

GENESIS 35: A LIFE POURED OUT

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Something changed in Jacob after the events of the previous chapter
 - i. Jacob returned to the place he first encountered God
 - a. He obeyed God instantly
 - ii. He still encountered hardship on the way
 - iii. But we don't see him try to manipulate events for his benefit anymore

II. OVERVIEW

- A. God told Jacob to go back to Bethel
 - i. Jacob made his family get rid of all their idols and departed for Bethel
- B. God sent terror of Israel on all the cities they passed
 - i. They arrived at Bethel and Jacob built an altar
- C. God appeared to Jacob at Bethel
 - i. Reminded him of his name change
 - ii. Reminded him of the covenant
- D. Jacob and his family left Bethel
 - i. Rachel had another son but died after he was born
 - a. She called his name Benjamin
- E. Jacob settled beyond the tower of Eder
 - i. There Reuben slept with Jacob's concubine Bilhah
 - ii. He arrived at Hebron where Isaac died and was buried

III. GOD SAID TO JACOB – V. 1

- A. The fourth time God has appeared to Jacob

IV. ARISE – V. 1

- A. Jacob had a permanent residence and land in Shechem
 - i. So he would have to leave his home just like Abraham
 - ii. But he was no longer welcome in his home because of what Simeon and Levi did

V. GO UP TO BETHEL – V. 1

- A. Where Jacob originally encountered God
 - i. Revelation 2:4-5 ***But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you***

did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

- B. Where he had made unfulfilled vows to God
 - i. Works that are not fulfilled are at risk of dying
 - ii. Revelation 3:2 ***Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.***

VI. DWELL THERE – V. 1

- A. Instead of dwelling near Shechem, which was Jacob's choice
- B. The surrounding tribes likely hated Jacob after what his family did to Shechem
- C. Jacob invested a lot of time and money there
 - i. Not clear he would have been willing to leave if he wasn't hated
 - ii. God will use negative circumstances to get us where he wants us¹
- D. God never intended Jacob to settle down in one place
 - i. Genesis 15:13 ***Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years."***

VII. MAKE AN ALTAR THERE – V. 1

- A. God is calling Jacob to a new life of worship
 - i. He had been playing around the edges of obedience and worship

VIII. JACOB SAID TO HIS HOUSEHOLD – V. 2

- A. He is obeying God immediately
 - i. He is showing maturity of faith
- B. He couldn't expect his family to purify themselves if he hadn't done so first
 - i. This is what a man's strong leadership can accomplish in a family²
 - ii. Acts 16:29-34 ***And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds;***

¹ Armstrong, S. (2012w, November 11). Genesis 2011 - lesson 35A. Verse By Verse Ministry International. https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_35A

² Guzik, D. (2018). Genesis 35 - Revival In Jacob's Life. Enduring Word. <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-35/>

and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

IX. PUT AWAY THE FOREIGN GODS – V. 2

- A. Rachel had her father's idols
- B. Jacob's sons had taken the women of Shechem who likely had idols
- C. Jacob is now committing his household to worship Yahweh
 - i. Joshua 24:14-15 ***“Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”***
- D. Israel would struggle with idol worship for their entire history

X. PURIFY YOURSELVES – V. 2

- A. Purifying or washing the body symbolizes cleansing the heart or a new beginning³
 - i. 2 Corinthians 7:1 ***Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.***

XI. CHANGE YOUR GARMENTS – V. 2

- A. Like God made garments of skins for Adam and Eve to replace their garments of leaves
 - i. Covered their shame
 - ii. Fig leaves are inadequate clothing
 - a. Isaiah 64:6 ***We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.***
 - iii. Shows God's mercy

XII. THE DAY OF MY DISTRESS – V. 3

- A. Jacob has had a lot of these

XIII. WHEREVER I HAVE GONE – V. 3

- A. Jacob is confessing God's faithfulness to His promise

³ Wiersbe, W. W. (2010). *Be Authentic: Exhibiting Real Faith in the Real World: OT Commentary, Genesis 25-50*. David C. Cook.

