deceives (lit. “stole the heart [*leb*] of”) Laban (wordplay) by hiding his plan. (31:20; 31:27)
  - iii) This word [*ganab*] for stealing is what is forbidden in Exod. 20:15.
- c) Jacob's **intention**—31:21
- i) Jacob heads south-southwest and crosses the Euphrates River, aiming for north-eastern Israel (Gilead), which is the closest part of the Promised Land to Paddan-Aram.
  - ii) Remember his mother Rebekah's words in 27:43: “arise and flee.” Perhaps there is significance here that the word order (he fled and arose) is reversed as his direction is reversed. (Sarna)

**3) Things we need to remember:**

- a) Our walk of faith as husbands and fathers impacts those in our care.
- b) Note three ways in which gives providential guidance: (Warren Wiersbe)
  - i) Through internal desire.
    - (1) But not every longing of the human heart if necessarily the voice of God.
  - ii) Through external circumstances.
    - (1) But circumstances are not always the finger of God pointing out His way.
  - iii) Through His external Word. (Ps. 119:105)
    - (1) This is the most reliable and the most important.
- c) It isn't enough to know and do the will of God; we must also do His will in the way He wants it done, the way that will glorify Him the most. (Warren Wiersbe)

Genesis 31:1-32:2 (part two)  
Yahweh Enables Jacob to Return to the Land

**Introduction:** This section (31:1-55) appears to be the turning point in the larger section of 25:5-37:1. Yahweh enables Jacob to escape and depart for home. (David Dorsey)

**1) The circumstances—31:1-16**

**2) The departure—31:17-21**

**3) The confrontation—31:22-42**

- a) The pursuit—31:22-23
  - i) Jacob has a 3-day head start + a 7-day search.
    - (1) What Jacob covered in ten days Laban covered in seven.
    - (2) This is @ 350-400-mile journey. 35-40 miles per day? Some ancient evidence suggests @ six miles per day with livestock, while others indicate.
  - ii) God reveals His will to Laban—31:24
    - i) Laban was to avoid saying anything to Jacob that would be intended to enhance him or to harm him. (NET Bible)
    - ii) Someone has said, “God has corked the bottle of his aggressiveness.”
- b) The encounter filled with unfair accusations—31:25-30
  - The expression “pitched his tent” (31:25) suggests a war context, clearly a hostile atmosphere.
- c) Stealing his **heart** (deception): (31:26a)
  - (1) “What have you done?” (cf. 4:10; 12:18; 20:9; 26:10; 29:25)
  - (2) Laban HAD been unfair to Jacob.
  - (3) God had told Jacob to leave.
- d) Stealing his **daughters**. (31:26b)
  - (1) “My daughters” (not “your wives”)
  - (2) The women had agreed to leave. (31:14-16)
- e) Stealing his **grandchildren**. (31:27-28)
- f) Stealing his **gods**. (31:30)
  - (1) Jacob did not know about the godnapping. (31:32)
  - (2) This narrative shows how embarrassing it is that one can steal gods, hide gods, and even sit on gods. (Victor Hamilton)
- g) Jacob responds to Laban—31:31-32
  - i) He doesn’t confess to stealing the gods, only his quick departure. (31:31)
- h) Laban’s search—31:33-35
  - Note how the different tents are identified. (31:33)

- i) The gods are shown to be incapable of protecting themselves from an unclean woman!
  - ii) This implies a deliberate defilement of the gods by Rachel.
  - iii) Rachel apparently deceives her father. Rachel took after her father as a master deceiver. Children watch their parents' behavior and learn from them, for good or evil. The narrative does not condone Rachel's deception, but portrays the realities of family life. (Boyd Luter)
- f) Jacob responds to Laban's search—31:36-42
- Laban shifts from being the accuser to being the accused.
  - i) The length of time (20 years) in Paddan-Aram is noted. (31:38, 41)
    - (1) This makes Jacob 97 years old.
  - ii) Note Jacob's five-fold description of his shepherding: (31:38-41)
    - (1) Not of his livestock miscarried. (31:38a)
    - (2) He didn't eat the livestock, as was common. (31:38b)
    - (3) He endured the natural loss of livestock. (31:39a)
    - (4) He endured the theft of livestock. (31:39b)
    - (5) He endured the rigors of shepherding. (31:40)
  - iii) Note "the dread of Isaac". (31:42, 53)
    - (1) "The One whom Isaac dreaded", feared and respected.
    - (2) Or perhaps "the One who inspires dread", referring back to 31:29
  - iv) 31:42 is the theme verse.
    - (1) God has been faithful to His Word. (cf. 28:13-15, 20-21)

