

Genesis Chapter Thirty Five Notes & Workbook

Genesis 35:1-4

Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and live there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau." So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments; and let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and has been with me wherever I have gone." So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods which they had, and the rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem.

- Told to go to Bethel for the purpose of worship—similar to Israel leaving Egypt—going three days journey into wilderness to worship
- Bethel becomes the focus in Jacob's life—like having a son was to Abraham.
- We see the holiness of God called for in these acts of consecration
- Throughout the OT—we continually see mixture and the ongoing need for consecration before worship is received
- Back in Gen 28:20-22----Jacob makes altar and gives pledge
- God fulfills all of his promises—providing and protecting—but Jacob is a man with a house full of idols (no doubt Rachel's stolen idol is a snare to the family)
- Change garments—we will see this played out with great intricacy for the priests after the Law
- Not only gave up idols—but earrings also—they were associated with idolatrous practices. These are forsaken—not repurposed
- Aaron made a golden calf out of earrings
- Hosea 2:13
- Name of Jacob goes back and forth with the name 'Israel'.
- Holiness in the OT—is the state of belonging to God
- This is to be a journey of repentance

Genesis 35:5-8

As they journeyed, there was a great terror upon the cities which were around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. And he built an altar there, and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed Himself to him, when he fled from his brother. Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died,

and she was buried below Bethel under the oak; it was named Allon-bacuth.

- Terror on cities—either due to sense of divine protection or due to stories of this family overpowering—killing—and looting an entire city
- This terror—experienced by the surrounding cities is a type of what will take place after the Exodus when Israel returns to possess the land
- God is not tied to a location—but journeying to this city becomes a point of obedience
- Jacob built no altar during all the years he sojourned in Paddan-aram
- Did Deborah come to inform Jacob of his own mother's death, since she heard that he had returned to the land? She seems to have been with the family since Paddan-aram—how did she come to be with the family?
- Rebekah had expected his return 'after a few days'—Gen 27:44

Genesis 35:9-13

Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him. And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; you shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." Thus He called him Israel. God also said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you. And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you." Then God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him.

- God Almighty—El Shaddai=God who is sufficient
- Reaffirmation of Jacob's new name
- Re-identifying God by name
- Call to be fruitful and multiply---original command to mankind

Genesis 35:14-16

And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a libation on it; he also poured oil on it. So Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel. Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe labor.

- Ephrath=Bethlehem=house of bread
- Located 12 miles south of Rachel's burial place (I Sam 10:2-Benjamite border)

- There is a distance between the House of God and the House of Bread. One is a place of restoration of relationship—the other a place of provision and nourishment

Genesis 35:17-22

And it came about when she was in severe labor that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for now you have another son." And it came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). And Jacob set up a pillar over her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day. Then Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. And it came about while Israel was dwelling in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard of it.

- Rachel names boy Ben-oni=son of my sorrow
- Jacob names boy Benjamin=son of the right hand (implies honor, skill)
- Benjamin is the only son born in Canaan
- Rachel weeping for her children—Jer 31:15, Matt 2:18
- Memorial stone rather than a call to worship
- Rachel is the only one of the matriarchs and patriarchs to not be buried at Machpelah
- Promise expressed in the meaning of Joseph's name
- Scathing judgment for Reuben's sin in Gen 49:3-4
- The offense of Reuben costs him his birthright
- Ephrath=ash heap; place of fruitfulness
- Eder=a flock

Genesis 35:23-29

Now there were twelve sons of Jacob—the sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's first-born, then Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulun; the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin; the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and Naphtali; and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram. And Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre of Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. And Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, an old man of ripe age; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

- It sounds like he may have had a chance to reconnect with Isaac before he died

Genesis Chapter Thirty Five Workbook

Key Words:

Harmonize:

Read Revelation 2-3. What is Jesus asking each church to repent from?

Dig:

- 1) Why is Bethel spiritually important to Jacob?

- 2) Why is Jacob's return to Bethel significant to God?

- 3) What must be done to prepare for a return to Bethel?

- 4) What is the response from the cities Jacob passes by on his journey?
Why do you think he has this effect?

- 5) How does Rebekah's nurse influence this story?

- 6) How does the promise of land effect where Jacob settles?

- 7) Which son does Jacob name? Why would he change his name?

- 8) When Jacob sets up a pillar in Bethel, what does he pour on the stone?
Why?

Discuss:

- 1) Has the Lord ever called for a spiritual 'house cleaning' in other portions of scripture?
- 2) Has the Lord ever called for a spiritual 'house cleaning' in your church? Should He?
- 3) Has the Lord ever called for a spiritual 'house cleaning' in your family? What initiated this?

Point of Prayer:

Pray through Psalm 51 or Psalm 139:23-24

Integrate:

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

Application:

- 1) What are some spiritual 'altars of remembrance' in your own journey?
- 2) Do you have any tokens of idolatry in your belongings? How would you recognize this?
- 3) How do you find that your faith sets you apart within your family? Within your neighborhood? Within your culture?
- 4) Do you find yourself:
Offended by your culture
Enmeshed within your culture
Grieved about your culture
Prayerful about your culture
Other
- 5) Have you experience a difficult birth? Did it cause fear? What did you do?