



BAND of BROTHERS

SPRING SERIES 2023 – WEEK 4

### Genesis 34-35: A Need for a New Identity

*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.  
The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come!*  
– 2 Corinthians 5:17 BSB

- **What's in a name?**

- Jacob has been blessed with a new name

*"Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but **Israel**, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed."* – Genesis 32:28 ESV

- His new name isn't cosmetic or superficial
  - It signifies a change in his **identity**
  - **Israel** means "let God rule"
  - It's **aspirational** in nature
  - Up to this point, Jacob has gotten his way

*"...you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed."* – Genesis 32:28 ESV

*"...you have **struggled with God**, and **with men have you succeeded**."*

- **God is not a man**

- Jacob had been treating God like a man
- He tried to win a blessing from Him
- He thought he could **manhandle** God

*"**God is not a man**, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?"* – Numbers 23:19 ESV

- God cannot be...
  - ...bought off
  - ...manipulated

...deceived                      ...or bargained with

- Jacob had to learn to Israel (let God rule)
- It's a **calling** and not just a **name**

- **New name. Same old Jacob.**

*And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him.* – Genesis 33:1 ESV

- Notice that Moses still uses his old name
  - o Jacob was not yet ready to “Israel”
  - o He **lifted up his eyes** and saw Esau

*I lift up my eyes to the hills.*

*From where does my help come?*

***My help comes from the Lord,***

*who made heaven and earth.* – Psalm 121:1-2 ESV

- Nothing to fear, but fear itself

*He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.* – Genesis 33:3-4 ESV

- o This was not what Jacob expected
  - o His years of worry had been for nothing
  - o God (not time) had changed Esau's heart
- Each had more than enough

*But Esau said, “**I have enough, my brother...**”* – Genesis 33:9 ESV

*Jacob said, “No, please, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand...Please accept my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because **I have enough.**”* – Genesis 33:10, 11 ESV

- o They had divided over a blessing
  - o But God reunited them **through** blessing
  - o He removed the root of bitterness
  - o 20 years later, they had more than enough
- But Jacob felt the need to repay his debt
    - o He felt an obligation to make things right
    - o He had a need to make restitution
    - o And the size of **his gift** reflects the weight of **his guilt**

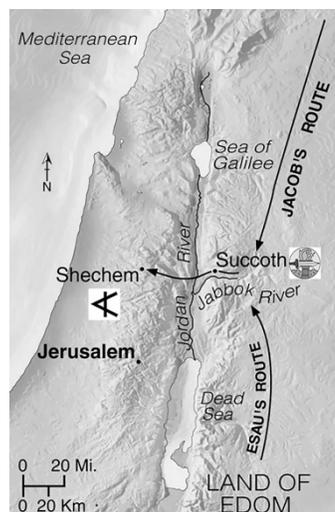
*...he selected these gifts from his possessions to present to his brother, Esau: 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 female camels with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 male donkeys. – Genesis 32:13-15 NLT*

- **Isra-jacob, not Isra-el**

- Jacob wore his old name well
- He still wanted to “let Jacob rule”
- The “deceiver” was alive and well

*Then Esau said, “Let us journey on our way, and I will go ahead of you.” But Jacob said to him... “Let my lord pass on ahead of his servant, and I will lead on slowly, at the pace of the livestock that are ahead of me and at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir.” – Genesis 33:12-13, 14 ESV*

- Jacob had never intended to go with Esau
  - o He paid his debt and assuaged his guilt
  - o Now he parted ways for the final time
  - o He settled temporarily in Succoth
  - o But he eventually moves east to Shechem
- Jacob fulfills the vow he made at Bethel
  - o He builds an altar to worship God
  - o He names it **El-Elohim-Israel**  
**“God, the God of Let-God-Rule”**
  - o God had done what He promised
  - o Now it was Jacob’s turn



*“...if I return safely to my father’s home, then **the Lord will certainly be my God.**” – Genesis 28:21 NLT*

- **Love, lust, and lousy leadership** – Genesis 34

*Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the women of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he seized her and lay with her and humiliated her. And his soul was drawn to Dinah the daughter of Jacob. He loved the young woman and spoke tenderly to her. So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, “Get me this girl for my wife.” – Genesis 34:1-4 ESV*

- Jacob is the father of 12 children
  - o But only one of them is a girl
  - o She’s referred to as “the daughter of Leah”
  - o Remember: Leah was the “unloved” one
  - o Does Jacob consider Dinah unlovable?

