



SERMON NOTES

January 5, 2014

Scripture: Genesis 35:1-29 (NAS)

Topic: "Climbing Out of Spiritual Doldrums"

Rev. Bruce Gardner

- 1 Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and live there, and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."
- 2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments;
- 3 and let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone."
- 4 So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods which they had and the rings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem.
- 5 As they journeyed, there was a great terror upon the cities which were around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.
- 6 So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him.
- 7 He built an altar there, and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed Himself to him when he fled from his brother.
- 8 Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak; it was named Allon-bacuth.
- 9 Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him.
- 10 God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; You shall no longer be called Jacob, But Israel shall be your name." Thus He called him Israel.
- 11 God also 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 forth from you.
- 12 "The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, And I will give the land to your descendants after you."
- 13 Then God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him.
- 14 Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it.
- 15 So Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel.
- 16 Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe labor.
- 17 When she was in severe labor the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for now you have another son."
- 18 It came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.
- 19 So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).
- 20 Jacob set up a pillar over her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.
- 21 Then Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.
- 22 It came about while Israel was dwelling in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine, and Israel heard of it. Now there were twelve sons of Jacob--
- 23 the sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, then Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulun;
- 24 the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin;
- 25 and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and Naphtali;
- 26 and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.
- 27 Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre of Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned.
- 28 Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years.
- 29 Isaac breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, an old man of ripe age; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

I. THE SPIRITUAL SLUMP

- A. Believers Go Through These Times
- B. We Are Slow To Recognize Them
- C. Sometimes As Individuals Sometimes As A Body
- D. We Are Called To Return To Our First Love

II. JACOB'S TIME IN THE DOLDRUMS

- A. He Had Lost The Vitality He Had Known At Bethel And Peniel
- B. He Had Failed In His Leadership Of His Family

III. JACOB'S RESTORATION

- A. God Spoke To Jacob
- B. God Was Still Seeking Jacob
- C. Jacob Became Aware Of A Need For Spiritual House Cleaning
- D. Jacob Began To Assume His God-Given Responsibility Of Spiritual Leadership
- E. Jacob Sought To Keep His Vows To The Lord *Genesis 28:16- 22*
- F. Jacob Saw God's Faithfulness *Genesis 35:5; Lamentations 3:22-23; Philipians 1:6*

IV. JACOB KNEW GOD'S PRESENCE IN THE TRIALS WHICH FOLLOWED

- A. Death Of His Mother's Nurse
- B. Death Of His Most Loved Wife, Rachel