

# **Patriarchal Age – The Patriarchs.**

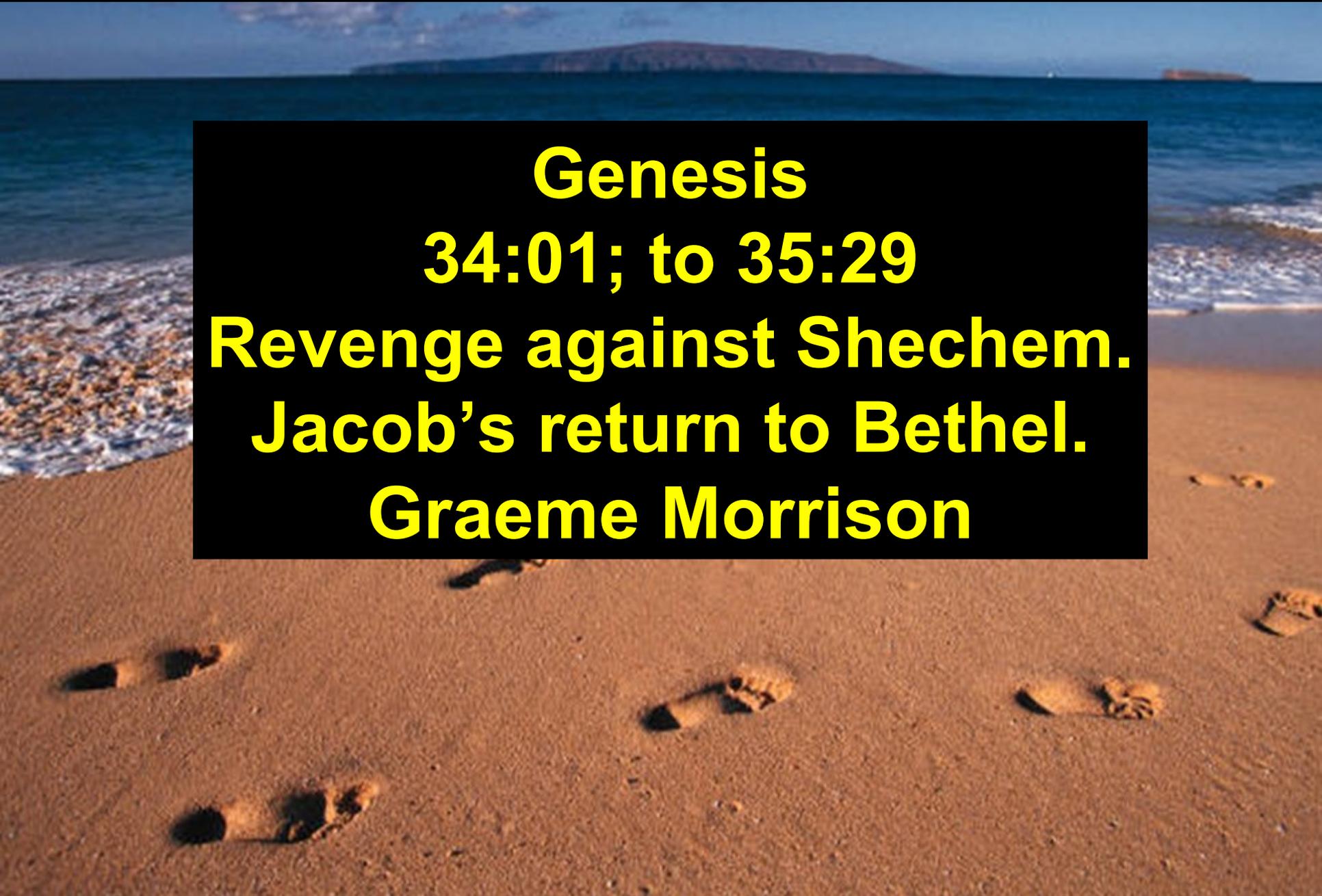
## **Genesis**

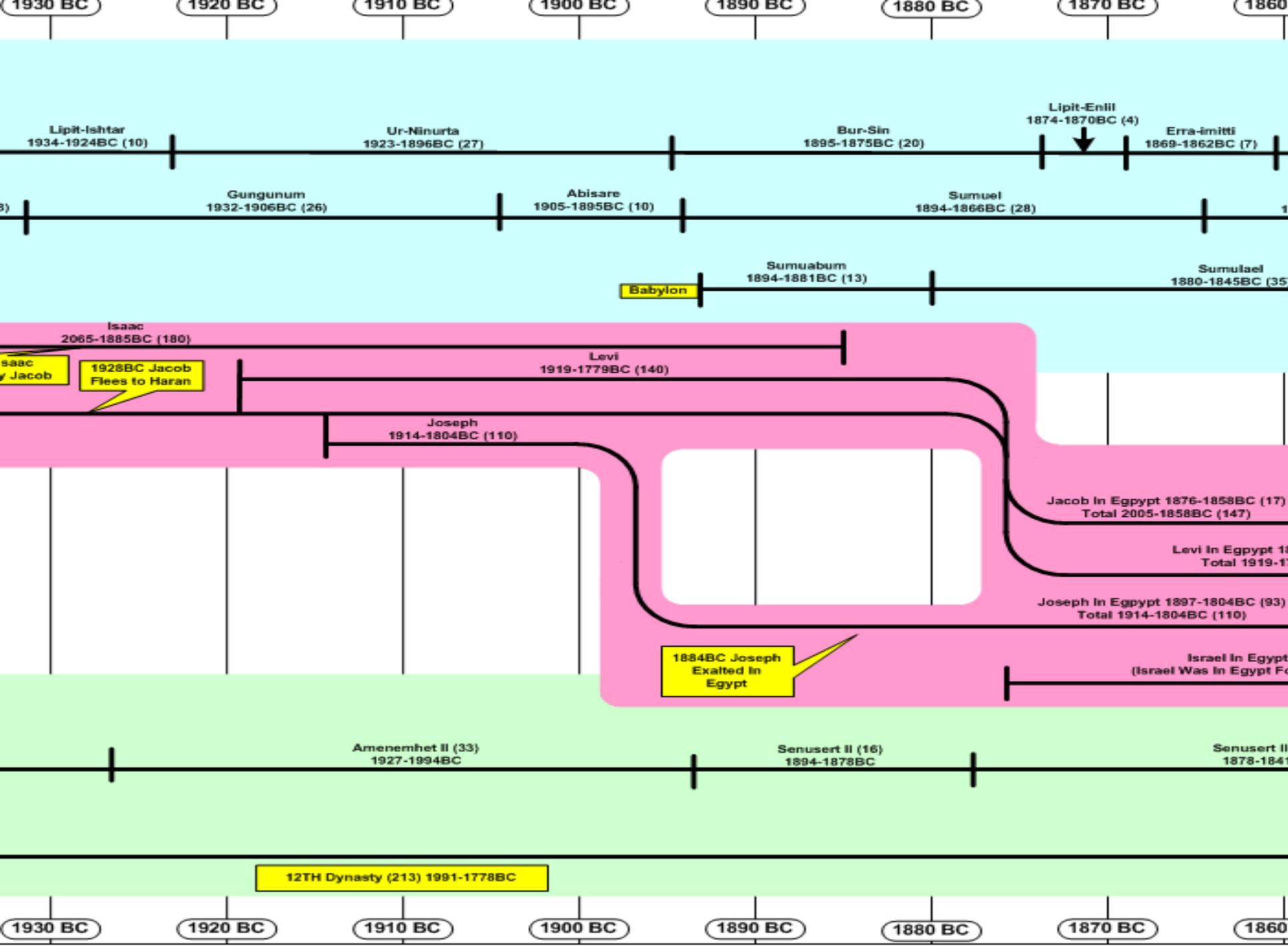
**34:01; to 35:29**

**Revenge against Shechem.**

**Jacob's return to Bethel.**

**Graeme Morrison**







## **Simeon and Levi.**

**Leah's daughter Dinah was seduced by the son of Hamor, Shechem. (34:1-2;)**

**Shechem wanted to marry her.**

**Deceitfully, the sons of Jacob agreed upon one condition – all of the males of Shechem become circumcised.**

# A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:1-7;

1. Now **Dinah the daughter of Leah**, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. 2. And when **Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite**, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her.

3. His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and **he loved the young woman** and spoke kindly to the young woman.

