

## #26 - Jacob and Esau are Reunited . . . for a Little While

[Genesis 33; 34; 35:1-5](#)

The next morning Jacob crossed the Jabbok River and limped into camp to join his family. Off in the distance he could see Esau advancing with his four hundred men. Jacob divided his family into three groups and walked in front of them to meet his brother. He bowed seven times as he approached, to show Esau how much he wanted to be forgiven for the past. When he saw Jacob, Esau started running toward him. But it was not to kill him—it was to embrace him! **God had changed Esau's heart.**

Jacob introduced Esau to his family. He explained that all the animals he had sent ahead were to demonstrate how much he wanted Esau's forgiveness. But Esau didn't want or need anything. God had already blessed him with enough. Still Jacob insisted, so Esau finally accepted the gifts, **acknowledging his willingness to forgive.**

Esau was eager to accompany his brother back to his home, but Jacob had young children and lots of animals with him. He claimed he needed to travel more slowly. So, Esau went on ahead with his four hundred men.

Jacob never did complete the journey to Esau's home. And he didn't make it to Bethel either—the place God had instructed him to go (see [Genesis 31:13](#)). Instead, he headed in the opposite direction. He eventually bought some land near a pagan city called Shechem. **Once more Jacob was scheming to do things his own way instead of God's. And once more, it caused significant problems!**

One day his only daughter Dinah went into the town of Shechem hoping to meet some other young women. The son of the ruler of the city saw her. He was very attracted to her and ended up abusing her. When Dinah's brothers found out what happened, they were furious. But by then, the young man had fallen in love with Dinah and wanted to marry her.

Two of Dinah's brothers pretended to make an agreement with the young man's family that would allow the marriage to take place, but instead they planned a surprise attack. They killed all the men in the city and took off with everything they owned.

Jacob was shocked when he heard what happened. He had known nothing about the plan. He was afraid that everyone from the surrounding areas would be upset and come after his family.

**God told Jacob to move to Bethel immediately.** Once he arrived, he was to build an altar. It was to be at the same place where God had appeared to him when he was fleeing from Esau—the same place where he had previously erected a memorial (see [#21 - January 21](#)). **Only then would God protect him and bless him.**

Jacob obeyed God. He instructed everyone to get rid of any idols they were hiding. Then he moved his family to Bethel. It took a while, but **Jacob finally arrived in the place God wanted him to be.** *There* God protected him.



**Think about it . . .**

When God gets you through a tough time, do you remain thankful and obedient? Or do you easily forget and default to old habits? Old habits will always lead you in the wrong direction. (That's consistently what happened with Jacob.) Where we go matters to God.

We must read His Word and follow His directions if we want to enjoy His protection and blessings.

[Psalm 119: 9; Proverbs 2:6-8; 2 Timothy 2:15](#)

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