

# (Genesis) - Part 26

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of seeking God's will and the consequences of settling in the wrong place, as illustrated by Jacob's life and the events surrounding his daughter Dinah.*

**Duration:** 1:00:46

**Scripture:** Genesis 33:18

**Topics:** "Genesis", "God's Will", "Obedience"

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## Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of being in the right place according to God's will, using Jacob's journey to Shechem as a cautionary tale. Jacob settled in Shechem instead of Bethel, where God had commanded him to go, leading to dire consequences for his family, including the defilement of his daughter Dinah. Poonen warns that just because something seems attractive or convenient, it does not mean it is God's will, and highlights the necessity of being radical and obedient to God's direction. He draws parallels between Jacob's mistakes and the need for believers today to seek God's specific plans for their lives, rather than settling for comfort. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a wholehearted commitment to God's purpose, urging believers to remove idols and distractions from their lives.

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## Transcript

Genesis chapter thirty-three. Genesis and thirty-three, we saw how Jacob had come back to the land of Canaan, but he didn't come to the place where God wanted him to be. Genesis thirty-three, eighteen.

He came safely to the city of Shechem, in the land of Canaan. Verse nineteen, he bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent. Now, in Genesis thirty-one, verse thirteen, the Lord had said to Jacob when he was in Mesopotamia, I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to me.

Now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth. Bethel was the place where he had anointed a pillar and said that he would come back to, but maybe when he came to Shechem, he perhaps felt that was a more attractive place to settle down in. And so he settled down, not where he should have, but in Shechem.

And he bought a piece of land, he had money, and that's the way very often believers find the will of God. If they have money to get something, that means it must be God's will. Jonah had money to buy a ticket to go to Tarshish, so he decided it was God's will.

Jacob had money to buy a plot of land, so he said, well, it must be God's will to stay here, but it was not. Just because we have money for something does not mean that it is necessarily God's will, what we do with it. And of course, he wanted to be a God-fearing person there.

We read in Genesis thirty-three, twenty, he erected an altar and called it El Elohi Israel. The altar was good, but it was not in the place where God wanted him to be. And it's important for us to understand this, because what follows in the next chapter is a very shameful scene, where Jacob's daughter gets into problems, and she got into problems because her father settled down in the wrong place.

She would not have got into that problem if her father had gone and settled down where God wanted him to be, in Bethel. And here we have a picture of a believer who wants to live a God-fearing life. He erects an altar to the God, the God of Israel.

But he wants to live a God-fearing life in the place which he has chosen, and which will be comfortable for him. There is no place in the world where we cannot live a God-fearing life. Jesus could have lived a God-fearing life in Rome.

That would be the equivalent of New York today. Jesus could have gone to Rome and fought against the lust in his flesh and overcome sin. He could have overcome sin anywhere.

And as far as overcoming sin was concerned, whether he had lived in Rome or in Philippi, it would have been just the same. He would have overcome sin and lived a Godly life. But he could never have said at the end of his life, Father, I have finished the work you gave me to do.

It's not enough to erect an altar. We have to erect it in the place which God has appointed for us. In the Old Testament, the Lord told the Israelites in Deuteronomy chapter 12, Deuteronomy chapter 12, he said, When you come into the land, you must be careful to observe the commandments of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 12.1. As long as you live. It says in verse 5 of Deuteronomy 12, You shall seek the Lord at the place which the Lord your God shall choose. Not where you choose.

You have to seek God in the place which the Lord shall choose for you. And there, verse 6, you must bring your burnt offerings. There, verse 7, you and your family must sit down and eat.

But you shall not do, verse 8, just whatever is right in your own eyes. That's a very important principle. Because many people do not realize that not only God has a will for us as far as sanctification is concerned, but he has a will and a plan for us as far as a ministry is concerned for us in the church.

And when I say ministry, I don't mean just preaching. Every member of the body has got some function. And we cannot fulfill that function in the place that we have chosen.

This little finger can't function as a little finger in any other part of the body than where it is. It can be a good little finger, healthy one, but it must also be on the right hand. It can't just choose some other place to function as a little finger.

So that is the principle we learn here. That God has a plan for our lives, and it's important that we find the place that God has chosen for us. Because it is easy to say, God loves us as He loves Jesus.

And that is a comfort for us. But we must go on to say, therefore, He has a plan for us like He had a plan for Jesus' life too. And if the plan for Jesus' life was not just that Jesus should overcome sins, but that

Jesus should live in a particular town, and move in a particular country.

Otherwise He could never have fulfilled the Father's will. This is so important, and yet I find that many believers don't understand it. They think it's just enough to live a good holy life.

Well, that's all right for third-rate believers. But for those who want to fulfill all of God's purpose, we must also know where God wants us to be. And therefore it's dangerous to go and buy a plot of land in Shechem just because the price is attractive, and it's a nice place to settle down in.

There can be problems, particularly related with our family. We know from the second letter of Peter, chapter 2, that Lot was a righteous man. It's an amazing thing that the Holy Spirit says in 2 Peter 2, that Lot was a righteous man.