4. So **Shechem** spoke to his father Hamor, saying, **“Get me this young woman as a wife.”**

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:1-7;**

5. And **Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah** his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field; so Jacob held his peace until they came.

6. “Then **Hamor the father of Shechem** went out to Jacob to speak with him.”

7. “And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and **the men were grieved and very angry**, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob’s daughter, **a thing which ought not to be done.**”

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:1-31;**

**Jacob**, who had always been a “**country boy**,” must have been **ignorant of the dangers of the city**.

As close as Jacob lived to Shechem,  
**Dinah found it easy to visit with**  
**“the daughters of the land.” (34:1;)**

**More than likely, this visiting occurred frequently, and so her involvement with Shechem might not have taken place quite as suddenly as it would appear.**

# **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:1-31;**

**Shechem may have first seen Dinah and been attracted to her when Jacob purchased the land from Hamor, his father.**

**As the most respected in his father's house, he could have been a party to this sale. (34:2, 19;)**

**On a particular occasion Shechem was able to seize her while she was alone and to force his affections on her.**

**While his rape of Dinah was an abomination, he had a great love for her and desired to marry her.**

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:1-31;**

He urged his father to **arrange for their marriage** as soon as possible, regardless of the price.

**Dinah** may have remained in his tent while these negotiations took place. (34:26;)

Hamor's offer was one that could have been expected from a Canaanite who was **a man of prominence within the community.**

He sought to **calm the anger** of Dinah's brothers by **stressing the great love** of Shechem for her.  
(34:7-8;)

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:1-31;**

In addition, **such a union** would pave the way for many other benefits.

They could be **free to inter marry** with the Canaanites (34:9;) and also to **engage in business** more freely. (34:10;)

Furthermore, whatever they required as a dowry would be paid.

Probably Hamor felt that **a high price for Dinah would do much to appease the anger of these brothers.**

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:13-17;**

**Jacob's sons** were **not content** with such an offer, but they did see it as providing a means **for their getting revenge:**

**“Jacob's sons** answered Shechem and his father Hamor, **with deceit**, and spoke to them, because he had defiled Dinah their sister.”

**“they said to them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to **one who is uncircumcised**, for that would be a disgrace to us.”**

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:13-17;**

**“Only on this condition will we consent to you; if you will become like us, in that every male of you be circumcised, then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves, and we will live with you and become one people.”**

**“But if you will not listen to us to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and go.”**

**It is of particular interest that these words are attributed to “**Jacob’s sons**” rather than to “**Dinah’s brothers.**”**

**The reason must be that in being deceitful **they were proving themselves to be sons of their father.****

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:1-31;**

We are not entirely surprised by the fact that **it is they rather than Jacob who respond to Hamor's offer.**

A similar situation is to be recalled in **the acquisition of Rebekah for Isaac.**  
(Gen 24:50,55, 57-60;)

The **one concession** Jacob's sons require is stated in such a way that **it could be declined only with great difficulty.**

This is because **circumcision is portrayed as a vital part of their religious ritual.**

# **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:13-17;**

**Circumcision**, these sons contended,  
would **unite the Canaanites with the Israelites**  
so that **inter marriage**  
would be **acceptable and permissible**.

If this rite were not followed,  
then **NO inter marriage** could take place.

**“The stipulation of circumcision**  
was all the more plausible because the rite,  
outside Israel, was **sometimes an initiation**  
**into marriageable status;**  
cf. on 17:9 14.” Kidner, Genesis, p. 174.

# **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:13-17;**

**The deceitfulness of Jacob's sons  
is in no way defensible.**

**They intended to trick the Canaanites  
into an arrangement whereby  
they would be **physically incapacitated**,  
especially on the third day of their circumcision.**

**This would make the slaughter of Hamor,  
Shechem, and all the inhabitants of that city  
much easier to accomplish.**

**No defence of this plan  
can be successfully presented.**

# **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:13-17;**

**Jacob's willingness to inter marry with the Canaanites is not only contrary to the purposes and promises of God in the Abrahamic covenant,**

**It is also a direct violation of the instructions which his father had given him:-**

**“So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him, and said to him, “You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.”**

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:13-17;**

**“Arise, go to Paddan aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother’s father; from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother’s brother.”**

**“May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples.”**

**“May He also give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your descendants with you; that you may possess the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham.” (Genesis 28:1-4;)**



## **Simeon and Levi.**

**The men of Shechem readily agreed to be circumcised.**

**While the men were in pain,  
Simeon and Levi killed all the men  
and looted the city**

**Jacob was very angry  
and feared for his life.  
God appeared to Jacob  
and told him to move to Bethel. (35:1;)**

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:18-24;**

In good faith, **Hamor and Shechem** went to their fellow citizens and convinced them to comply with the proposal of Jacob's sons:

**“Now their words seemed reasonable to Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. And the young man did not delay to do the thing because he was delighted with Jacob's daughter.”**

**“Now he was more respected than all the household of his father. So Hamor and his son, Shechem, came to the gate of their city, and spoke to the men of their city, saying,”**

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:18-24;**

**“These men are friendly with us;  
therefore let them live in the land and trade in it,  
for behold, the land is large enough for them.”**

**“Let us take their daughters in marriage,  
and give our daughters to them.”**

**“Only on this condition will the men consent to us  
to live with us, to become one people:  
that every male among us be circumcised  
as they are circumcised.”**

**“Will not their livestock and their property  
and all their animals be ours? Only let us  
consent to them, and they will live with us.”**

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:18-24;**

**“all who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to his son Shechem, and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.”**

**On the surface it was a reasonable offer that Jacob’s sons had made, and Shechem was eager to have the marriage performed.**

**The reason why Hamor and Shechem would comply with the proposal was obvious, but the other men of the city were convinced on financial grounds.**

# **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:18-24;**

**Hamor must have been the president  
of the Shechem Chamber of Commerce.**

**How could his fellow citizens refuse  
such a temporary inconvenience  
when **they would eventually profit substantially**  
**from the arrangement?** (34:23;)**

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:25-29;**

**“Now it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword and came upon the city unawares, and killed every male.”**

**“They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem’s house, and went forth.”**

**“Jacob’s sons came upon the slain and looted the city, because they had defiled their sister.”**

**“They took their flocks and their herds and their donkeys, and that which was in the city and that which was in the field; and they captured and looted all their wealth and all their little ones and their wives, even all that was in the houses.”**

# A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:25-29;



## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:25-29;**

Little did the people of Shechem realize the intentions of **Dinah's brothers**, whose **anger** could not be appeased by anything less than **the revenge of blood**.

**Weakened by their circumcision**, the men of the city were **virtually helpless** when **attacked by Simeon and Levi**.

It was **no less than a slaughter**.

**They killed every male**, and the rest of their brothers were quick to share in the spoils.

All of their **wealth** along with **the women and children** was taken.

# **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:30-31;**

**Jacob's silence is shattered  
by the blood bath of his sons:-**

**“Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi,  
“You have brought trouble on me, by making me  
odious among the inhabitants of the land,  
among the Canaanites and the Perizzites;”**

**“My men being few in number, they will  
gather together against me and attack me  
and I shall be destroyed, I and my household.”**

**But they said,  
“Should he treat our sister as a harlot?”**

## **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:30-31;**

There is some question as to who participated in the taking of the spoils of Shechem.

