

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

2-5-20

Genesis 35

Jacob Returns to Bethel - Verses 1-15

¹ Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau." ² So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes." ³ Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone." ⁴ So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem. ⁵ Then they set out, and the terror of God fell on the towns all around them so that no one pursued them. ⁶ Jacob and all the people with him came to Luz (that is, Bethel) in the land of Canaan. ⁷ There he built an altar, and he called the place El Bethel, because it was there that God revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother. ⁸ Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried under the oak outside Bethel. So it was named Allon Bakuth. ⁹ After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him. ¹⁰ God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel. ¹¹ And God said to him, "I am God Almighty^[1]; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants." ¹² The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you." ¹³ Then God went up from him at the place where he had talked with him. ¹⁴ Jacob set up a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. ¹⁵ Jacob called the place where God had talked with him Bethel.

35:2 Why did the people have these idols? Idols were sometimes seen more as good luck charms than as gods. Some Israelites, even though they worshiped God, had idols in their homes, just as some Christians today own good luck trinkets. Jacob believed that idols should have no place in his household. He wanted nothing to divert his family's spiritual focus.

Jacob ordered his household to get rid of their idols. Unless we remove idols from our lives, they can ruin our faith. What idols do we have? An idol is anything we put before God. Idols don't have to be physical objects; they can be thoughts or desires. Like Jacob, we should get rid of anything that could stand between us and God.

35:4 Why did the people give Jacob their earrings? Jewelry in itself was not evil, but in Jacob's day earrings were often worn as good luck charms to ward off evil. The people in his family had to cleanse themselves of all pagan influences, including reminders of foreign gods.

35:10 God reminded Jacob of his new name, Israel, which meant "he struggles with God." Although Jacob's life was littered with difficulties and trials, his new name was a tribute to his desire to stay close to God.

35:10 Many people believe that Christianity should offer a problem-free life. Consequently, as life gets tough, they draw back disappointed. Instead, they should determine to prevail with God through life's storms. Problems and difficulties are painful but inevitable; you might as well see them as opportunities for growth. You can't prevail with God unless you have troubles to prevail over.

35:13-14 This oil used to anoint the pillar was olive oil of the finest grade of purity. It was expensive, so using it showed the high value placed on the anointed object. Jacob was showing the greatest respect for the place where he had met with God.

The Deaths of Rachel and Isaac - Verses 16-29

¹⁶ Then they moved on from Bethel. While they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and had great difficulty. ¹⁷ And as she was having great difficulty in childbirth, the midwife said to her, "Don't despair, for you have another son." ¹⁸ As she breathed her last—for she was dying—she named her son Ben-Oni. But his father named him Benjamin. ¹⁹ So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). ²⁰ Over her tomb Jacob set up a pillar, and to this day that pillar marks Rachel's tomb. ²¹ Israel moved on again and pitched his tent beyond Migdal Eder. ²² While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went in and slept with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard of it. Jacob had twelve sons: ²³ The sons of Leah: Reuben the firstborn of Jacob, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun. ²⁴ The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁵ The sons of Rachel's servant Bilhah: Dan and Naphtali. ²⁶ The sons of Leah's servant Zilpah: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob, who were born to him in Paddan Aram. ²⁷ Jacob came home to his father Isaac in Mamre, near Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had stayed. ²⁸ Isaac lived a hundred and eighty years. ²⁹ Then he breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, old and full of years. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

35:22 Reuben's sin was costly, although not right away. As the oldest son, he stood to receive a double portion of the family inheritance and a place of leadership among his people. Reuben may have thought he had gotten away with his sin. No more is mentioned of it until Jacob, on his deathbed, assembled his family for the final blessing. Suddenly Jacob took away Reuben's double portion and gave it to someone else. The reason? "You went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it" (49:4).

35:22 Sin's consequences can plague us long after the sin is committed. When we do something wrong, we may think we can escape unnoticed, only to discover later that the sin has been quietly breeding serious consequences.