And yet he was a righteous man who was living in the wrong place. He was not in the place where God wanted him to be. He went to Sodom.

He wanted to live a righteous life. He didn't become ungodly like the others. He lived a righteous life.

We wouldn't have known that unless Peter had mentioned that in his letter. But he lived it in the wrong place. And it's possible to live a righteous life in the wrong place.

And then we are like Lot and like Jacob in Shechem. And then we see the consequence of that in chapter 34, where Dana is assaulted. Dana is one of the daughters of Jacob.

He had more than one. Genesis 34, verse 1. Dana, the daughter of Leah, when she was born to Jacob, went out to visit the daughters of the land. Dana was a young teenager, maybe about 16 years old.

And she was one of these young teenagers who decided to go visiting. Just like today in Bangalore. Young teenagers who like to go visiting.

But Dana was just like one of them. She went out to visit the other young girls in town. And see if she can make some friends with them.

And we can say that she was like a door. And not like a wall. This reference in Song of Solomon, chapter 8, verse 9. If you are not already familiar with it.

Where she speaks of the possibility, Song of Solomon, chapter 8, verse 9. That a girl can either be like a wall. Reserved. Modest.

That people cannot have easy access to her. Or she can be like a door. Easily accessible, friendly, jovial.

Cracking jokes and etc. with the opposite sex. Nothing dirty, just a certain attitude.

And if she is a door, then we have to barricade her. And that is the responsibility of the father and the mother. To barricade her with planks of cedar that cannot be easily broken down.

That means with a certain strictness of discipline. And that's a good exhortation for all parents who have daughters. Teenage daughters.

Think that Jacob and Leah. Just let her go like that into the street. And then she gets into problems with some young man there.

And who is to blame first of all? I would say first of all the father. And then secondly the mother. And then thirdly Dina.

It's always like that. The number one person to blame when a young girl gets into trouble is always the father. Who is too lazy and too kind to barricade his daughter when he sees that she is like a door with planks of cedar.

And she goes and ruins her testimony. She had a good testimony till then. But she went visiting out in the streets and she ruined it.

And that's a warning to us dear brothers and sisters. As parents. To be particularly careful with our daughters.

Especially in these days. And of course she also should have a little sense. I don't know whether she consulted her mother and went out.

And if her mother permitted her. It was a really stupid mother. Possibly she just went out on her own.

She's probably one of these modern type of girls who thinks that she can find her way around town. And she went out to visit the daughters of the land. Wandering on the streets on her own.

Visiting with unconverted girls. The daughters of the land who had no interest in God. Idolaters.

Friendly with these unbelievers. And there of course. She meets a young man.

Shikin. The son of him or the Hivai. He really fell in love with her.

And defiled her. Verse 3. He was deeply attracted. And he loved her.

And spoke tenderly to her. Amazing how people can put on all the tender voice and all that. When they're interested in getting something.

And he spoke to his father and said. Get me this young girl for a wife. Jacob heard.

That he had defiled. Dana's daughter. What does the father do? You see the weakness.

Of this man. His sons were not at home. He had to wait for his 20 year old sons.

To come and decide what shall we do next. He doesn't know what to do. When his daughter has gone and made a mess of her life.

That's a sad thing. When a father. Just sits back.

And the daughter is going and making a mess of her life on the streets. And the father sits back and says what shall we do now? And then so he kept silent. Until they came in.

And then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob. To speak with him. And the sons of Jacob came in from the field.

They were very grieved. Because. Very angry because he had done a disgraceful thing.

And then Hamor spoke with them. Of course Jacob doesn't even enter into this conversation. It's pathetic.

To see a father like this. It's the sons who have taken over the home. The sons are deciding.  
What we're going to do. The daughters are wandering the streets. And the sons are deciding how the home should be run.  
And the poor father sits there. Very sad when a home comes to that condition. Where a father has got no control over his children.  
Where his father is not able to tell the sons what to do. And tell the daughters to stay inside. And.  
Hamor spoke. Speaks with the. Sons of Jacob.  
And says my son wants to marry your daughter. And. Let's intermarry.  
You can live with us. And you can use our land. And.  
Shechem also was there. And he said I'll give you whatever you want. Any.  
Dowry. Any payment. For the girl.  
Jacob's sons. Answered Shechem verse 13 with deceit. And they said.  
We cannot do this thing. To give our sister to one who is uncircumcised. Only on this condition.  
We will consent if you will become like us. And that every male of you be circumcised. Because circumcision was a religious right.  
They didn't really have any intention. As we see later in the chapter of giving. Their sister in marriage.  
But it was just a clever trick. To. Get them weak.  
And then to finish them off. And. One of the first instances we see of.  
Religion being used. To attain one's own end. A religious right.  
Acting religious. In order to. Attain a certain end.  
They spoke with deceit. And used religion. To further their deceit.  
And the descendants of these sons of Jacob are many. Throughout the world in Christendom. In the 20th century.  
Who used religion. As a form. Of deceit for their own gain.  
And their words appeared reasonable. Verse 18. To Hamor and Shechem.  
The young men did not delay to do the thing. Because he was. Delighted to.  
With Jacob's daughter. This. Chap Shechem.  
He was willing to take. Be circumcised. Or take baptism.  
Or baptism in the name of Jesus. Or anything. He's the type of these.

