

Genesis 35.16-29

Getting Worse while Getting Better

Recent SECULAR Study on Transition in American Political Rhetoric

Beginning 20th C Politicians said: “These policies are TRUE and RIGHT...”

POLITICAL Speak End of 20th C “These policies MAKE ME FEEL GOOD...”

SIMILAR Transition happened in EVANGELICAL CHURCH in West

BILLY Graham: “The BIBLE SAYS...GOD’S TRUTH we MUST believe...”

Preacher’s TODAY “You need to FEEL GOOD about YOURSELF and God..”

IF that were TRUE we’d have to RIP MANY Pages OUT of the BIBLE

Certainly THIS SECTION before us this Sunday – NOT a FEEL Good Passage...

Gen 35 – The MAN ISRAEL never been STRONGER in his FAITH in God

120 years Old! Spiritually > BEST YEARS are AHEAD of him

1st ½ Ch 35 Jacob RENEWS FAITH: REPENTS of Idols, Returns House of God

WASHED Themselves – CHANGED their Clothes of OLD, SINFUL WAYS

He & Family BURIED their IDOLS – Back to BETH-EL “House of God”

BUT Problems of LIFE Only GET WORSE, FEEL Most PAIN ever Experienced

2nd half of Ch 35: DAY turns DARKNESS / SUNSHINE turns to STORM

1. Birth through Death

In Great MERCY and GRACE God had Renewed Covenant PROMISES....

vs. 11,12 And God 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 from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.”

FOUNDATION of Covenant NATION – 11 Sons, and 12th about to be BORN

Many things NOT Exemplary in Jacob’s Life > Commend LOYAL Love: Rachel

Years ago SMITTEN with LOVE for Beautiful YOUNG Girl RACHEL

Jacob's LOVE for Rachel had Only Grown DEEPER thru the YEARS...

a. Sorrow of Separation

GOD takes MOST Lovely and Precious GIFT AWAY from his SON ISRAEL

v. 16-20 They journeyed from Bethel. When they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel went into labor, and she had hard labor. And when her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for you have another son." And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem), and Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb.

HOW does THAT Work? Finally Jacob STOPPED Playing Games with God!

MAKING things RIGHT with God – But NOW things GO HORRIBLY Wrong!

Sick IRONY Rachel Dies JUST AFTER God Commands JACOB be FRUITFUL

POIGNANT Scene: Old Jacob Cradling Newborn Son next Rachel's Cold Body

Dark Scene: Dying words of Mama Rachel Call his NAME "*Son of my Sorrow*"

TRAGIC Event – BORN as Mother DIES – Sadsness of Death in Child BIRTH

Jacob NEVER FORGOT Beloved WIFE – Took PAIN to the GRAVE

Decades later, Dying 3rd PATRIARCH BLESSING his Son JOSEPH....

"As for me, when I came from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)." Genesis 48.7

What does this have TO DO with Patriarch's Blessing son Joseph? **NOTHING!**

HEART Full: Joseph's FACE probably Reminded Jacob LATE Mother Rachel

Their TRUE LOVE Survived DEATH > Great Sadness to lose Beloved SPOUSE

b. Sanctification through Sorrow

What makes SCENE even More TRAGIC are WORDS of Rachel herself

In THICK of BATTLE for BABIES with SISTER LEAH > Rachel Demands:

When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, *“Give me children, or I shall die!”* Genesis 30.1

ALMOST PROPHETIC DEATH WISH – Rachel bears Son she will DIE FOR!

Many JET Aircraft: THRUST REVERSER SYSTEMS, STOP after Touch Down
WHEN Wheels hit Ground > Pilot throws Engines into REVERSE - as a Brake

See PAINFUL Reverse THRUST in God’s Fatherly PROVIDENTIAL CARE

What seems VERY WRONG can Sovereignly be MADE Right in His HANDS

We often think of providence as a fortunate turn of events, but here in this chapter, providence more often than not operates in the context of sinful behaviour. If God can only work through godly behaviour, there is little he can do in our sinful world...He dovetails the free, wicked choices that people make into His own plan. John Walton

For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning. Psalm 30.5

DYING Wish of Person is SACRED TRUST – but JACOB Refuses to Follow

v. 18 As her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

JACOB knew the POWER of a NAME – “heel grabber” – Thief, Deceiver

Benjamin – Name of FAITH amidst DARKNESS and PAIN

NOT be SON of Sorrow > Come thru SORROW to Place of STRENGTH

Benjamin – SON of MY RIGHT HAND – Son of my VIGOR or STRENGTH

NAMING of Benjamin in TIME of CRISIS > Choose to TRUST God’s Promise

For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love Lamentations 3.31,32

God is always like Himself.