It appears reasonable to assume that **All of Jacob's sons took part in this act, not just Simeon and Levi.**

Surely a word of rebuke was in order, but **Jacob's words lacked force** because **his reasons were self centered** and not based upon principle, but **only on the interest of self preservation.**

# **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:30-31;**

**They brought trouble to Jacob.**

**They made Jacob look bad.**

**They put his life in danger.**

**He might be attacked and destroyed.**

**Jacob seemed to care only about his safety and saving his own skin.**

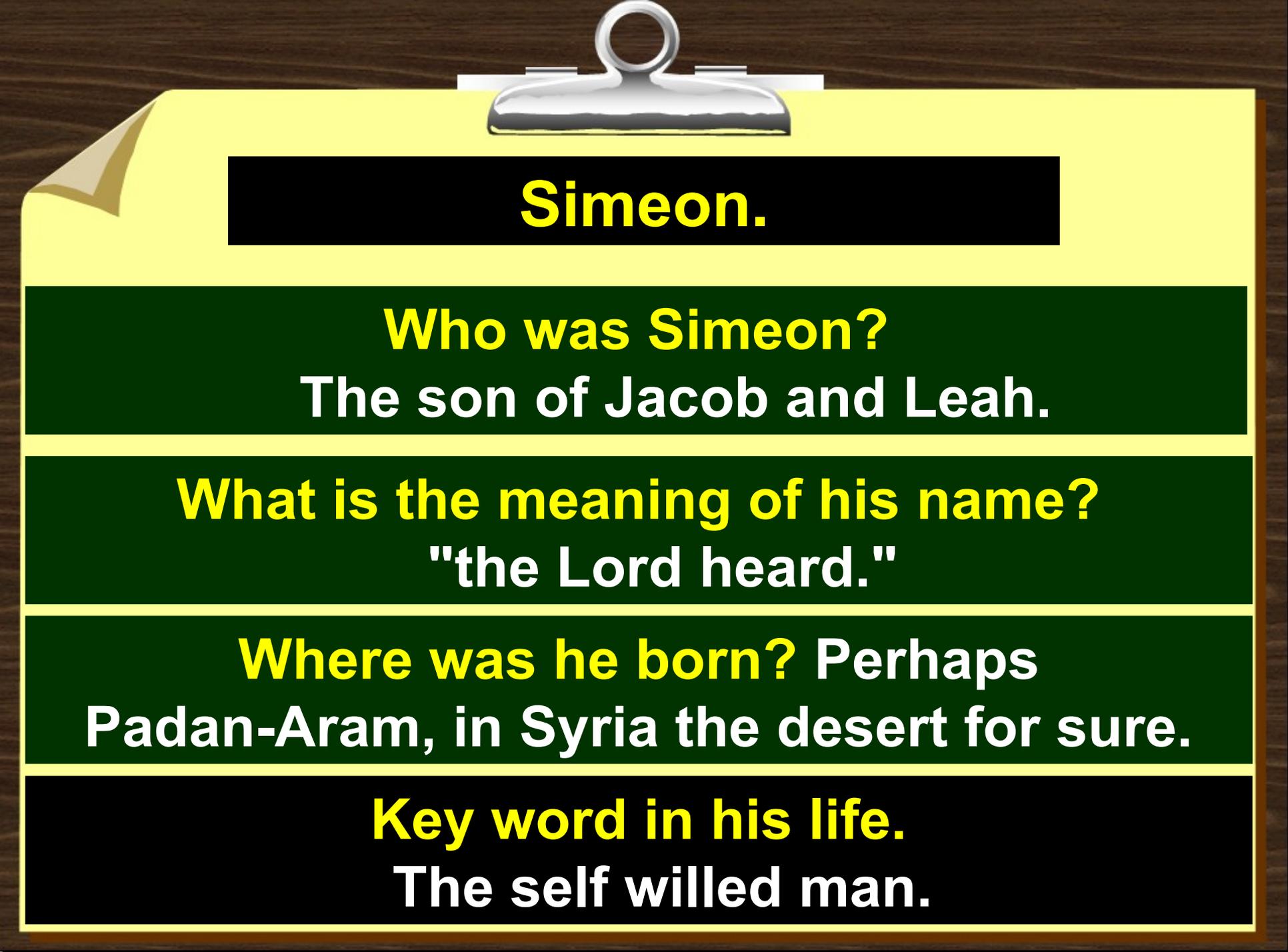
**The shallowness of Jacob's stern rebuke was exposed by his sons response:  
"Should he treat our sister as a harlot?"**

# **A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:30-31;**

**The issue of morality  
had never been raised by Jacob.**

**Granted, the sons' deception and destruction  
hardly seems moral, but they, at least,  
had some sense of the abomination  
that had taken place concerning their sister.**

**While Jacob was strangely  
silent and passive on this point.**



## **Simeon.**

**Who was Simeon?**

The son of Jacob and Leah.

**What is the meaning of his name?**

"the Lord heard."

**Where was he born?** Perhaps  
Padan-Aram, in Syria the desert for sure.

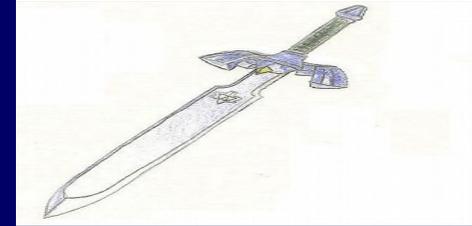
**Key word in his life.**

The self-willed man.

# Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;

**Simeon who drew the sword without compassion!**

**Genesis 49:5-7;**



5. “Simeon and Levi are brothers; Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. 6. Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honour be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a man, And in **their self-will** they hamstrung an ox.”

7. “Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;  
And their wrath, for it is cruel!  
I will divide them in Jacob,  
And scatter them in Israel.

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**What is it that we are not to copy from Simeon?**

**The Bible condemns this man's  
“self-will” and also his “Unrighteous Anger.”**

**He was cruel, he had no compassion  
the Bible from the beginning to the end  
condemns this type of attitude.**

**Proverbs 15:18; “A hothead starts fights;  
a cool-tempered person tries to stop them.”**

**Prov 16:32 “It is better to be patient than powerful;  
better to have self-control than to conquer a city.”**

**Prov 27:4; “Anger is cruel, and wrath is like a flood,  
who can survive the destructiveness of jealousy?”**

# A Third Backward Step. Gen 34:30-31;

**Simeon** later appears in the story of Joseph, who felt it would be **better to retain Simeon until Benjamin** had been brought to the palace.

Remember when a big famine came to the land of Egypt?



## **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**Jacob was never in greater danger than at those times when he felt most secure.**

**Jacob seemed to feel safest when his brother was out of sight, and yet it seems that Esau came with his armed men in order to provide an escort for him into Canaan.**

**Jacob felt secure** when his cattle could feed on the lush grass of Succoth rather than in the more sparse pastures of Bethel.

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**He felt safer near a city of Canaanites than in the seclusion of some place more remote from civilization.**

**But it was in Shechem that the rape of Dinah occurred, and it was there that Jacob could have been killed by the Canaanites.**

**The reason for this is really quite simple: we are most inclined to trust in God and obey Him when we sense that we are in grave danger and that our only hope is in God alone to save us.**

**It is sad but true that all of us tend to slack up in our diligence and devotion when things are going along smoothly.**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

We can make **several observations** on **the matter of safety** from a closer look at these two chapters in Genesis.

**First,** Jacob was never safer than he was in those times of most evident danger.

**Think through Jacob's life** for a moment, especially those times of great danger.

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**When fleeing** from Esau,  
Jacob was met by God at Bethel. (28:10ff.;

**When Jacob was hotly pursued** by his frustrated  
and furious uncle, God sternly warned Laban  
that he should not even speak harshly to Jacob  
(31:24;) This sharply curtailed Laban's plans. (31:29;)

**When Jacob entered** into a new and threatening  
existence in the land of Canaan,  
he was met by a host of angels assuring him  
of God's presence and protection (32:1-2;)

## **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**Finally, as Jacob feared his brother**  
as the sole obstacle to his entry into Canaan  
and the blessings of God, God Himself met him  
and wrestled with him, finally “succumbing”  
to his petition to be blessed.

**Having prevailed with God,** into whose face  
he looked, he was assured of prevailing  
over Esau in the meeting that was ahead.

**Never was Jacob safer than at those times  
when his life seemed in greatest peril.**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**We think that we can handle things ourselves**  
when dangers seem distant and troubles  
are far removed, but when there is a crisis  
or a sudden overwhelming problem,  
**then we rush to God for help.**

It is **a foxhole** kind of Christianity,  
but that is often the way we are.

**When Jacob was freed of Esau,**  
whom he perceived to be his principal danger,  
he felt free to handle matters himself.

**He sought safety** in separation from his brother  
and turned to succulent pastures and the  
security of cities and alliances with pagans.

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**At this time of spiritual decline,**  
he was remarkably passive in the face of evils  
**which should have been appalling to him.**

He who was so aggressive in seeking  
material prosperity had no zeal for moral purity.  
**Self interest and self preservation**  
**were his only concern.**

**It should have taught them**  
**that their only security was in God.**

**It should have warned them** that the greatest danger  
in the promised land was not the size of the inhabitants  
or their military prowess, but in becoming  
carelessly complacent about spiritual purity  
and resisting false pride.

