

Jacob

From before the birth of the twins God has already stated that Jacob would be the one to receive the inheritance though he was the younger. Compare [Rom 9:10-13](#). This does not mean that Esau was damned before birth, because he was also to become great nation.

God wanted Jacob to be the head of His chosen nation, would we have chosen him?

Esau represents what is natural, the flesh, while Jacob represents the spiritual life. The lives of these two brothers always in competition is similar to the Believers two natures, the old nature of the flesh always fighting the spiritual nature.

In Esau we see the nature which has no desire for the things of God. In Jacob we find a nature which desires the things of God, unfortunately Jacob used the wrong way to achieve the promises of God. Jacob's lifetime was one continual battle, it is an interesting fact that God does not hid the failures but records all the good and bad of his life.

As a Believer we will all have a battle between our two natures, but the record of Jacob shows that God is prepared to work for a long time to bring someone into the situation that He wants.

Jacob shows considerable selfishness throughout his lifetime, but eventually God brings Jacob to depend fully on Him. God had promised Abraham that he would be the father of His chosen nation, Jacob was one of the stages in fulfilling this promise.

In Isaiah 41:14 Jacob is called "a worm," quite an animal to be compared with. God does not always chose the strong or clever to carry out His plans, more often He uses the foolish and weak. No flesh will glorify in the presence of God, 1 Cor 1:25-29. Compare what was prophesied of Jesus in Psalm 22:6-8.

Birthright

The parents of Esau and Jacob had their favourite, Isaac loved Esau, "*because he did eat of his venison:*" and Jacob was Rebekah's favourite, Genesis 25:28, favouritism often causes problems.

Before the birth of the twins Rebekah had been told by God that "the elder shall serve the younger," Genesis 25:23, We have to assume that this was known by all the family and probably caused some of the

favouritism of the two parents.

In the Old Testament times owning the birthright was a most desired facility, it came with power and a large section of the inheritance and other special blessings.

Esau sells the Birthright.

see Genesis 25:29-34.

Esau appears to have little care for the birthright for he was prepared to sell it to Jacob just for a meal. Following hunting, Esau felt he was "about to die of hunger," but this was rubbish, he just had no respect for the birthright, which was still in the future and did not really have it to sell at the time. What's a future promise against a nice hot meal. Jacob had probably been waiting for the chance to obtain the birthright from Esau, but though he had been promised it by God, Jacob was prepared to use Esau's flesh nature to obtain it instead of waiting on God. Using flesh nature to obtain spiritual desires is not acceptable to God. Jacob had to wait another 30 years before he was to benefit from the birthright.

There was no excuse for the attitude of Esau to the Birthright, in [Heb 12:16,17](#) we find a divine comment on the action by Esau.

Jacob spent many years plotting how to get the birthright, but it is interesting to note that God did not permit him to benefit from it until Jacob first accepted that Esau was the rightful owner. How different Jacob's life would have been if he had waited upon God.

Unfortunately, there are many Christians who are concerned with the present and what it offers, not considering their future eternity in the presences of God. We must, as Believers, always wait on God. Consider [Rom 8:16,17,22,23,32](#), from this passage we see that Believers are joint heirs with Christ, a spiritual birthright.

See also [Eph 1:3-7](#); [Eph 2:5,6](#); [Col 1:18,27](#); [1 Cor 12:13](#).

The stolen Birthright. - Genesis 27:1-4

The biggest problem was to occur when Isaac felt that he was approaching the end of his life and wanted to give the blessing to the heir of the family. According to the normal family arrangements of the time, and still tends to apply today, was that the oldest male would

receive the inheritance and blessing. Esau and Jacob were twins and so had the same date of birth, but Esau was the first born so would normally have been the senior child.

Isaac would have known of the promise by God that "*the elder shall serve the younger*," yet still he planned to give Esau the blessing. Esau, was willing to do anything to restore his birthright, he too must have known of God's promise. Rebekah had other plans, neither were trusting God to fulfil the promise His way.