John Calvin

BENJAMIN will be BELOVED SON of JACOB at LOSS of FAVORED Joseph
With Jacob's DYING WORDS he will Bless THIS LAST BORN SON...

Jacob: "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey and at evening dividing the spoil."
Genesis 49.27

AFTER Naming LAST BORN Son – Not SORROW but STRENGTH blessed...

v. 21 Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.

ISRAEL Journeyed ON – 1st time in NARRATIVE ever Called ISRAEL
PRINCE with GOD – He STRIVES with God thru Sorrows & Overcomes

Becoming CHRISTIAN is NOT becoming CINDERELLA

CINDERELLA: Everything is CHANGED for BETTER, Happily Ever AFTER!

Cinderella can FIX EVERYTHING with the WAVE of her MAGIC WAND

Why can't our PRAYERS be like PIXIE DUST to FIX Everything Immediately?

CHRIST: Everything WILL BE Changed, Happy NOW by FAITH in Him

BUTTERFLY Must Struggle EMERGE from COCOON – CUT it OUT – Kill it!

JOY in Journey because HE is with US > True SATISFACTION in STRUGGLE

11 yrs in KZ Possible to BUY Almost ANYTHING

Driver's License, Educational Diploma, Medical Certification – My Ordination!!

Lots of Official Looking Documents – Not Much WISDOM, Not Hopeful Future

Some of YOU might WISH to SAVE TIME – Fly to KZ and BUY your Degree!

APPRECIATION increases with AGONY: Study, Read, Reflect, Struggle, Work

Possible to BUY Night SEXUAL Pleasure – Find it for FREE! – just HOOK UP!
Sexual Satisfaction comes in Faithfulness, Exclusive Relationship, Trust, Loyalty

Perhaps Joseph LEARNED THIS Good POINT from DAD

Could TRACE the HAND of God thru Sorrows caused by BROTHERS

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. Genesis 50.20

Hymn “Prayer Answered by Crosses” by John Newton 1791

SLAVE Trader who was SAVED > PREACHER, Hymn Writer: Amazing Grace

1. I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of his salvation know,
And seek more earnestly his face.

2 Twas he who taught me thus to pray
And he, I trust, has answered prayer:
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

3. I hoped that in some favored hour,
At once he'd grant me my request;
And, by his love's constraining
power,
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

4. Instead of this, he made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

5. Yea more, with his own hand he
seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Crossed all the fair designs I
schemed,
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

6. Lord, why is this? I trembling
cried;
Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?
'Tis in this way, the Lord replied,
I answer prayer for grace and faith.

7 These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free,
To break thy schemes of worldly joy,
That thou mayst seek thy all in me.

2. Legacy through Disobedience

In his DECADES of PARENTING Jacob leaves behind FEW GOOD Examples
MANY KIDS – Raised by Mothers, Servants, WISDOM of World Wide Web

For the MOST PART - PAPA JACOB was Strong, Silent, Absentee FATHER
Here is BRIGHTEST Moment of JACOB'S Fatherhood thus far...

v. 2-4 Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone." So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had

One of FEW TIMES Jacob led his Family to DO ANYTHING

Jacob LED his Family to RENOUNCE and BURY IDOLS

SONS were OLDER – Seen Dad BLOW IT – Many TIMES

Jacob could have thought I DISQUALIFIED Myself, Failed, Inconsistent!

NO MATTER how Many Mistakes Jacob made in PAST – He will OBEY Now

Understands RESPONSIBILITY to LEAD his Family to REPENT, Bury Idols

NOT duty of KIDS or WIVES – Duty of FATHER – THEN and NOW!!

Study on CHURCH GOING conducted by the Swiss government:

1. If both father and mother attend church regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all.

2. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.

3. If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church!

What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Amazingly, the percentage of children becoming regular goes up from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and up to 44 percent with the non-practicing.

In short, if a father does not go to church - no matter how faithful his wife's devotions - only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If Dad takes faith in God seriously then the message to their children is that God should be taken seriously.

