

- ii. God tells Jacob to build an altar there.
- C. The Lord renews and expands on the covenant. (9-15)
- i. Intensification of the blessing Jacob received in chapter 28
 - a) Genesis 28 compares closely to the blessing the Lord gave Abraham in Genesis 12.
 - b) This blessing compares closely to the blessing the Lord gave Abraham in Genesis 17.
 - ii. Jacob truly has received the blessing of Abraham... by grace through faith; faith that God intervened to complete in his life.
- D. Now that his worship is brought to completion, his family of 12 sons, a nation is also (16ff).

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Why does Jacob's stopping to camp in Shechem communicate a pause in his journey of faith? Is it possible to stop pursuing God by faith but not regress in our spiritual growth? Explain.
- What fears do you face? Are you tempted to think that security can more readily be found doing things your way than in risky obedience to God? What can we learn from Jacob regarding this?
- How might it be said that Jacob was trading one danger for another in his choice to settle in Shechem rather than proceed to Bethel?
- In what ways does Jacob's leadership fail in our text?
- What might we learn by the fact that Simeon and Levi's future leadership role in the community are changed because of these actions?
- How does chapter 35 demonstrate God's faithfulness to bring our faith to completion?
- What does this chapter say about what the blessing of Abraham means to us who have received it as believers?

Truth for Understanding Our World (Part 23) Faltering Faith, Future Leadership, and the Faithfulness of God

Jerry Cisar — November 20, 2016

Text: Genesis 33:18 – 35:21

Introduction

- A. Psalm 23
- B. Jacob has the blessing of Abraham, but Jacob is certainly no Abraham. (Genesis 18:19)

I. Faith On Hold (33:18-20)

- A. God's Promise and Jacob's Vow (Genesis 28:15, 20-22)
- B. He camped “*within sight of the city*”

II. Defilement and Failure (34:1-7)

- A. Choices and Consequences
 - i. Settling too close to Shechem is a bad choice:
 - a) God was forming a nation in order to save **all nations**.
 - b) Jacob had made a vow to go to Bethel.
 - c) Jacob traded the danger of enemies on the way to Bethel, for the dangers from close exposure to wickedness.
 - ii. Jacob's choices have some serious consequences.

B. Defilement of Dinah (1-4)

- i. It is important to understand the heinousness of this action by Shechem.
 - a) He saw her, seized her, laid (dispossessed) her, and raped her.
 - Genesis 6:2
 - b) Now he is drawn to her, loves her, and speaks tenderly to her.
- ii. This injustice requires a response. But, from God's people, a just response.

C. Jacob's Failure (5-7)

- i. Sex removed from the context of marriage is not the same thing!
- ii. We never see Jacob actively do anything either on Dinah's behalf, nor to intervene on his sons' plans.
- iii. Jacob has regressed from the Christ-likeness of Genesis 33, to the same passive, spineless leader he was in *the scenes of rivalry between Rachel and Leah*.

III. Falsity and Fury (34:8-31)

A. Sales Pitch #1 (8-12)

- i. Another sales pitch (Matthew 4:8-9)

- ii. Another gospel

B. The Big Con (13-17)

- i. The response from Jacob's sons is a mixed bag.

- ii. They also had no intention of settling among them and becoming one people.

C. Sales Pitch #2 (18-24)

- i. How do you sell a bunch of grown men on the idea of circumcision?
 - ii. *By accepting the sign of the covenant, the covenant will be done away with.*
 - a) Relevance for Israel
 - b) Relevance to the NT and Jewish persecution

D. Injustice in Seeking Justice (25-31)

- i. Does the punishment fit the crime? (Genesis 49:5-7)
- ii. Jacob shows little concern for Dinah.

E. Living in a fallen world leaves us with very complicated answers to what we must do in some very broken situations.

IV. Faith and Finishing (35:1-15)

A. Jacob's journey to fulfill his vow will be fulfilled because *God said!*

B. But what about Jacob's fear of traveling this route? (5-8)

- i. This journey has enemies on every side.