

Back to Bethel

I. Announce:

A. Slide1 Men's Breakfast this Sat 7:30-9am, Andy Dean.

II. Intro:

A. Slide2 Watch Overview of Genesis

B. Slide3 Ch.34, Simeon & Levi massacring whole town, cause of rape of sis/Dinah.

1. We move from a *Godless chapter* (34) (God not mentioned in it), to a *God-filled chapter* (35). [God 11 x's, 22 x's w/like *bethel*]

C. This is a chapter of transition. It marks an end and a beginning. *The family of Jacob will now be completed by the birth of Benjamin.* And the center of gravity would now shift to his sons (from Patriarchs to the 12 sons/tribes).

III. Slide4a NEW BEGINNINGS

A. Go Back to Bethel - back to the place of the Vision and the Vow.

1. When you are backslidden there's nothing else for you to do but go back to the place of dedication and renew your vows before the Lord.

2. But before he could go back to the altar he had to clean house, by...burying strange gods, jewelry & anything associated with heathen worship.

a) See the only place for sin is in the grave.

(1) Wait! Did this all stem from Rachel/mom's stolen idol? monkey-see, monkey-do, your kids are watching you.

(2) Way to go dad (Jacob). Sometimes the only way to re-boot a family is to call a family meeting.

b) Slide4b Idolatry is worshipping anything that ought to be used, or using anything that ought to be worshipped. Augustine

(1) Today's idols are more in the self, than on the shelf.

c) Slide4c Think about this: Every person is serving a god or gods in his life. Every person is transformed into an image of his god.

B. Questions:

1. To identify your gods...What is the object of your affections, your efforts, and your attention?
2. Bury your heathen charms and idols. What do you need to bury tonight? Bury the past. Bury past hurts, memories, offenses, pains, stings, hurtful words, emotional wounds.
3. What are you devoted to, other than God?
4. Do you have any life goals that revolve around something other than God Himself?

C. Back at Bethel...

1. God met him in a new way.
2. God reminded him of his new name, Israel.
3. God reaffirmed the promises He gave to Abraham and Isaac.
 - a) And Jacob responded by erecting a new pillar and anointing it as he had done years before.
 - b) A backslidden believer does not need a new experience to get right with God. He needs only to reaffirm the old experience in a new way. Wiersbe

D. We walk by faith when we obey God in spite of circumstances or consequences.

E. A change in geography does not guarantee a change in life.

F. (7) El-bethel - God, of the house of God.

IV. Slide5a NEW SORROWS

A. We have three deaths in chapter 35.

1. Death is a fact of life.
2. Slide5b Jacob's obedience to God did not prevent him from experiencing hurts & trials.

B. Jacob lost a friend Deborah (her long service to the family). He lost his favorite wife Rachel. Then lost his beloved father Isaac.

C. (16-20) Sad that Rachel died right after Jacob got restored to fellowship with God.

1. Slide5c Great *spiritual experiences* are **not security** against the sorrows & trials of life.
 2. **And** not only sorrows but **sins**...(21,22)
- D. (22) Perhaps the greatest sorrow for **Jacob** was from his firstborn, **Ruben**.
1. This **laconic report** (using very few words) leaves the shock of this **breach in the family** to be imagined.
 2. **Sin** is expensive and it soon **cost** **Ruben** his **birthright**. 49:3,4.
 3. Slide5d **Sin never** brings **blessing**, it is **always costly**.
- E. (22b-26) Throughout the OT & NT the number **12** will be the number symbolizing the **whole Israel of God**.
- F. (27-29) The **final act** on this journey was for Jacob & Esau to **bury the father**.

V. Slide6a **NEW JOYS**

- A. **The birth of Benjamin** cost **Rachel** her life. **See** 30:1.
- B. Jacob wisely change the name from **son of my sorrow** to **son of the right hand** (the place of honor).
1. This was an act of faith at a time when Jacob's heart was broken.
- C. **Making our dying Benoni to be our living Benjamin**.
1. Slide6b To every matter there is **a bright** as well as **a dark side**.¹
 2. **Rachel** was overwhelmed with the **sorrow of her own travail and death**; **Jacob**, *though weeping the mother's loss*, could see **the mercy of the child's birth**.
 3. Slide6c While our **flesh mourns** over trials, **our faith triumphs in divine faithfulness**.
 - a) Samson's **lion** yielded **honey**, **and so will** our **adversities**, *if rightly considered*.
- D. **Benjamin** is a type of **Jesus**, in that they were both called **a son of sorrow** (Is.53:3) **and a son of the right hand** (Mrk16:19).
1. The tribe of Benjamin gave us the apostle Paul (Phil 3:5).

¹ Adapted from Spurgeon, C. H. (1896). Morning and Evening. March 8th Evening.

2. So the mothers sacrifice bore a rich harvest for the world.

E. Slide7 **ESAU'S DESCENDANTS (Ch. 36)** see Edom map/yellow

F. It was foretold *before their birth* that each of Rebekah's twin sons would bring about a nation (25:23).

G. The brotherhood of Esau & Jacob lives on in the nations of Edom & Israel, throughout the OT.

H. Esau's family tree is much more imposing than Jacobs. But this is the last we hear of it.

1. Though the Edomites became the enemies of God's people, for centuries.

I. Despite their failures, the sons of Israel are *the chosen instruments* to accomplish God's will on earth.

J. *****

K. Slide8a **Put off the old self** - Eph.4:22-24, *to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

1. Put off old the self is likened to putting off old clothes.

2. Like Lazarus' **grave clothes**. [*Every trait of the Old Man's behavior is putrid, crumbling, or inflated like rotting waste or cadavers, stinking, ripe for being disposed of and forgotten.* Barth]

3. Or like, dirty **soiled stain-filled clothes**. [my Aeropress story]

4. The instruction **Jesus** gave concerning Lazarus applies to each believer: *Loose him (i.e. take off the grave clothes) and let him go.*

a) But it is not enough simply to die to the old life; there must also be resurrection and the **manifestation** of the new life. *wiersbe*

b) We put off the *grave clothes* of the ol'life & put on the *grace clothes* of the new life

L. Note the progression: (22-24) *Put off, be renewed, put on.*

1. Imagine working in your yard all day. At the end of the day, you're dirty, stinky, you take off your clothes...but you don't just put on fresh clothes. You also

shower (I hope). Oh, if you just put on fresh clothes it's a little better. **But what's best** is *a true cleansing*. **Then new clothes**.

M. **Slide8b Put on your new self** (24)

N. Love the **smell & look** of new clothes.

1. This new look is created according to the likeness of God.

a) *Put on the new self, created to be like God* (NIV)

O. **A brand-new man thinks right; feels right; acts right; & is right.**

P. **Ever have the blessing of getting a brand new car/truck, right off the lot?**

1. There's something about getting rid of the old clunker, & climbing into your new auto.

2. The ride is different, more performance, its quieter inside, it sparkles, everything about it is fresh, ohhh & that new car smell.

3. You make sure you keep it washed & clean. Amor All & wheels black.

4. You'd never want to *go back* once you're in your new ride. **(oh, you tell your old car your going to miss em, but you never look back)**

a) That's *not only* how it is with a new ride, *but with* our **New Walk**.

b) **Come Back to your Bethel.**