Rebekah's Plan. - Genesis 27

Rebekah overhears Isaac speaking to Esau and his plans, so while Esau goes off to hunt for the venison Rebekah explains to Jacob what must be done. Jacob has great doubts of the plan working and he will end up being cursed by Isaac. His main doubt was that Esau was hairy and probably smelt of animals, while Jacob had smooth skin. Rebekah's lack of faith that God also has a plan to bless Jacob and sets her plan in motion. While she prepares a meal made of meat but season so it tastes like venison Jacob goes off to find animal skins to cover his smooth skin. Because of her lack of faith in God, Rebekah in giving Him "a helping hand" in the future has dishonoured Him, she felt that God must need help in His plan. Sarah also thought she could help God along by offering Hagar to Abraham to have his child, what a disaster that ends in.

Jacob is more worried about the reaction of Isaac if he should realized what he was doing than his sin action against God, he lives up to his name "Deceiver."

Genesis 27:18-29: Once the plot starts one lie leads to another, Jacob even lies that God has helped him in his hunting. Isaac is suspicious but on examining Jacob he said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." Isaac eats the fake meal.

Genesis 27:26-29: Just as with Jesus the kiss is part of the betrayal, Isaac is deceived and gives the blessing to Jacob, but it will be 30 years before Jacob is to receive the benefits of the blessing.

Esau returns soon after with the prepared meal. Jacob was found out, see and consider Numbers 32:23; [2 Cor 5:10](#).

Isaac's reaction is strange, he realized he had been deceived but "Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken

venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed." In horror Isaac realized that not only had his plan to bless Esau had not worked but he had tried to overrule the will of God by his action. God did not forgive and accept Jacob's sin but has now used it to wake up Isaac to his relationship with God, and the will and plans of God. Isaac makes no attempt to change the blessing, [Heb 11:20](#), submitting to the will of God. Isaac and Jacob's sin are not recorded by a loving God in [Heb 11:20](#). Esau referred to as a "profane person," Heb 12:16 suggesting that he never submitted to the will of God.

Esau's Reaction - Genesis 27:34-40

After Esau heard that Jacob had for a second time taken advantage of him, first with the purchase of his birthright for a meal and now the loss of his blessing, he hated his brother Jacob. He becomes desperate with weeping for some sort of blessing from Isaac, v38, but Isaac will not change his blessing of Jacob instead gives Esau the following, *"Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."* v39,40.

Though Jacob removed the birthright by deceit Esau was also guilty because of his attitude to the birthright, it made it easy for Jacob to cleverly get the blessings.

Following the loss of the blessing Esau hates Jacob so much that he wants to kill him, but he thinking that Isaac was soon to die was prepared to wait A FEW DAYS to punish Jacob, unfortunately, though Isaac was 137 years when he gave the blessing he was to live another 43 years.

Rebekah has heard of Esau's threats and plots and warns Jacob to leave immediately and go to her brother Laban in Haran until Esau's anger ends, she will tell him when it was safe to return. She again tells a lie to Isaac for the reason of Jacob's departure, to get a wife from their family, not to take a wife from the local Hittites as Esau had done.

Rebekah never realized the sadness of her action, she was never to see Jacob again.

Trust God

We must learn to wait on God in our Christian life, He knows the right action, time and reason. Though Jacob sinned against God in the events looked at, His grace can be seen much in action. Read and think on the following verses.

Rom 11:33-36

Rom 5:20

1 John 1:9

Isaiah 46:9,10

There are a number of important lessons for a Believer in the life of Jacob:-

Never do evil to achieve good

God is completely in charge, He is sovereign.

You reap what you sow.

Always wait on God, He knows the right time and action.

Following the request of Rebekah, that Jacob find his wife from their family in Bethuel, Jacob is sent away with Isaac's blessing, Genesis 28:1-4. Isaac could not know that Esau wanted to kill Jacob as soon as Isaac had died. Esau was to be disappointed for Isaac lived for another 43 years. Rebekah and Isaac had one plan for Jacob, but God's plan was very different.

Jacob, without realizing it, believed in God and desired the things of God. God knew this, He had seen the desire when he look at Jacob's heart and mind. S God was working to get the best out of Jacob and bring glory to His Name thorough Jacob.

Jacob's Dream.

Genesis 28:10-22. On the first night of Jacob's journey to his uncle God makes His first move to establish the missing fellowship.

