

Genesis 33 Jacob Meets Esau and Settles at Shechem

Read Genesis 33:1-4

Jacob's preparations reveal an obvious fear of how this meeting might transpire. Although frightened, how does his example demonstrate how we should deal with situations in which we are apprehensive, or even afraid to undertake?

Look up: Proverbs 16:7

When I am afraid, I will trust in you.
- Psalm 56:3

"Come what will, nothing can come amiss to him whose heart is fixed, trusting in God." – Matthew Henry

Why did Jacob put Rachel and Joseph at the back of the line as he introduced his family to Esau? How do you think Leah felt about her order in the procession?

V. 3,4 - As you recall chapter 27, how have the attitudes of both brothers changed? (Genesis 27:41)

Read Genesis 33:5-11

Describe the actions of both Jacob and Esau, and what they teach us of how we are to deal with feelings of being wronged, revenge, forgiveness and reconciliation? Look up: Luke 17:3

Jacob and Esau had a peaceful reunion because they didn't rehash past mistakes. As Christians, how can we conquer the tendency to replay in our minds wrongs committed against us, keeping them alive and preventing honest reconciliation? Look up: Proverbs 19:11

The word for "gift" used in verse 11 is the same as that used for "blessing" in Genesis 27:35 (the stolen blessing). The wordplay used in verses 9-12 is deliberate: Esau forgave Jacob freely. Just as freely, from the blessings God had given Jacob by grace, Jacob freely gave.

Read Genesis 33:12-17

Seir is far to the south of Jacob's destination. It is unclear whether Esau is offering hospitality for an extended visit, or whether he is offering to join the two families together in one tribe. How does the depth of his forgiveness compare to Jacob's deception. Clearly, Jacob wanted to stay on his route. But why use deceit? How can we apply 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 to Jacob and Esau's meeting, as well as implement this passage in our daily walk?

Apart from the deceit, Jacob was wise to stay on his path, which was to avoid becoming entangled with Esau's tribe and return to Bethel as he had promised God. How does this remind us of how intimate or indebted we should be with those who do not claim the promises of God? Look up: Genesis 14:22,23; 2 Corinthians 6:14

Jacob settled in Succoth for a time, and built shelter for his livestock there.

Read Genesis 33:17-20

Jacob then moved to Shechem and bought land there.

Jacob did not merely thank God with shallow words. He demonstrated true thankfulness in his actions. He named the altar which he built: El Elohe (*mighty is the God of Israel*). The name of the altar is a reminder that God is able to accomplish what He promises. It signified that God had fulfilled the promise He had made to Jacob at Bethel, twenty years before.

Altars were built to celebrate God's goodness at important times of life. Why is this important to record and commemorate God's faithfulness and answers to prayer in our lives?

Read Isaiah 38:19; Lamentations 3:22-24