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**What a lesson this must have been to the Israelites who read this account of Moses, especially as they were about to enter into the land of Canaan.**

**The Israelites, like Jacob, appeared to be in a place of great danger, trapped as they were between the Red Sea and the soldiers of Egypt.  
(cf. Exodus 14:10-12;)**

**The fact was that they were never safer because they were following the will of God and walking according to His word.**

**They were safe because they were Where God wanted them to be, and so God made a path through the sea for them.**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**The great danger for Israel** was what would happen once they were in the land.

During the years in which they wandered in the desert, they were, humanly speaking, in a most dangerous situation, **but God miraculously provided for them.**

Indeed, God used those circumstances to teach them that **the most important matters of life were not food and drink, but obedience to the will of God and the keeping of His word. (Deut 8:1-6;)**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**The greatest danger** which Israel would ever face was not the persecution of the Egyptians, for that kept them pure.

**It was not the problem of survival** in the desert, for God met their needs for food and clothing.

**The greatest danger Israel would face** was **their prosperity and apparent security** once they possessed the land.

## **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**“Beware lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today;”**

**“lest, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them, and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies,”**

**“then your heart becomes proud, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”**

## **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**He led you through the great and terrible wilderness,  
with its fiery serpents and scorpions  
and thirsty ground where there was no water;  
He brought water for you out of the rock of flint.”**

**“In the wilderness He fed you manna  
which your fathers did not know, that  
He might humble you and that He might test you,  
to do good for you in the end.”**

**“Otherwise, you may say in your heart,  
“My power and the strength of my hand  
made me this wealth.”**

## **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”**

**(Deuteronomy 8:11-**

**18.)**

**Built into the Law which God gave His people were some factors which were intended to stimulate the faith of the Israelites once they were in the land.**

## **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**“You shall thus observe My statutes, and keep My judgments, so as to carry them out, that you may live securely on the land.”**

**“Then the land will yield its produce, so that you can eat your fill and live securely on it.”**

**But if you say, “What are we going to eat on the seventh year if we do not sow or gather in our crops?” then I will so order My blessing for you in the sixth year that it will bring forth the crop for three years.**

## **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**“When you are sowing the eighth year,  
you can still eat old things from the crop,  
eating the old until the ninth year  
when its crop comes in.” (Leviticus 25:18-22;)**

**Here God instructed the people not to plant  
or to harvest in the seventh year.**

**This did, of course, give the land a rest.**

**In addition, it stretched the faith of the Israelites,  
for it forced them to obey God, even when  
the normal result would have been a lack of food.**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**They had to trust God to provide for their needs.**  
While **Egypt** had its river and its very predictable and prosperous farming by irrigation.

God brought His people into a land where they must **trust Him to provide the rains** which the land needed to produce in abundance.

These were faith stimulating conditions, designed to keep the Israelites alert to their **dependence upon God for their daily needs.**

**Israel's only security was in her God, Whom she must trust and Whom she must obey.**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**“If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit.”**

**“Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. (Leviticus 26:3-5;)**

**Man’s security has always been in God, and in God alone. This is not just a New Testament truth; it is an eternal truth.**

**“The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men; From His dwelling place He looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, He who fashions the hearts of them all, He who under-stands all their works.”**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**“The king is not saved by a mighty army; A warrior is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a false hope for victory; Nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength.”**

**“Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His loving kindness; To deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine.”**

**“Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield. For our heart rejoices in Him,”**

**“Because we trust in His holy name.  
Let Thy loving kindness, O LORD, be upon us,  
According as we have hoped in Thee.”  
(Psalm 33:13-22;)**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

There is no security in the “**arm of the flesh,**”  
only in the “**arm of Yahweh.**”

If we trust in our own devices,  
we are exceedingly vulnerable.  
**If we trust in God, we are invincible.**

The slaughter of the Canaanites  
by the sons of Jacob, **while done  
in deception, was a necessity.**

Had **Simeon and Levi** not slaughtered  
the men of this city, **Jacob's  
sons and daughters would have inter married.**

## **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

There is little doubt of this since Jacob consented to it. **Jacob viewed their friendliness and openness as an evidence of safety and security.**

In reality, it was the opposite.

The **willingness of the Canaanites** to adopt Jacob, the Israelites, and their religion into their way of life **would have defiled the purity which God required for this race.**

While Jacob did not take such activity as defiling and disgraceful, his sons did. (34:7,31;) and so did God.

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

Thus it was that God would later instruct the Israelites to **wipe out the Canaanites due to their depravity and decay.** (Deut 20:17-18;)

From this incident in the life of Jacob **the Israelites could see the consequences of co habitation with the Canaanites.**

# Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;

A number of principles arise from this event in the life of Jacob which apply to us centuries later.

**1. Safety is not something we can provide for ourselves.**

Men are **never secure** apart from God.  
Every non believer must be warned of this truth.

**As Peter said centuries ago:-**

“There is **salvation in no one else**; for there is **no other name** under heaven that has been given among men, **by which we must be saved.**”

(Acts 4:12;)

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

## **2. Safety comes only from God:**

**“In peace I will both lie down and sleep,  
For You alone, O LORD, makes me  
to dwell in safety.” (Psalm 4:8;)**

## **3. The true believer is most secure when he is following the Word of God:**

**“But he who listens to me shall live securely,  
and shall be at ease from the dread of evil.” (Proverbs 1:33;)**

## **4. Safety is not the absence of danger, but the acknowledgment of it and the turning to God for protection in it.**

**This was the faith of Daniel’s three companions.  
(cf. Daniel 3:13ff;)**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**5. Times of apparent safety which lead to complacency are occasions where danger is at its greatest intensity.**

**The real dangers are most often not seen by the human eye because they are spiritual in nature.**

**These dangers include unbelief, apathy, carnality, compromise, and complacency.**

**so it is that Christians are urged to be on the alert, attentive to the dangers which are always present, especially when there are**  
**times of prosperity and peace:**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” (I Cor 10:12;)**

**“While they are saying, **“Peace and safety!”** then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”**

**“But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day.”**

**“We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but **let us be alert and sober.**” (I Thess 5:3-6;)**

## **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (I Pet 5:8;)**

**“Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”  
(Revelation 3:17;)**

**How different the trials and sufferings of life look in the light of these truths.**

**Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**Life's trials are not given by God  
for our destruction, but for our defence.**

**“They cause us to cling ever more closely  
to Him Who is able to give strength  
in times of need.” (cf. Hebrews 4:14-16;)**

**“The trials of life are a gift of God's grace.”  
(Philippians 1:29;)**

**Intended by a loving Father  
to strengthen our faith:**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**“It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.”**

**“Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?”**

**“For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.”**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”**

**“Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.”  
(Hebrews 12:7-13;)**

**Most Christians prefer to dwell in comfort and complacency rather than to live on the cutting edge of Christianity.**

**Most of us, like Jacob, prefer peace to purity, prosperity to piety, and safety to spirituality.**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**The commands and principles of the New Testament, like the laws of the Old, are designed to cause us to live on the cutting edge of life.**

That, is possibly why our Lord told the rich young ruler to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor.

That man could not trust in God and gold, it was one or the other. While money is not evil, trusting in it for security is. (I Tim 6:17;)

**God desires to remove from our lives anything which stands in the way of our total trust in Him.**

# **Lessons we can learn. Gen 34:1-31;**

**May each of us be willing to look only to Him for security and safety, for that is the way God has ordered this universe.**

**Many Christians desire to live the kind of life that God intends for us to live.**

**The way to do this is intensely simple: trust and obey.**

**Trust leads to obedience to the will and the Word of God. And obeying the Word of God forces us to trust in Him to provide for our every need.**

**May each of us be willing to do as God commands.**

# **The Way Back. Gen 35:1-29;**

**Nearly thirty years have passed since Jacob vowed to return to Bethel, where God had revealed Himself to him during his flight from Esau to Paddan aram.**

**Far worse, it had been ten years since Jacob had left Laban and returned to the land of promise.**

**Jacob had built a house in Succoth, (33:17;) and formed alliances in Shechem with the Canaanites, which would have brought about the ruin of the nation that was to emerge from Jacob's descendants.**

# **The Way Back. Gen 35:1-29;**

It was **thirty years after Jacob's vow to return to Bethel** that he determined to fulfill it, and this in light of the fact that **Bethel lay only thirty miles from Shechem.**

**From outward appearances** Jacob was not that far from God, only thirty miles distant from Bethel.

He had also **built an altar at Shechem, (33:20;)** so there must have been some kind of religious observance there.

