

## Jacob Becomes Israel 8/7/16

Genesis 35:1-4

35 God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau." 2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. 3 Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone." 4 So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

We have the free will to disobey commands but not to thwart God's sovereign purposes for our lives.

- Needless heartache/sorrow was in store for Jacob because for 30 yrs he was 30 miles from God's will....return to Bethel & to his father. 34:30-35:1, Gal 6:7

Even after Gen 34 & 30 yrs. he struggles but God graciously, gently welcomes Jacob.

- God's grace/faithfulness leads to Jacob's devotion & obedience. 35:1-4, Ps 51:2, 7, 1 Jn 1:9, Rev 3:18

Jacob finally exercised spiritual leadership & his family followed. Better late than never!

- God didn't tell Jacob to get rid of idols. He knew they did not please God
  - Idol: is anything takes place of God & blocks you from growing in Lord & doing His will.....Even good things can become evil idols.

The key to spiritual revival is repentance.

- Identify & put away anything that hinders you from drawing near to God.
- purify yourselves: confess your sins & appropriate God's forgiveness.
- change garments= making new beginning, change of behavior.

Jacob's obedience did not mean a trouble-free life. 35:8, 16-19, 22, 29 Ps. 46:1, 7

- 3 deaths: Deborah (Mothers/his nurse), wife Rachel, father.
- Reuben committed incest with Jacob's concubine, Bilhah.

Trials can either make us self-focused or God-focused & by God's grace, Jacob responded to trials with a trust in God.

- Renamed Ben-oni (son of my sorrow) > Benjamin (Son of my right hand...going to be powerful/meaningful to me).
  - This is the only son Jacob named. He was born near a town where Jesus was born. Mt 2:1
- He put up 2 memorial pillars signifying thankfulness for God's faithfulness & faith in God's promise in spite of Rachael's death.
  - Our compassionate God encouraged & strengthened Jacob in a great time of need...between the death of Deborah & Rachel. 35:9-15,

In God's final personal appearance to a patriarch He reiterates the promises He made to Abe, Isaac & Jacob 30 yrs before.

- He also included a command God had made to Adam...Be fruitful/multiply.

- “Kings would come” was reference to Jesus Christ.
  - It connects life before sin, in the midst of sin, & the future sacrifice for sin.

In His very last meeting with Jacob God graciously calls him Israel.

- Jacob’s identity was not shaped by past failures but God’s future for him.
  - God looking upon Christians not as we are in ourselves, with all our past failure/sin but as we are in Christ. *Ps 37:23-26, Isa 61:10, 2 Tim 2:13, Rom. 2:4*

If you feel overwhelmed & disqualified by your failures & struggles with sin.

- Recall that in spite of our sin & spiritual dullness, our Lord is faithful.
  - God’s past & continuing mercies and compassion toward us in Christ should produce celebration/worship....not fear/condemnation!

