

The Book of Genesis IV

The Cleansing and Casualties of Jacob's House

- III. THE CASUALTIES FOR JACOB (Genesis 35:8, 16-22, 27-29) – Note: Three funerals cloud Jacob's life here in chapter 35. This is a reminder that even when we do and are in God's will our life is not without problems.
- A. The Funeral of a Friend
1. Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, dies (Genesis 35:8).
 2. She is buried beneath Bethel under an oak (Genesis 35:8).
 3. It was named "*Allon-bachuth*" (Genesis 35:8).
 - a. Deborah is first mentioned in Scripture in chapter 24 (Genesis 24:59).
 - b. She went with Abraham's servant when Rebekah returned with him to be Isaac's wife.
 - c. The fact that Deborah is Jacob indicates to us that; (1) Jacob is willing to take care of her, that (2) she likely has outlived Rebekah, and that (3) like Rebekah, she preferred Jacob over Esau.
 - d. The name "*Allon-bachuth*" means "*oak of weeping*."
 - e. It is said that at her death she was highly revered (see Isaiah 57:1).
- B. The Funeral of the Favorite (Genesis 35:19)
1. "*Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem*" (Genesis 35:19).
 2. A time of mourning – The hardest mourning for Jacob is now upon him. Rachel was his favorite and surely this would be one of the hardest things for him to experience. Consider that the death of Deborah was a preparation for Jacob, preparing him for the death of his wife.
 3. A time of joy – Even in the midst of this mourning there was joy. Rachel died while giving birth to her youngest son, Benjamin (Genesis 35:16-18).
 - a. Death while traveling – Rachel's death occurred as Jacob was traveling from Bethel on his way to Hebron (Genesis 35:27) to see his father, Isaac.
 - b. The honour given – Jacob honoured her death by erecting a "*pillar upon her grave*" (Genesis 35:20).
 - c. A name given – "*Benoni*" – Benjamin's original name (Genesis 35:18) which means "son of sorrow"; or "son of my strength."
 - d. A name changed – Benjamin – Jacob changed his name (Genesis 35:18) which means "son of my right hand."

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- e. Rachel's feelings were reflected in the name of her son, but Jacob's faith was seen in the name Benjamin. It takes faith to see a Benjamin in a Benoni experience.
- 4. A time of parting – The soul's departure, an indicator of death.
 - a. The time immediately following death – The following is a sermon outline from Pastor David Reagan: *The First Minute After Death*
 - (1) Gathered to the People
 - (a) The Old Testament Practice (**Genesis 25:8, 17; Genesis 35:29; Numbers 27:13**)
 - (b) Not Burial in the Family Plot
 - i. Jacob (**Genesis 49:33; with Genesis 50:2-3**)
 - ii. Moses (**Deuteronomy 32:50; Deuteronomy 34:5-6**)
 - (c) Gathered Unto Shiloh (**Genesis 49:10**)
 - (d) The Gathering of Lazarus (**Luke 16:22**)
 - (2) Clothed With the Eternal
 - (a) Our House Which Is from Heaven (**2 Corinthians 5:1-4**)
 - (b) Contrasted to Our Resurrected Body (**1 Corinthians 15:51-53; Philippians 3:21**)
 - (c) The Mystery and Assurance of Eternity (**1 John 3:2**)
 - (3) Received Into His Presence
 - (a) To Be Present with the Lord (**2 Corinthians 5:6-8**)
 - (b) To Be with Christ (**Philippians 1:20-24**)
 - b. Her location of death – “*And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is **Bethlehem***” (*Genesis 35:19*) – Bethlehem.
 - (1) A place of weeping
 - (a) The death of Rachel (*Genesis 35:15-20*)
 - (b) The weeping of Rachel (*Matthew 2:16-18*)
 - (c) The hope in weeping (*Jeremiah 31:15-17*)
 - (d) Jesus: rest for the weary (*Matthew 11:28-30*)
 - (2) A place of blessing
 - (a) The loss of all (*Ruth 1:1-5*)
 - (b) The return in sorrow (*Ruth 1:19-22*)
 - (c) The blessing for Ruth (*Ruth 2:1-12*)
 - (d) The Kinsman – Redeemer (*Ruth 4:9-11*)
 - (e) Jesus: making us the sons of God (*John 1:10-13*)
 - (3) A place of anointing
 - (a) The choice of a king (*1 Samuel 16:1-3*)

