

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Genesis 34-35

Lesson: God reveals His grace to Jacob.

Let's pray...

Tonight, we wrap up the story of Jacob,

Isaac's son and Abraham's grandson,

to whom the promises of God, originally given in ch. 12, had passed.

At this point, Jacob has returned from his 20 year exile in Mesopotamia where he had acquired a vast fortune and extensive family.

He has eleven sons with him, two wives and their two servants who have also bore Jacob children.

He's been reconciled to his estranged brother Esau, and he's settled near the Canaanite city of Shechem.

You might remember that when Jacob fled from his home some 20 years before, he spent the night at a place he named Bethel, the House of God, because of the vision/dream he'd had there.

This is where God spoke to Jacob and told him that despite his own clever attempts to wrestle the family blessing from his brother, God had graciously ordained that he should receive it.

God promised to bless and prosper Jacob and to bring him back to the land.

And it was at Bethel – that Jacob set up a memorial stone and anointed it as a marker of his vision and what God had promised, making a vow himself that if God did indeed, bless him and bring him back, then he would serve God.

Bethel became for Jacob the place of commitment, of dedication to the Lord.

When God appeared to him in Mesopotamia, in chapter 31 - He called Himself “The God of Bethel.”

31:13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.”

However, upon his return, Jacob doesn't go directly to Bethel, he takes a detour and camps next to the city of Shechem.

And I made the point two weeks ago that Shechem was a pagan, wicked city. It was the cultural capital of the Canaanites.

[Gen 34:1-31 NKJV] 1 Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. 2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her. 3 His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman. 4 So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young woman as a wife." 5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field; so

Jacob held his peace until they came. 6 Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him.

7 And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard [it]; and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, a thing which ought not to be done. 8 But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter.

Please give her to him as a wife. 9 "And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves. 10 "So you shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade in it, and acquire possessions for yourselves in it." 11 Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me

find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. 12 "Ask me ever so much dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife." 13 But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. 14 And they said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that [would be] a reproach to us. 15 "But on this [condition] we will consent to you: If you will become as we [are], if every male of you is circumcised, 16 "then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. 17 "But if you will not heed us and be

circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone." 18 And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. 19 So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. He [was] more honorable than all the household of his father. 20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying: 21 "These men [are] at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land [is] large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22 "Only on this [condition] will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they [are] circumcised. 23

"[Will] not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs [be] ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us." 24 And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city. 25 Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males. 26 And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out. 27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled. 28 They took their sheep, their oxen,

and their donkeys, what [was] in the city and what [was] in the field, 29 and all their wealth. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and they plundered even all that [was] in the houses. 30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I [am] few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I." 31 But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a harlot?"

The unusual thing about Dinah is that she is mentioned by name in scriptures. Women were usually left off lists of genealogies.

Jacob had other daughters –

However, it appears that the name of Dinah is recorded in scripture because of what happens during this event.

Many theologians place her age around the mid-teens.

She goes out for a walk, encounters Prince Shechem who proceeds to rape her –

Shechem then develops feeling for Dinah and seeks to marry her.

Dinah's brothers are angry at what Shechem has done to their sister – however, notice the absence of emotion from Jacob.

Shechem's father suggests that they merge their families, allowing his sons to marry Jacob's daughters and in return Jacob's sons would be able to marry his daughters.

This guy, Hamor, he is trying to be a good salesman – it's a win-win for both of our families Jacob. Let's make it happen.

However, it wasn't that long ago that we saw the great lengths that Abraham went to make sure that Isaac would not marry a Canaanite woman – as he sent out his servant to find a bride for Isaac.

We saw how Rebekah and Isaac were troubled when Esau married his first wife – a Canaanite. That is how Rebekah was able to convince Isaac into sending Jacob to her brother's house so that he wouldn't marry a Canaanite woman.

Jacob should have immediately turned down the request – but again, we see no action on his part.

And His inaction opens up the door for his sons to conspire against Shechem and his family.

Shechem, now negotiates with the brothers who are angry with him and he is so desperate that he pretty much says – name your price, we will do it.

The boys counter with a request that all the males in Shechem must undergo circumcision.

You see, it's a win-win for Jacob's boys, if Shechem turns down the offer, Dinah no longer has to marry this creep that defiled her – they can go elsewhere, if they accept the offer, then the men will be vulnerable for attack.

Shechem still has to sell the agreement with the other men in Shechem and he does this by pointing out the prosperity that will occur if they all agree to the agreement.

They were willing to go through the process because they kept their eyes on the wealth that they would eventually acquire.

All the men agree, they go outside the city walls and circumcise themselves.

Simeon and Levi then proceed to kill all the males of Shechem who were in too much pain to defend themselves.

The rest of the brothers walk in and plunder the city taking everything from the residents of Shechem – flocks and all - and they take the women and children as captives.

It appears that Jacob finally speaks out against what they did yet Simeon and Levi simply rationalize it by defending the actions they took.

Now church, do you notice anything missing in this chapter???

