

# THE RECONCILIATION OF JACOB AND ESAU

BIBLE TEXT : Genesis 33:1-20; 35:1-20.

## LESSON 26 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "There hath not failed one word of all His good promise" (I Kings 8:56).

### BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

#### **Genesis 33:1-20**

1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.  
2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.  
3 And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.  
4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.  
5 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who *are* those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.  
6 Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves.  
7 And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.  
8 And he said, What *meanest* thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, *These are* to find grace in the sight of my lord.  
9 And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.  
10 And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.  
11 Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took *it*.  
12 And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.

### Bible References:

#### Notes:

#### **The Joy of Reconciliation**

The moment of reconciliation between Jacob and Esau had come. Jacob had been dreading this day for more than twenty years -- until that night on the banks of the brook Jabbok when he prevailed with God and received the assurance that he would meet his brother in peace. He left the scene of that conflict with a physical limp, but with a new name and a witness that as a prince he had power with God.

Jacob set his family in order for their advance, then he went ahead of all of them and bowed himself seven times before Esau. There were none of the characteristics left of the former self-seeking, arrogant Jacob. He came to Esau asking mercy and offering love; and Esau's heart was touched, and they wept as they embraced. The past hatreds and jealousies were forgotten, and they were at peace.

"When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7). Jacob's life after he met God at Bethel, the first time, had been conformed to His divine will, and now he was enjoying the blessings of complete reconciliation.

Esau was surprised to see all the women and children in Jacob's family, and asked who they were. Jacob answered that they belonged to him, graciously given to him by God.

(Jacob now had eleven sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and Joseph. Benjamin was born a little later. From these twelve sons of Jacob we have the twelve tribes of Israel.)

#### **Esau's Acceptance of Jacob's Gifts**

Esau then wanted to know why Jacob had sent the gifts of cattle to him. Jacob answered that he wanted to find favour in the eyes of his brother, and hoped the gifts would please him. Esau said he had plenty of his own, and at first refused to accept them. When Jacob insisted, he finally consented. It was the custom at that time for a man to show his forgiveness by accepting a present from the one who had wronged him. If Esau had not accepted Jacob's gift, Jacob would have had no assurance that he was forgiven. By Esau's consenting to take the present, he bound himself to be a friend.

Esau offered to help Jacob move his family home, but it was difficult to travel with the women, small children, and huge flocks and herds. If they became too tired they would die. So Jacob told Esau to go ahead, and he would follow at a more leisured pace, in keeping with the strength of his company.

#### **Jacob's Thanks to God**

Jacob did not immediately head for his father's house, but turned toward Succoth, and then to Shalem where he bought some land, which was later used as a burying ground for Joseph and given to his children for an inheritance.

As soon as Jacob settled in any place, he built an altar unto God. This place was no exception. He did not feel that having gained victories with God and man he could now neglect his spiritual life. God said to the Children of Israel at one time:

13 And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children *are* tender, and the flocks and herds with young *are* with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die.

14 Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir.

15 And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee *some* of the folk that *are* with me. And he said, What needeth it? let me find grace in the sight of my lord.

16 So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir.

17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

18 And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city.

19 And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money.

20 And he erected there an altar, and called it Elelohe-Israel.

### **Genesis 35:1-20**

1 And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.

2 Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that *were* with him, Put away the strange gods that *are* among you, and be clean, and change your garments:

3 And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.

4 And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which *were* in their hand, and *all their* earrings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which *was* by Shechem.

5 And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that *were* round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

"When thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 6:11,12).

When we go through hard places we feel that we have to lean upon the Lord, but we must be careful that when we have triumphed we do not become "at ease in Zion" and let the enemy of our souls draw us away from God. Jacob rejoiced in the victories he had won, and honoured God for His tender mercies. He called the altar, **El-elohe-Israel**, which meant **God the God of Israel**, signifying that he claimed his new name, and offered himself afresh to God. Here he worshiped the only true God in the midst of a sinful people.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Why did Jacob bring gifts unto Esau?
2. At first, did Esau want to accept Jacob's gifts?
3. Does the 4th verse show us that all was forgiven?
4. God had brought Jacob back home in peace. Do you remember the place where God promised He would do this?
5. Does God ever fail to keep His promise?

6 So Jacob came to Luz, which *is* in the land of Canaan, that *is*, Bethel, he and all the people that *were* with him.

7 And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

8 But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allonbachuth.

9 And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him.

10 And God said unto him, Thy name *is* Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.

11 And God said unto him, I *am* God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;

12 And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

13 And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.

14 And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, *even* a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.

15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel.

16 And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour.

17 And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.

18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which *is* Bethlehem.

20 And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that *is* the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.