

Week 23
Genesis 33 and 34

Read Genesis 33:1-11

1. Jacob has just been blessed by God (Gen. 32:28-29) and given the new name of Israel, meaning "governed by God." What does he do when he sees Esau coming with his 400 men?

- What likely emotions was his family experiencing as he positioned them in line?

- Years later, what was the result of this favoritism Jacob had shown to Joseph? See Genesis 37:12-36.

1. Jacob and Esau both prepared for this meeting: Jacob sent 550 animals ahead of him and Esau came with 400 men. What do you think was the purpose of each brother?

- It's been 20 years since the brothers parted in anger. Esau had claimed he would kill Jacob (27:41), so Jacob's fear is valid. Did Jacob dishonor God and his new name by showing obeisance to his brother?

- Does Esau's reaction to seeing his brother surprise you?

- What opportunity did Jacob miss by not telling Esau about his night with God and his new name? How does Jacob give God credit in these verses?

Read Genesis 33:12-20

2. What excuse did Jacob use when Esau suggested they travel together to Seir?

How does Jacob deceive Esau again when Esau suggests he leave a few of his men to travel with Jacob?

3. In Genesis 31:3 and 13, God told Jacob to go to Bethel. Where does he end up instead?

What does he do to show he plans to settle there?

Why do you think Jacob chose Succoth over Bethel?

4. In naming the altar El Elohe Israel ("God, the God of Israel"), what is he claiming in that title?

What is God's position on sacrifice? See I Samuel 15:22.

Read Genesis 34:1-31

5. Consider the situation in verse 1. Why would Dinah go and visit the pagan women of the land? What does it say about her heart that she would go unprotected by not taking a servant or brother with her?

6. When Jacob heard that Dinah had been defiled by Shechem, a prince in the land, do you think his inaction was wise or foolish? What was the reaction of his sons?
 - Why was Hamor's suggestion abhorrent "in Israel"?

 - Is this the first time Scripture refers to Abraham's descendants as "Israel" (vs.7)?

7. What did Dinah's brothers do that carried on the deception they learned from their father?

- Circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants that He would be their God and Canaan would be their everlasting possession (Gen. 17:7-10). How were Jacob's sons abusing God's covenant?
- What did Dinah's full-blood brothers (Simeon and Levi) do to vindicate her honor?
- What did the other sons of Joseph do?
- Jacob's sons acted like the pagans in Shechem. How did Jacob share that responsibility?

8. How does Jacob rebuke Simeon and Levi?

9. List the ways you see Jacob as a work in progress.

10. A crisis will often show what we are made of. We can discern a person's character in how they handle a situation. How would you handle this crisis if you were Jacob? What can you learn from Jacob about what we should and shouldn't do in a crisis?