#### **4) The covenant—31:43-55**

- a) Laban proposes a solution—31:43-44
  - i) He claims complete ownership—31:43a
  - ii) He acknowledges there isn't much he can do about it—31:43b
  - iii) He proposes a covenant—31:44
    - (1) Laban has already broken more than one agreement. (cf. 29-30)
- b) The covenant—31:45-54
  - i) Preparations—31:45-46
  - ii) Naming the memorial—31:47-49
  - iii) The conditions of the covenant—31:50-53
    - (1) Note "the dread of Isaac" (31:53; cf. 31:42)
    - (2) Laban uses a plural verb for "judge" (polytheism), indicating he does not understand the one true God.
  - iv) The commemoration meal—31:54
- c) Laban returns to Paddan-Aram—31:55

- i) This ending demonstrates the break with Paddan-Aram for the sons of Israel. There will be no returning to the land of their fathers for wives or any other reason. (Moody BC)

**5) A holy place—32:1-2**

- a) This echoes 28:12. As was his departure so is his return to the Promised Land 20 years later.
  - i) The covenant with Laban severs Jacob's relationship with his family's past.
  - ii) As Allen Ross states: At this point God's invisible world openly touched Jacob's visible world.
  - iii) Jacob interprets this event correctly.
- b) The name Mahanaim continues in Israel's culture. The village is on the border between Manasseh and Gad on the Jabbok River. (Josh. 13:26, 30)
- c) God sends His spiritual messengers:
  - i) To encourage and reassure Jacob.
  - ii) To help prepare him for a difficult time.
  - iii) To remind the reader that Yahweh protects and provides for Jacob.
    - (1) Despite Jacob's failings
    - (2) Despite Rachel's theft
    - (3) Despite Laban's animosity and opposition

**6) Things we need to remember:**

- a) Our walk of faith as husbands and fathers impacts those in our care, either negatively or positively.
- b) When God's work is involved, the conflict is spiritual, not physical. This is true for Jacob, it was true for Israel, and it is true today. (Allen Ross)
- c)

Genesis 32:3-23 (part one)  
Jacob Fears Esau  
The Fear of Man vs. the Fear of God

**Introduction:** Time heals all wounds, so the saying goes. However, sometimes time intensifies wounds. (Walter Elwell) Jacob's anxiety shifts from a Laban-focus to an Esau-focus. Initially fearful response vs. a Biblically reasoned response. Jacob is now @ 97 years old.

**1) First attempts to pacify Esau—32:3-5**

- a) The land of Seir, the country of Edom, is east-southeast of the Dead Sea. (32:3)
- b) Note how Jacob views his relationship with Esau. (32:4)
  - i) Lord/master and servant/slave, which can be cultural at times, but is much more than that here.
- c) Jacob appeals to Esau's generosity/favor. (32:5)
- d) Jacob's three basic points. (Keener & Walton, NIVCBSB)
  - i) His legitimate reason for being gone (32:4)
    - (1) He has been hiding from Esau or sneaking behind his back for the last 20 years.
  - ii) His legitimate (yet understated) accumulation of property. (32:5a)
    - (1) He is not financially broke and looking for a handout.
  - iii) His legitimate desire to put the past behind them. (32:5b)
    - (1) Is this an attempt to "compensate" Esau for loss of wealth related to the birthright?
- e) Advantages to Jacob's plan. (Keener & Walton, NIVCBSB)
  - i) The five distinct groups of animals, arriving in succession, would wear down the military readiness of Esau's band. If they were planning an ambush, they would have to set it up each time a group arrived. When they discovered that Jacob was not in the group, they would all have gathered again and proceeded on their way. After five times it was unlikely that they would be as alert for combat as they might have been at first. By that time Esau and his men would probably have given up the idea of an ambush altogether.
  - ii) As the gifts arrived, Esau became more and more encumbered in his travel. The animals would have forced him to move more slowly and would have made his band much noisier. It would be difficult to take Jacob by surprise given the unavoidable cacophony of the livestock.
  - iii) As Jacob's servants brought gifts, they joined the march of Esau's band. Esau's military tactics would have been less effective if he had

to cope with members of Jacob's household mixed in among his own retinue of soldiers.

## 2) Assumption of a dangerous response by Esau—32:6-8

- Wordplay on angels/messengers (32:1, 3, 6) and camps (32:2, 7).
  - a) Jacob hears of Esau's militia. (32:6)
    - i) "Coming to meet you" does not necessarily imply a negative intent.
    - ii) Why does Esau need his own militia of 400 men?
      - (1) See Abraham in Gen. 14:14-16)
    - iii) The assumption of a bad motive on Esau's part is based upon simply observing the 400 but it leads to fear and distress. The imagination has kicked into high gear.
  - b) Jacob's first response is a lack of faith, characterized by fear and distress. (32:7)
    - i) Is it superficial to criticize Jacob's response?
    - ii) Will God keep His promises to Jacob or not?
  - c) Jacob assumes hostility from Esau and strategically attempts to minimize his losses. (32:8)
    - i) Perhaps this arises from a troubled conscience or from the memory of 27:41.
    - ii) Question: If Esau truly has hostile intentions, why does he allow Jacob's messengers to return to Jacob?

