

**INTRO:** Chapter 34 showed us that Jacob somehow ended up bewildered in the promised land. His daughter was raped, and his sons became murderers which brought reproach to Jacob's name... **not a good start!** – *All he ever wanted was to be blessed of God!* But Jacob blew it! – You and I would quickly write Jacob off, but God's ways are so different than ours. – In this dark moment of Jacob's life, **God extends his unbelievable grace to Jacob!** (Rom 5:20) declares, "...where sin abounded, grace abounded much more..." – God didn't say *"That's it, I'm done with you, you're out of the game! You're finished...sit on the bench."* Instead, he tells him to **"Get up!"** – God wanted Jacob to complete what He called him to. So, He tells him **"Arise and GO BACK to Bethel"** ...**BACK TO WHERE YOU BELONG**

**I. HEARING GOD (1)** – Jacob was silent and reserved during the whole **Shechem Fiasco.** – We learned that **FEAR gripped his heart (34:30)**, and I would imagine that **GRIEF did also!** – **GRIEF** for his inaction and even his disobedience, **having dwelt in Shechem for over 10 years.** These events most likely lead him to humble himself before God, confessing his negligence and seeking guidance for what's next. It was at this point we read, *"THEN God Said to Jacob..."* – No mention of the circumstances, **God simply redirected Jacob with his voice!**

**A. Rise Up (1a)** – Jacob was wallowing in his own defeat, but God said **ARISE! {Qum, coom}** which **signifies the need for immediate action;** to **establish** or **strengthen.** To "Rise up" from sitting, kneeling or a reclining position! – At **AI**, God said the same to Joshua (**Josh 7:10**), *"Get thee up, wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?"*

**B. Return (1b)** – *"Go Up to Bethel"* – Jacob had built an altar in **Shechem (33:20)**, but that's not where God wanted him to DWELL. He called him to go **Back to Bethel**, where God first revealed Himself to him. Back to the place where **Jacob made a VOW to the Lord!** So, God reminded Jacob that it was time to fulfill his vows! (*cf.* Eccl 5:1-5) – Time to **"Come back" to the PLACE OF COMMITMENT!** – To *"Dwell There"*

**C. Rebuild (1c)** – *"Make an altar there to God"* – You may recall that **30 years prior**, Jacob set-up a pillar to God at Bethel (**28:18-21**). – Jacob may have thought it as an "old memory," or a **"Broken Down Promise,"** which he destroyed by his own failures – This may even be the reason why Jacob delayed his return to Bethel – But God's command to build an altar shows that GOD IS PATIENT WITH HIS CHILDREN, even when we fall short on our end of the deal!

**D. Remember (1b)** *...the predicament that he was in!* – His brother Esau planned to kill Jacob because He cheated him out of the firstborn blessing. But God tell Jacob to... **REMEMBER** that *"I protected you from Esau THEN"* (**27:41-42**), **and I will protect you from the Canaanites NOW (WOW!)** – Jacob was Plagued with Fear and Felt like a Failure... BUT God's Words instantly breathed hope and life back into Jacob!

**II. HEEDING GOD (2-8)** – **HEARING** and **DOING... OBEDIENT ACTION!** – Jacob knew that if he was going to get back to Bethel, some **changes would have to be made in his life**. His household contained **Rachel's Teraphim (31:19)** idolatrous symbols, amulets, and charms (v.4) dedicated to foreign gods. This was his chance to **Heed God's voice by following through with complete obedience, so he sprang into action...**

**A. Consecration (2)** – He took **bold steps** to **CLEANSE** his home, calling for Three Actions:  
1. *Put away foreign gods*; 2. *Purify themselves*; and 3. *Changing of garments* – All which symbolize a **Surrendered Pledge** to follow the ways of the Lord, a **Spiritual Purification**, and a **Shift in Perspective**. – In scripture, washing the body and changing clothes symbolize **making a new beginning** (Isa 1:16; 2 Cor 7:1; 1 John 1:9) – God in fact, **gives us "new garments" when He makes us new in Christ** (Gen 31:21; Isa 61:10; Luke 15:22; Rev 3:18)

- **Jacob could no longer tolerate anything that would bring defilement into his camp.** – Sometime Later, Joshua would demand the same of the children of Israel (Josh 24:15), *And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of 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."*

**B. Intention (3)** – **Now he is acting like a leader!** He says, *"this is what I plan to do!"* His words also give witness to WHO he serves, *"The God who answered me, and has been with me!"*

**C. Separation (4)** – **Whoa, what a response!** Perhaps they knew that sin was in their camp. So, they gave it all up! **And Jacob hid all of it under the Tree.** – *fig.* A Tree in the Bible often symbolizes the Cross! So, if that is applied here, we see what all sinners must do...Take our Sin and our Shame and BURY IT at the foot of the Cross. – Thus, signifying **our dying to our old ways!** – **Bury it at a place that you're never going back to you, and never resurrect it!**

- **Such a Vivid Lesson here: Their foreign gods** desensitized their hearts, so that **they could not sense their need for the True God**, and **their earrings** weighed heavy on their ears so that **they could hear God's Voice!**
- It's highly possible that **this Tree was the very same Terebinth Tree (12:6)** that his grandfather Abraham worshipped at.