People would be willing to do anything under the sun. If he can get married to the one he wants to get married to. And there also.

His descendants are also many. In the world today. Who when they are in love with somebody.

And want to marry someone. They'll do anything. Religious.

Or non-religious. Or anything. And act spiritual.

And act religious. Because deep down in their heart. They want to get married to this person.

We are not to be deceived. By. That such people.

Have got any intention of being spiritual. Their only intention in life. Is to get married to the one they love.

Full stop. Of course. If you have to be religious.

In order to do that. They'll put on a whitewash of religion as well. And Shechem was willing to do that.

He was willing to do anything. I think if they had said. We've all got to cut off.

One leg. He'd have been willing to do that too. Is that the religious right? Sure.

And. They spoke to the men of the city. And convinced them.

That it'd be good to. All of us can be circumcised. Because this is the king and his son.

And then. Convinced them. That all their property will be ours.

Let them live here. Because they are a small group. And so.

It says here. That every male. Verse 24.

Was circumcised. And on the third day. When.

The swelling was intense. And the pain was great. After the circumcision.

Verse 25. Simeon and Levi. Took their swords.

And went in. And killed all the men. Who were not able to get up.

Because of their pain. And they killed Ahimeur. And Shechem.

And took Dinah. From Shechem's house. And Jacob's sons came.

And slew them. And looted the city. Took their flocks.

And herds. And donkeys. And all the little ones.

And wives. And all the prisoners' houses. Then Jacob.

Verse 30. Said to Simeon. And Levi.

You have brought trouble on me. Of course. He is not rebuking them.

For. Taking revenge. Like that.  
In an evil way. He is scared of his life. He says.  
What will these other people now. Do to me. When they hear.  
That you have finished off. The whole village here. By making me odious.  
Among the inhabitants. of the land. And the Canaanites.  
And the Perizzites. My men. Being few in number.  
They will gather together against me. And attack me. And I will be destroyed.  
And I and my household. No. We don't get a very great picture of this man.  
Jacob. Even though God has blessed him. And changed his name.  
Yet. It's a slow process. Of transformation.  
Still. The same. Weakness.  
And fear of men. It teaches us. How slow it is.  
For us. For God. To complete the work.  
You know. The habits. And traits.  
Of character. That we have developed. Through many.  
Many years. Leave us. So slowly.  
That's why. It is so important. To be wholehearted.  
And radical. That's why. We speak so much.  
About being wholehearted. And radical. Because.  
Otherwise. These things. Will.  
Move. So slowly. Everything.  
Will go. So slowly. It is God's desire.  
A quick work. May be done in us. That we might be free.  
From these. Attitudes. Chapter 35.  
Then God said to Jacob. All right. Now.  
It's time for you to arise. And go out to Bethel. That's where I told you to go.  
In the first place. You shouldn't have bought this. Land.

And shaken. And settled down. And thought you could live.  
A comfortable life. Now you got. Problems.  
Your one. Daughter is being defiled. Your children have become murderers.  
Why didn't you listen to me. In the first place. Live there.  
That's where I called you to live. And make an altar there. Not in any place.  
Where you like. To the God. Who appeared to you.  
When you fled. Fled. From Esau.  
And God's reminding him. You remember. Way back in Genesis.  
Chapter 28. Verse 20 to 22. How you saw that ladder.  
Up to heaven. In Bethel. And you said.  
This is the house of God. And if God brings me back. This will be God's house.  
And I'll be. I'll give to God. A tithe.  
And a. Etc. Etc. And he says.  
You forgot all about it. Remember. When you saw that lovely plot of land.  
In Shechem. Just like. Lots of people.  
Who forget all about the promises. They make to God. When they find something.  
That suits their own convenience. And their own comfort. All the promises.  
They made 20 years earlier. Are all forgotten. But God doesn't forget it.  
He says. You remember what you said. Come back there.  
That's where I want you. And so. Jacob.  
Tells his household. To put away the foreign gods. It's amazing.  
How God. Had to arrange. These external circumstances.  
And make life difficult. If life was. Comfortable for.  
Jacob. And Shechem. He'd never have moved.  
And so. God made life. A little difficult.  
For him. So that he had to move. From there.  
And. It is a sad thing. That these.

