

Lesson: Family Drama and the Promise Pt 4 (Gen 33:1-34:31)

Jacob's has been given a new identity through his encounter with God. Having met God on his way back to Canaan, God blessed him and told him his name would be Israel because he was victorious with God. His old, corrupt nature—and all of its accompanying elements—was defeated. Jacob's encounter with God was purposeful to enable him to face any and all possible threats with God's help. He had sent his family ahead of him to pacify the possible vengeful nature of Esau. But after his encounter with God, while walking with a limp, he would discover he had divine strength with him. God's presence and protection had always been with him but now he will rely on them.

Biblical Takeaways

1. ***A better Jacob meets Esau and all is well (Gen 33:1-17)***
 - a. Jacob had sent his family and possessions ahead of him believing that Esau might have mercy and take some of the goods, at best. Or, he believed that he might kill or enslave some of those he sent ahead and he some of his family might escape, at worst.
 - b. But after Jacob's encounter with God, Jacob gathered his family with all of the mothers and their children and sent them over but took the head of the line (v. 3). He decided he would be the first to engage Esau. This shows the removal of his deceptive and selfish nature.
 - c. All of Jacob's fear was for nothing (v. 4). While he was expecting Esau and his four hundred men to attack him, he discovered Esau wanted to embrace and show him and his family love. Sometimes, we expect horrible things and forget that God can work things out and they are much better than we expected.
 - d. Jacob and Esau rekindle their relationship. Esau had prospered in Edom as a blessed man, despite some of his earlier tendencies towards profligacy. He desires nothing from Jacob, though Jacob insisted on giving him something. They end up parting on good terms. Jacob chooses to go to Succoth (“booths”) instead of going over to Mt. Seir with Esau.
2. ***Jacob settles in Shechem (33:18-20):*** Jacob and his family settle in Shechem where he erected an altar, naming it “God, the God of Israel.”
3. ***Dinah is violated (34:1-12)***
 - a. Jacob's daughter Dinah was violated by the Shechem (named like the city). After his violation, he desired to marry her.
 - b. He and his father approached Jacob and his sons to intermarry with them. They would marry the women of Jacob's people and vice versa.
4. ***Simeon and Levi get revenge (34:13-31)***
 - a. Simeon and Levi convince them that the only way they would go forward with their request was that they had to get circumcised (vv.15-18). The all of the men of the city agreed and while they recovered from the procedure, Simeon and Levi killed them. The other brothers plundered the city, taking not only the goods but also the people left alive.
 - b. Jacob feared the result of their behavior (v. 30). He was concerned that the other nations might gather and destroy him and his family. But his sons were indignant that they had to avenge their sister for the violation. She had been assaulted and they had to punish the men for this behavior. Samaria (Shechem) carried the significance of female violation and assault.