“The Demographic Characteristics of the Linguistic and Religious Groups in Switzerland” by Werner Haug and Phillippe Warner of the Federal Statistical Office, Neuchatel. Study conducted by the Swiss government in 1994 and published in 2000.

WHOLE FAMILY had BURIED IDOLS – Renounced SINS

Shortly after this PUBLIC Purification – Sinful Heart of Son REUBEN Exposed

CEREMONIAL Commitments mean NOTHING Unless Reflect True FAITH

v. 22 While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine. And Israel heard of it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve.

People Wondered Aloud WHY doesn't this SON of a LEADER behave better?

This was NOT JUST KINKY GRANDMA LOVE > POLITICAL COUP

REUBEN wants to INSURE Prominence of MOTHER LEAH – born 6 SONS

YEARS EARLIER - Rachel to Jacob: “Here is my servant Bilhah; go in to her, so that she may give birth on my behalf, that even I may have children through her.”
Genesis 30.3

Reuben's shameful act is motivated more by politics than lust. By defiling Bilhah, he makes certain with Rachel's death her handmade cannot supplant Leah (*Reuben's mother*) as chief wife.
Bruce Waltke

CENTURIES Later ABSOLAM did SAME THING to Father – KING DAVID

JACOB'S Discipline of Reuben does not OCCUR until he is About to DIE

“Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the firstfruits of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. Unstable as water, you shall not

have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it—he went up to my couch!
Genesis 49.3,4

Strong WARNING: Just because you SEEM to GET AWAY with Sin you Won't

LISTING of 12 Sons in MATRIARCHAL Order...

vs. 23-26 The sons of Leah: Reuben (Jacob's firstborn), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant: Dan and Naphtali. The sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.

Jacob Enters SUNSET Years RICH with BLESSINGS

Man with NOTHING > 12 Sons who will BLESS WORLD – Promise of God

All BORN in ONE PLACE – UNITED, INSEPERABLE – Like Church

No Child of God will ever be LEFT BEHIND – Relentless Grace of God

Who will lead family?? – Not Reuben – Defiled Bilhah,

Not Simeon or Levi – Slaughtered Neighbors – NEXT is JUDAH

Judah will save Joseph amidst BROTHERS

“Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.
Genesis 49.8-10

SAVING Blessing thru JUDAH – Fullness of Time

And one of the elders said to me, - **APOSTLE JOHN in Throne Room of GOD**
“Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah...has conquered...”
Revelation 5.5

As JACOB will FADE from Away > SPOTLIGHT on his 12 Covenant SONS

Very CLEAR at Beginning WILL NOT – CANNOT – Be SAVED by Works

Need GOD of JACOB – God of MERCY, GRACE, Covenant FAITHFULNESS

“There is never any room for complacency; when one generation has been reached, it is time to move on to the next...Like Joshua, we need to have a passion for spiritual things that is transmitted to everyone with whom we have contact, but especially to our children, so we too can say, ‘As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord’” (Joshua 24.15). Iain Duguid

3. Death unto Life

Our 8 years of LIVING in Uganda – ABRUPT END – Left within 2 Weeks!

My Family said if want to See Father ALIVE better Get HOME

Not Enough Money for 5 of Us to Go Back and Forth – Been Feeling a PUSH

4 Days after ARRIVING in LA Father DIED, Stayed to help Mom 6 Months

JACOB’s Long PILGRIMAGE has NOW come FULL CIRCLE

Jacob could SAY FAREWELL to Father he had NOT SEEN in 30 YEARS vs. 27-29 And Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. And Isaac breathed his last, and he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

a. Completion v. 29 “old man and full of days”

Like a DINER who pushes himself away from table “I am full!!”

ISAAC DIED FULL > COMPLETE > God’s Purpose was Fulfilled in his Life NOT just QUANTITY of Life but QUALITY of Life > SATISFACTION

It takes the whole of your life to give the whole of your life to God. Jim Elliot

LIFE ENDS WHEN GOD’S WORK FOR US IS FINISHED > Paul’s Last Letter

“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” 2 Timothy 4.6-8

“I am immortal until the will of God for me is accomplished” David Livingstone

b. Continuation v. 29 “he died and was gathered to his people”

MEANING? He was buried in SAME TOMB as Abe, Sarah, Rebekah...