## 3) Things to remember:

- a) Note how the fear of man is described:
  - i) He hears the news. (32:6)
  - ii) He responds fearfully to the news. (32:7)
  - iii) He assumes the worst. (32:8)
- b) Jacob has no hope yet because Yahweh is not his God. Jacob can depend only on himself. This is the root of the fear of man that must be torn out so that we can rightly live in awe of God.

Genesis 32:3-23 (part two)  
Jacob Fears Esau  
The Fear of Man vs. the Fear of God

**Introduction:** Time heals all wounds, so the saying goes. Sometimes time intensifies wounds. (Walter Elwell) Jacob's anxiety shifts from a Laban-focus to an Esau-focus. Initially fearful response vs. a Biblically reasoned response. Jacob is now @ 97 years old.

**1) First attempts to pacify Esau—32:3-5**

**2) Assumption of a dangerous response by Esau—32:6-8**

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**3) Jacob's second response is prayer based on God's word—32:9-12**

- This is his first recorded prayer since Bethel in 28:20-22, 20 years ago.
- a) **Invocation: to whom** does he pray? (32:9)
  - i) God of another: *God of my father Abraham and God my father Isaac*
    - (1) Not, my God. This is the prayer of an unsaved man who is being drawn to the one true God.
    - (2) He does not pray to the teraphim Rachel had stolen. Nor does he pray to the angels that had just appeared to him.
  - ii) God of authority: *O Yahweh, who said to me, "Return ... and I will prosper* (lit. "do good with") *you."*
    - (1) "*I will prosper / do good with you*" was not clearly stated as part of God's promise in 31:3. It appears to be Jacob's interpretation of "*I will be with you.*"
- b) **Confession: how** does he pray? (32:10)
  - i) With self-deprecation: *I am unworthy ... to Your slave*
    - (1) Jacob recognizes God's displays of loyal love and faithfulness.
      - (a) A reflection of God's character. (cf. Ex. 34:6)
      - (2) This is common grace in the life of an unbeliever.
  - ii) With dependence: *with my staff only ... two camps.*
    - (1) "This Jordan" can easily be seen from the banks of the Jabbok.
- c) **Supplication: for what** does he pray? (32:11)
  - i) Rescue: **Deliver me** *from the hand* (power) ...
  - ii) With transparency: *for I fear him ...*
    - (1) He imagines Esau's unspeakable cruelty (killing mothers & children).
  - iii) Note: he does not pray for Esau's destruction
- d) **Recollection: why** does he pray? *For You said ...* (32:12)
  - i) He reminds God of God's promises at Bethel (28:13-15).
    - (1) The prayer begins and ends with a focus on God's revelation.

ii) If Esau destroys Jacob, then God's promises cannot be fulfilled.

#### 4) A present for Esau—32:13-21

- a) Jacob sends @ 575 animals to his brother as a present. (32:13-15)
  - i) Based on historical records, this gift was larger than many towns had to pay tribute to conquering kings.
- b) Jacob strategically staggers the presentation of his gifts. (32:16-20)
  - i) Advantages to Jacob's plan. (Keener & Walton, NIVCBSB)
    - (1) The five distinct groups of animals, arriving in succession, would wear down the military readiness of Esau's band. If they were planning an ambush, they would have to set it up each time a group arrived. When they discovered that Jacob was not in the group, they would all have gathered again and proceeded on their way. After five times it was unlikely that they would be as alert for combat as they might have been at first. By that time Esau and his men would probably have given up the idea of an ambush altogether.
    - (2) As the gifts arrived, Esau became more and more encumbered in his travel. The animals would have forced him to move more slowly and would have made his band much noisier. It would be difficult to take Jacob by surprise given the unavoidable cacophony of the livestock.
    - (3) As Jacob's servants brought gifts, they joined the march of Esau's band. Esau's military tactics would have been less effective if he had to cope with members of Jacob's household mixed in among his own retinue of soldiers.
    - (4) From Proverbs:
      - (a) 18:19 *A brother offended is harder to win over than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a citadel.*
      - (b) 18:16 *A man's gift makes room for him And leads him into the presence of great men.*
- c) Jacob remains alone during the night. (32:21)

#### 5) Preparations for meeting Esau—32:22-23

- a) Jacob sends his wives and all his children across the Jabbok at night.
  - i) This is very difficult and dangerous to do in the dark.
  - ii) However, Dinah is not included in the count.
  - iii) The purpose is not to protect Jacob. (cf. 33:3)

#### 6) Things we need to remember:

- a) It is not his plan that proves successful but his prayer. (Sailhamer)

- i) Though it is the prayer of an unbeliever.
- b) God hears all prayers, even those of unbelievers.
- c) An unbeliever can use all the appropriate elements of prayer even though the heart is not redeemed.
- d) This is a display of God's grace as He draws Jacob to Himself. Jesus said in John 6:44, *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him;* and again in John 6:65, *No one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.*

Genesis 32:24-32  
Jacob Is Changed

**Introduction:** This is the important turning point in Jacob's life. As Jacob re-enters the Promised Land, he is met by Yahweh who both cripples and blesses him. (Allen Ross) This incident appears to be an illustration of the whole of Jacob's life.

