

**God's Refining Grace:  
Unexpected Reconciliation and God's Promise Fulfilled  
Genesis 33  
July 27, 2022**

For over a year we've studied the life of Jacob and the word writ large over all of Jacob's life from Gen. 25:12-32:32 is grace.

*In what ways has God been gracious to Jacob from Gen. 25:12-32:32?*

All these blessings were given to/provided for Jacob despite his sin – his deceptiveness, his prayerlessness, his selfishness – which has been on full display throughout his life. But before Jacob was born, he was a man chosen by God and loved by God. (Mal. 1:2-3, Rom. 9:13)

As we turn the page from chapter 32 to chapter 33, we transition from seeing the start of Jacob's new relationship with God to the restoration of his relationship with Esau. Matt. 22:37-40.

**I. Jacob's Final Preparations (1-3)**

In verse 1 we see that the night has passed and now Jacob sees the approach of Esau and his men.

*In what ways do we see the "old" and the changed Jacob at work in verses 1-3?*

As Jacob bows before Esau we see the reversal of the words with which Isaac blessed Jacob in Gen. 27:29.

**II. Jacob and Esau's Reconciliation (4-17)**

Verse 4 tells us that as Jacob bows before his brother possibly trembling in fear and not knowing what to expect Esau runs to him. Twenty years has passed, there's much damage that has been done to this relationship, but in a scene that parallels the end of Jesus' parable of the prodigal son.

*What is a major difference seen between Jacob and Esau in their dialogue in verses 4-11?*

In this moment of reconciliation, we see Esau enabled to forgive Jacob, but we also see Jacob enabled to repent. Jacob presents himself to Esau and seeks to bring restitution.

Both words for Jacob's gifts – present and blessings - display his attempt to right the wrong of his deception used to gain the blessing and his attempt to repay some of the material blessings that were stolen from Esau. Gen. 27:28.

Esau offers to personally journey with Jacob and his family and offers what is akin to a security detail for Jacob and his family. Jacob refuses both offers.

Notice that Jacob never says that he can't follow Esau to Edom. Instead, Jacob offers as "outs" the tender and weakened state of the livestock and children which is true to a certain extent.

So instead of Seir Jacob arrives in Succoth which is east of the Jordan.

### **III. God's Promise Fulfilled (18-20)**

Jacob's safe arrival to the city of Shechem marks the fulfillment of God's promise to Jacob that was pronounced in Gen. 28:15.

In verse 20 we see Jacob erecting an altar to commemorate a meaningful event in his life.

The building of the altar in Shechem is problematic because the past narrative of Genesis has pointed to Bethel as the place that Jacob was to return to in Canaan. Gen. 35:11-13.

*What are points of application for the Christian in Gen. 33?*