XIV. RINGS – V. 4

- A. Associated with pagan worship
 - i. Exodus 32:1-3 ***When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” So Aaron said to them, “Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron.***
 - ii. Hosea 2:13 ***And I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals when she burned offerings to them and adorned herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her lovers and forgot me, declares the LORD.***

XV. HID THEM – V. 4

- A. Under the tree as in a burial
- B. To prevent his family from coming back for them⁴
 - i. Like Rachel did with Laban

XVI. TERROR FROM GOD – V. 5

- A. Because they had completely destroyed Shechem
 - i. No one wanted to share the same fate
- B. God was protecting them on their journey

XVII. REBEKAH’S NURSE – V. 8

- A. Indicates Rebekah had died already
 - i. Jacob may have never seen his mother again after fleeing from Esau

XVIII. BURIED UNDER AN OAK – V. 8

- A. Just like the idols earlier in the chapter
- B. Deborah was like a surrogate mother for Jacob⁵
 - i. Jacob was Rebekah’s favorite
 - ii. He would have greatly missed his mother
- C. Jacob’s family had to get rid of their idols

⁴ Armstrong, S. (2012w, November 11). Genesis 2011 - lesson 35A. Verse By Verse Ministry International. https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_35A

⁵ Armstrong, S. (2012w, November 11). Genesis 2011 - lesson 35A. Verse By Verse Ministry International. https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_35A

- i. Now Jacob had to get rid of his idol

XIX. GOD APPEARED TO JACOB AGAIN – V. 9

- A. Jacob's relationship with God had been restored due to his repentance⁶

XX. BLESSED HIM – V. 9

- A. There's nothing new in this blessing
- B. Sometimes we need a reminder that God remembers what He promised before

XXI. BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY – V. 11

- A. Same command given to Adam and Eve
 - i. This is still the purpose of God's image bearers

XXII. DRINK OFFERING – V. 14

- A. Supplemented the burnt offerings
 - i. Exodus 29:40-41 ***And with the first lamb a tenth measure of fine flour mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and a fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering. The other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it a grain offering and its drink offering, as in the morning, for a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD.***
- B. Represented a life joyfully dedicated to God's service and to worship
 - i. Philippians 2:17 ***Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.***
- C. The law for drink offerings were given after Israel rebelled against God in Numbers 13-14
 - i. The spies were sent to the land but they convinced the people they couldn't win in battle
 - ii. Israel rebelled so God told them they wouldn't enter the land for 40 years
 - iii. Then they tried to conquer the Amalekites but were defeated
 - iv. The law of the drink offering was then given for when they enter the land
 - a. Represents the rest of being in the land
 - b. Represents the victory of being in the land⁷
 - v. Jacob's drink offering was symbolizing his future victory in the land

XXIII. THEY JOURNEYED FROM BETHEL – V. 16

- A. God had just told Jacob He would give him the land He gave to his father Isaac

⁶ Guzik

⁷ Leithart, P. (2018, July 17). *The Theology of the Drink Offering*. Theopolis Institute. <https://theopolisinstitute.com/the-theology-of-the-drink-offering>

- i. So Jacob left Bethel to go to where his father was

XXIV. RACHEL WENT INTO LABOR – V. 16

- A. No indication of the rivalry with Leah from before

XXV. YOU HAVE ANOTHER SON – V. 17

- A. Rachel had previously asked God for another son
 - i. Genesis 30:24 ***And she called his name Joseph, saying, “May the LORD add to me another son!”***

XXVI. BEN-ONI – V. 18

- A. Means son of my sorrow or son of my strength
 - i. Rachel knew she wouldn’t survive his birth
 - ii. His life would be marked by sorrow at the loss of his mother⁸
- B. Previously, Rachel would have considered this a victory over Leah
 - i. But that competition has only brought her sorrow at the end of her life⁹

