
GENESIS: IT ALL STARTS HERE

A PEOPLE FROM A MAN

GENESIS 35:1-15

God said to Jacob, *“Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.”*

So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, *“Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.”*

So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

And as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

And Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him, and there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother.

And Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried under an oak below Bethel. So he called its name Allon-bacuth.

God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him.

And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.” So he called his name Israel.

And God said to him, “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.”

Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him.

And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it. So Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him Bethel.

INTRODUCTION

A mass of humanity is represented in Jacob, and he is truly the father of a nation. Many individuals became a notable people, and they all may trace their origin to this man. Like Jacob, Adam is also a man from whom a people have emerged. Humanity owes its origin to this one man. Adam, however, is not usually viewed in positive light, because his representation of humanity was the quintessential bad representation. And yet, there was a “second Adam” who represented humanity well. Jesus Christ is the better representative, and He too creates a people for Himself. Those who love and trust in Christ, are a people from a man, and we shall consider the depths of this profound reality in this message.

MESSAGE OUTLINE:

(1) THE CONTEXT: LEAVING JACOB & BECOMING ISRAEL

(2) CALAMITY FOLLOWS BAD REPRESENTATION

(3) CHRIST IS THE BETTER REPRESENTATIVE

MESSAGE:

(1) THE CONTEXT: LEAVING JACOB & BECOMING ISRAEL

◆ JACOB'S LIFE IS FULL OF PRETENSE AND MANIPULATION

● **Jacob's intro - manipulating a birthright.**

- He shrewdly gets his brother to sell him his birthright for a bowl of “red stuff” (Gen. 25:29-34).

● **Jacob's next act - a deceitful plan to steal a blessing.**

- Jacob had already gotten Esau to give his birthright away, but now Jacob and his mother devised a plan to ensure that the family blessing would accompany it (Gen. 27:5-13).

● **Jacob ran away in a scheming attempt to avoid facing facts.**

- Esau became angry with Jacob over the blessing fiasco, and Rebekah (the boys' mother) devised a plan to help Jacob escape with his father's blessing (Gen. 27:41-46).

- **Jacob even tried to manipulate God.**
 - After God shows Jacob a shadowy demonstration of His intent to dwell with humanity by way of a “ladder” that bridges the gap between heaven and earth, Jacob still prays a prayer of selfish and manipulative intent. *“If God will _____, then the Lord shall be my God.”* (Gen. 28:18-22).
- **Jacob became a polygamist, selfishly yielding to another’s schemes.**
 - Jacob made an agreement with a distant relative, so that he would be able to marry the woman he admired. However, that relative had plans of his own, and he gave Jacob another woman as his wife. Instead of pursuing more appropriate measures to right the wrong, Jacob simply added the prized woman as a second wife (Gen. 29:15-30).
- **Jacob conceived children with 2 wives and 2 concubines.**
 - Jacob, like his grandfather (Abraham), conceived children with the servant of his wife. However, Jacob’s promiscuity was doubled, since he had two wives and both offered their servants as concubines (Gen. 30:1-13).
- **Jacob secretly tried to run away from both his wives’ father.**
 - Fearing reprisals, Jacob packed up his family – 2 wives, 2 concubines, 11 sons, and 1 daughter – and all that he had gained in livestock, and they all ran away from the father of his two wives (Gen. 31:17-21).
- **Jacob plotted to win favor with his estranged brother.**
 - With a generous portion of all that he owned, Jacob devised a manipulative plan to give gifts to his brother in order to buy his favor. Jacob sent his servants ahead of him in droves to present these gifts as distinct peace offerings. All the while, Jacob did not intend to serve his brother... He intended to rule him (Gen. 32:6-21).
- **Jacob played favorites among his wives and children.**
 - This is a pervasive theme throughout Jacob’s life, but it is epitomized in the way Jacob apportioned the line of his family as they trailed him towards Esau. Jacob feared that Esau would kill him and his family, so he placed his wives and their respective children in a line from least important to most. His plan was to give those at a greater distance a better chance to flee and survive (Gen. 33:1-2).

- **Jacob stopped short of obedience to God's command: "Go to Bethel."**
 - Jacob came back to Canaan, but he did not go to Bethel. God commanded Jacob to go to Bethel (Gen. 28:19, cf. Gen. 31:13), but Jacob urged Esau to let him settle in Shechem (Gen. 33:15-20).
- **Jacob thought only of self-preservation when his daughter was defiled.**
 - After Dinah, Jacob's only daughter, was defiled by a prince in this half-point land towards Bethel, Jacob did not respond at all. Even when the offender approached Jacob, it was only his sons that answered him. Jacob was completely passive in all of it (Gen. 34:1-17).
- **Jacob allowed and did not condemn his sons' acts of mass murder and blasphemy.**
 - Vengeance motivated Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, to use the high mark of God's covenantal blessings upon them (circumcision) as a tool for their own retaliation. In a murderous rage, they deceived and killed an entire city of men. In all of this, Jacob's only voiced concern was that he might face reprisals from a stronger enemy (Gen. 34:13-31).

◆ AND YET, JACOB IS RECIPIENT OF BLESSING

- **In spite of all Jacob did and was, God blessed him.**
 - God renamed Jacob, and reiterated the blessing of Abraham and Isaac: "*9 God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and **blessed him.** 10 And God said to him, 'Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but **Israel shall be your name.**' So he called his name Israel. 11 And God said to him, '**I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. 12 The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.**'*" (Gen. 35:9-12).

