

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #75

Genesis 35:1-9

Jacob was a believer who had been elected by God to accomplish great things, but on his way to accomplishing those things, he got sidetracked by the world and as a result both he and his family experienced many dark consequences. However, **Genesis 35 is an exciting chapter because it shows that a believer can change**. The light can come back. Revival can occur.

NO MATTER HOW WORLDLY OR BACKSLIDDEN THE BELIEVER HAS BECOME OR HOW DARK OR DEPRAVED HIS PAST HISTORY HAS BEEN, IF THE BELIEVER WILL TURN FROM HIS SIN AND TURN TO OBEYING GOD, GOD WILL LEAD HIM, BLESS HIM AND USE HIM.

God's elect are always God's elect no matter what they have done, no matter how disobedient they may have been. When one of God's elect finally gets fed up with the world and his sin and purposes to obey God's Word and do God's will, God will lead him, bless him and use him.

OBSERVATION #1 - God speaks to a worldly believer. 35:1

Keep the context in mind - when God spoke to Jacob, Jacob had pretty much forgotten about God. He is not where God wanted him to be, he has lost total control of his family and he is totally focused on himself (Genesis 34:30). When you read the opening of verse 1 - "Then God said to Jacob," it is a tremendous demonstration of God's grace because God could have legitimately stopped speaking to Jacob.

Message #1 - Go to Bethel. 35:1a

Jacob needed to get out of worldly Shechem and he needed to get back to Bethel. There was no way that he could find God's blessings while fellowshiping with the godless world or living life like the godless world.

Message #2 - Live in Bethel. 35:1b

The Hebrew Word "live" means that Jacob was to inhabit, to remain and to abide in Bethel (Gesenius) *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 371-372). This was not to be a temporary move, but a permanent move.

Message #3 - Worship God in Bethel. 35:1c

Jacob was to build an altar unto God right back at the spot where God first appeared to him (Genesis 28: 10-19). This was the spot God wanted to be worshipped. **Worship that is acceptable to God is not worship on our terms but on God's terms**. It is not in a place of our choosing but His choosing.

Lessons:

- 1) Great spiritual revival is often preceded by a period of gross disobedience, sin and disgrace, Chapter thirty-five in a believer's life is often preceded by a chapter thirty-four.**
- 2) Great, spiritual revival is initiated by God, not man. God first spoke to Jacob (35:1).**
- 3) Great spiritual revival demands leaving the environment that drags you down.**
- 4) Great spiritual revival comes by living in godly environments with godly people.**
- 5) Great spiritual revival comes by worshipping God on His terms.**

OBSERVATION#2 - The worldly believer and his family obeys God. 35:2-9

Jacob starts taking the spiritual lead:

Action #1 - Jacob verbally testifies to everyone. 35:2a

This is a remarkable transformation because not too long prior to this, Jacob was so caught up with the world that he "kept silent" (34:5). Now he is testifying to his family and all others.

Action #2 - Jacob demanded total separation from the world. 35:2b-3

The verb "put away" is one that literally means to go away from and to depart from (Ibid., p. 582). There needed to be a total break from the old way of life. Jacob demands his family turn their backs on worldly things and put God first in their lives. They needed to change their worldly garments and be clean.

Action #3 - Jacob's family listened to and obeyed his demands. 35:4

The foreign gods (v. 2) apparently consisted of things that could be hand-held and earrings which could be worn. Before moving to blessing they buried these things and left them. They turned their backs on them and literally walked away. God will not ever fully bless His family, in any dispensation, until they get rid of worldly, godless things.

Action #4 - Jacob moved his family to Bethel. 35:5-9

(Result #1) - The nations feared God. 35:5 - Other people sensed this is God's property.

(Result #2) - Jacob built an altar. 35:6-7 El-bethel means God of Bethel, not God of Shechem.

(Result #3) - Rebekah's nurse died. 35:8 - Three die in this chapter: Deborah dies (35:8); Rachel dies (35:19); Isaac dies (35:29). Allon-bacuth means "the oak of weeping." Deborah's entire life was one of serving. Jacob wasted a lot of life worldly.

(Result #4) - God blessed Jacob. 35:9

Verse 9 is encouraging because even though there were regrets, there would come rich blessings.