Genesis 36

Esau's Descendants - Verses 1-30

¹ This is the account of the family line of Esau (that is, Edom). ² Esau took his wives from the women of Canaan: Adah daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite—³ also Basemath daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth. ⁴ Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, Basemath bore Reuel, ⁵ and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These were the sons of Esau, who were born to him in Canaan. ⁶ Esau took his wives and sons and daughters and all the members of his household, as well as his livestock and all his other animals and all the goods he had acquired in Canaan, and moved to a land some distance from his brother Jacob. ⁷ Their possessions were too great for them to remain together; the land where they were staying could not support them both because of their livestock. ⁸ So Esau (that is, Edom) settled in the hill country of Seir. ⁹ This is the account of the family line of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir. ¹⁰ These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz, the son of Esau's wife Adah, and Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath. ¹¹ The sons of Eliphaz: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz. ¹² Esau's son Eliphaz also had a concubine named Timna, who bore him Amalek. These were grandsons of Esau's wife Adah. ¹³ The sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These were grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath. ¹⁴ The sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon, whom she bore to Esau: Jeush, Jalam and Korah. ¹⁵ These were the chiefs among Esau's descendants: The sons of Eliphaz the firstborn of Esau: Chiefs Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, ¹⁶ Korah, Gatam and Amalek. These were the chiefs descended from Eliphaz in Edom; they were grandsons of Adah. ¹⁷ The sons of Esau's son Reuel: Chiefs Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These were the chiefs descended from Reuel in Edom; they were grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath. ¹⁸ The sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah: Chiefs Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These were the chiefs descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah daughter of Anah. ¹⁹ These were the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these were their chiefs. ²⁰ These were the sons of Seir the Horite, who were living in the region: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ²¹ Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These sons of Seir in Edom were Horite chiefs. ²² The sons of Lotan: Hori and Homam. Timna was Lotan's sister. ²³ The sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho and Onam. ²⁴ The sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah. This is the Anah who discovered the hot springs in the desert while he was grazing the donkeys of his father Zibeon. ²⁵ The children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah daughter of Anah. ²⁶ The sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Keran. ²⁷ The sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan. ²⁸ The sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. ²⁹ These were the Horite chiefs: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ³⁰ Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These were the Horite chiefs, according to their divisions, in the land of Seir.

36:9 The Edomites were descendants of Esau who lived south and east of the Dead Sea. The country featured rugged mountains and desolate wilderness. Several major roads led through Edom because it was rich in natural resources. During Israel's Exodus from Egypt, God told Israel to leave the Edomites alone (Deuteronomy 2:4-5) because they were relatives. But Edom refused to let them enter the land, and later they became bitter enemies of King David. The nations of Edom and Israel shared the same ancestor, Isaac, and the same border. Israel looked down on the Edomites because they had intermarried with the Canaanites.

The Rulers of Edom - Verses 31-43: ³¹ These were the kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite king reigned: ³² Bela son of Beor became king of Edom. His city was named Dinhabah. ³³ When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah succeeded him as king. ³⁴ When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites succeeded him as king. ³⁵ When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, succeeded him as king. His city was named Avith. ³⁶ When Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah succeeded him as king. ³⁷ When Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth on the river succeeded him as king. ³⁸ When Shaul died, Baal-Hanan son of Akbor succeeded him as king. ³⁹ When Baal-Hanan son of Akbor died, Hadad succeeded him as king. His city was named Pau, and his wife's name was Mehetabel daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me-Zahab. ⁴⁰ These were the chiefs descended from Esau, by name, according to their clans and regions: Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, ⁴¹ Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, ⁴² Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, ⁴³ Magdiel and Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom, according to their settlements in the land they occupied. This is the family line of Esau, the father of the Edomites. 36:15-43 The title "chief" is equivalent to "head of the clan."