As Jacob settled down to sleep that night he must have felt alone and wondered if all the events of the past years were worth it? It was then that God reveals His presence. Jacob falls asleep and God makes him dream. He saw a ladder from the earth to heaven and angels are climbing up and down this ladder. At the top stood the Lord who identifies Himself as the God of Abraham and Isaac. He makes Jacob a promise, where you are sleeping is part of the land you and your descendants will inherit. In addition God promised that the descendants will be like the dust on earth in number, they will spread across the world and from this nation will come a great blessing for the world. What a promise! Jacob may feel alone but God was reaching down to him and Jacob could reach up to God.

Seven times God used the word "I", He did not expect any response from Jacob, no limits like "if" or "but" God showed that He was fully in charge. Note especially verse 15, a divine assurance for Jacob and the ultimate purpose of His actions. Consider [Rom 8:28](#).

When Jacob awakes he realized that he was in the presence of God, Genesis 28:16. He is afraid, *"a dreadful place"*, yet this is the *"House of God"* and the *"Gate to heaven"*. Jacob would have heard about God from his father, but at this point it all becomes personal, God was very near, very present and was controlling his life. Read and consider Psalm 139, God knows all about Jacob and He knows all about you.

Jacob marks the place.

Jacob makes a promise, Genesis 28:20-22, but note that he makes conditions "if God," Jacob still did not have a full faith. He attempts to make conditions, "God, if you supply food, clothes, safe journey, then - would God be his God." How sad, with all the love and grace available from God Jacob sets conditions for his worship. Jacob wanted God in his life, but also wanted the help and blessing upon what Jacob wanted to do, not what God had planned for him.

As a Believer be careful if you include conditions in your worship, God could hold us to the conditions and account for our failures.

Jacob had not fully submitted to the Will of God, so God has to continue to teach and often chasten (humbled, possibly ashamed) him. Consider [Heb 12:5-11](#), chastening by God is designed to bring glory to God and more fruit of righteousness. God's training can take many years, look at the life of Moses, Joseph, David and the disciples before they were used for the work of God. See [Gal 2:20](#); [Phil 3:14](#).

Jacob's New Life. Genesis 29:1-14.

Jacob now continues on his journey, a changed man, he had found fellowship with God. Jacob was completely alone as he made the 450 miles on foot to the home of his uncle Laban.

God takes care of Jacob during the journey, and guides him to the correct place. Jacob comes to a well and asks if any one knows of Laban, yes they did, and we see how God is in full control for the men tell Jacob that the daughter of Laban, Rachel, was approaching to water her sheep.

When Jacob met Rachel, it was love at first sight, v10,11. Rachel brings her father Laban and so begins 20 years of discipline for Jacob.

Who is Laban?

Laban and Jacob were very similar in many ways, they were both out to get the most for themselves, however, Laban was probably more crooked and cunning than Jacob, but Jacob believed in God, Laban did not, Genesis 31:19 showed he worshipped idols.

It was God's plan to let Jacob suffer hardship and pain under the cunning of Laban so that ultimately Jacob would put all his faith in God. God will often do this to a Believer, He has a purpose for all Believers and He may use hardship in life to accomplish His purpose and make a Believer more fruitful, [Rom 8:28](#): Psalm 37:5.

It took 20 years for the training by God to be completed, but he had to go through severe testing and suffered considerable cunning by Laban. During the 20 years Jacob struggled to gain worldly possessions, he does not seem to show the Bethel experience he had received on his journey to Laban.

Jacob has to submit to Birthright.

Genesis 29:15-28.

God now allows Jacob to suffer and reap what he had sown, Jacob wanted to marry Rachel and he offers to work for 7 years to pay the payment of the marriage required by Laban. At the end of the seven years Jacob goes to Laban and asks for Rachel in marriage.

Laban now reveals his cunning, he had another older daughter, Leah, who was apparently not so good looking as Rachel. As the older of the two sisters she would be expected to marry first. It was the custom for the bride to wear a veil so it was not possible to see the face of the bride until after the ceremony. Laban deceives Jacob and sends Leah in to be the bride at the marriage instead of Rachel, because of the veil Jacob did not discover the change until after the marriage.