James Rosscup introduces this section with the following: Perhaps the snap of a twig or a soft footfall hauled Jacob around. Something ... somebody was stalking him in the night! And then out of the darkness a figure took vague shape, and before he could react, Jacob found himself locked in a wrestling match."

**1) The setting—32:24-25** (note the play on words)

a) **Jacob's opponent:** <sup>24</sup> *Then Jacob [ya'aqob] was left alone [on the north side of the river Yabboq], and a man [an angel—Hos. 12:3-4; God Himself—32:28, 30] wrestled [yeabeq] with him until the breaking of dawn.*

i) Jacob has struggled:

- (1) With his brother Esau (Gen. 25, 27),
- (2) With his father Isaac (27),
- (3) With his father-in-law (29-31),
- (4) And now with God (32).

b) **Jacob's ability** [cf. 29:10]: <sup>25</sup> *And he saw that he had not prevailed against him,*

i) The Angel limited His own strength so Jacob could keep up.

ii) As John Gill (1697-1771) said, it was "not because he could not, but because he would not."

c) **Jacob's disability:** *so he touched the socket of his thigh; and so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled [aboq] with him.*

i) Jacob has finally met Someone he cannot defeat.

ii) As John Gill said, this was to let Jacob know that the person he wrestled with was superior to him, and could easily have overcome him ... ; and that the victory he got over him was not by his own strength, but by divine assistance, ... so that he had nothing to boast of ..."

iii) God's "touch" cripples Jacob. (NET)

**2) The dialogue—32:26-30**

a) **God takes the initiative** in the dialogue—32:26-29

i) God speaks: <sup>26</sup> *Then he said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking."*

(1) Jacob responds: *But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."*

(a) Jacob recognizes his opponent is more than a mere mortal.

(b) Jacob recognizes his opponent is not out to destroy him.

ii) God speaks: <sup>27</sup> *So he said to him, "What is your name?"* (rhetorical)

(1) God already knows everything about Jacob. Jacob is finally realizing who and what he really is.

(2) Jacob responds: *And he said, "Jacob."*

- (a) The last time he was asked his name (27:18) he lied.
- iii) Changing the name of a person: God speaks with authority: <sup>28</sup> *Then He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob ["heel-catcher"], but Israel ["God fights"]; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed."*
  - (1) Jacob prevailed, not in the physical wrestling but in receiving the blessing.
  - (2) Jacob responds: <sup>29</sup> *Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name."*
- iv) God speaks: *But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?"*
  - (1) God acts: *And he blessed him there.*
  - (2) Note that the Man does not identify Himself directly.
- b) **Jacob responds—32:30**
  - i) Changing the name of a location: <sup>30</sup> *So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been delivered [lit. my soul has been rescued]."*
    - (1) Peniel is mentioned in Judges 8:8, 17.
    - (2) Jacob "prevailed" through submission to God.

### 3) The conclusion—32:31-32

- a) The permanent result: <sup>31</sup> *And the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh.*
- b) The explanation: <sup>32</sup> *Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip (the sciatic nerve) which is on the socket of the thigh because he touched the socket of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.*
  - i) This was a tradition but it was never commanded in Scripture.

### 4) Things to remember:

- a) Seeing God face-to-face
  - i) Although Ex 33:20 says that no one can see God and live, that text likely refers to God the Father (cf. Jn 6:46; 1 Tm 6:16; 1 Jn 4:12). The Son of God is the visible God (Col 1:15), making preincarnate appearances as the Angel of the Lord (as He appears to be doing in this narrative; cf. Jdg 6:11–16; Is 6:1–5; Dn 10:5–6) and after the incarnation in the person of the God-man, Jesus (Lk 2:25–32; Jn 1:18; 17:1–8; 2 Co 4:6; Php 2:6; Heb 1:3; Rv 1:12–18). (MBC)
- b) God often graciously gives us reminders of our weakness and His strength. Better to have the touch of God and a dislocated hip than self-oriented independence from God.
- c) Self-sufficiency is incompatible with the work of God in any age. (Allen Ross)

