

Genesis 35

Read Genesis 35:1-21: Jacob is starting to get more serious about his faith as his life remains chaotic and unsatisfying. He tells his family that the time has come to ditch all of their idols. God told him to move to Bethel, where God appeared to Abraham. God told him to build an altar there. This is where Jacob had the original stairway to heaven dream, and dedicated his life to God, should he return.

The Hebrew word used here for altar means place of *slaughter*. The word for Bethel means *house of God*. It is interesting that true worship involves something dying and clearing the path for a better connection.

Now Jacob is making the right decisions, though his family is a mess. God protected Jacob from the retribution of the Canaanites as they feared them over the Shechem slaughter incident. Part of the Christian walk involves the discovery that you are not going to be everybody's friend.

Why did they bury Deborah the maid in the same place with all of the buried idols and jewelry? It was all under the big oak tree. This tree was named the Oak of Weeping. Perhaps the family was also sad to dump all of their idols and jewelry.

Now things are starting to roll pretty well with God. God reminds Jacob of his new identity in God. Now that Jacob is on the right track God can bless the multiplication of Jacob. To have given him peace in Padan Aram with Laban and multiplication would have resulted in producing an unholy nation.

It sounds like Jacob actually saw Jesus here. Things become much more personal with God when we become more personal with him. Benjamin was born here. Now Jacob is unknowingly experiencing messianic prophecy taking place. Rachel died in Ephrath (Bethlehem). This caused a lot of crying. This verse became the future reference for all of the young children slaughtered in Bethlehem around the time of Jesus birth.

Read Genesis 35:22-29: The results of rearing children with weak faith are coming to roost. Ruben was Jacob's first child. He slept with Bilhah, his father's maid.

Isaac died, and both Jacob and Esau came to bury their father. Nothing is really said about Jacob inheriting his families flock upon their death, but he did.