**D. Protection (5)** – The **"Terror of God"** came upon all the inhabitants of the land, so that **nobody would touch His people.** – The application is simple: Walking in God's Will, and in God's Way will assure God's Watch over us! – *On the contrary, Wandering from God's Will and God's Way can bring about God's WRATH... so, be WARNED!*

**E. Destination (6)** – Finally, **Jacob arrives at the place that God always wanted him to be.** And now he is with his family, leading them to a place of Consecration and Commitment.

- When you Heed God’s Instruction, you too will make it to Your Destination!

**F. Construction (7)** – Upon arrival, Jacob is quick to build and altar for God and **correctly rename it!** – Previously in (28:19), Jacob changed the name from **LUZ** to **BETHEL**, which means **“House of God.”** NOW, he extends the name to **“El Bethel,”** which means the **“GOD of the House of God”** – He does not place the importance on the place, but rather **on his GOD, who had always been with him!** – **Jacob knew that God brought him back!**

*Jacob’s return also brought a time of ...* **READ**

**G. Lamentation (8)** – **Deborah** was the maidservant of Jacob’s mother Rebekah (24:59). She most likely served as **Jacob’s “nanny.”** – Rebekah’s death is not reported in scripture, but **Deborah most likely brought the news to Jacob** and came to stay with him when he re-entered the land. – Obviously, she was a beloved member of the family, because **they honored her** by naming her burial place, **Allon Bachuth,** which means **“Oak of Weeping.”**

*Jacob went Back to the Place of...* **READ**

**III. HONORING GOD (9-15)** – The last time Jacob saw God was in (32:28), when he wrestled with Him... and that was **10 years prior!** – But now that Jacob is **BACK WHERE HE BELONGED, GOD APPEARS TO JACOB** first to **Bless him,** then to **Reaffirm him. (9).** *He does so by...*

**A. Reaffirming Names (10-11a)** – Since Jacob had behaved more like the old Jacob than like Israel, **it was crucial to REMIND him of his NEW NAME.** God desired for him to focus on the new man that God had created. – In Ephesians, Paul instructs believers to, “...be renewed in the spirit of your mind,<sup>24</sup> and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph 4:23-24)

- Jacob was to denounce his old name because **his New Name was to be HONORABLE!**
- **God also RESTATED His name:** He identified Himself as **El SHADDAI, i.e., God Almighty!** The One who nourishes and provides... the One who is strong enough to meet every need – **Stating His Great name was a Reaffirmation of His commitment to Jacob!**

*God then...*

**B. Reaffirming Promises (11b-13)** – God then reaffirms **His promises to Jacob from 30 years earlier,** just as He did with **Abram (17:1)** and his father **Isaac (28:3)** – *He gently reminded Jacob to continue to be fruitful and multiply,* conveying that **greatness would come from him!** Jacob was blessed to know that the Land was now his to pass on to his descendants. – **God came down personally to remind Jacob that His Promises were Yes and Amen! Then He Went Up!**

**C. Rededication (14-15)** – Jacob now **HONORS GOD** with a grateful heart, **by pouring a drink offering on his sacrifice.** – The practice was later found in scripture (Num 15:5-7). It included a mixture of wine poured out on the altar unto the LORD. – **Paul saw his life being poured out before God** as if it were a drink offering offered at God's altar (**2 Tim 4:6**).

**CLOSING POINTS: God called Jacob BACK TO BETHEL!** A place where he was to Remember God’s faithfulness to him throughout the years... a place with a Sacrificial Altar to HONOR God! – Likewise, God desires for us to **SET UP A PLACE** on the **ALTAR OF OUR HEARTS (Isa 66:1-2),** – **A Place where we can worship God and HONOR Him in spirit and in truth!**

**No matter how many times we may have failed.** The Lord will **ALWAYS** receive us back **if we Repent and Obey Him!** – JESUS wants you to know that He is the God who allows U-turns. He is the God of Second Chances, **Who LOVES YOU** regardless the crooked path that you've chosen in life.