Jacob had not respected the rights of Esau being the firstborn, having stolen the title and blessing away from Esau, now Jacob has to submit to the cunning of Laban and the rights of the firstborn. In addition Jacob now has to learn to wait for the promised wife. Just as he should have waited upon the promise of God, "*the elder shall serve the younger*," Genesis 25:23b. Jacob now has to work and wait another seven years before he is able to marry Rachel.

Further Cunning by Laban.

14 years later, after Jacob's marriage to Rachel and the birth of her first child, Joseph, Jacob asks to return to his family, but Laban does not want him to leave and cunningly said to Jacob, "*I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake.*" Quite a confession by Laban, an idol worshipper. Laban had told Jacob to "name his wage," this gave Jacob the chance to be cunning as well. He told Laban that he would not get a wage, Jacob would continue to look after Laban's herds but he would search all the herds and any cow, sheep or goats which are spotted or speckled or the colour brown will become Jacob's, theoretically a rare situation, so Laban was very happy with this idea. Once Jacob had separated the marked animals from Laban's herds he now arranges how the various animals conceive, the use of the sticks is

thought to be a local story that if the animal saw the marked sticks then they would have spotted etc. babies, but the facts were that God was at work, making sure that the animals were marked, as agreed. Any spotted etc. were Jacobs.

Jacob departs Haran. Genesis 31:1-

Jacob had worked 14 years for his two wives, then Laban tricked him to stay on for another 6 years by encourage Jacob to get more possessions. The sons and workers of Laban became jealous because by the work of God Jacob had become the owner of many possessions which they felt should be Laban's. God loved Jacob because he was seeking to please God, God was allowing Jacob to become very rich, even though there is no record of any worship by Jacob. Laban was also changing in his attitude to Jacob. After a period of 20 years God breaks His silence and communicates with Jacob. Genesis 31:3. Jacob over the 20 years had suffered but had become rich, incase Jacob decides to remain in this country God appears and tells Jacob to return to his home country of Canaan. Jacob has had a desire to return to his home for some time, see Genesis 30:25, but Jacob did not depart Laban until instructed by God. Jacob speaks to his family out in the fields for security. He had noticed the hatred for him developing in Laban, and he told his family that God had instructed him to depart. Rachel and Leah are happy to obey God, so Jacob now plots how to leave.

Jacob runs. Genesis 31:19-55

Jacob arranges the family and his possessions ready to move out. Jacob now waits for a suitable time to leave Laban, this came when Laban went off to shear his sheep for three days. Jacob rapidly leaves the area, Rachel also steals and takes the images and idols of Laban. This action would have two affects on Laban, he could not worship and consult the images when he finds Jacob gone and secondly the customs of the time who ever had the household gods would be the primary heir to family possessions.

Laban was told of Jacobs departure when he was with his sheep, by the time Laban had returned home and then set out after Jacob must have been many days, the Bible only records that it took Laban and his

family 7 days to catch up Jacob at mount Gilead, probable this was on the East side of the Jordan, near the promised land. It is at this point God moves and warns Laban in a dream, v24.

Jacob does not know that Rachel has taken Laban's idols, so Laban is allowed to search all the tents by Jacob. Rachel had hidden the idols in a camel seat and sits upon it, claiming that the "custom of women was upon her". So Laban searches fruitlessly for them.

Following the search Jacob is very angry, he challenged Laban, "*What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?*" He then reminds Laban of all the bad treatment he had received from Laban. "For 20 years I have worked for you, you have become rich, I looked after all your animals. I served for both of your daughters 14 years, then a further 6 years for the animals. If I had not been a relative you would have sent me off with nothing, God has seen and told you of your bad behaviour. v38-42.

Laban now suggests that he and Jacob make an agreement of separation, neither will pass the marked point towards the other. This is not a covenant of fellowship because of the words "*The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.*" but it is a "covenant of separation." At this point two very powerful people could not now trust each other and must separate, but they are relying on God to monitor what the other is doing. Following a sacrifice by Jacob and a night of relaxation the two separate.

Jacob moves on, now with God.

Genesis 32:1->

Jacob must now face Esau whom he had cheated. Jacob must also see himself as he really was, God must become the most important in his life. As Jacob sets out the angels of God met him.