Genesis 33:1-20  
Jacob Is Restored To Esau and The Land

**Introduction:**

**1) Jacob is restored to Esau—33:1-17**

- a) Jacob takes the initiative—33:1-3
  - i) Esau is noticed as having a militia of @ 400 men—33:1a
  - ii) Jacob divides his family into three clusters—33:1b-2
  - iii) Jacob leads the way and shows respect—33:3
- b) Jacob makes the introductions—33:4-11
  - i) Esau makes the first move—33:4
    - (1) Undignified response to seeing Jacob
    - (2) Asks questions of Jacob
  - ii) The women and children arrive in waves—33:5-7
    - (1) Bilhah and Zilpah—33:5
    - (2) Leah and her sons—33:6
    - (3) Rachel and her son—3:7
  - iii) Esau questions Jacob about the gifts from 32:13-ff—33:8-11
    - God answers Jacob’s prayer from 32:11
    - (1) Esau’s question—33:8a
      - (a) Remember that Jacob had already instructed the servants to explain things when they arrived. (32:4-5) Esau already knew the **what** and the **why**. Perhaps he wanted to hear it directly from Jacob’s mouth.
      - (b) Jacob’s explanation—33:8b
        - (i) Humble transparency—*To find favor [hen] in the sight of my lord [adon].* (cf. 32:5)
    - (2) Esau’s refusal of Jacob’s gifts—33:9
      - (a) Cf. Esau uses “brother” while Jacob uses *adon* (33:8, 13-15)
      - (b) Esau claims to have “plenty” while Jacob claims to have “everything.” (cf. 33:9, 11)
    - (3) Jacob’s refusal of Esau’s refusal—3:10-11a
      - (a) *Take my present [minchah—gift to a superior; cf. 32:13, 19]* because of Jacob’s interpretation of Esau’s response—33:10
        - (i) Cf. 32:22-31 and Jacob seeing God’s face
        - (ii) Esau reflects God’s image by treating Jacob in a way that Jacob does not deserve. (T. D. Alexander)
      - (b) *Please take my blessing [berakhah—a gift (as reparations for “stealing the blessing” 20 years earlier) because of God’s common grace—33:11a*
        - (i) Cf. “blessing” in 27:35-36
    - (4) Jacob “wins” the exchange—33:11b
- c) Esau and Jacob agree on a plan—33:12-17

- i) Two gracious, conciliatory proposals—33:12-15
  - (1) Let's travel together—33:13
  - (2) Let me provide you with a protective escort—33:15a
  - (3) As Victor Hamilton writes: At almost every point in this story, Esau emerges as the more appealing, more humane, and more virtuous of the two brothers.
- ii) Possible reasons for not going with Esau—33:12-15
  - (1) Jacob doesn't want to slow Esau down—33:13-14
    - (a) The children range in approximate ages from 6-13.
  - (2) Jacob doesn't want Esau's help—33:15b
  - (3) Jacob may not fully trust Esau yet.
  - (4) Jacob was told by God to return to the The Land (cf. 28:15; 31:3, 13; 32:9), not to Seir/Edom.
- iii) Separate destinations—33:16-17
  - (1) Esau heads **south** to his home—33:16
  - (2) Jacob heads **north** to Succoth—33:17
- iv) The brothers will be reunited at their father's grave 23 years later. (cf. 35:29)

## 2) Jacob is fully restored to the Land—33:18-20

- a) He **arrives** near Shechem—33:18 [Like Abraham (cf. 12:6-7)]
  - i) 20 miles west of the Jabbok River, 30 miles north of Bethel.
  - ii) He eventually returns to Isaac at Hebron in 35:27.
- b) He **buys lands** near Shechem—33:19 [Like Abraham (cf. 23:9)]
  - i) Qesitah is a financial measurement, but not coins. Referred to in Josh. 24:32 (referring to this event) but also Job 42:11.
- c) He **worships** near Shechem—33:20 [Like Abraham (12:6-8; 26:25)]
  - i) Jacob keeps his word to have Yahweh as his God (El-Elohe-Israel). (cf. 28:21)

## 3) Things we need to remember:

- a) Did God keep His promises? (cf. 28:13-15)
- b) Did God answer Jacob's prayers? (cf. 32:9-11)
- c) Did Jacob keep his promises? (cf. 28:20-22)
- d) Did Jacob evidence genuine faith?
  - i) His bravery (33:3), humility (33:3), and generosity (33:10-11)

Genesis 34:1-17  
Tragedy Strikes Jacob's Family (part one)

**Introduction:** Rape is a horrible thing. Some statistics show that @ 20% of females will be raped in their lifetime, and of those, @ 50% will be raped by someone they know. There are consequences not just for the rape victim and the rapist, but also for both families involved.

**1) The horrible situation—34:1-7**

- None of God's names are not mentioned in this chapter.
- a) Dinah, Leah's teenage daughter, makes an unwise decision—34:1
  - i) This appears to be innocent curiosity as she is clearly portrayed as the victim.
    - (1) But ... this action loosened a stone that caused a landslide. Jacob had made a commercial connection with Shechem (33:19), but Dinah's step toward social interaction had serious complications. Avoidance of the Canaanites would have been much safer. (Allen Ross)
  - ii) Culturally, she would not have left the camp without a chaperone for protection, especially to an unfamiliar, Gentile city.
  - iii) These "daughters of the land" were unacceptable for Abraham and Isaac & Rebekah. (cf. 24:3, 37; 27:46; 28:1, 6, 8)
- b) Shechem rapes Dinah and then wants to marry her—34:2-4
  - i) The sin—34:2
    - (1) He brutally rapes Dinah—34:2
      - (a) He took her, he lay with her, he violated/afflicted her.
      - (b) This is judged as defiling her (34:5, 13, 27) as well as a senseless/disgraceful act (34:7).
        - (i) Many rape victims feel unclean, dirty, or polluted by this violent act. Remember, you have not sinned, nor does God view you as guilty. It is the rapist who has sinned and who is guilty before God.
    - (2) Dinah somehow ends up in Hamor's home. (cf. 34:17, 26)
      - (a) Is she being held captive or is she there willingly?
  - ii) The perverse aftermath—34:3-4
    - (1) He is attracted to her, loves her, and attempts to influence her with kindness—34:3
      - (a) These things will never erase the horror of being raped.
    - (2) He tells his father to arrange the marriage—34:4
- c) The response of Jacob and his sons—34:5-7
  - i) Jacob takes time to think—34:5
    - (1) Is this to be taken **negatively**, as though he is passively indifferent, cowardly, or confused?
      - (a) Jacob is over 100 years old now. What can he do by himself?

