

Genesis 35-37

An Overview of Chapter 35

God instructs Jacob to move to Bethel and build an altar there. Jacob instructs his family and all his families servants to get rid of their foreign gods and purify themselves. He then hides all the gods in a tree (how thankful I am that my God cannot be hidden in a tree).

After the journey to Bethel Jacob builds an altar as he had been told. God appears to Jacob and reminds him of a few things. First, God had changed his name to Israel and yet he was still going by Jacob. God then promises to multiply and prosper Israel and give him, and his descendants the land promised to Abraham and Isaac.

Rachel gives birth again, but this time dies in labor. As she is dying she names her son Ben-oni (son of sorrow), but Jacob/Israel renames him Benjamin (son of the right hand). Not only has he lost the wife he loved, but his son sleeps with one of his other wives (but Jacob/Israel only thought of her as a concubine).

After a quick reminder of Jacob/Israel's twisted family tree we see Jacob/Israel return to the root - his father Isaac. At the ripe old age of 185 Isaac died and the two brothers bury their father.

An Overview of Chapter 36

Following the funeral Esau moves away from his brother Jacob/Israel, because they both had grown to prosperous to live together. Had Esau not sold his birthright, then it would have been Jacob/Israel who would have to move.

The rest of this chapter is a list of Esau's descendants, as well as the kings and chiefs that ruled in the lands they populated. We are also told that Esau is the father of the Edomites.

An Overview of Chapter 37

Jacob/Israel's son Joseph at the age of 17 tells his dad that his older brothers are doing a bad job in the shepherding business. This makes his brothers mad, and it doesn't help that dad always liked him best anyway. In fact, dear old dad made a special coat for Joseph to wear. Joseph continues to anger his brothers as he tells them about some dreams he has had, both of which seem to point to his brothers bowing down to him.

One day while Joseph's brothers are out shepherding Jacob/Israel sends him out to check on them. As they see him coming, they decide to prevent his dreams from coming true by killing him. The oldest brother, Reuben, is not on board with this idea and convinces them to just throw him in a pit, with the hopes that he will be able to return and rescue his little bro. They agree and strip Joseph into a pit. While Reuben is out doing "who knows what," the rest of the brothers under Judah's guidance decide to sell Joseph to some traveling sales men, who take him to Egypt and sell him into slavery. When Reuben returns and sees his brother is gone and he is all torn up about it so they devise a plan to make it look like little brother was eaten by a wild beast.

When they give the news to dad he takes it pretty hard and will not let his children comfort him, in fact, he decides to be altogether uncomfortable and puts on some scratchy clothes.

Reflection

Where has God instructed you to go? Did you go? What did God tell you to do when you got there? Did you do it? Are you a tattle-tale? Do you often tell of your great circumstances to boost your pride or ego? Do you stand up to sin wholeheartedly, or do you allow some smaller sins to happen around you in hopes of not drawing the anger of others?

For Further Study

Sheol: Psalm 49:15, Psalm 139:8, Proverbs 30:15-16, Ecclesiastes 9:10.

Edom: Numbers 20-21, Deuteronomy 23:7, Psalm 83