Jacob sends messengers ahead to Esau. The message sent acknowledges Esau is the senior brother, "*speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saithI may find grace in thy sight.* ", Jacob is telling Esau that he is not coming to claim his birthright. The messengers return to tell Jacob that Esau is coming to meet you with 400 men. Was Esau still angry? Jacob become afraid, v7. Though God had instructed Jacob to return to Canaan and angels had welcomed him and he had seen God protect him

from Laban, but Jacob still tends to rely on his own plans, however he does come to God in prayer, v9-12, Jacob showed his humility, admits his unworthiness and need of mercy, called upon the God of his ancestors, but does not call Him his own God, the prayer still lacks real faith even though he knows and reminded God of His promises. Jacob then puts his own plans into operation, he was still Jacob the schemer, (always planning). Consider [Phil 4:6,7](#).

Jacob's plan

Instead of trusting God to protect him from Esau, he plots to give gifts to Esau and protect his possessions by dividing them up into separate packs, each pack of animals etc., to be separated by a large distance and when they met Esau they are to say "*They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us.*"

Jacob has realized that his plan may fail, but hopes that Esau will see the gifts and have forgiveness by the time he reaches Jacob.

Jacob was his own enemy, his lack of faith in God was making life very difficult. God had promised his safety, yet Jacob still does not rely upon Him, consider Psalm 37:5. Jacob still did not fully trust God so God could not fulfil His promise. Jacob was still trying to pay off Esau, he was still not willing to admit his guilt and failures.

Jacob is alone. Genesis 32:24-32

After sending off the presents Jacob now sends his family to safety leaving him alone to wait for Esau. Jacob was now exactly where He wanted him, He could now deal with Jacob, his desires, self-righteousness, pride and living for himself only.

It was Jacob's plan to not sleep that night and watch for any attack by Esau during the night, he had great care for his family. As he stood and watched a man appears and wrestles with Jacob all night. The man was unable to subdue Jacob so he touches the hollow of his thigh and the joint is dislocated and Jacob becomes lame for the rest of his life.

It was the Lord who wrestled with Jacob, why did He not subdue Jacob earlier? For the answer ask yourself "how long has God been fighting me and my desires? days, months, even years." We should be very thankful for God's patience.

It was God's plan that Jacob should realize his limits and submit to God

on his own, Jacob had experienced the patience of God, see [2 Peter 3:9](#), the Lord is prepared to wait in love until the right time. Jacob had never been defeated by men, but this time it was a loving God who wanted Jacob to stop depending upon himself, it needed a physical failure for Jacob to submit. Consider the words of Jesus in [Matt 10:39](#) and [Luke 9:23,24](#), the Believer must be willing to submit what ever is required of God, make sure you are not still depending upon your old nature, the flesh life must die. Read [Rom 6:6,11-13](#). What must God do to make us submit to Him?

Jacob could now no longer fight Esau physically, he was powerless to deal with the threat. It is at this point he seems to have realized who he was fighting. Now he had to depend upon God who could now take over as promised. Look at Genesis 32:26, Jacob seems to even needed physical support, he had to cling for his life. All that he had worked so hard for was now about to be lost. Now the stolen blessing from Esau was gone, he could only get it from the Lord.

From "Jacob" to "Israel."

Genesis 32:3 :27-29

Jacob receives not only a blessing but a new name. Jacob meant "Deceiver" which he had lived up to well now he becomes "Israel" - "Prince of or with God", quite a change, it recognized Jacobs new character. Though Jacob had a new name we must remember that his old nature was still around and would occasionally reappear. In Genesis the name "Jacob" is used 45 times after Peniel and "Israel" only 23 times.

The name "Israel" showed the new relationship with God, he was now to be working and fighting for God rather than himself. Consider [Eph 6:10-12](#); [Phil 4:13](#).

God had now directly communicated with Jacob three times, the name that Jacob gave this place, "Peniel," showed that he knew he had been in God's presence, Genesis 32:30. Look at others who had been changed when they came into God's presence. Joshua 5:13-15; Isaiah 6:1; Jeremiah 1:4-9; Daniel 10:8-10; [John 15:15](#); [1 John 1:3](#); [Rev 1:13-19](#).

Jacob and Esau meet.