TOOK HIS PLACE AMONG HEROES OF FAITH > Adam to ABRAHAM

“we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses” Hebrews 12.1

Jesus replied...about the resurrection of the dead--have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." Matthew 22.31,32

“Death gathers us to our people. Those that are our people while we live, whether they are the people of God or the children of this world, are the people to whom death will gather us.” Matthew Henry

Will we be gathered w/Children of Promise, or Children of this World?

Answer ETERNAL Question Now: Who do you LOVE? Where do you LIVE?

Covenant Blessing did NOT DIE with ISAAC, Continues to All ABE'S Children

ISAAC was a Type > JESUS is TRUE Fulfillment

ISAAC was a SHADOW > JESUS is the SUBSTANCE

ISAAC was TEMPORAL > JESUS is ETERNAL

Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. ... (he) was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. Galatians 4.28,29

v. 29 “And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.”

IRONIC: DISHONORING of JACOB occurs Shortly Before J. sees his Father

Been 30 years since SEEN Father – DEPARTURE was Clouded in DECEIT

Stolen BROTHER'S Blessing from BLIND, BED-Ridden Father ISAAC

RECONCILED Brothers UNITED, paid FINAL RESPECTS to Covenant Father

Wm BOOTH founder of Salvation Army, Asked WHAT was Secret for Success?

“the DAY I told God you can have EVERY PART of William Booth”

After his DEATH his Daughter commented on this Story – Not Full Story

“My FATHER made this promise THEN he KEPT it ALL his LIFE!”

c. Confidence > Walk with God in Life > Taken by God into the Next Life

Isaac LIVED 180 yrs – LONGER than Abe or Jacob > 30 years BEDRIDDEN?

No LIVING WILL – NOBODY to Pull Out his FEEDING TUBES

If God does not exist to bless our old age and provide us with joys particularly suited to the years when physical powers fail, then aging is a cruel cosmic joke and none but the young can be buoyant. James Boice

ISAAC Lived LONGEST – but we KNOW Least ABOUT HIM

COLORLESS Character – We’re TOLD LITTLE About him – He SAYS Less

SPOTLIGHT on Abraham, Sarah, Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau

Not SAVED by Personality but PURCHASE of Precious Blood of Christ

The linking of birth and death in these scenes shows vividly and acutely the transference of faith between generations in the holy family...Some saints soar with wings of eagles, others run, and some only walk; nevertheless, all complete their journey. Bruce Waltke

OLD LAUGHTER was LAID to Rest > First PRINCELING, Promised CHILD

SPARED Sacrificial KNIFE of Father Abe as placed on ALTAR of God

SAVED by RAM caught in THICKET – KILLED in HIS PLACE

WHAT are we DOING WITH our LIFE? It’s SHORT, Time to Meet GOD

NOT JUST Old people DIE!

ISAAC > Gathered with his People > Who will YOU be Gathered with?

When I Student in COVENANT College - Summer Job to HELP pay the BILLS
 Factory in LA: Boss: BIG ED Workmates Unbelievers – Friendly, I was Bigger
 Shared my Faith in Jesus with Ed and the Guys

Ed “I know I am going to hell, but I’ll be there with all these other guys too!”

Ed shot and killed by Neighbor in Neighbor’s Bed with Neighbor’s Wife
 Nothing in Bible says we are with FRIENDS in HELL – Friends are GOOD
 GOODNESS comes from GOD - No Good, No God, No Friends in HELL

Company you keep on Earth > Probably the Company you will keep in Eternity
 LIVE! Wisely! Abundantly! Eternally! For Kingdom! Lovingly! Humbly!

FOLLOW Jesus’ Footsteps of Faith! Covenant God Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob
 God and FATHER of our LORD Jesus Christ

May YOU be Gathered with JESUS > United to Him > NOW and FOREVER
 CONFIDENCE > Walk with God in Life > Taken by God into the Next Life

Genesis 35. ¹⁶Then they journeyed from Bethel. When they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel went into labor, and she had hard labor. ¹⁷And when her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, “Do not fear, for you have another son.” ¹⁸And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. ¹⁹So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem), ²⁰and Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb. It is the pillar of Rachel's tomb, which is there to this day. ²¹Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. ²²While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine. And Israel heard of it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. ²³The sons of Leah: Reuben (Jacob's firstborn), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. ²⁴The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁵The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant: Dan and Naphtali. ²⁶The sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram. ²⁷And Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. ²⁸Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. ²⁹And Isaac breathed his last, and he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.