XXVII. BENJAMIN – V. 18

- A. Means son of the right hand
 - i. Right hand associated with strength or honor
 - ii. Son that would be honored¹⁰
 - a. Israel’s first king would be from the tribe of Benjamin
 - b. Apostle Paul would be from the tribe of Benjamin
- B. Jacob’s twelfth son would become the twelfth tribe of Israel

XXVIII. RACHEL DIED – V. 19

- A. Rachel had previously told Jacob she would die if she didn’t have a son
 - i. Genesis 30:1 ***When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I shall die!”***
- B. Jacob had cursed the one who stole Laban’s gods
 - i. Genesis 31:32 ***“Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live. In the presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours, and take it.”*** Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

XXIX. EPHRATH – V. 19

⁸ Wiersbe

⁹ Guzik

¹⁰ Wiersbe

- A. Means *fruitful*
- B. Another name for Bethlehem
 - i. Means *house of bread*
 - ii. Eventual birthplace of Jesus

XXX. TOWER OF EDER – V. 21

- A. Watchtower for shepherds near Bethlehem
- B. Means *tower of the flock*
- C. Same area where the shepherds were told about the birth of Jesus

XXXI. LAY WITH BILHAH – V. 22

- A. Like Ham went and lay with his father Noah's wife
 - i. Genesis 9:22-25 ***And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers."***
- B. Attempt to challenge his father's leadership and exert power over the family
 - i. Absalom tried to take the throne by taking David's concubines
 - a. 2 Samuel 16:20-23 ***Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your counsel. What shall we do?" Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house, and all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench to your father, and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened." So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof. And Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. Now in those days the counsel that Ahithophel gave was as if one consulted the word of God; so was all the counsel of Ahithophel esteemed, both by David and by Absalom.***
- C. This is why he lost his birthright and blessing
 - i. He became impatient and tried to obtain his inheritance early
 - a. Just like Jacob dishonored his father to obtain the blessing
 - ii. Cursed just like Ham was cursed
- D. No indication of rape

XXXII. ISRAEL HEARD OF IT – V. 22

- A. The name used to describe Jacob gives us insight into the nature of his actions
- B. Israel acts wisely by removing Reuben's birthright

XXXIII. TWELVE – V. 22

- A. The number of God's government

XXXIV. THESE WERE THE SONS OF JACOB – V. 26

- A. This list of Jacob's sons was inserted here for a purpose
 - i. Shows the order of succession for who would receive the covenant blessing¹¹
- B. Leah's first three sons had already disqualified themselves
 - i. Leaving Judah as the next oldest that could receive the blessing
- C. But Rachel was Jacob's favored wife
 - i. So Joseph could also be considered the next one to receive the blessing
 - ii. But the list clearly places Joseph after Judah
- D. This family is totally dysfunctional
 - i. Three generations after Abraham and they are sexually immoral and murderous
 - ii. But God used them anyway to bring blessing on the nations
 - a. How much more will God use us when we are imperfect but repentant
 - b. We may not always know it in our lifetime

XXXV. JACOB CAME TO HIS FATHER – V. 27

- A. Fulfills God's word to Jacob
 - i. Genesis 28:15 ***Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.***
- B. Fulfills Jacob's vow to God
 - i. Genesis 28:20-21 ***Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God..."***

XXXVI. HE DIED – V. 29

- A. Jacob was now the patriarch of the family
 - i. Isaac's inheritance was now Jacob's
 - ii. Reuben tried to take his authority too early

¹¹ Sailhamer, J. H. (2008b). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (T. Longman & D. E. Garland, Eds.; Revised Edition). Zondervan.