Foreign gods. Idols. Had come into.  
Jacob's household. And he knew about it. And he hadn't done.  
Anything about it. Think that. All these years.  
There were these idols. In Jacob's household. Which he knew were wrong.  
He knew from Abraham. And Isaac. That these were wrong.  
And yes. He allowed it. He allows it to.  
Exist. But now. He has another revival.  
In his heart. When God speaks to him. Another time.  
And he says. Put away these idols. And purify yourself.  
And change your garments. Then he decides to be radical. Thank God.  
He became radical. At least then. And let us arise.  
And go up to Bethel. And I'll make an altar there. To God.  
Who answered me. In the day of distress. And has been with me.  
Wherever I had gone. If he had gone. Straight back.  
There would have been no Genesis chapter 34. And the story there. He would have escaped all that.  
If he had moved right. If he had been radical. Right in the beginning.  
It's because. We delay in being radical. That we have so many problems.  
And then after the problems come. We decide to be radical. And as they journeyed.  
And so. Verse four. They gave to Jacob.  
All the idols. Which they had. The rings which were in their ears.  
And Jacob hid them under the oak. Which was near Shechem. Idols.  
Are to be. Got rid of. Not to be sold.  
To get somebody else. To follow the devil. They are to be.  
Destroyed. Like books of magic and witchcraft. In Ephesus.  
They didn't sell it. To make money with it. And ruin other people's lives.  
If you've got a book that's ruined you. And it'll get you a good price in the market. What do you do? Sell it.  
And ruin somebody else's life. Or destroy it. No.

They got rid of it. He didn't sell it. He got rid of it.

And as they journeyed. Verse five. There was a great terror.

Upon the cities which are around them. Amazing verse. The result of purification.

The result of getting rid of the idols. Is that. There is a fear.

Upon the people around. The terror of God. Was.

That's what it says in the margin. The terror of God. Was upon the cities.

And they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. They heard. What did these fellows had wiped out.

The whole village. In Canaan. And these were no doubt relatives.

And they did not pursue. We see there God's sovereign. Restraining hand.

Upon evil people. When they seek to. Harm us.

In any way. And if you turn to a verse in Job chapter 38. It tells us there is something of God's tremendous power.

In relation to the waves of the sea. And the waters in the ocean. Job 38 it says.

In verse. Eight. Where were you God says.

When the foundations of the earth were laid. Do you know who. Verse eight.

Enclosed the sea with doors. When it was bursting forth. It went out from the womb.

In other words. The sea was about to cover the whole earth. And God.

Restrained the sea. In fact the sea is always trying to cover the whole earth. The tides.

That rise with the pull of the moon. Always seeking to cover the earth. And God restrains it.

Like we sing in that song. With feeble. Sand.

On the beaches. When you think of sand. Little.

Particles of sand. God uses that feeble sand. To restrain the mighty.

Tidal waves of the ocean. So that it doesn't. Cover the earth.

I. Verse ten. Placed boundaries on it God says. I set a bolt in doors to the sea.

And I said. Thus far you shall come. But no farther.

And here shall your proud waves stop. God is a God who can say to the sea. And to the tidal waves of the sea.

Thus far you shall come. And no further. You go down to the sea in any beach.

And you can see how the waves come. And you know it won't come any further. And there we are to see something of God's power.

That's able to restrain evil. The Bible says in the book of Isaiah. The wicked.

Are like the troubled sea. And that troubled sea. God is able to restrain.

Saying thus far. And no further. That's the thing that should give us confidence.

That if we are wholehearted. And we are radical. And we obey the exhortation in the last letter.

In the last verse. Of John's first letter. One John five the last verse.

Little children. Keep yourselves from idols. And like Jacob.

We put away all idols. And we are radical and wholehearted to purify ourselves. We shall find that God uses a restraining influence.

Even upon evil. Around us. There was a terror of God upon the cities.

And they could not follow. And thus Jacob came to Luz. In Bethel.

And there he built an altar. This time the altar was in the right place. It was in Bethel.

God the God of Bethel. Because there God revealed himself to him. At last he had come to the place.

Where God wanted him to be. There he offered his sacrifices. And there Deborah said.

Rebecca's nurse died. And she was buried. Deborah Rebecca's nurse died.

And she was buried. And then God appeared to Jacob again. When he came from Padana Ram.

And he blessed him. And God said to him. Your name is Jacob.

You shall no longer be called Jacob. But Israel shall be your name. Think of all that time that was wasted in Shekin.

God wanted him to come here and get this blessing. But he wasted some time. He wasted time in Padana Ram.

In Laban's place. Wasted time in Shekin. But finally he comes.

To the place where God wanted him to be. And the second time he tells him. Your name is going to be Israel.

God also said to him. I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply.

A nation and a company of nations shall come from you. Kings shall come forth from you. And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac.

I will give to you. And I will give to your descendants. And then God went up from him to the place where he had spoken to him.

God will speak to us when we are in the right place. God will speak to us when we are. Seeking to be in the place where he.

Wants us to be. And not when we seek. To be in a place which is convenient and comfortable for us.

And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken. A pillar of stone. And he poured out a libation.

A sacrifice. And he poured oil on it. And Jacob named the place where God had spoken.

The house of God. Bethel means the house of God. It is a picture of the church.

The true church. Jerusalem. Bethel.

The first place which is called the house of God in the Old Testament. That is the place where God wants us to be. And we can say that there are people who come out of Padana Ram and never reach the true church.

They get stuck in Shechem somewhere. Where it is more comfortable. Some other denomination where the fire is not so hot.

Where it is comfortable. And they have problems. Problems with their daughters.

And problems with their sons. And sometimes it is only after they have made a mess of their family life that they decide finally to find a place in the true church. That is how it was with Jacob.