You will not find the name of God anywhere in this entire chapter.

Neither Jacob nor his children consulted God in what to do when they heard that Dinah was raped.

They allowed their own uncontrolled anger to enact vengeance on Shechem.

Was their anger warranted – yes

Was their response just – no

[Jas 1:19-20 NKJV] 19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

[Rom 12:19-21 NKJV] 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but [rather] give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance [is] Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

There will be people that say, well what about an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth? Isn't that biblical – yes, it is.

However, it was written so that the Children of Israel would not retaliate in an unjust manner. It is an eye for an eye not an eye for a foot.

Apart from God, we are incapable of making such decisions.

The scriptures tell us multiple times that God and Jesus were angry – however, their anger was a righteous anger.

We need to learn to put these things into God's hands and let Him take care of the "vengeance".

We must remember that anger is rarely the right way to handle any problem.

[Gen 35:1-29 NKJV] 1 Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the

face of Esau your brother." 2 And Jacob said to his household and to all who [were] with him, "Put away the foreign gods that [are] among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. 3 "Then 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 in the way which I have gone." 4 So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which [were] in their hands, and the earrings which [were] in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which [was] by Shechem.

Here in chapter 35, God once again speaks to Jacob – it's time to go to Bethel Jacob.

God is not angry at what has just occurred in Shechem.

He doesn't tell Jacob that He is no longer going to use him or his family because of what they did. He simply says, "let's go!" – we do have a God of unbelievable grace.

The interesting response from Jacob is that he commands his family to hand over their idols.

We know that Rachel probably still had her father's idol that she stole from his house. It appears that the other had picked up idols as well.

Notice that God didn't tell Jacob that his family had idols among them; this was Jacob's response to God's grace.

This is what grace does to the believer, when I realize how kind and good and benevolent and merciful God is to me day after day after day, it causes me to take inventory and clean up the things in my life that are not of Him.

This is what Jacob is doing here.

And verse four states that he hid them under the terebinth tree.

In scripture, the tree speaks of the Cross.

The picture that we have here is that Jacob left his sin at Calvary – at the cross.

5 And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that [were] all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. 6 So Jacob came to Luz (that [is], Bethel), which [is] in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who [were] with him. 7 And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.

At the end of the last chapter, Jacob was afraid of what was going to happen to him and his family once the other people heard what happened at Shechem. That was because God was out of the picture.

Now, Jacob and his family are walking with God and have rid themselves of their idols and now the fear of God keeps the people from attacking them.

8 Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth. 9 Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. 10 And God said to him, "Your name [is] Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called

his name Israel. 11 Also God said to him: "I [am] God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. 12 "The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land." 13 Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him. 14 So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it. 15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.

God once again reminds Jacob of His promises and his new name.

16 Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored [in childbirth], and she had hard labor. 17 Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear; you will have this son also." 18 And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin. 19 So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that [is], Bethlehem). 20 And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which [is] the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.

Back in chapter 30, Rachel made the demand, “Give me children or else I’ll die,” it was during childbearing that she dies.

Rachel names the child – Ben-Oni which means son of my sorrows, Rachel was in that constant competition with Leah in who could give Jacob the most sons – even at the time of her final victory, all she experienced was sorrows.

Jacob renames his new son Benjamin which means son of my right hand.

21 Then Israel journeyed and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. 22 And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard [about it].

So here Reuben sleep with Bilhah.

Do you guys see the switch???

No longer is it Jacob who journeyed or Jacob who dwelt in the land or Jacob who heard about what Reuben has just done, it is Israel.

If Jacob would have heard it, he probably would have overreacted. But Israel heard it, Israel is broken, Israel is limping, Israel is governed by God, Israel does not react immediately.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: 23 the sons of Leah [were] Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; 24 the sons of Rachel [were] Joseph and Benjamin; 25 the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, [were] Dan and Naphtali; 26 and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, [were] Gad and

Asher. These [were] the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram. 27 Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba (that [is], Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt. 28 Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. 29 So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, [being] old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

In the same way that we saw Isaac and Ishmael come together to bury Abraham, here we have Esau and Jacob come together to bury their father Isaac.

So in this chapter, we see Reuben lack self-control as he sleeps with one of his father's wives and in our last chapter

we saw Simeon and Levi lack self-control over their anger as they killed the men of Shechem.

Let's look at the consequences. **Genesis 49.**

Here we have Jacob giving his blessings before he dies.

[Gen 49:3-7 NKJV] 3 "Reuben, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. 4 Unstable as water, you shall not excel, Because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled [it]--He went up to my couch. 5 "Simeon and Levi [are] brothers; Instruments of cruelty [are in] their dwelling place. 6 Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. 7 Cursed [be] their

anger, for [it is] fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob And scatter them in Israel.

The blessing fell on Judah and through Judah would come the seed – 800 years later in Jesus Christ.

What a big difference between chapter 34 and 35, the choices we make when we walk with God and those we make when we are apart from Him.

May we take the example of Jacob and make the decision to go to Bethel and worship Him.

Amen,

Let's pray...

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