

Sunday, August 13, 2023 pm

## JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE (17)

### Patriarchal Period - 6

### Jacob (2)

As we continue our “Journey through the Bible”, discussing the 17 time periods of Bible history (we are currently studying the 4<sup>th</sup> Bible period – the age of the patriarchs. This is a time, recorded in Genesis 12-50 where God communicated His will through the patriarchs – “fathers” who were faithful to Him. We have noted Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s first part of his life.

In our last lesson, as we discussed Jacob’s birth, leaving for Haran the home of Laban, Rebekah’s brother (who married Isaac), his marrying Leah and Rachel and noted the 12 children they had thus far (11 boys and 1 girl). We concluded our study with Jacob returning after 20 years to the land of Canaan, where he would again meet Esau face to face. Esau had accepted his place and they were again at peace. Isaac was still alive, and Jacob and his clan settled in Canaan. We pick up with his interaction with his children as recorded beginning in Genesis 34.

#### I. The account

##### a. *Jacob arrives in Shechem* –

- i. **Gen 33:18-20** - he buys a piece of land from the children of Hamor and settles there for awhile. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece of land purchased by the patriarchs. The 1<sup>st</sup> was the cave of Machpelah where the patriarchs and their covenant wives were buried (Genesis 23:17-20, 49:29-33). NOTE Joshua 24:32 – Shechem is where the bones of Joseph will be buried.
- ii. He builds an altar there to the Lord. He calls it, “El Elohe Israel” (God, The God of Israel). Prior to this, he referred to YHWH as the God of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 31:42, 32:9). Recall the promise he made at Bethel as he escaped – Genesis 28:20-22.
- iii. He dwells there for awhile -estimated at several years, possibly a decade. It is estimated that Joseph would have been about 6-7 when Jacob left Laban (he was the youngest child, and Jacob had been married for 13 years then). So even with some overlap in the women bearing children, Joseph would have been fairly young. The children would have ranged from 12-13 at the oldest and moved down from there. They will not leave Shechem until after several of his sons were young men, based upon their actions in the next chapter.

- ##### b. *Dinah defiled* – Genesis 34. We have here a sad event. While living in Shechem among the Hivites, Shechem, son of Hamor, saw Dinah who was wondering around seeing “the daughters of the land”. (What this means is uncertain, but she was among idolaters.) She is violated by Shechem – it could have been violent or seduced. But he loved her and spoke kindly to her. He wants to marry her and approaches his father Hamor. Jacob hears about this incident but holds his peace until his sons come in from their work in the fields. Hamor approaches Jacob for his son to marry Dinah. He offers dowry and desires to make a covenant with Jacob. But Jacob’s sons heard it and plotted against Shechem suggesting they could only enter into that agreement if the men of Shechem would all be circumcised. They gladly agreed and while they were healing, Simeon and Levi kill Hamor, Shechem and all the men of the city, took their possessions and women & children captive. When Jacob hears of it, he is disturbed because they had made him obnoxious among the inhabitants of Canaan. They justified their vigilantism because of what Shechem did.

##### c. *Jacob returns to Bethel and there he settles* – Genesis 35:1-15.

- i. God tells Jacob to go to Bethel (where he had first made his promise as he was fleeing Esau). He is instructed to build an altar there to God.
- ii. Jacob prepares and tells his household to put away their foreign gods, purify themselves and change their garments.