But Jacob was radical at that point. He began to take charge of his house which he had not taken charge of till then. Then he told his sons.

Now I am going to take charge of my house. Get rid of all your idols now. And his sons and his daughters obeyed.

And they came to the house of God. To the church. Symbolically speaking.

Verse 16. Then they journeyed from Bethel. And there was some distance to go to Ephrath.

And Rachel began to give birth. And she suffered labor. Severe labor.

And came about when she was in severe labor that the midwife said to her. Do not fear. For now you have another son.

And came about as her soul was departing. For she died. That she named him Benoni.

But his father called him Benjamin. That is the younger brother of Joseph. Rachel's second son.

So Rachel died. And was buried on the way to Ephrath. That is Bethlehem.

And Jacob set up a pillar over her grave. That is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day. Then Israel journeyed on and pitched a tent beyond the Tower of Eder.

I want you to see these beautiful words. It is something like Mount Moriah where Abraham offers up the darling of his heart. And we know that the darling of Jacob's heart was Rachel.

And it says here, see these words. Jacob, verse 20, buried Rachel. It was Jacob who buried Rachel.

Verse 21 it says, Israel journeyed on. I believe there has to be something like that in our life too. We can say this was Jacob's Mount Moriah experience.

Verse 20, Jacob set a pillar over the grave. Verse 21, Israel journeyed on. The deceiver buried the darling of his heart.

And the Prince of God comes out of that grave and moves on. Yeah? And there is, we can say, a difference in Jacob's life from this point onward. It is always a difference when we have buried and set up a grave over that which is the darling of our heart.

That God has to remove that when we are so attached to someone. And we read, it came that while Israel was dwelling in that land, Reuben went and lay with Billah his father's concubine. Israel heard of it.

Here is another irresponsible son that Jacob had. He doesn't seem to have much control over his children. And then the twelve sons of Jacob are mentioned.

And then we read in verse 28, the days of Isaac where Jacob came to his father. Verse 27, Isaac at Mamre. No mention of his mother Rebecca.

His mother Rebecca had died. She never realized that when she schemed and planned to deceive her husband Isaac by giving that savory meat through Jacob, that she would set in motion a chain of events that ended up with her never seeing her darling son Jacob again until she died. She sent Jacob away, thinking it would be only for a few days, but she never saw him again on this earth.

She died. It's sad to see the state of a good, wholehearted young couple like Isaac and Rebecca as they were when they began their married life, praying, seeking God. You see them at the end of their life, separated from one another, partial to their children, compromising, wayward.

And then they die. Sad. And there are many, many cases like that.

Young, wholehearted people who don't remain wholehearted in their married life. God is not first. Get taken up with the ways of the world.

A warning. And the days of Isaac were 180 years. It's interesting to note that Isaac lived longer than Abraham and longer than Jacob, who died later.

He lived the longest of the three. But what's the use living for 180 years if you end your life like that? It's not how long we live. The world is full of people who want to live a long life.

Would you like to live up to the age of 80, 85? I'll tell you honestly, I have no desire to live a long life. I say, Lord, I want to live a useful one, where I've done the will of God. Once the will of God is finished, that's the end.

I want to leave. No interest in living a long life. It's those who are interested in the long life who are always afraid.

Oh, this pain here, what's that now? I wonder what it is. And this other ache here, I don't know what it is. You want to live a long life like Isaac? 180 years, perhaps? Be wholehearted.

And then we shall not be filled with all these fears. We shall come to our grave in God's time, in God's will. We should never have a desire to live a long life, but only a useful one.

To do the will of God. Jesus had no desire to live a long life. He didn't want to live till 180.

God's will for him was 33 and a half, and he was finished and he went. He said, Our Father, I've finished the work you gave me to do. It's the fear of death, unbecoming of a believer, that makes people want to live a long life.

Just like the worldly people around us. Our mind must be set on doing God's will. In the one life God gives us.

And Isaac breathed his last and died. Gathered to his people an old man of right age, but not of right maturity, spiritually. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Bible says in Hebrews 13 and verse 7, Consider your leaders and consider how they ended their life. That's the important thing. How did they end their life, not how they began.

It's easy to see how Isaac began, but how did he end? The leader in Ephesus began well, but how did he end? That's the important thing. He who endures to the end will be saved. Chapter 36.

This is a list of Esau's descendants. We don't want to read through the whole thing. It's a list of the wives.

Verse 2, He took from the daughters of Canaan. Just one thing I'd mention here in this long list. It's mentioned here in verse 31 that these are the king's descendants of Esau.

Who reigned in the land of Edom long before there was any king among the sons of Israel. Isn't that a wonderful thing? That Esau had kings among his children long before Jacob had kings among his children. There was something that Esau could boast about.

My sons became kings before your sons became kings. And Esau's sons were kings when Jacob's sons were slaves in Egypt. That's what we read next to them.

They became slaves. Think of the contrast. Slaves, and here are the brothers' children, kings.

But we read throughout the word of God in the Old Testament how God fought against Edom. Against all those people. And that training for the children of Israel in affliction in Egypt was the training for becoming kings in Canaan later on.