**Spiritually, however,  
Jacob was not near to God at all.**

## **The Way Back. Gen 35:1-29;**

Jacob told Esau he would meet him at Seir, (33:14;) but **he went the opposite direction to Succoth, then to Shechem.**

Jacob somewhat passively accepted the rape of his daughter and even entered into an agreement whereby **the purity of the covenant people of God would be lost.** (chapter 34;)

**Jacob was preoccupied with prosperity and security at the expense of purity and piety.**

**He is near Bethel but not near to the God of Bethel, at least not in chapter 34.**

# **The Way Back. Gen 35:1-29;**

**Jacob's condition is not that different from many Christians in our own time.**

**We may appear to be walking close to God while the opposite is true. We may still continue to preserve the forms and observe the rituals of piety, but, in fact, the reality is not there.**

**Paul described this condition as:-**

**“holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power.” (2 Timothy 3:5;)**

# **The Way Back. Gen 35:1-29;**

We may be like those in the church at Ephesus, who have **“lost their first love.”** (Revelation 2:4;)

Or those at Laodicea who, due to their wealth and security, considered themselves to be doing well spiritually when they were destitute, cold, and indifferent. (Revelation 3:15-17;)

**Since every one of us will face times when we have strayed from an intimate walk with God, Genesis 35 provides us with a pattern for finding the way back.**

# **The Way Back. Gen 35:1-29;**

**So this chapter not only describes the way back for Jacob:-**

**It also outlines the way back for any believer who has grown cold and indifferent by failing to walk in the path which God has made clear.**



## **Simeon and Levi.**

**Because of what, Simeon and Levi had done.**

**Jacob was very angry and feared for his life.**

**God appeared to Jacob  
and told him to move to Bethel.**

**(35:1;)**

# Jacob's Return (Shechem to Bethel.)

## CANAAN IN THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS

Scale of Miles  
0 10 20 30 40

The Great Sea



Canaanites

Canaanites

Dothan •  
**Shechem** •

**Bethel (Luz)** •  
Ai •

Mt. Moriah, Salem (Jerusalem), Bethlehem (Ephrath)

Mamre, Hebron (Kirjath-arba)

Gerar

Beersheba

Rehoboth

Beer-lahai-roi?

Wilderness of Paran ↓

Edomites

Mt. Seir

Hobah? •  
Damascus •

• Laish (Dan)

Sea of Chinnereth  
Yarmuk R.

Galeed? Gilead

• Mahanaim?

• Succoth  
Penuel Peniel

Jericho

Arnon R.

Ammonites

Moabites

Zered R.

Dead Sea

Zoar

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are thought to be located beneath the shallow waters at the south end of the Dead Sea. This area was called the Vale of Siddim.

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**“Then God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel, and live there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.”**

**“So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify your-selves, and change your garments; and let us arise and go up to Bethel;”**

**“I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and has been with me wherever I have gone.”**

**“So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods which they had, and the rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem.”**

## **The Way Back. Gen 35:1-29;**

**“As they journeyed, there was a great terror upon the cities which were around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.”**

**“So Jacob come to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him.”**

**“And he built an altar there, and called the place El bethel, because there God had revealed Himself to him, when he fled from his brother.**

**“Now Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak; it was named Allon bacuth. (Gen 35:1-8;)**

# **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

Insofar as the Scriptures report,  
**God had been silent for nearly ten years,**  
ever since He had commanded Jacob  
to leave Paddan aram and return to Bethel. (31:3;)

The question must be asked,  
“Why did God wait so long to instruct Jacob  
to get on with the matter of returning to Bethel,  
as He had clearly commanded him earlier?”

**The answer is quite simple:-  
until now Jacob wasn't listening.**

In spite of his dramatic encounter  
with the Angel of Yahweh in chapter 32,  
**Jacob quickly lost any sense of urgency  
about doing what God had commanded.**

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

No doubt Jacob intended to get around to going up to Bethel in time,  
**but there was no hurry in his mind.**

**Jacob would have felt obliged to give the tithe that he had promised, (28:22;)**  
which might have been a bitter pill to swallow.  
**after promising to meet Esau at Seir. (33:14;)**

**Jacob travelled the opposite direction,**  
first to Succoth, then to Shechem.

**Jacob agreed to allow his children to inter-marry with the Canaanites in order to preserve peace and to enhance his prosperity. (34:8ff;)**

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**Jacob seems to have little desire to do the will of God which he knows.**

**God had, after all, clearly spoken. was it of any value to speak again?**

**The tragic and painful events of chapter 34 greatly improved Jacob's ability to hear and obey God.**

**His daughter had been raped, his sons had put the men of Shechem to death, and it appeared that neither he nor his family could live safely in that region any longer.**

**You see, while all of the men of the city of Shechem had been put to the sword, the women, children, and cattle had been taken as booty. (34:28-29;)**

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

The relatives of those who were killed and those taken captive were not inclined to take the actions of Jacob's sons lightly.

**Jacob was correct in his assessment of the danger of staying in that area. (cf. 34:30;)**

It was only at the point where **Jacob sensed great danger** and where it seemed impossible to stay in Shechem **that Jacob was willing to listen to the voice of God** reminding him of his duty to return to Bethel.

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**Surely there is a principle here for all Christians pertaining to God's will and man's will.**

**The Christian does have a free will in the sense of being able to choose whether or not he / she) will obey that which God has commanded.**

**We can resist the commands of God,  
but despite us or through us  
God will achieve His ultimate purposes.**

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**God allowed Jacob to go his own way  
and to reap the consequences of his disobedience.**

**God does not, like many of us do as parents,  
yell and shout, fuss and fume,  
over the disobedience of His children.**

**He is, of course, deeply grieved by disobedience,  
but he will allow us to go our own way  
and to reap the painful price of sin.**

**Then, when we have gotten our fill of sin  
and there is no other way to turn,  
we too shall surely listen and obey.**

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**God's will can be resisted for a season and at a great price, but ultimately God will create an atmosphere in which we will gladly hear & obey.**

**Only then His purposes will be realized in our lives.**

We sometimes refer to **the commands of God** as His **“declared will,”** the expressions of the **desires of God** as His **“desiderative will,”** and the **decree of God** as His **“determined will.”**

**Only the last of these is unstopable.**

**Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**God's Word is not always obeyed,**

**(sometimes we would better say, not often obeyed),**

**even though God commanded it.**

**God's desires are not always realized,**

**(such as the salvation of all men, I Timothy 2:4;)**

**even though it would please Him.**

**But God's determined ends  
always come to pass.**

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**Jacob was to return to the place of his beginnings, spiritually speaking, and to dwell there.**

**While oblivious to divine standards of holiness and purity in Succoth and Shechem, Jacob was intent upon putting off impurity before coming into the presence of God.**

**Jacob had to be aware of the presence of the foreign gods in his camp. Further, he seemed to be content to do nothing about them until now.**

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

One reason may have been that **Rachel**, **his favourite**, had **set the precedent** when she took with her the household gods of her father. (31:19;)

But here we are told that the possession of such **“gods”** was much more common in the camp of Jacob than by just Rachel.

Part of the explanation for this is the fact that **many foreigners** had been added to Jacob's household.

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**While all of the men of Shechem had been put to the sword, the women and children were taken alive.**

**These Canaanites undoubtedly kept their gods with them (or made new ones) when they were taken captive.**

**Finally this idolatry had to be dealt with.**

**The foreign gods and also the earrings, which must have had some unacceptable pagan religious associations, (cf. Hosea 2:13;) were collected and buried under the oak tree near Shechem.**

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

Not many years after the Israelites read of the **burial (literally, “hiding”)** of these pagan artefacts, **they would be called upon by Joshua to put away their foreign gods.**

**It would seem to be under this same oak tree, their gods were put away, and a large stone was set up as a witness to this act. (Josh 24:19-28;)**

We cannot help but note **Jacob’s casual attitude toward separation and purity** while dwelling in Shechem.

**He tolerated** the possession of foreign gods. **He was about to enter into a relationship** with the Canaanites which would undermine the purity of this chosen race.