- (b) Does his delay lead the younger men to respond vigilante emotionalism?
- (2) Is this to be taken **positively**, as though he is being careful about his response toward his neighbors?
  - (a) Will he knowingly give his only daughter to such a sinful man?
- ii) Hamor brazenly meets with Jacob—34:6
  - (1) Remember they had done business before. (33:19)
- iii) Her brothers respond to (Jacob's?) information about Dinah—34:7
  - (1) With intense grief, burning anger, and moral outrage.
  - (2) The pain is Dinah's, but her brothers share it. (Victor Hamilton)

## 2) The shameless proposal of peaceful coexistence is met with a deceitful counter-proposal—34:8-12

- a) The shameless proposals of father and son—34:8-12
  - No good will come from trusting these defiling Canaanites. (A. Ross)
  - i) **Hamor's** shameless proposal prepares for Shechem's—34:8-10
    - There is no regret, apology or confession of guilt of his son.
    - (1) Give Dinah to Shechem—34:8
      - (a) Notice that Dinah is a “daughter”, not merely “this girl” (34:3, 12)
    - (2) Intermarry with us—34:9
      - (a) Cf. Gen. 24:3; 28:1; Deut. 7:3
    - (3) Peacefully coexist with us—34:10
      - (a) He offers citizen rights to those he perceives have no rights.
      - (b) Hamor has the wrong presupposition. The land is not his to give. It belongs to God who has decreed it belongs to Israel.
  - ii) **Shechem's** shameless proposal—34:11-12
    - There is no regret apology, or confession of his own guilt.
    - (1) The irrational, arrogant idea that he could find favor in their sight!—34:11
    - (2) Is the bridal payment intended to function as a bribe?—34:12
      - (a) Notice that Dinah is a “girl”, not “daughter” (cf. 34:3, 8, 12)
      - (b) A common price for a bride was 30-40 shekels of silver. At a minimum wage of \$15/hour, this would be \$11,000-14,500.
      - (c) Deut. 22:29 sets the price at 50 shekels, or @ \$18,000.
- b) The deceptive counter-proposal—34:13-17
  - i) Clearly noted as deceit or treachery. (34:13)
  - ii) Their protest regarding “reproach/disgrace” rings hollow. (34:14)
  - iii) Their promises are empty words that reverse God's original intent. (34:15-17)
    - (1) God stated that circumcision was to set Israel apart and to unite Israel, distinct from the other nations. (cf. Gen. 17:9-14) As John Sailhamer points out, the Canaanites were not joining the seed of Abraham; rather, the seed of Abraham were joining with the Canaanites.

- (2) The daughters of Jacob's sons were not of marriageable age, if they were even born yet.
- iv) Their last words, "take our daughter and go" are intended as a threat of violence/force because Dinah is still in Shechem's house. (cf. 34:17, 26)

**3) Things we need to remember:**

- a) All choices have consequences, intended or unintended.
- b) When a rape occurs, the guilt of sin is on the rapist, not the victim.
- c) It is not always what people say but what they don't say that matters.
- d) Will the sin of these Gentiles derail God's plan for Jacob's family and for the Jewish people?

Genesis 34:18-31  
Tragedy Strikes Jacob's Family (part two)

**Introduction:** Rape is a horrible thing. Some statistics show that @ 20% of females will be raped in their lifetime, and of those, @ 50% will be raped by someone they know. There are consequences not just for the rape victim and the rapist, but also for both families involved.

