

“Jacob’s Final Years”

Genesis 35:1-29

Studying Genesis clarifies foundational truths—for us and for our world.

- Psalm 11:3: If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?
- Jer. 6:16a: Thus says the Lord: “Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.
- Genesis 35 at first looks like a random collection of family history. It’s not random. God is intentional.
- We see a tapestry of God’s faithfulness through the generations.

BACK TO BETHEL. v.1-15

1. God summoned Jacob to return to Bethel in the land of Canaan. v.1

- Bethel is where Jacob dreamed of a stairway to heaven when he fled from his brother Esau. Ref. Gen. 28
- God promised to protect Jacob and his descendants, and give them the land of Canaan. 28:13-15
- Jacob made a vow to the LORD. 28:20-22

2. Jacob “purified” his household in preparation. v.2-4

- We see Jacob (and his household) repenting—turning away from idols. Heb. “the gods of foreignness”
- He calls his household to ‘put them away’ and ‘purify yourselves’ and ‘change your garments.’

→ 1 Thes. 1:9-10: *For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

- Three things about repentance:
 - a.) Repentance is active—take an action step.
 - b.) Repentance is specific—they put away the foreign gods and earrings—and buried them!
 - c.) Repentance is life-long. Jacob continued to repent as he grew older.

→ Joshua 24:14-15: *Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵ And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

3. Jacob arrived at Bethel and built an altar there. v.5-8

- God protected Jacob and his family as they traveled back to Canaan. v.5
- Jacob arrived at Bethel and built an altar. v.6-7
- Deborah, Rebecca’s nurse, died and was buried under an oak near Bethel. v.8 “oak of weeping”

4. God reaffirmed His covenant promises to Jacob. v.9-15

- God appeared to Jacob again and blessed him. v.9
- God reaffirmed Jacob’s name change. v.10 Ref. 32:28
- God reaffirmed the covenant promise. v.11-12 Ref. Gen. 17:1-8

→ The covenant promises are renewed in their totality to Jacob and his descendants.

GOD’S FAITHFULNESS THROUGH THE SEASONS OF LIFE. v.16-29

1. God’s faithfulness through life and death.

- Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died. v.8
- Jacob’s youngest son Benjamin was born, but his beloved wife Rachel died in childbirth. v.16-20
- Isaac (Jacob’s father) died. v.27-29

2. God’s faithfulness through family—and family struggles.

- Reuben’s sin with his father’s concubine, Bilhah. v.22
- God provided Jacob with 12 sons—they would become the 12 tribes of Israel. v.23-26
- God reunited Jacob with his father Isaac. v. 27-28
- God reunited Jacob and Esau again for Isaac’s burial. v.29

3. God’s faithfulness to His plan of redemption.

→ Psalm 103:15-19; Psalm 105:7-15

Thematic Overview of Genesis

“The Beginning of God’s Saving Purposes”

(source: Rev. Dr. Phil Smuland)

Literary Structure	Heavens & Earth God's Creation and Purposes	Adam & Seth God's Election	Noah God's Propitiation	Abraham God's Faithfulness	Isaac & Jacob God's Loving Discipline	Joseph God's Saving Son	
Theological Structure	ADAMIC COVENANT (skin) Ch. 3 NOAHIC COVENANT (rainbow) Ch. 8-9 ABRAHAMIC COVENANT (circumcision) Ch. 12 "A Deliverer Will Come" "Judgment Will Delay" "A Saving Descendant Will Come..."						
Salvation Pictures	WORLD BONDAGE The Fall Adam Saved	WORLD REBELLION The Flood Noah Rescued	WORLD RELIGION Babel Abraham Called	WORLD IMMORALITY Sodom & Gomorrah Lot Rescued			
Pictures of Christ	Animal Skin 3:21 Covered by the Blood	The Ark Ch. 6-7 Safe in Him through Judgment	Melchizedek Ch. 14 He is the Eternal King-Priest	Cov. Agreement Ch. 15 He bore our Covenantal Failure	Isaac Born Ch. 21 He was Impossibly Conceived	Isaac Offered Ch. 22 The Father Offered His Only-beloved Joseph Ch. 37-50 Saved those who rejected Him	
Establishment of Israel	ABRAHAM Not the Nations	→	ISAAC Not Ishmael	→	JACOB/"ISRAEL" Not Esau	→	ISRAEL Not Egypt