# **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**But all of a sudden,  
when God called him to return to Bethel,  
he was greatly concerned about purity.**

**Jacob knew that there could be  
no approach to God in an impure condition.**

**Perhaps this explains, in part, his reluctance  
to “go up” to Bethel before now.**

**(“Up” here does not mean “north,”  
for Bethel was south. “Up” has reference  
to the higher altitude of Bethel.)**

# **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**Following Jesus** has always been **costly**,  
and men should not do so without  
**counting that cost.** (cf. Luke 9:57-62;)

lest we be too quick to condemn Jacob for this, **let us remember** that this is precisely the case today.

**Many Christians** are unwilling or hesitant  
to fully commit themselves to God  
**for fear of what that commitment will cost them.**

There is a song which says, “whatever it takes to be closer to Thee, Lord, that’s what I’ll be willing to do.” **I doubt that many of us are willing to make that kind of commitment for fear of what might have to be set aside.**

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**Jacob had every reason to fear** some kind of **reprisal** from the relatives of those Shechemites who had been put to death by his sons.

Furthermore, the wives and children, who were taken captive and would be taken away, **had Canaanite relatives eagerly seeking revenge.**

After all, what had been done to **Dinah** **was committed on a grand scale by her brothers** in their killing the men of Shechem and kidnapping the women and children.

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

Contrary to his fears, **not so much as one finger was raised to resist their departure to Bethel** thirty miles or so to the south and then beyond this.

**The explanation is to be found in the great terror that came from God.**

**The Canaanites feared any military action or resistance because they were convinced of the fierceness of the sons of Jacob and of the might of their God.**

**This same terror would again fall upon the Canaanites**  
**When Israel marched from Egypt to Canaan**  
**(cf. Exodus 15:16; 23:27; Deuteronomy 2:25;)**

# **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**In this experience Jacob learned a lesson**  
which is pertinent to us as well: safety is not to be found  
in our own strength nor in alliances with pagans,  
**but in the fear of God, which causes us**  
**to maintain the purity He demands.**

**The fear of man brings a snare,**  
**But he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted.**

(Proverbs 29:25; cf. Exodus 14:13-14;  
Proverbs 8:13; 10:27; 14:26; Isaiah 8:13-15;)

**Our security will never come from**  
**the “arm of the flesh,” but only from**  
**the Sovereign God Who cares for His own.**  
(cf. Psalm 20:7; 33:13 22; Isaiah 30:1-3, 15; 31:1; 41:10-16;  
Jeremiah 5:17, 17:5-8;)

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**In obedience to the command of God, Jacob finally returned to Bethel, and there he built an altar, calling the place El Bethel, for the God of Bethel had revealed Himself there.**

**Nowhere are we told that Jacob gave a tithe, as he had promised years before. (28:22;)**

**God did not remind him of this promise as He did of the commitment to return and build an altar.**

**I suspect that this is for two reasons:-**

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

**First**, there was no need for a tithe here.  
What would have been done with it?

**Second**, when Jacob made this promise he did so in a bargaining mentality, and God does not bargain with men. **God may thus have chosen to let this promise pass by.**

Some commitments are rashly made, especially by those who are immature. **God seems to have overlooked this one, too hastily made by Jacob.**

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

It was here at Bethel  
that **Deborah, Rebekah's maid, died.**

We are not told why or when  
she came to stay with Jacob.

It is possible that **she came bearing the news  
of Rebekah's death and then stayed on with Jacob.**

No doubt **Deborah** was one to whom  
Jacob felt very attached, especially  
if he knew that his mother had died.  
**Her body was buried under the oak.**

## **Back to Bethel. Gen 35:1-8;**

Both in verse 4 and verse 8,

the oak tree is called **“the” oak, not “an” oak.**

**This is probably due to a combination of two factors:**

**First,** trees were not all that numerous there, and so it may have been the only tree around.

**Second,** it designates a specific oak, probably one that could be pointed out in Moses' day. (Gen 35:20;)



## **Jacob Moves to Bethel.**

**In Bethel, God confirmed  
Jacob's name change to Israel  
and repeated the promises that he had made  
to Abraham and Isaac.**

**Land.  
Nation.  
Seed.**

# **God's Blessing Reiterated. Gen 35:9-15;**

Then **God appeared to Jacob again** when he came from Paddan aram, and **He blessed him.**

God said to him, “Your name is Jacob;  
**You shall no longer be called Jacob,  
but Israel shall be your name.”**

Thus He called him Israel.

God also said to him,  
**“I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply;”**

# **God's Blessing Reiterated. Gen 35:9-15;**

**“A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from you.”**

**“The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, And I will give the land to your descendants after you.”**

**“Then God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a libation on it; he also poured oil on it.”**

**“So Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel.”**

# God's Blessing Reiterated. Gen 35:9-15;

Gen 35:9; takes us somewhat by surprise, for it seems to suggest that God may have made several appearances to Jacob since he had come up from Paddan aram.

The word “**again**” particularly inclines us toward this conclusion. In Genesis 35:1; **Jacob was commanded to return to Bethel,** where He had appeared to him.

**The first** appearance of God was at Bethel, thirty years previous. **The second** appearance (“**again**”) was also at Bethel, as recorded in **35:9,13;**

God did not appear when He commanded Jacob to return to Bethel in 35:1; it would seem, but **only spoke to him.**

# God's Blessing Reiterated. Gen 35:9-15;

**35:9;** is unusual in that it almost seems to **overlook the time which lapsed** between Jacob's departure from Paddan aram and his going up to Bethel.

**Moses, under inspiration,** wrote in this fashion to suggest something significant for us from the life of Jacob. **35:9; brushes aside ten years as though they did not exist.**

**Thus, God's appearance to Jacob "the second time" is recorded as though it happened shortly after he returned to the land of Canaan.**

# **God's Blessing Reiterated. Gen 35:9-15;**

The inference here is that **those ten years were of little or no spiritual value.**

**They were lost years, for they were a time of independence and disobedience on Jacob's part.**

**Whenever the people of God choose to go their way, they must always return to the point where they departed from the revealed will of God.**

**While it should have taken Jacob only days to get from Paddan aram, it took ten years.**

# **God's Blessing Reiterated. Gen 35:9-15;**

**No real growth or progress in Jacob's spiritual life could take place until he returned to Bethel.**

**The blessings spoken by God are remarkably similar to those given to Abraham in Genesis 17:4, 7;**

**Virtually nothing new was promised Jacob here, and the former promises given to him at Bethel 30 years before were simply reiterated.**

# **God's Blessing Reiterated. Gen 35:10-12;**

**“And God said to him,  
‘your name shall not be called Jacob anymore,  
but Israel shall be your name.’  
So He called his name Israel.”**



**“Also God said to him: I am God Almighty.  
Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company  
of nations shall proceed from you,  
and kings shall come from your body.”**

**“The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac  
I give to you; and to your descendants after you  
I give this land.”**

# **God's Blessing Reiterated. Gen 35:9-15;**

**Jacob** would henceforth be **called Israel**.

He would **be fruitful** and would **become a nation** and a company of nations, and **the land promised Abraham would be his and his descendants**.

**The repetition of the change of Jacob's name to Israel** further assured him that the One he had seen face to face in chapter 32 **was the same God who had twice revealed Himself to him at Bethel**.

**God visibly ascended** before Jacob's eyes from the place where He had spoken. (35:13;)

# **God's Blessing Reiterated. Gen 35:9-15;**

**Jacob set up a pillar there and poured oil and wine upon it. (v14;) Again, Jacob gave this place, which was presently known as Luz, the name Bethel. (v6;)**

**Once the Israelites possessed this land,  
it would become known  
by the name which Jacob had given it.**

**For Jacob, this event served as a rededication  
to the God Who had set His love on Him  
in eternity past and Who had sought him out  
thirty years before when he was fleeing from Esau.**

# **God's Blessing Reiterated. Gen 35:9-15;**

Soon they must **take up the torch of faith,** and **the purposes of God** will be carried on through them. **The faith of Jacob must become the faith of his children.**



## **Death of Rachel.**

**Rachel conceived once again,  
She bore Jacob a second son, Benjamin.**

**Rachel died during childbirth. (35:18;)**

**Jacob buried her at Ephrath. (Bethlehem.)**

## **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**“Then they journeyed from Bethel;  
and when there was still some distance  
to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth  
and she suffered severe labour.”**

**“it came about when she was in severe labour  
that the midwife said to her,  
“Do not fear, for now you have another son.”**

**“it came about as her soul was departing  
(for she died), that she named him Ben oni;  
but his father called him Benjamin.”**

**And Jacob set up a pillar over her grave;  
that is the pillar of Rachel’s grave to this day.  
(Genesis 35:16-20;)**

# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**Somewhere between Bethel and Bethlehem,  
Rachel went into hard labour.**

**As the child was being born the midwife  
tried to encourage Rachel by informing her  
that it was the son she wanted so badly.**

**We should recall that Joseph,  
the name she had given her first son,  
meant, literally, “add to me,” (Genesis 30:24;)  
expressing her desire for yet another son.**

# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

With her dying breath Rachel named this second son **Ben oni**, meaning “**son of my sorrow.**”

**Jacob** would not allow that name to stand, and changed it to **Benjamin**, “**the son of my right hand.**”

**Rachel was then buried on the way to Bethlehem,** and Jacob and his household proceeded on, having **set up a pillar** along the way.

**Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**Significantly, Moses added that this pillar was still standing in his day.**

**While this may mean little to us, it was of great interest to his first readers, the Israelites, who were about to enter into the land of Canaan.**

**It informed these travellers that if they looked for this pillar when they possessed the land they would find it.**

# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**What a sense of history this pillar must have helped to create.**

**The events of the past were intended to be remembered and commemorated.**

**Visual reminders had a great place in Old Testament times, not to mention the present. (Exod 13:14ff; Josh 4:4-7; I Cor 11:26;)**

**Rachel's death should be viewed from the vantage point of two previous events:-**

## **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**“Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or else I die.” (Genesis 30:1;)**

**Rachel demanded children of her husband out of jealousy toward her sister Leah.**

**She said she would die if she could not bear children. In truth, she would die in the bearing of children.**

# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**A second passage is even more striking.**

**In the context of this text, Jacob has fled from Laban, not knowing that Rachel has stolen her father's household gods. (Gen 31:19-20;)**

**After bemoaning the fact that Jacob took his family away before he could give them a proper farewell, **he got to the real bone of contention demanding the return of his gods.****

# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**In response to this charge Jacob hotly retorted:-**

**“The one with whom you find your gods shall not live; in the presence of our kinsmen point out what is yours among my belongings and take it for yourself.” (Genesis 31:32;)**

**While the sentence may have been delayed in its execution.**

**Rachel's death is the result, to one degree or another, of these words spoken by her husband.**

# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**While Jacob was dwelling beyond the tower of Eder, another painful incident saddened his heart:**

**“Then Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. And it came about while Israel was dwelling in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine; and Israel heard of it.”**

**“Now there were twelve sons of Jacob:-**

**The sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob’s first born, then Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulun;**

**The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin;**

**The sons of Bilhah, Rachel’s maid: Dan and Naphtali;**

**The sons of Zilpah, Leah’s maid: Gad and Asher.**

**These are the sons of Jacob  
who were born to him in Paddan aram.**

**(Genesis 35:21-26;)**

# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, initiated an illicit sexual union with Bilhah, Rachel's maid and later Jacob's concubine.**

**This report is given to us here because it fits into the chronological scheme at this point, and it prepares us for the time when Jacob will take away from Reuben the rights of the firstborn.**

**(Genesis 49:3-4;)**

**A careful look at this event suggests that there is more to the story than what is seen at first glance.**

# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

So far as we are told, there is **only one act of immorality** rather than an ongoing relationship.

**Jacob was told of it but did nothing.**

This was probably because the sin had been committed only once and was not repeated.

**What could be done to prevent what had already happened?**

Furthermore, this act is **not described** in terms of lust or sexual desire, such as the incident with Shechem and Dinah. (Gen 34:1ff;)

There seems to be little question but that Bilhah was a woman who was far from young.

**No mention is made of her youthfulness or attractiveness!**

# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**The deeper significance, is to be seen in her position as Jacob's concubine, not in her personal beauty.**

**An incident later in the history of Israel helps us to grasp what prompted this act and the penalty exacted by Jacob.**

**“When David became old and it was time for him to designate who was to replace him as king, he delayed.”**

**“As a result, Adonijah set out to make a claim to the throne by gaining the allegiance of the leaders of the nation.”**

# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**“Only due to the urging of Bathsheba did David designate Solomon, her son, as the heir to the throne.”**

**“Adonijah then made one last daring attempt to regain supremacy. He did so by asking Bathsheba to intercede with David for one seemingly harmless and innocent request: **To give him Abishag one of David’s Harem.** I Kings 2:13-25;**

**Adonijah knew that to claim the king’s harem was to possess the kingdom.  
That was the basis for his request.**

**Solomon knew it also  
and had him put to death for treason.**

# Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;

Is this not also the explanation  
for the actions of Reuben?

He, like Adonijah, was the older brother,  
who would have been expected  
to assume the rights of the first-born.

He, like Adonijah, could, by this act of possessing  
the harem, assume the headship that seemed  
to be his by virtue of being the eldest brother.

If this explanation is correct,  
is this not a kind of poetic justice for his father  
Jacob, who so desired the headship of the family  
that he would cheat his brother  
and deceive his father?

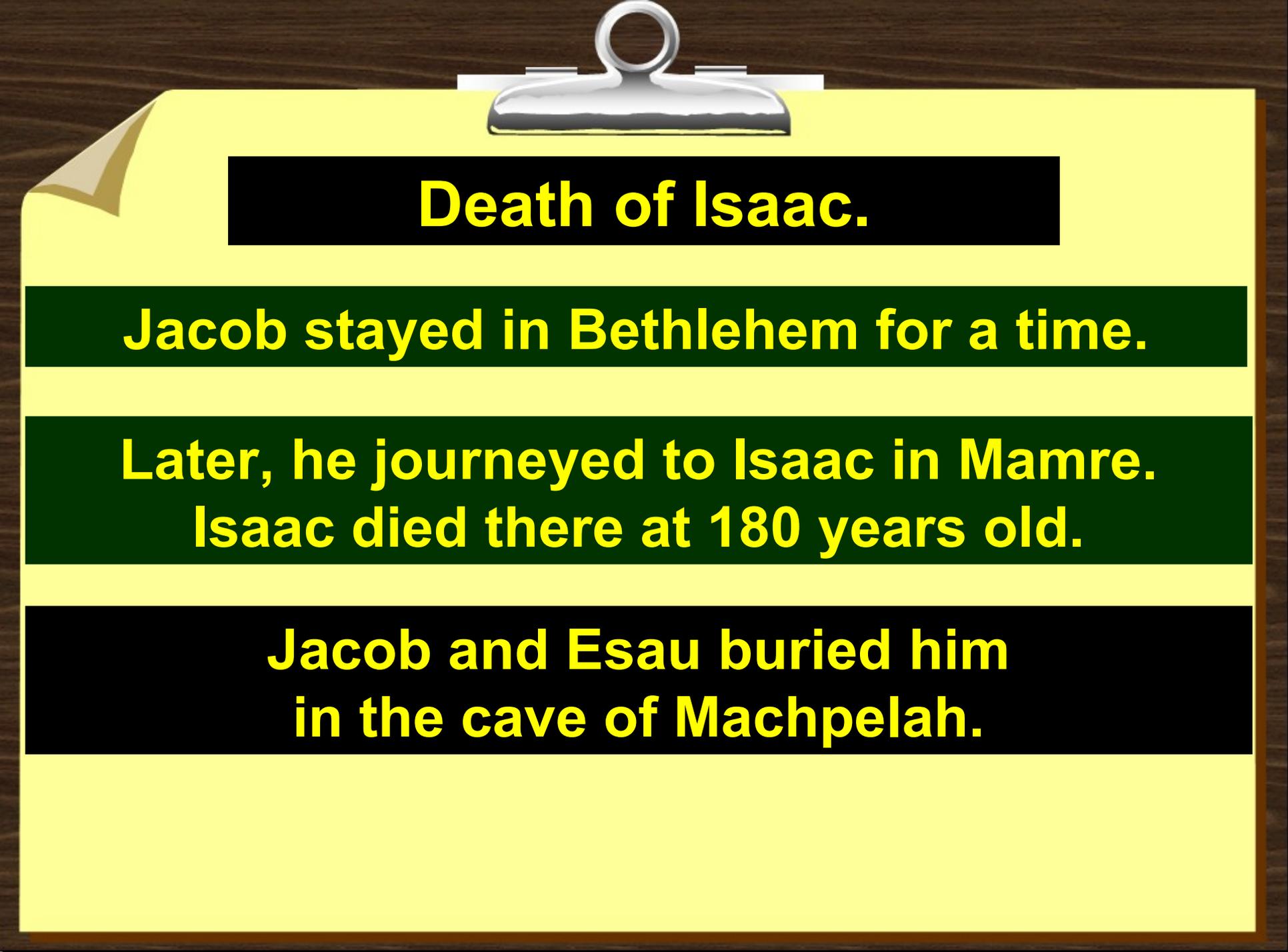
# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**The chickens, do come home to roost.  
That is precisely what happened here.**