- iii. They comply and hide the idols and stuff under a tree and leave.
- iv. Vs. 5, the terror of God was upon the cities around them so that they left Jacob alone.
- v. Israel arrives at Bethel (Luz) and builds the altar and calls it El Bethel (God of the house of God).
- vi. Vs. 9-14, God appears to Jacob again and reminds him that his name is now Israel. He retells the promised blessing – Be fruitful and multiply, nations would come from him including kings. The land promise is was repeated to him.
- vii. Israel set up a pillar of stone and pour out a drink offering. He called the place, Bethel.
- d. **Rachel dies while giving birth to Benjamin on the way** – Genesis 35:16-22
  - i. They continue their travels, and while going, Rachel goes into labor. But it is difficult labor and she will die. As she is being born, she wants to call the child, “Ben-Oni” (Son of my Sorrows), but Israel names him Benjamin (Son of My Right Hand).
  - ii. She is buried and the grave is marked. But Israel continues his journey further into Canaan.
  - iii. Vs. 22 - We also read that Reuben (Israel’s oldest son) lies with one of Israel’s concubines. Israel hears about it (but nothing is said about his reaction at the time)
- e. **Jacob’s 12 sons** - Genesis 35:23-26 – they are all names. These will become the 12 tribes of Israel the nation.
- f. **Isaac dies** – Genesis 35:27-29 – Israel arrives at Hebron. Isaac dies at the age of 180 and is buried by Jacob and Esau (in the Cave of Machpelah).
- g. **Genesis 36** records the descendants of Esau (still in Patriarchal age). Vs. 6-8 describes how he goes from the presence of Israel because of the greatness of their possessions. Esau dwells in Edom (Remember that as the Edomites will eventually because thorns in Israel’s side.
- h. **Joseph’s dreams** - Genesis 37 – We are introduced to Joseph as he dreams dreams of greatness.
  - i. Vs. 2 tells us that Joseph is 17 years old. He brings a bad report about some of Israel’s sons.
  - ii. Vs. 3-4 – we read that Israel loved Joseph more than his other children (favoritism). He made him a tunic of many colors. Because of this his brothers hated him and treated him wrong.
  - iii. Vs. 5-11 – he has 2 dreams, that he tells his brothers. One involved his brothers binding sheaves in the field, but his sheave arose and all the other sheaves bowed to his. Then he dreamed of the sun, moon and 11 stars all bowing before him. Even Israel is incredulous at this. His brothers hated and envied him even more because of these dreams.
- i. **Joseph is sold as a slave** – Genesis 37:12-36 – Joseph is sent by Israel to inquire of his brothers. When they saw him coming, they conspired to kill him. Reuben convinced them to not kill him, but rather to cast him into a pit (he was hoping to return and deliver him). They did that. As they were eating (evidently Reuben was not with them), they saw a group of Ishmaelite traders coming. Judah suggests they sell Joseph to them. They agree and do so for 20 shekels of silver. Joseph was taken to Egypt. When Reuben returns he find Joseph is gone and tears his clothes (a sign of mourning). They then took Joseph’s coat of many colors, killed a goat and dipped the tunic in its blood. They brought it to Jacob. When he saw it he grieved thinking Jacob had been killed by wild animals. Jacob tears his clothes and grieves for many days. We know from the text, he does not get over it! Joseph is sold by the Midianites in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh.
- j. Genesis 38 records another incident among these brothers. Judah and Tamar.

## II. **Lessons from these events**

- a. **Is God YOUR God?** Just as Israel acknowledges that the God of Abraham is also his God, so we need to have a personal relationship with God. When we are living as we ought to, *Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. John 14:23. 1 John 2:24, Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.*

- b. Do we act in haste when we are wronged? Concerning the Dinah incident, we note that Jacob held his peace. He did tell his sons (BTW, I make no judgment as to whether or not he should have done this). But they certainly overreacted – punishing an entire community over the actions of one man. This is mob mentality and it is sinful. We need to always consider how we will be perceived by others. There are ALWAYS consequences to the actions you take. Romans 13:10. 1 Corinthians 13:4 – the very first quality of love described – “Love suffers long”. CF. Romans 2:24 – His name is blasphemed because of you. 1 Corinthians 6:6-7 – “*Why do you not rather accept wrong?...*” (Note the context). Romans 12:17-19 – leave it in God’s hands.
- c. Parents, watch out for your children? Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4, etc. Where are you allowing them to dwell? Dinah was in a foreign land and troubles happened. We are in this reminded of our responsibilities as parents to protect our children. We need to know where they are going and who they are with. As much as possible, we shield them from dangers.
- d. Will you put your idols away? Idols do not have to be carved or molded images. They can be anything that you put before God. Colossians 3:5 calls covetousness - idolatry. What is covetousness? L&N gives a good definition, *a strong desire to acquire more and more material possessions or to possess more things than other people have, all irrespective of need*<sup>1</sup>
- e. Deceit is a terrible thing. Specifically, Isaac was deceived by his sons and it changed his whole demeanor about life. It is one of Satan’s favorite tools. Lessons for us include:
  - i. Deceit comes with consequences. It hurts people, including relationships. It erodes trust. It leads people “down the wrong road”.
  - ii. IF tolerated, it will erode a relationship, or even a society.
  - iii. Do not believe everything you see and hear. Investigate – 1 John 4:1. Colossians 2:8, *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*
  - iv. God despises the deceiver – Revelation 21:8 – all liars.
  - v. Ephesians 4:25, *Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another.*
- f. Favoritism, deceit, jealousy, and other unhealthy traits do not ONLY affect you. Others are impacted by one’s actions. Whether it becomes a family trait (as noted, did Jacob learn this from Isaac) or one is the recipient of their actions, others clearly pay a price, and often so do you. Whether they say anything or not, people know when someone has negative traits (this applies to positive traits as well). Philippians 2:3-4. So much of scripture addresses our attitudes and the impact they will have on others.

And thus, we see most of Jacob’s life, as well as the development of his family. Clearly, we see there were “issues” and flaws. But that did not stop God from moving forward with His plan. NOR did it keep Jacob from serving God. The point being, God works with imperfect people, including you and me. NOTE: This is not an implication that bad behavior is acceptable and to be ignored, but it does give us hope when we stray.

In our next lesson, we will deal with Joseph in Egypt.

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<sup>1</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, pp. 290–291). United Bible Societies.