- Obviously, Shechem doesn't
  - o He... saw her was drawn to her
  - o seized her spoke tenderly to her
  - o lay with her longed for her
  - o humiliated her demanded to have her
  
- Dinah is defiled by Shechem the Hivite
  - o A descendant of Canaan
  - o The son of Ham whom Noah cursed
  
- Jacob heard
 

*Now Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah. But his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob held his peace until they came. – Genesis 34:5 ESV*

  - o But Jacob did nothing
  - o He exhibits no emotions whatsoever
  - o But Dinah's brothers are...
    - ...grieved                    ...appalled
    - ...angry                      ...and out for revenge

- **Let's make a deal**

*But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him to be his wife. Make marriages with us. Give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. You shall dwell with us, and the land shall be open to you. Dwell and trade in it, and get property in it." – Genesis 34:8-10 ESV*

- The violation of Dinah is brushed aside
  - o Her name is not even mentioned
  - o Shechem is driven by lust
  - o Hamor is driven by greed
  - o Jacob's sons are driven by revenge
  
- Like father, like sons
  - o They devise a plan to get even
  - o And it involves trickery and deceit

*They said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us. Only on this condition will we agree with you—that you will become as we are by every male among you being circumcised. Then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to ourselves, and we will dwell with you and become one people." – Genesis 34:14-16 ESV*

- The Hivites accept the deal
- They all get circumcised

- While they are healing, Jacob's sons attack
- Simeon and Levi avenge their sister

*Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and came against the city while it felt secure and killed all the males. They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem's house and went away. – Genesis 34:25-26 ESV*

- **You've violated my name**

- Jacob was appalled by their actions
- They had damaged his reputation

*"You have ruined me! You've made me stink among all the people of this land..." – Genesis 34:30 NLT*

*"I will be ruined, and my entire household will be wiped out!" – Genesis 34:30 NLT*

- Jacob had lost sight of God
- He feared man more than God
- His new name had not yet set in

- **A new name and a new beginning** – Chapter 35

*God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." So he called his name Israel. And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you." – Genesis 35:9-12 ESV*

- God reconfirms Jacob's new name
- And He reconfirms His covenant promises
- All of this took place at Bethel
  - God had commended Jacob to return to the place of promise
  - Jacob "cleaned house" before he went
  - He returned to the "House of God" purified

- **Discussion questions**

What do you need to remove from your life so your "House of God" can be pure?

How does our behavior contradict our new identity in Christ? How can we change that?

End your time discussing how you might make 2 Corinthians 5:17 a reality in your lives.





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SPRING SERIES 2023 – WEEK 5 HOMEWORK

### WEEK 5 – Genesis 36: Burned, But Still Blessed

Almost as an afterthought, Moses squeezes in an update on the fate of Esau. Despite Jacob's questionable purchase of his birthright and Isaac's accidental misapplication of the blessing of the firstborn, Esau has not been forgotten by God. This lesson will reveal that God had not abandoned Esau. From him would come many offspring who would expand into many tribes, clans, and nations. The elder son who lost everything he had of value would become the progenitor of a line of kings and chiefs. And these descendants will end up playing a significant part in the history of Jacob's descendants: the Israelites.

- Read chapter 35 in one sitting, writing down anything jumps out at you. I know there is a lot of difficult-to-pronounce names and boring genealogical lists, but try to consider why God had Moses include this chapter. It's there for a reason.
- Now read pages 103-110 of Ken's Devotional™ on Genesis Part II.
- Why do you think God had Moses dedicate so much space to the descendants of Esau?
- To get a better understanding of the history of the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, read the following excerpt from [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org).

The name "Edom" comes from a Semitic word meaning "red," and the land south of the Dead Sea was given that name because of the red sandstone so prominent in the topography. Esau, because of the soup for which he traded his birthright, became known as Edom, and later moved his family into the hill country of the same name. Genesis 36 recounts the early history of the Edomites, stating that they had kings reigning over them long before Israel had a king

(Genesis 36:31). The religion of the Edomites was similar to that of other pagan societies who worshiped fertility gods. Esau's descendants eventually dominated the southern lands and made their living by agriculture and trade. One of the ancient trade routes, the King's Highway (Numbers 20:17) passed through Edom, and when the Israelites requested permission to use the route on their exodus from Egypt, they were rejected by force.

Because they were close relatives, the Israelites were forbidden to hate the Edomites (Deuteronomy 23:7). However, the Edomites regularly attacked Israel, and many wars were fought as a result. King Saul fought against the Edomites, and King David subjugated them, establishing military garrisons in Edom. With control over Edomite territory, Israel had access to the port of Ezion-Geber on the Red Sea, from which King Solomon sent out many expeditions. After the reign of Solomon, the Edomites revolted and had some freedom until they were subdued by the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser.

Why would God bless a people who proved to be a thorn in Israel's side for so many years? What could possibly be His intentions for doing so?

- Go back and read Genesis 26:4. How would all the descendants of Esau factor into this promise from God? Keep in mind that they could all be considered the offspring of Jacob.
- Even though Jacob stole the blessing from His brother, Esau was not left empty-handed by God.  
"God would still bless Esau by providing him with five sons and 10 grandsons and, as the text makes clear, most of these men would grow up to be "the chiefs of the sons of Esau" (Genesis 36:15 ESV). They would become powerful leaders in their own right and from them would come many nations, including the Kenizzites, Edomites, and Amalekites." – Ken Miller, *Devotional™ on Genesis*

Why are these points important to remember?

- Read the following quote and write down any thoughts you may have.  
"The Edomites had kings and kingdoms. Even the Horites had a long list of chiefs and enjoyed that benefit of living in cities built by human hands. But the people of God would have to wait a long time before they experienced the fulfillment of God's promise. God had promised to give them the land of Canaan as their inheritance, but neither Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob would make their permanent home in the land of promise because God had something better in store." – Ken Miller, *Devotional™ on Genesis*