There's a contrast here we can say. The world boasts in being a king without any affliction. But for God's people, while in the world they have become kings, we have to go through affliction.

When their children are great in the world, our children are perhaps not. We read in 1 Corinthians, in chapter 4, Paul says to the Corinthians, The Corinthians were carnal, vague, seeking the best of both worlds. And he tells them, 1 Corinthians 4.8, You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us.

What about us? Verse 9, We are not kings at all. You sons of Esau have become kings already. You are great in the world.

You are accepted and honored in the world. But we apostles, we are last of all. We are fools, verse 10.

We are considered, verse 13, the last part, as the scum of the world. The scum that floats on the gutters. The dregs of all things.

That is the sons of Israel. Whereas the sons of Esau, the sons of Esau are kings. It's an interesting verse.

There were kings in Esau, in the land of Edom, long before any king reigned over the sons of Israel. Affliction is the true preparation for kingship. There were kings in Israel.

David and Solomon became kings. But the kings in Israel came after many years of affliction in Egypt. 400 years of affliction.

And then they come out and have kings. Whereas Esau had kings without affliction. And that is the principle we see in scripture.

That those who come to the throne without any trial and temptation. Like King Saul, for example, in Israel. He became a king without any personal affliction in his life.

And you know what a miserable king he was. But David, he became a king through trial and affliction and difficulty. And he was a wonderful king till the end of his days.

And then he had a son called Solomon who became a king without any difficulties and trials. And he was a miserable king. It's always like that.

When we seek for that which is easy, and also we want to be a king, we end up like Saul and Solomon. When Paul says about Demas that he has forsaken me having loved this present world. I think probably Demas didn't stop preaching.

In fact, I doubt very much whether Demas would have stopped preaching. He must have continued preaching because he would have lost his testimony if he had stopped preaching. It's just that he thought a more comfortable life.

In a more comfortable place like Shechem. And bought a piece of land in Shechem and settled down. And continued to preach.

And continued to build an altar there. But Paul could see through all that and said he has loved this present world. I'm not impressed with all that talk about godliness and the altar and all that.

He's in the wrong place. And so we allow the sons of Esau to become kings. And we are glad to be slaves and under affliction.

And to be considered the scum of the earth. Because our kingship is over the lust in our flesh. Not in the eyes of the world.

Now we come to chapter 37. And now Jacob lives in the land where his father had sojourned in the land of Canaan. These are the records of the generations of Jacob.

Joseph now begins from Genesis 37 till the end of this book. We have the story of Joseph. Tremendous man who began well and ended well.

And in a book like Genesis where we read of the mistakes of Noah who got drunk. Anybody who's biography is given in detail. Abel we don't know much about.

There's just a few verses written about Abel. But the other Melchizedek we don't know much about. Just a few verses.

But the ones whose biographies are given in detail. The men of God in the book of Enoch also like that. Very few verses.

But the lengthy biographies in Genesis are of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Five people. And it's very interesting to see in all these five people that Joseph is the one man who stands out as one concerning whom we don't see a single thing spoken of as having been done as being evil or bad.

Noah, Abraham. Abraham told his lies. And Isaac we saw.

Jacob we saw. But in contrast to all that is Joseph. Beginning at a young age.

And he was 17. Think of that. 17 years of age.

Verse 2. Did he have elder brothers who were examples? His older brother committed adultery with his father's wife Reuben. We just read that. Another two brothers were murderers.

Simeon and Levi. We read about them. The fourth brother.

We read in the next chapter went and committed adultery with his daughter-in-law. And his sister was one of these modern teenagers. Who went and made a mess of her life.

And from such a family. When nobody was an example. Comes this young God-fearing man.

Who really had his heart open to God. He didn't go around judging, criticizing his brothers. He lived before God in humility.

Tremendous example. We can't say there are no good examples. For us to follow.

Be an example yourself. Think of Joseph. Alone.

Without meetings. Without exhortations. Without tapes.

Books. Magazines. Nothing.

With a heart that was open for God. It shows what one young man can do in a home. Where most people don't have much interest in Godliness.

Tremendous. As you see. And Joseph.

Was pasturing the plot with his brothers while he was still a youth. And his friends were the sons of Wilhelm. The sons of Wilpa.

And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father. That their children were misbehaving. Joseph told his father what was going on.

He didn't try to take action himself. That was outside his authority. He just told his father.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons. Because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a very colored eunuch.

And his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers. And so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms. Here is another case of partiality in a family.

Special dresses. For my favorite son. Special clothes for the one and only son I have.

Or the one and only daughter I have. Or for my favorite daughter. Special clothes.

Causing envy. Partiality. Favoritism.

Again. It was there in Jacob's father's family. Now it's in his own family too.

And caused a lot of problems. It caused problems between Jacob and Esau. And it caused problems between Joseph and his brothers.

Just a warning to all parents. To cleanse themselves of all partiality towards their children. And here is where we see Joseph's openness to God.

He had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. He said to them, please listen to this dream which I have had.

