

Jacob Returns to Canaan

Genesis 32, 33, 35

Teenagers today are under a lot of pressure from their peers. The world tries very hard to force them to make split-second decisions whether they understand the consequences or not. Have you ever felt that pressure? Friends may try to encourage you smoke, do drugs, steal, and worse. We make mistakes; we are sinners. But that does not make it right. The Lord reminds us to face up to faults and mistakes; to look to Him for guidance and love but above all for forgiveness.



In today's lesson, Jacob is ready to return home. He left home in a hurry because he was pressured into doing something that was not right. Jacob was not pressured by his friends to lie and cheat his father and brother but by his own mother. Now he feels the need to return home, ask for forgiveness, and raise his family in the land of Canaan.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, we know that You care for us better than we could ever care for ourselves, You alone know what is best for us. We ask You now to give each of us the unshakable confidence in You as our Protector and Provider. Grant that through the study of this lesson we might come to realize that just as You were with Jacob and brought him safely through many adversities, so You will always protect and provide for each one of Your children. Bless our study of this truth, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

The Story - Genesis 32, 33, 35

Jacob makes the final preparation for returning home. The Lord reassured Jacob that this was the right thing by sending angels to meet Jacob. When Jacob left home, he was fleeing from Esau, his brother. Still unsure how his brother Esau would accept Jacob's return, special preparation needed to be made. First Jacob sent messengers ahead to inform Esau that he was coming home. The messengers returned to

Jacob and told him that Esau, along with 400 men, was coming to meet Jacob. This news caused Jacob to be afraid. Why 400 men? Was Esau still upset with his brother?

Looking to his human understanding, Jacob divided his family and possessions into two groups. If Esau destroyed the first group, then the second group could escape. Next, Jacob turned to the Lord in prayer requesting that the Lord grant him a safe



home-coming. Jacob reminded the Lord of the promises that God had given to him, such as the promise of becoming a great nation. Jacob, trusting in the knowledge that it was the Lord's will that he return home, sent the first group of animals and servants to his brother Esau. Jacob instructed the servants to tell Esau that these were gifts from his brother. After the first group left Jacob moved his two wives, their servants, and his eleven sons over a brook to protect them in case Esau did not accept Jacob's gifts.

That night, while waiting to learn of Esau's response to Jacob's gifts, Jacob wrestled with a Man until the breaking of day. The Man was the Lord. As morning was waking, Jacob would not let go of the Man. Jacob requested a blessing from the Man. The Lord blessed Jacob by changing his name to Israel because he had struggled with God and with men, and prevailed.

As the sun rose, Jacob saw Esau coming. Scared by the vision of his powerful brother and his 400 men, Jacob quickly divided his children and servants putting the maidservants first, then Leah and her children, finally Rachel and Joseph. Then Jacob went out to greet his brother by bowing to the ground seven times. Esau ran to meet Jacob, embraced him, and they wept in joy together. Esau was impressed with Jacob's family. It was a wonderful family reunion blessed by the Lord.

Esau did not wish to accept the gifts that Jacob had given him.

However, Jacob insisted. Esau wanted everyone to return home together. Jacob, concerned for his family, encouraged Esau to go on ahead. He and his family would follow. Esau went on home.

Jacob and his family safely made their way back to Succoth in Canaan where he purchased some land, built a house and provided for his livestock. The Lord directed Jacob to move to Bethel and dwell there. Before moving, Jacob knew that some of the servants and family members still believed in false gods and were carrying idols with them. Jacob asked that these gods be put away. Jacob buried these idols and the family moved on. The Lord protected Jacob's family as they moved from place to place in Canaan. At Bethel, Jacob built an altar to the Lord. It was here that the Lord first appeared to Jacob when he was fleeing his brother many years before. The promise of the Lord then was fulfilled; God had been and continued to be with Jacob. It was here that the Lord repeated His promises to Jacob.

Shortly after the stop in Bethel, Rachel gave birth to her second son. While in childbirth, Rachel died. Jacob named the child Benjamin and buried his wife at Bethlehem.

Jacob finally returned to his home and to his father Isaac. Shortly after Jacob's return, Isaac died at the age of 180 years. Esau and Jacob buried their father together.

The Lord continued to bless Jacob (Israel), and Jacob showed his love in return by building altars and praising God.

Outer Aim - God helps Jacob realize that it is He who has preserved and blessed him.

What the Story Tells Us - If the statement is true circle the "T". If the statement is false circle the "F".

- T or F 1. As Jacob started back to Canaan, God appeared to him.
- T or F 2. Esau sent messengers to greet his brother Jacob.
- T or F 3. Jacob was sorry for his sin against his brother; he wanted Esau's forgiveness.
- T or F 4. It was God's idea that Jacob return to Canaan.
- T or F 5. Jacob was poor when he left Canaan; now he was returning home rich.
- T or F 6. Jacob tried to buy his forgiveness from Esau.
- T or F 7. The Lord blessed Jacob with a new name: Israel.
- T or F 8. Esau was not happy that his brother had returned.
- T or F 9. The Lord assured Jacob about his return home and blessed him.

What the Bible Tells Us - Look up the following Bible references and explain how you can apply them to your life today.

1. Psalm 121. _____

2. Psalms 18:2. _____

3. James 1:7. _____

Inner Aim - God helps us realize He preserves and blesses us.

Passages

Psalm 145:15 - The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season.

1 Peter 5:7 - casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Psalm 37:5 - Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.

Psalm 50:15 - Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.

Hymn - TLH #428 v.1, 2, 4, 6

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
Trusting only Thee;
Trusting Thee for full salvation,
Great and free.

I am trusting Thee for pardon;
At Thy feet I bow,
For Thy grace and tender mercy
Trusting now.

Where should you be looking for your strength today?

I am trusting Thee to guide me;
Thou alone shalt lead,
Ev'ry day and hour supplying
All my need.

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus;
Never let me fall.
I am trusting Thee forever
And for all.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, whenever I am tempted to put my trust in myself remind me always to put my trust in You. Let me never forget that You are my strength and that You are always with me and will never leave me. Apart from You I can accomplish no good thing. Strengthen the faith with which You have blessed me and help me to always trust in You as my Savior and Provider. In Jesus' name I ask this. Amen.