Jacob now moves forward to meet Esau, still trying to plan everything, instead of depending upon the control and protection of God. Jacob is still in fear of the situation, we read *"And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men.* Jacob had just had a wonderful night with God which resulted in him becoming a new person, but fear again took over and Jacob reverts to do it his way. *"He divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids."* Jacob then organises these groups to approach Esau. Consider [1 Cor 15:57,58](#); [Phil 3:13,14](#); [Luke 9:23](#) Jacob had already tried to buy Esau with the earlier gifts of animals, now as Jacob approaches Esau he bows seven times in submission. But Jacob should have relied upon God's preparation for Esau was pleased to see him again. Jacob did not need to fear Esau, God had control of Esau. No one was going to harm God's chosen one. *"In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me."* Psalm 56:11. Esau asks about the gifts, then responds with, *"I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself."* But Jacob insists he takes the gifts as they show how God has blessed him.

Jacob Lies to Esau.

Esau wants Jacob to follow him, offering the protection of his 400 men, but Jacob wants to go his way, but uses the children and animals as an excuse for travelling slowly. Come back to Seir was Esau's plan but Jacob had been instructed by God to return to his father home in Bethel, but he failed to tell Esau of this fact and lies that he will follow Esau back to his home, Jacob does not have the courage to tell Esau that he is following and trusting God. What did Esau think when Jacob fails to turn up as they had agreed. A poor witness of a believer! Have you done this? Many are turned away from God by the poor witness of the Believer.

Jacob fails to obey God.

Jacob now sets out apparently obeying God's instruction to return to Bethel, but stops at Succoth. We do not know why, perhaps the conditions for the animals were better, Jacob was seeking earthly

advantages, not God's obedience and instructions. Now Jacob is not where God wants him, so God makes it uncomfortable until he obeys.

Jacob moves a little. Genesis 33:18-20

Jacob gets the message and moves a little closer to Bethel. He enters the area of Canaan, but stops at the city of Shalem, a city of Shechem.

"Shalem" means "peace." Jacob purchased some land and constructs a place of worship, as if he planned to stay, it became nearly 10 years, but Jacob was not to have peace for long.

Jacob has a family problem. Genesis 34:1-31

Jacob had still not fully obeyed God, now he begins to reap, through his family, the failure.

This time the problems come upon Jacob's children. Dinah, the only daughter of Leah, mixed with the local girls, she was seen by Shechem the son of Hamor, the local prince, desired her and raped her.

God considers that our bodies are not to be defiled, see [1 Cor 3:16,17](#); [1 Cor 6:12-20](#). The Believers body is the temple of God, the Holy Spirit lives within each of us. In fact we have all been purchased through the Blood of Christ, we belong to Him.

The Solution to the problem? Genesis 34:3,4

Shechem, who has fallen in love with Dinah, realizing what he has done, tries to arrange a marriage. This marriage would have been with a child of God and a child of Satan, a believer and unbeliever. Genesis 34:8-12 gives an account of how the father Hamor gives the reason for Jacob and his family to continue to live with the people of the area, *"make marriages with us,"*.

This situation had developed slowly, first Jacob had not obeyed God, to be separated. Second Jacob had built up a relationship with the local people, the world. The daughter was attracted to the world, is the third condition, which resulted in the fourth, the desires of the world, Shechem's action. The suggestion of intermarriage was the fifth state and this finally ends up in a terrible action by Jacob's family.

Jacob's sons plot a way of revenge for their sister Dinah, they use a religious covenant to achieve this. Their excuse for not being able to intermarry was that the people of the city had never been circumcised so

the men must first be circumcised before marriages could be arranged. This was an evil excuse, for while the men of the city were recovering from the circumcision, the brothers of Dinah came into the city and murdered all the males who could not defend themselves. They then took all the animals which belonged to the people, and the women and children as prisoners. Jacob's sons planned and carried out premeditated(planned) murder, such evil in the name of religion.

Consider [James 4:4](#); [2 Cor 6:14-17](#).