For behold, we were binding sheaves in the field. And lo, my sheave rose up and also stood erect. And behold, your sheaves gathered round and bowed down to my sheave.

And his brothers said to him, are you actually going to reign over us? Are you really going to rule over us? We know that it was fulfilled. We know that a day came when all these eleven brothers bowed down to Joseph in Egypt. It was a prophetic dream.

We know that Joseph was not a diplomat. He just shared what he heard. What he heard from God.

In simplicity. And it was prophetic. And the thing we see with interest here is a young, seventeen year old man.

Think of that age. Seventeen years. With ambition.

Desire. To become great with passions in the body. To be open to God.

To have dreams concerning spiritual things. Most seventeen year olds have dirty dreams. But here was a young seventeen year old who was dreaming where God was speaking to him.

Amazing. Is God partial? There is no partiality with God. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

That is written in Hebrews 11. Hebrews 11.5 and 6 where we read of Old Testament saints. And here is one of those Old Testament saints.

God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. And if Joseph found Him, it must have been because God rewarded him. Because he diligently sought God.

Something like Samuel. In the midst of all the lack of examples in Samuel's day. Samuel was open to hear God.

And God could speak to him. That is our calling in these days. There is compromise everywhere.

There is worldliness everywhere. Even Christians who talk about victory over sin are not, generally speaking, wholehearted as they used to be. In the midst of all this, what shall we do? We shall be like Joseph.

We shall be like Samuel. Lonely. Alone.

Listening to God. Hearing what God has to say. And keeping the standards without compromise.

God is looking for young people like that. Seventeen years old. He can lay hold of you.

Seventeen. You don't have to be seventy. Don't let the devil fool you.

Seventeen years old. As I have often said on the day of Pentecost. There was not a single gray hair on those apostles who stood there to build the church.

Not one of them was over thirty-three. Think of that. Young people, say, between the ages of twenty-eight to thirty-three.

These were the people who began to turn the world upside down from the day of Pentecost onwards. They were not fifty, sixty, seventy year old people. If God can't lay hold of our life when we are young, I tell you the chances are pretty bleak that He'll never do it later on in life.

We'll just drift along. Most believers, even those who have accepted the new and living religion, just drift along. Seek God wholeheartedly.

Then maybe you can have dreams in the night too from God. God speaking to you at night. In the middle of the night.

And he had another dream, verse nine. It wasn't the end. It wasn't just a flash.

No, it was a consistent thing. He had another dream. And he said, I have still another dream.

The sun and the moon and the eleven stars were bowing down to me. And he told his father and his brothers. His father rebuked him.

What is this dream? I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you? And we know that's exactly what happened in Egypt. His brothers were jealous of him, but his father was a little more wise. He knew that such things can happen.

He knew that God said when he was born that the elder will serve the younger. And he knew that that took place. So he said, maybe there's something here.

And he kept it in mind. He didn't despise it. Yeah, that's really a tremendous encouragement for us.

Particularly, I want to challenge all the young people here who are teenagers, boys and girls. I want to encourage you to be open to God. Be open to God.

There's a verse in the book of Job, chapter thirty-three, which says about God speaking in dreams at night. Job thirty-three, verse fourteen. Indeed, God speaks once or twice, yet no one notices it.

He speaks in a dream, a vision of the night, when sound sleep falls on men when they slumber in their beds. Then he opens the ears of men, Job thirty-three, sixteen, and seals their instruction. The purpose is that he may turn man aside from his conduct and keep man from pride, from that which is unlike Christ in his life.

He keeps back his soul from the pit. So God speaks in a dream. And we need to understand what God is speaking.

But the thing I want you to notice here is this openness to hear God. Day and night, we must be open to hear God. Not just soothe our conscience that I've read my Bible for fifteen minutes, but to be open to hear God all the time, day and night.

Lord, speak to me. And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind. Then his brothers went to pasture their flock, Genesis thirty-seven, twelve, in Shechem.

And Israel said to Joseph, For not your brothers pasturing the flock in Shechem? Come, I'll send you to them. And he said to him, I'll go. And he said to him, Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring word back to me.

So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. I want you to notice here, in this whole story, from now onwards to Genesis fifty, Joseph is a picture in the sky of Jesus Christ. And just like Jacob sent Joseph to look for his brothers, God sent Jesus among the Jews to find them.

The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. And just like when Joseph came to his brothers, they sold him for some pieces of silver. Like that Jesus, when he came to the Jews, he was also sold for some pieces of silver, because they were jealous of him.

They hated him. They put him into the pits. They got rid of him.

And, rejected by his brothers, but finally we read that though his own brothers rejected him, he came to his own, and his own did not receive him, Joseph went to the Gentiles, to Egypt. And there he was exalted to be a king. There, in Egypt, he found a bride, for he married an Egyptian.

That is a picture of Jesus, rejected by his own brothers, the Jews, and coming to the Gentiles and finding a bride for himself from among the Gentiles. And then, after that, the Jews, his brothers, come back to Joseph, to Egypt. And that is how we see finally the Jews coming back into the land today.