◆ THE STORYLINE CONTINUES

• **Jacob's sons are much like him.**

- **Ruben** slept with his father's concubine as an act of usurping his authority and claiming it for himself.
- **Simeon** and **Levi** murdered a city of men, and used the sacred sign of circumcision as a pretense for their violence.
- **Judah's** promiscuity got him into big trouble on more than one occasion, and he also acted disgracefully regarding his family responsibilities.
- We don't know a ton about **Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Zebulun,** and **Issachar**; but all of these made a collaborative effort to punish Joseph for their father's favoritism.
- **Joseph** is the exception to the rule here, and he is a standout for good reason.
 - Joseph serves as a type or shadow of the Christ who is to come, and he sparkles amongst his brothers. This, of course, plays a major role is his ill-treatment at their hands.
- **Benjamin** was the youngest son, and his personal actions are also mostly unknown. Benjamin was tossed about when Joseph became a ruler in Egypt, but he is merely the passive character there.

• **People of Israel**

- Time would not afford us the opportunity to recount the ups and downs of Israel.
 - These are a "people" who resemble their "man" Jacob/Israel.
 - They were humble and obedient at short intervals
 - They were vile and corrupt on many occasions
 - They remained the people of God, formed from a man

(2) CALAMITY FOLLOWS BAD REPRESENTATION

◆ REP: JACOB

- **As recounted already, Jacob's bad representation is exemplary.**
 - An Example to follow: Jacob, on many occasions, serves as an example of how to be bad. He also serves as an example of one under God's blessing.
 - Exemplary Model: Jacob serves as a model of what is to come.
 - Representation: Through Jacob's divine blessing, they receive God's blessing as well.

◆ REP: ADAM

- **Adam is the quintessential bad representative.**
 - An Example to follow: Adam shows us how to disobey God's authority and pursue our own craving for it.
 - Exemplary Model: All of Adam's descendants follow in his footsteps.
 - Representation: Through Adam's divine curse, his descendants must live under the curse of God as well.
 - A Representative is an individual who acts on behalf of another.
 - Adam acted on behalf of all humanity, and his disobedience brought calamity to all.
 - "...one trespass led to condemnation for all men..." (Rom. 5:18).
 - "sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned..." (Rom. 5:12).
 - "...by the one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners..." (Rom. 5:19).
 - "...because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man..." (Rom. 5:17).

(3) CHRIST IS THE BETTER REPRESENTATIVE

◆ REPRESENTATION

● **Active Obedience.**

- Christ lived the perfectly obedient life, that life which God's law/authority requires of all humans.

- *"...as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by **the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous**" (Rom. 5:19).*

● **Passive Obedience.**

- Christ gave Himself up to be counted as the greatest sinner of all time, in order that God's justice would be satisfied.

- *"...as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so **one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men**" (Rom. 5:18).*

● **Creating a New People**

- In His Representation, Christ creates for Himself a new people.

- Christ *"gave himself for us **to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession**" (Titus 2:14).*

- You who love and trust in this Savior are *"a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **a people for his own possession, [so] that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light**" (1 Pet. 2:9).*

- All those who look to Christ, who trust in His perfect person and representative work on their behalf, are recreated and made anew – they are the people of God in Christ!

◆ AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

● **The Call to Reformation – *Be Holy, for I am Holy.***

- Christ serves, then, as our example of holiness

- Peter implores us, *"As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called*

you is holy, **you also be holy in all your conduct**, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Pet. 1:14–16).

- Paul tells us that this is the purpose for which God has loved His children from before the foundation of the world, that “**we should be holy and blameless before him**” (Eph. 1:4).
- Therefore, all who love and trust Christ must follow their Savior and Master – we must strive for holiness and Christlikeness, not to earn our place among His people, but precisely because we are now His people!

◆ AN EXEMPLARY MODEL

- **The Promise of Reformation – *Making His People in His Image.***
 - Christ also serves as a model of those who follow Him.
 - Paul tells us that God promised to “**conform to the image of his Son**” all those He, by grace, adopts into His family (Rom. 8:29).
 - Paul says elsewhere, “**So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit**” (Eph. 2:19–22).
 - Therefore, we may rest in the assurance that God is working in us to bring about the holiness to which He calls us... We are guaranteed to be formed, ultimately, into the image of Christ. We shall be like Him!

MY PRAYERS

- May God forgive us for following the example of Adam.
- May God humble and comfort us as we see His blessing upon the likes of Jacob.
- May God grant us grace to rest in and strive for the holiness of Christ.

APPLICATION:

- (1) What is this passage asking me to believe about God and myself?
- (2) What is this passage asking me to believe about sin and salvation?
- (3) What is this passage asking me to believe about the world and the world to come?
- (4) What sin is this passage forbidding? And What duty is this passage commanding?
- (5) What grace, fruit, or gift of the Spirit is this passage calling for?
- (6) How should this passage impact my relationship with God? My family? My friends? My neighbors? My enemies?
- (7) Is this passage addressed to believers, unbelievers, hypocrites, doubters, etc?
- (8) What does this passage teach me about my responsibilities as a church member, a citizen, an employee/employer?
- (9) Is there an example here I am being urged to follow or avoid?
- (10) What is there in this passage to lead me into worship?
- (11) Does this passage admonish, rebuke, convict, or warn me? Why and how?
- (12) Does this passage encourage, comfort, console, or promise me? Why and how?
- (13) What is this passage asking me to question or examine?
- (14) Does this verse ask me to look at the past, the present, or the future?
- (15) Is this passage addressing my mind, my emotions, my will, my desires, or my conscience?
- (16) Is this passage focused on me as an individual or upon the church (local or universal)?
- (17) What is this passage intended to change in me? My family? My church? My workplace? My world?