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- (b) The choice not expected (1 Samuel 16:6-13)
 - (c) The promise of a seed (2 Samuel 7:8-13)
 - (d) Jesus: The Son of David (Matthew 1:1; Luke 1:31-32)
 - (e) God's choice today (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)
 - (4) A place of refreshment
 - (a) The thirsty soul (2 Samuel 23:14-15)
 - (b) The three mighty men (2 Samuel 23:16)
 - (c) Jesus: the source of water (John 4:10-14)
 - (5) A place of salvation
 - (a) A place of taxation (Luke 2:1-7)
 - (b) The birth of the Saviour (Luke 2:8-11)
 - (c) Jesus: The Saviour of the world (John 4:42; 1 Timothy 4:10)
- C. The Funeral of His Father (Genesis 35:27, 29) – Note: The final funeral in this chapter is the death of Isaac, Jacob's father.
1. The arrival before his death
 - a. *"Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto... Hebron" (Genesis 35:27)*
 - b. This completed the fulfillment of the charge that God gave Jacob in Haran some years before (Genesis 31:3).
 2. The age at his death
 - a. *"The days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years, and Isaac... died" (Genesis 35:28, 29).*
 - b. Isaac lived 43 years after the beguiling by Jacob and Rebekah. At that time Isaac was sure that his death was near (Genesis 27:2). This goes to show us that God is the giver and taker of life (Genesis 2:7; Matthew 10:28).
 3. The amiableness at his death
 - a. *"And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him" (Genesis 35:29).* One cannot read this verse without being reminded of another verse *"Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him..." (Genesis 27:41).*
 - b. The days of mourning did not occur for another 43 years and during that time some things changed in the lives of both Jacob and Esau. Instead of animosity between the brothers there was amiableness when Isaac died. This emphasizes the faithfulness of God in the life of Jacob, but not only Jacob in Esau too. This also emphasizes the faithfulness of God in our own lives. God keeps His promises.

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IV. THE COTTAGE OF JACOB (Genesis 35:22-26)

A. The Shame in the Cottage (Genesis 35:22)

1. The perniciousness of it
 - a. This vile act by Reuben with the mother of some of his brethren is repugnant.
 - b. A similar problem was occurring in the church at Corinth of which Paul strongly rebuked and said it was a sin that *“is not so much as named among the Gentiles”* (1 Corinthians 5:1). If it was not named among the Gentiles, it certainly shouldn't be named among God's people.
 - c. Any sexual conduct outside of marriage is unholy, wicked, and vile. It is a great shame to God and to God's work and people.
2. The publicity of it
 - a. *“Israel heard it”* (Genesis 35:22b). Jacob heard about it (Numbers 32:23).
 - b. Sin always gets found out sooner or later. Sin has a built-in publicity factor which keeps it from being hid forever. You are a fool if you think you can keep your sins hidden from God and the light of His word (2 Samuel 12:11-12; cp. 2 Samuel 16:22; Luke 12:1-2).
3. The punishment of it – Note: Reuben paid a great price for his sinful act. Scripture speaks of two punishments which he experienced.
 - a. The loss of the birthright
 - (1) The double portion – Joseph got a double portion and thus his sons enjoyed said blessing (1 Chronicles 5:1, 2).
 - (2) The sceptre – Judah got the Divine blessing of the ruling part of the birthright: *“Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler”* (1 Chronicles 5:1, 2).
 - b. The loss of achievement
 - (1) *“Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel...”* (Genesis 49:4).
 - (2) The word excel involves the idea of having or gaining the preeminence. Reuben's failure to excel is illustrated in the fact that Scripture does not record any prophet or judge or outstanding leader coming from his tribe.
 - (3) Moral failure effects other parts of one's life. Many in our age think that they can compartmentalize their private, public and secret “lives” and the one will not affect the other. However, this is simply not true, especially as a Christian.

B. The Sons of the Cottage (Genesis 23-26)