**1) Hamor selfishly agrees to the counter-proposal—34:18-24**

- a) Father and son respond positively to the counter-proposal—34:18-19a
  - i) Note the shift in Shechem's affections: from deeply attracted/clinging/stuck [*dabaq*] (34:3), to loving [*aheb*] (34:3), and now to delighted/infatuated [*haphets*] (34:19)
  - ii) What began as violent rape has become a romantic attraction.
- b) Father and son deceptively inform the city council—34:19b-23
  - i) The assumed positive impression regarding Jacob's family—34:21a
    - (1) They are peaceful with us; we are safe with these neighbors.
  - ii) The assumed positive results of coexistence—34:21b-d
    - (1) Business and marriage opportunities
  - iii) The assumed painful condition of coexistence—34:22
    - (1) This was not conversion to Israel's God, simply the external act of circumcision.
  - iv) The assumed selfish goal of coexistence—34:23
    - (1) The accumulation of the wealth of Jacob's family.
  - v) Note that Hamor and Shechem omit some vital information: Shechem's passion for Dinah, his violation of her, Jacob acquiring property, or about Jacob's sons' ultimatum of what the price was for Dinah's hand in marriage. (Victor Hamilton)
    - (1) Those who have been deceived are now deceiving others.
- c) The city council agrees to the counter-proposal based on the assumptions communicated to them.—34:24
  - i) Making decisions based on the information (true or false) presented to them. We can't always blame the city council for their decisions. Sometimes they get deceived.

**2) Violent revenge against Shechem by Simeon and Levi—34:25-31**

- a) The revenge is enacted—34:25-29
  - The level of brutality is incomprehensible and far exceeds the justifiable retribution for the crime of the city's prince. (NIVCBSB)
  - A vigilante mentality always insists that the answer to violence is more violence. (Walter Elwell)
- i) By Simeon and Levi (Dinah's full brothers) with instinctual anger—34:25-26 (cf. 49:5-7)
  - Two verses and 36 words in Hebrew to describe this action.

- (1) Slaughter of the incapacitated, unsuspecting males—34:25-26a
  - (a) The men of the city suffered from pain and fever.
- (2) Rescue of Dinah—34:26b
- ii) By the other 9 sons with apparent greed—34:27-29
  - Three verses and 37 words in Hebrew to describe this action.
  - (1) Plunder of the city—34:27-29a
    - (a) The irony of Jacob's family accumulating Hamor's wealth.
  - (2) Kidnapping of children and women—34:29b
- b) The revenge is rebuked selfishly—34:30-31
  - i) The **appeaser**: the selfish rebuke based on assumptions—34:30
    - Note there is no apparent concern for Dinah or for the innocent people who had been slaughtered.
    - Jacob uses eight first-person pronouns in 34:30!
    - (1) We will lose respect from neighbors—34:30a
      - (a) Vengeance exacted meant retaliation expected. (MacArthur)
    - (2) We will be attacked and exterminated by the neighbors—34:30b
      - (a) But see what God does about Jacob's assumption. (Cf. 35:5)
  - ii) The **avengers**: Simeon and Levi show no remorse for their revenge—34:31
    - (1) Their apparent motive was not murder or plundering, but rather the honor of their sister.
    - (2) The women of Israel are not to be regarded as objects of abuse. (Nahum Sarna)
    - (3) Remember Gen. 49:5-7.
  - iii) The appeaser and the avengers, mutually exasperated, and swayed respectively by fear and fury, were perhaps equidistant from true justice. They exemplify two perennial but sterile reactions to evil. (Derek Kidner)

### 3) Things we need to remember:

- a) Do our selfish decisions put the fulfillment of God's will in jeopardy?
  - i) Remember God's promise to Abraham in Gen. 15:13-16.
- b) This illustrates one reason why God limited retribution in Exod. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21; 22:28-29.
- c) Our impulsive actions may influence others to sin against their consciences.
- d) The absence of God in this chapter screams loud.

Genesis 35:1-15  
The End of the Generations of Jacob

**Introduction:** Although Jacob appears in later narratives, this section wraps up the section in which he is the main human character.

**1) Jacob returns to Bethel—35:1-8**

- a) God's **revelation** and Jacob's response—35:1-4
    - i) The revelation—35:1
      - It appears that Jacob has spent @ 10 years in The Land before returning to Bethel. (@ 1908-1898 BC)
    - (1) Four commands: arise, go up to Bethel, live there, make an altar (for prayer, not sacrifices)
      - (a) Bethel is @ 1,000 feet higher in elevation than Shechem.
      - (b) The delay in returning to Bethel was costly to his family.
      - (c) Remember Gen. 31:13. This is crucial.
    - (2) Bethel is @ 15 miles south of Shechem.
    - (3) Is this a reminder to Jacob of his vow from Gen. 28:20-22?
  - ii) The response—35:2-4
    - (1) Determination to prepare for worship—35:2-3
      - (a) Three clear commands: put away, cleanse, change
        - (i) Perhaps the gods and other items plundered at Shechem?
          1. This may include the captives taken from Shechem.
        - (ii) Purify themselves after what happened at Shechem.
      - (b) Three clear intentions based on God's commands: arise, go up, make an altar.
      - (c) Two clear descriptions of God: answered me, has been with me
        - (i) This does not mean everyone worshiped and believed in Yahweh exclusively, but rather they accepted Yahweh as their family's god even though other gods do exist.
    - (2) Obedience to Jacob's commands—35:4
      - (a) Unlikely these are normal earrings, but rather those associated with false gods.
      - (b) False gods may be stolen, sat on, stained with menstrual blood, and now buried. (Victor Hamilton)
- b) God's **protection** and Jacob's response—35:5-8
  - i) Safe journey—35:5
    - (1) By himself, Jacob had only inspired anger, but not fear.
    - (2) Fear toward God or fear from God?
    - (3) Cf. later events in Exod. 15:14-16; Deut. 2:24-25; Josh. 2:8-14
  - ii) Obedience to God's commands—35:6-7
    - (1) The name of the altar, El-Bethel, means "the God of the House of God."
    - (2) "*God revealed*" is an unusual phrase of both plural noun and verb.
  - iii) Sorrow—35:8