**As Jacob begins to fade from the spotlight,  
his twelve sons come to the forefront.**

**Moses therefore lists these twelve sons  
according to their mothers,  
beginning first with Leah, then Rachel,  
and concluding with Bilhah and Zilpah.**

**Previous to this time, God had chosen  
to fulfill His covenant to Abraham  
through one son to the exclusion of others.  
Now God's people will be begotten  
through all the sons of Jacob.**



## **Death of Isaac.**

**Jacob stayed in Bethlehem for a time.**

**Later, he journeyed to Isaac in Mamre.  
Isaac died there at 180 years old.**

**Jacob and Esau buried him  
in the cave of Machpelah.**

# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

The final event of the chapter seems to have been inevitable:-

**The reconciliation of Jacob, his father Isaac, and his brother Esau:**

“Jacob come to his father Isaac at Mamre of Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years.”

“And Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, an old man of ripe age; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

(Genesis 35:27-29;)



# Genesis 49:29-31;

**“in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place.”**

**“There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah.”**



# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

Perhaps the most difficult thing in the world for Jacob to do was **to stand before his father, whom he had deceived in order to obtain the blessing.**

Perhaps, **Jacob's reluctance** to return to Bethel and to his father **was stemming from his sense of guilt and shame.**

**Reconciliation with God**  
and the **renewal at Bethel** necessitated  
the reconciliation described in **Gen 35:27-29;**

## **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

One might conclude that Jacob had scarcely arrived at his father's home when Isaac died,  
**So it seems Jacob arrived just in the nick of time.**

**More careful calculations** inform us that **there was something like ten to 12 years** between Jacob's return and his father's death.

**Isaac's death is now reported,**  
though it did not take place  
for another twelve or thirteen years.

# Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;

For shortly after this, when **Joseph was sold** into Egypt, he was **seventeen years old**.

When he **stood before Pharaoh** he was **thirty**. (41:46)

Seven years later when Joseph was thirty seven, **Jacob came to Egypt at the age of 130**. (47:9;)

Consequently **Jacob** must have been **ninety three** at **Joseph's birth** and at the time of our chapter  $93 + 15$ , i.e. about **108 years old**.

But **Isaac was sixty** years old when Jacob was born;

$$108 + 60 = 168 =$$

**Isaac's age when Jacob returned home.**

# **Heartache in the Family. Gen 35:16-29;**

**In closing the life of Isaac it is proper to mention his death, though in reality this did not occur for another twelve years.**

**It is time for Isaac to step aside, as well as Jacob, at least for the time being. The burial of Isaac was a cooperative effort of both Jacob and Esau.**

**There is not so much as a hint that Esau still intended to carry out his threat from years past that he would get even with Jacob once his father died.  
(Gen 27:41;)**

# **Conclusion and lessons. Gen 35:1-29;**

**Several lessons may be learned from the events of this chapter.**

**First, we can be deeply impressed with the importance of renewal.**

**Some Christians seem to ever be seeking some new and exhilarating experience.**

**They wish to go from one novel experience to another.**

**In the Scriptures, however, we see little of this happening, either to Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob.**

**What Jacob did at Bethel was hardly novel, and what God said to him at His second appearance was nothing new.**

# **Conclusion and lessons. Gen 35:1-29;**

**That should tell us something.**

**What was really important for Jacob was that he gain a deeper and deeper appreciation of what he had already been told, but not fully grasped.**

**He needed nothing new,  
but a greater grasp of that which was old.**

**It is precisely for this reason that our Lord has commanded believers to frequently and systematically observe the ordinance of the Lord's Table.**

# **Conclusion and lessons. Gen 35:1-29;**

**It is here, week after week, that we are taken back to our initial encounter with our Lord.**

**We are reminded that all we are, all that we will be, and all that we will ever accomplish of any eternal value will be On the basis of that which took place on the cross of Calvary 2,000 years ago.**

**Jacob's renewal at Bethel needed several actions on Jacob's part.**

**First, he came to the point where he stopped going his own sinful way and once again obeyed that which he knew to be the will of God. There cannot be renewal without obedience.**

# **Conclusion and lessons. Gen 35:1-29;**

**Second, there cannot be renewal without separation.**

**Jacob put away those foreign gods  
which he had so long tolerated  
and which were so offensive to God.**

**Third, Jacob's renewal involved  
Reconciliation with those  
who had been injured and offended by his sins.**

**We cannot be reconciled to God  
without being reconciled with men.**

**( Matthew 5:23-24; 2 Cor 5:11-21;)**

# **Conclusion and lessons. Gen 35:1-29;**

**The second lesson** which Christians need to learn is that even when we do **renew our relationship** with God, **all things will not go smoothly for us.**

Life, even the Spirit filled life, is full of sickness, (Philippians 2:25ff;), suffering, and sorrow.  
(2 Corinthians 6:4-5; 12:7-10;)

**Walking in the path which God has revealed to us is not strolling along some rose petal strewn pathway, free from the adversities of life.**

In fact, these **adversities and afflictions** can be the very things which **draw us nearer to God and strengthen our faith.** (James 1:2-4;)

## **Conclusion and lessons. Gen 35:1-29;**

Had the **tragedy regarding Dinah** not occurred  
or the **slaughter of the Shechemites**  
angered the surrounding Canaanites,

**Jacob would have been content to remain  
amongst the Canaanites, and worse yet,  
to have become one of them.**

# **Conclusion and lessons. Gen 35:1-29;**

**The third lesson has to do with  
“reaping what we have sown,” (Galatians 6:7;)**

**Much of the heartache which Jacob experienced  
in this chapter was the result of his previous sins.**

**Jacob did not suffer the penalty for his sins  
but he did suffer the consequences.**

**No Christian ever suffers the penalty for sins,  
for Jesus Christ has borne our sins on the cross.  
But while the guilt and condemnation are dealt with,  
the consequences of sin often remain.**

# **Conclusion and lessons. Gen 35:1-29;**

**David sought God's forgiveness for his sin  
and received it, (Psa 51:32;)**

**but the consequences for his acts  
were not held back. (2 Samuel 12:9-12;)**

**The Third lesson is what we might call  
the certainty of sanctification.**

**God had purposed that Jacob would  
someday return to Bethel and to his father.**

**While Jacob dilly dallied and dragged his feet  
for ten years, he finally arrived.**

**We cannot thwart the purposes of God for our lives.**

**We may, of course, resist them,  
but we cannot prevent them.**

# **Conclusion and lessons. Gen 35:1-29;**

**It matters a great deal what we do.**

**There was much needless heartache and sorrow in Jacob's life** because of his waywardness.

**Sin is never worth the price.**

**We can be fully assured that what God has begun, He will finish.** (Philippians 1:6;)

**Whether this is done the "hard way" or the "easy way" is determined by our resistance or co operation, but God's purposes will be achieved.** (Romans 8:28-30;)

**This is one of the things which motivates us to be faithful and encourages us when we have failed?**

## **Conclusion and lessons. Gen 35:1-29;**

**“The steps of a man are established by the LORD;  
And He delights in his way. When he falls,  
he shall not be hurled headlong;**

**Because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.”**

**I have been young, and now I am old;  
Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken,  
Or his descendants begging bread.**

**All day long he is gracious and lends;  
And his descendants are a blessing.  
(Psalm 37:23-26;)**

**“For a righteous man falls seven times,  
and rises again, But the wicked stumble  
in time of calamity.” (Proverbs 24:16;)**

**Genesis**  
**34:01; to 35:29**  
**Revenge against Shechem.**  
**Jacob's return to Bethel.**

Prepared by  
Graeme Morrison

[graemestudy@gmail.com](mailto:graemestudy@gmail.com)

<https://www.graemebibleresources.com>

**Next in the series:-**  
**Genesis 36:1-43; Esau.**