

Sermon Notes 5/30/21

# “Bethel: House of God”

## How should we respond to Genesis chapter 35?

1. Let's get rid of our \_\_\_\_\_.

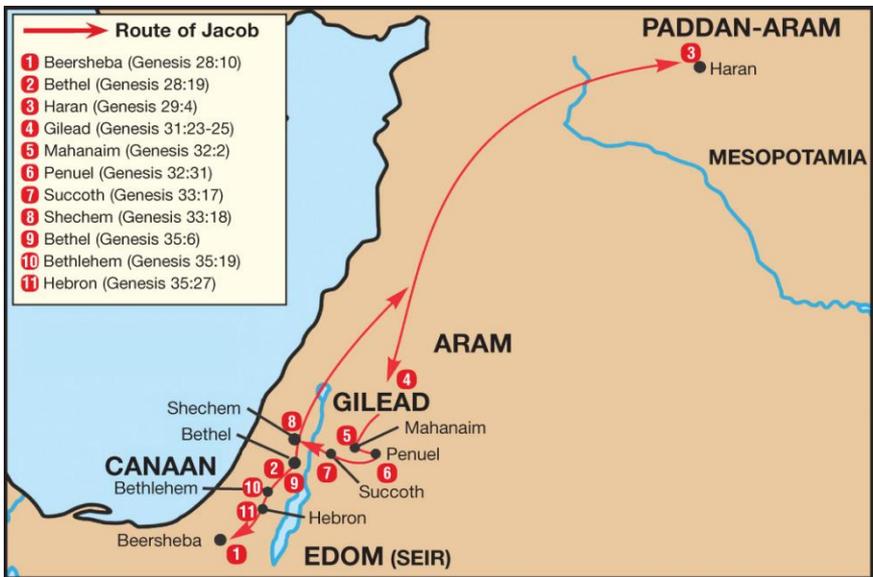
- Genesis 35:2-3
- Colossians 3:2-5
- 1 John 3:2-3

2. Let's remember our \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ.

- Genesis 35:9-12
- Ephesians 2:12-13
- Galatians 3:13-14

3. Let's give God our \_\_\_\_\_.

- Genesis 35:14
- John 4:23-24
- Romans 12:1-2



# Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 35: May 30 – June 6

## Genesis 35

Genesis 35 is a powerful reminder of God's faithfulness and grace. Here we see God bringing Jacob back to Bethel (the house of God). However, the geographical location is just a symbol of the spiritual condition of Jacob's heart as he turns away from the sins of his past and leads his family into sincere devotion to the one true God. Paul Kissling observes,

This passage thus is deliberately paired with its counterpart in chapter 28. Together they form the beginning and end of Jacob's saga of bearing the consequences for playing God. Even though those consequences included being tricked and cheated and humbled, and finally handicapped, God had been faithful. His purposes would not be defeated by Rebekah and Jacob's scheming, nor by Isaac and Esau's resistance, nor by Laban's treachery.<sup>1</sup>

### Read Genesis 35:1-15

1. What did God tell Jacob to do in verse 1?

Denis Prager notes,

This is the only time God told a patriarch to build an altar. All other times, the patriarchs spontaneously built one. Perhaps God wanted Jacob to have a physical reminder of His intervention on Jacob's behalf "when you were fleeing from your brother Esau." Gratitude must be constantly fed (unlike resentment, which lives on naturally), and physical reminders are essential.<sup>2</sup>

2. What did Jacob tell all his people to do in verse 2?

3. What was plan that Jacob shared with his people in verse 3?

4. What did Jacob do with all the idols the people gave him in verse 4?

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 2* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2009), 388.

<sup>2</sup> Dennis Prager, *The Rational Bible: Genesis* (Washington, DC: Regnery Faith, 2019), 409.

It may seem strange to read about Jacob telling his family to get rid of their idols. However, every generation of God's people struggled with the sinful influence of the pagan culture around them. Rachel may have still had the idols she stole from her father (31:19). And among the plunder taken from the city of Shechem there would have been many gold and silver idols (34:29). Kent Hughes writes,

Teraphim and other idolatrous images were purged from their tents. The earrings were not everyday jewelry but amulets and talismans engraved with pagan symbols. Most likely the earrings were largely from Shechem's booty. Archaeological digs in other parts of Palestine have yielded crescent-shaped earrings that celebrated the moon god.<sup>3</sup>

5. Why didn't any of the Canaanites attack the Israelites as they traveled to Bethel? (35:5-6)

6. What did Jacob name the place El Bethel in verse 7?

7. Who died in verse 8?

If this is the same nurse who came with Rebekah from Haran (24:59), she served God's people for over a hundred years. We don't know when she started traveling with Jacob. Perhaps she left Isaac's camp and joined Jacob's people when Rebekah died. She was undoubtedly loved and appreciated for her many years of service. Prager notes,

It is, to say the least, interesting that Deborah's death is mentioned but Rebecca's is not. Rebecca and Leah are the only two of the matriarchs and patriarchs whose deaths are not recorded. The Torah notes only that Rebecca and Leah were buried in the Cave of Machpelah along with the patriarchs and Sarah (Genesis 49:31).<sup>4</sup>

8. How did God bless Jacob in verse 10?

9. How did God bless Jacob in verse 11?

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<sup>3</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 421.

<sup>4</sup> Prager, *The Rational Bible*, 413.

Kissling comments on the blessing God bestows on Jacob in this passage. He writes,

God reiterates the promise he had made to Jacob in Genesis 28:13-15. That promise was an extension of the promises he had made to Abraham and Isaac, but it was also more. By beginning the patriarchal promise with the words "be fruitful and increase in number" the narrator clearly links the promises to the original creation commission in Genesis 1:26-28.<sup>5</sup>

10. How did God bless Jacob in verse 12?

11. What did Jacob do after this encounter with God? (35:13-15)

**Read Genesis 35:16-29**

12. What happened on the journey from Bethel to Ephrath? (35:16)

13. What did the midwife say to Rachel in verse 17?

14. What did Rachel name her son? How and why did Jacob change the name in verse 18?

15. How did Jacob mark the place where Rachel was buried? (35:19-20)

16. What sin did Reuben commit in verse 22? What were the consequences of that sin? (see Gen. 49:3-4 and 1 Chron. 5:1-2)

17. What were the names of Jacob's sons? (35:23-26)

18. Where did Jacob reunite with his father in verse 27?

19. How old was Isaac when he died? Who buried him? (35:28-29)

20. What idol or false hope will you remove from your life today?

21. What are some of the specific blessings from God that you want to remember this week?

22. What can you do to give God your best worship?

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<sup>5</sup> Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 2*, 389.