XXXVII. FULL OF DAYS – V. 29

- A. Just like Abraham was

XXXVIII. JACOB’S FAITHFULNESS IS TESTED

- A. Jacob seems to make a renewed commitment to follow God at the beginning of the chapter
- i. He is immediately faced with three deaths in his family
 - a. Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse
 - b. Rachel, Jacob’s wife
 - c. Isaac, Jacob’s father
 - ii. Three is the number of testing
 - iii. His son Reuben also tests his standing as patriarch in the family by laying with Jacob’s concubine
- B. Similar to how Abraham and Isaac were tested after receiving the promise
- i. Abraham with a famine
 - ii. Isaac with the Philistines stopping up his wells
- C. A dedicated life does not mean an easy life
- i. Usually means a more difficult life

XXXIX. POINTS TO JESUS

- A. Rachel’s labor unto death became a picture of Israel waiting for Messiah¹²
- i. Jeremiah 31:15 ***Thus says the LORD: “A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.”***
 - a. Jeremiah 31:1-14 is a prophecy of the future glory of Israel under the reign of Messiah
 - b. Jeremiah 31:16-40 is an exhortation to stop weeping because God will establish a new covenant with Israel
 - ii. Matthew 2:16-18 ***Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: “A***

¹² Sailhamer

voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

- a. Jesus and his family had to flee to Egypt because Herod was murdering children in Bethlehem
- B. Benjamin was born near Bethlehem, birthplace of Jesus
 - i. Rachel named him sorrow, Jacob named him honor
 - a. Jesus’ birth would one day bring both sorrow and honor to Bethlehem¹³
 - i. Sorrow from the babies killed by Herod
 - ii. Honor at being remembered as the birthplace of Jesus
 - b. Jesus was a man of sorrows and also honored at the right hand of God
 - i. Isaiah 53:3 **He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.**
 - ii. Psalm 110:1 **The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”**
- C. The tower of Eder was where the shepherds were told about Jesus’ birth
 - i. This area was specifically used to cultivate livestock for temple sacrifices¹⁴
 - ii. The sign the angels gave referred to the process for protecting a lamb after birth¹⁵
 - a. Luke 2:12 **“And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”**
 - iii. Jesus is the Watchtower of the Flock

XL. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- A. What is the best way to get your entire household to serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15)?

- B. Do you have any promises that you’ve made to God that have gone unfulfilled? What in your life do you still need to surrender to Him?

¹³ Wiersbe

¹⁴ Buehler, J. (2022, November 22). *The Tower of The Flock*. ICEJ. <https://www.icej.org/blog/the-tower-of-the-flock/>

¹⁵ Hampton, H. (2022, January 1). *Migdal Eder – The Anointed One of Israel!*. Promised Land Ministries. <https://promisedlandministries.wordpress.com/2022/01/01/migdal-eder-the-anointed-one-of-israel/>

C. Do you have any gods that you need to put away so you can serve the Lord fully?

D. Why do you think God reminded Jacob of His name “God Almighty” before blessing him?

E. What has God used in your life to remind you of His blessings and promises? How has this encouraged you?

F. Why do you think following Jesus makes life more difficult?

G. What are some ways that God has tested your faith? How has He used this to strengthen your faith?

XLI. FURTHER STUDY

- A. Why is it important that the high priest received new garments in Zechariah 3? What does this symbolize for Joshua and for the nation of Israel?

- B. What are some parallels between Genesis 30 and Micah 4:8-10? What point is the prophet trying to make by drawing on this story in Genesis? Consider the context in Micah 4.

- C. What could Reuben have been trying to accomplish by usurping Jacob's authority? How does the tribe of Reuben attempt the same thing in Numbers 32:1-5? What personality trait(s) did Reuben seem to pass down to his sons?

- D. Read through Joshua 24. Notice the similar language and parallels between these two chapters and list them here. What is the common theme between the two chapters? What is Genesis 35 foreshadowing?

- E. Why was Paul so angry in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5? What about this man's affair was made worse considering its historical context?

- F. How does Rachel's labor unto death continue to this day as we wait for Jesus' return? See Matthew 24: 5-8; Romans 8:18-25.
