

Character Study: Jacob

Part 4 – Jacob Learns about Loyalty

Genesis 34-49

What's happening?

- Jacob continued his journey back to Canaan. Along the way he made a stop in Shechem, where his daughter was greatly mistreated. Two of his sons responded by killing the men there and plundering their city. Jacob feared the surrounding cities would retaliate. (34:1-31)
- God told Jacob to go to Bethel (located in Canaan). In preparation, Jacob told his family to put away the foreign gods that were among them, purify themselves, and change their clothes. This act of purification showed their desire for complete loyalty to God. (35:1-4)
- Arriving in Bethel, God told Jacob to multiply, reminding him that a nation would come from him, as well as future kings. (35:5-15)
- Shortly later, during the birth of Jacob's twelfth son (Benjamin), Rachel died. Jacob journeyed to see his father and was able to reunite with him before his father passed away as well. (35:16-29)
- Later in life, Jacob would travel with his family down to Egypt (see "Joseph" study). The Israelites would not return to live in their land again until Joshua led them back in hundreds of years later. Jacob blessed each of his sons before his death at the age of 147. (46:1-49:33)

What's God doing?

- > The stop in Shechem was unnecessary and only prolonged Jacob from reaching his final destination. God used this as a means to both convict Jacob of the dangers of idolatry and teach him about loyalty.
- > The blessing Jacob gave Judah (49:8-12) is interestingly prophetic in that it recognized Judah's superiority over his brothers, even stating that through him one would come that would receive "the obedience of the people." This prophecy points to the royal kingship that would come through Judah (fulfilled in David, and ultimately in Christ – [Matt. 1:1-16](#); [Rev. 5:5](#)).

What's to learn?

→ Jacob got sidetracked on his journey, resulting in a horrible situation in Shechem. He failed to grasp the importance of holiness and loyalty to God. Are you sidetracked in your obedience to God? Jacob found the key to obedience is staying focused on the goal! We must do the same!