Jacob was not part of the murder plot of his sons, it would not have happened if he had obeyed God's instructions. Jacob realized the terrible result of Simeon and Levi action. "You've made my name stink amongst the people here, they will hunt and slay us all" v30. Jacob was more concerned about the human effect of their action, not how evil the sin was and how dishonouring to God. "What's going to happen to me" was Jacob's concern. He was ignoring the promise of God, to protect him, see Genesis 28:15.

Simeon and Levi try to explain their action, *"they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?"* Is it right to do evil to make things right? One sin cannot be covered by another. Jacob never really forgives Simeon and Levi, see Genesis 49:5-7, though it really was his fault for not obeying God. Let us note that a Believer will always have problems if they associate with the world. Consider the words of Jesus in His prayer, [John 17:6-23](#).

Jacob has now reached the lowest point in his life, he was hated by the people around him, his family were guilty of murder, but God has not left Jacob, "God said unto Jacob, *"Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God,"* God never failed Jacob, He will never fail us.

Jacob obeys.

Jacob now departs for Bethel, but first he makes sure the separation will be final. Jacob prepares his family to meet God. *"Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: 3 And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. 4 And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in*

their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. " Genesis 35:2-4. The family obey, for Jacob is now obeying and speaking the instructions of God. The things of Satan can never be used for the work and praise of God, they must be buried. (Earrings are often used in evil acts, as recorded in the Bible, see Exodus 32:2; Hosea 2:13;).

Jacob makes for Bethel, but God is keeping His promise, *"they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob."*

Jacob arrives at last and builds an altar. Genesis 35:7-

"And Jacob built there an altar, and called the place El bethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

"El-bethel" means "The God of the house of God." Jacob has now knows Him as his personal God, the God of all Believers. There is only one Head, look at [Eph 1:22,23](#); [1 Cor 12:12,13](#); [Eph 4:14,16](#).

Last time Jacob was at this place he was running away from Esau, now he returns a rich man, However, there is a danger for him at this point, he might think "he did it all by himself," consider [James 4:6-10](#). Jacob does not fail, he is full of faith and knows that it was the blessings of God, no more planning and scheming. This explains why Jacob is listed as a man of faith in Hebrews 11:17-21. Jacob now has a close fellowship with God, Genesis 35:13-15 and creates a place of worship. This shows that God will never fail a Believer, He has great patience with His people, read [Rom 8:28-39](#); [Phil 3:13,14](#), also bear in mind the warning to Ephesus, [Rev 2:5](#);

A Time of Sorry.

Jacob suffers two sad times;-

- 1) Deborah, Rebekah's nurse dies, she seems to have been with Jacob a long time.
- 2) While on the final part of the Journey to Bethlehem, Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife dies in child birth, Genesis 35:16. The baby was named by Rachel "Benoni," meaning "the son of sorrow," but Jacob named the baby "Benjamin," - "son of my right hand." Jacob buries Rachel and creates a pillar to mark the spot, for someone very precious to him.

Reubin's sin. Genesis 35:22

As the journey continued back to Jacob's home, Reubin committed a terrible sin, he committed fornication with Jacob's concubine. (In the Bible times a concubine was a woman who was united with a man, similar but of lower rank to a normal wife. THE CONCUBINE WAS A WIFE OF SECONDARY RANK.) So Bilhah was effectively the wife of Reuben's father, Jacob. We are told "that Israel knew of it," We are not told until later Genesis 49:3,4 what was Israel's action over the sin of Reubin. In 1 Chronicles 5:1,2 we are told that Reuben lost his birthright, it was given to the son's of Joseph.

Isaac Dies.

Jacob continues back to his father in Mamre, the father he had not seen for 30 years, can you imagine that meeting! Jacob cares for his father for the next 13 years when he died at the age of one hundred and eighty years. Esau and Jacob bury him together.

Jacob may have cheated Esau out of his birthright, but now it was his by divine instruction. The family was now his responsibility.

Genesis 36:6-8 tells us that Esau left the area. Esau (Later to become Edom nation) completely separated himself from the birthright and fellowship of God.

The End Years.

During these years we have many stories about the family, the relationships between the brothers, pride, anger, jealousy were all present, but God protected the family during these years. These years also shows that the patience of God with Jacob was rewarded with a life of worship, but we can see that he still suffered from what he sowed, for Joseph was sold by his brothers just as God had planned. See Genesis 36 to 46.