

Genesis Part II (Chapters 25-50)

Lesson 5: Jacob's Life in Canaan and Family of Esau

Reading: Genesis 34:1-36:43

Having been richly blessed with family, flocks, and herds, Jacob is told by God to leave Laban and return to the land of his fathers. Rachel and Leah endorse Jacob's decision, recognizing what God has given to Jacob belong to them as well. Jacob secretly departs with his family and possessions, and Laban pursues Jacob, overtaking him in the mountains of Gilead. Laban asserts his power to do Jacob harm, but states he was warned by God in a dream not to treat Jacob poorly. Laban accuses Jacob of stealing his household gods, which leads to an empty search with Laban not knowing that Rachel has taken them. Jacob then gives a scathing rebuke of Laban, recounting his deception during Jacob's 20 years of service to him. The two men establish a covenant through a heap of stones which serves as a witness that each man will not harm the other. As Jacob approaches Canaan, he is fearful of Esau's wrath for his deceitful acts of 20 years ago. He attempts to protect his family by dividing them into two companies and prays to God for protection. He also organizes a gift of flocks and herds, delivered to Esau in separate droves by servants. Jacob sends his family and possessions forward and remains behind. He wrestles with an angel until the break of day and asks for a blessing; as a result, his name is changed from Jacob to Israel. Jacob then reunites with Esau who welcomes him with open arms and offers to journey with him. Instead, Jacob settles in Succoth and builds housing for his family and livestock. He later leaves and settles outside the city of Shechem, where he buys a parcel of land and erects an altar to God.

The Dinah Incident (34:1-31)

1. What proposal does Hamor make to Jacob and his sons as part of asking permission for Dinah to become Shechem's wife (34:8-12)?
2. What requirement do the sons of Jacob levy upon the men of Shechem in order to accept their proposal, and what are the motivations of Shechem and the men of the town (34:13-24)?
3. What was Jacob's reaction to the deception carried out by Simeon and Levi (34:30)?

Genesis Part II (Chapters 25-50)

Jacob's return to Bethel (35:1-15)

4. Why does Jacob return to Bethel (35:1-4)?

5. What promises does God repeat to Jacob at Bethel (35:9-12)?

Death of Rachel (35:16-20)

Reuben's sin (35:21-22)

6. What sin does Reuben commit? What is the ultimate outcome (35:22; 49:3-4)?

Sons of Jacob (35:23-26)

Death of Isaac (35:27-29)

Family of Esau (36:1-43)

7. What does 36:6-8 tell us about the prosperity of Jacob and Esau and their relationship?