- (1) Deborah is the woman who nursed Rebekah (cf. Gen. 24:59)
- (2) Perhaps she came to live with Jacob after Rebekah died?

**2) Jacob's name change and Yahweh's covenant are restated—35:9-15**

- a) God the Son's revelation of Himself and blessing of Jacob—35:9
  - i) The third appearance of Christ to Jacob. (Cf. 28:10-22, 32:22-32)
  - ii) The \_\_\_ blessing of Jacob by God. (cf. 32:29)
  - iii) Jacob retells this story in 48:3.
- b) God the Son's authority to change Jacob's name—35:10
  - i) Cf. 32:28-29 done earlier on the east side of the Jordan River
  - ii) Done earlier before his reconciliation with Esau.
- c) God the Son's authority to restate His covenant—35:11-12
  - i) El Shaddai, God Almighty, *The God Who is Enough*
    - (1) God can fulfill what He commands and what He promises.
    - (2) Cf. 17:1; 28:3; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25
  - ii) Two **commands**: be fruitful and multiply
    - (1) Cf. 1:22, 28; 8:17; 9:1, 7; 28:3; 47:27; 48:4
  - iii) Four **promises**:
    - (1) **Politically**:
      - (a) *A nation ... shall come from you*
      - (b) *and an assembly of nations shall come from you*
      - (c) Cf. 12:2; 17:4-6
    - (2) **Royalty**: *Kings shall come forth from your loins*
      - (a) Cf. 17:6, 16; 49:10
    - (3) **The Land**:
      - (a) **Personally**: *I will give (the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac) to you (Jacob)*
        - (i) Cf. 12:2-3; 15:5, 18; 17:3-8; 22:15-18; 28:13-14
      - (b) **Corporately**: *And I will give the land to your seed after you.*
- d) God the Son's return to Heaven—35:13
- e) Jacob's worship and reconfirmation of his allegiance to God—35:14-15
  - i) Cf. 28:16-19, 20-22

**3) Things we need to remember:**

- a)

Genesis 35:16-29  
The End of the Generations of Jacob

**Introduction:** Although Jacob appears in later narratives, this section wraps up the section in which he is the main human character.

- 1) **Jacob's twelfth son (Benjamin) is born and Rachel dies—35:16-21**
  - a) Rachel's difficult labor—35:16-17
    - i) No timeframe is given for how long they stayed at Bethel (16a)
    - ii) Jacob is traveling south to Hebron, perhaps to be near his father.
    - iii)
  - b) Rachel's naming her second son and her death—35:18
    - i) Two distinctions about Benjamin: he is the only child of Jacob born in The Land and the only child named by his father. (V. Hamilton)
    - ii) Jacob changes *Ben-oni* (son of my sorrow/suffering) to *Benjamin* (son of my right hand).
    - iii) God answers Rachel's "prayer" from 30:24.
  - c) Rachel's burial—35:19-20
    - i) Cf. 48:7; 1 Sam. 10:2; Jer. 31:15
  - d) Israel's journey—35:21
    - i) This is the first time Moses uses Jacob's new name in referencing Jacob.
- 2) **Jacob's sons listed and the death of his father Isaac—35:22-29**
  - Three reports conclude the generations [*toledoth*] of Isaac that began in 25:19.
    - a) Reuben's sinful, incestuous claim to leadership—35:22a
      - i) He suffers the consequences of a forfeited birthright for this sinful action. Cf. Gen. 49:3-4
      - ii) This also prevents Bilhah from succeeding Rachel as the favorite wife.
    - b) Jacob's twelve sons listed—35:22b-26
      - i) Leah and Zilpah frame Rachel and Bilhah
      - ii) Leah's three oldest boys (Reuben, Simeon, and Levi) are now out of way. This sets the stage for Judah.
    - c) Isaac's death—35:27-29
      - i) Jacob's restoration to his father (27)
      - ii) He dies at the age of 180 in @ 1885 BC. (28)
        - (1) Isaac was 137 years old when Jacob left.
        - (2) Isaac was 157 years old when Jacob returned.
        - (3) Isaac lives for an additional 23 years after Jacob returns.
      - iii) Together, Esau and Jacob (note the order) bury him. (29)
        - (1) This introduces the generations of Esau. (36:1-37:1)
- 3) **Things we need to remember:**
  - a)