And again, one day when Christ comes again, the God-fearing ones among them will find him to be their saviour. So it is a very beautiful picture here, of Jesus, Joseph finally blessing his brothers, and finally the Lord blessing the Jews as well. Keep that in mind as we go through.

It is very beautiful how this is all pictured, the history, the whole history, of the Jewish people is there, at the beginning of the Jewish race, in a small capsule, as it were. And he goes searching for his brothers, and a man found him. He was wandering in the fields.

He said, what are you looking for? He said, I'm looking for my brothers. And the man said, they moved from here, let's go to Dothan. May we see something about Joseph's diligence? He could have come back to his father and said, well, I didn't find them.

But he was determined to fulfill the spirit of what his father commanded, not the letter. My father wants me to find them. So he said, if they've gone to Dothan, I'll go to Dothan.

And he went after his brothers. Who? He went after brothers who were jealous of him, who hated him, who never spoke kindly to him. And there we see something about Joseph's goodness, that he's willing to go after these brothers of his, maybe to take some food for them, perhaps.

I'm sure Joseph, Israel must have sent some food with Joseph. And when he didn't find them in one place, he doesn't come back. He goes and finds them.

Be a brother like that to those who are not good to you. And when they saw him from a distance, they plotted against him to put him to death. He comes in love to them, and they are still full of their hatred, exactly like Christ came to Israel, into the midst of the Jews.

They said to one another, here comes this dreamer. Now then, let us kill him, verse 20. Throw him into one of the pits.

And we will say, a wild beast devoured him. Then let us see what will become of his dreams. But there God watches the evil that other people plan to do to us.

Do you believe that? If God was not watching at that time and doing something about it, Joseph would never have become the ruler in Egypt. He would have died. God's plan for Joseph would have been frustrated.

But will God allow his plans for a God-caring young man of his to be frustrated, just because some people are jealous and evil towards him? Impossible. God will make all that jealousy and evil work together for good to this young man whom he has chosen. Think of that, that all the evil and hatred and jealousy that other people seek to pile upon us, what they speak, and the evil they speak, and the bad reports they give, and everything they do.

If we are God-fearing like Joseph, God is watching you plan it all and make it all work for good. Because while they are planning to kill Joseph, God has got a hold of one man, Reuben. He gets a hold of Reuben, and uses Reuben to save Joseph's life.

Because in verse 21 it says, Reuben says, Let's not take his life. And he's the elder brother there. Amazing how God can control one man in a crowd, to change the direction which the crowd is planning to take.

We have to believe that. God's got control of that trade union leader there, to change the situation. He's not converted.

He's godless like Reuben. Immoral like Reuben. Doesn't matter.

God can still control him to fulfill his purposes for his children. And so Reuben suggests that they put him into a pit in the wilderness. He thought he could rescue him later.

He seemed to have a good heart. And so they took off his very covered tunic, which is the cause of all their jealousy. Threw him into the pit.

There was no water in the pit. And they sat down to eat a meal, and Reuben had gone away somewhere. And as they raised their eyes, a caravan of Ishmaelites were on their camels, going down to Egypt.

And God's got control of Judah now, to plan something else. He says, Why should we kill our brother? Let's just sell him to the Ishmaelites. And his brothers listened to him.

God's got control of the second in command as well. He's got everybody in his hands, to fulfill his purpose. And these Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled Joseph out of the pit and sold him for 20 shekels of silver.

Something like the 30 pieces of silver that Judas Iscariot sold Jesus for. And they brought Joseph into Egypt. See how God fulfills his plan.

When, if we wanted to fulfill that plan, we would do it as a mighty demonstration of power and all that. But God doesn't do it that way. He uses evil people to plan evil and to do evil, and the evil turns out to be for good.

And that is a greater miracle than if God were to just finish off all his brothers and say, I'm going to defend my servants. No, let them do the evil. Just like in the case of Jesus Christ.

Let them crucify him. But through that crucifixion, Satan is defeated and salvation has come to the world. This is the principle of the Christian life.

Let them crucify you. But through it will come salvation. Through it will come the fulfillment of God's purposes.

If we have faith. When Reuben returned to the pit, he found Joseph was not there. He tore his garments.

He said, the boy is not there. As for me, where am I to go? So they took Joseph's tunic and killed the male goat, dipped it in blood, verse 31, brought it to the father, and said, is this your son's tunic? And Jacob, who had fooled his own father many years earlier, is now being fooled by his own children. It's amazing how 30 years later, we begin to reap the potatoes we sowed, the wild oats we sowed 30 years earlier.

Comes back, comes back, what we reap, what we sow. The way you fooled your father, one day you'll find your children fooling you. It's what we see.

And Jacob tore his clothes. He really believed it. He was fooled, 100%.

Just like he fooled his father 100%, maybe 30, 40 years earlier. And then all his sons and his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. That's where we read that he had more than one daughter, verse 35.

All his sons and all his daughters. Surely I'll go down to Sheol and mourn him. So his father wept for him.

And here is another part of the fulfillment of God's purpose. The Midianites told him to Potiphar, because there God has got something more to be fulfilled. Just into the right house, God's plan moves us right into the right employment, to the right tough character, who's got an evil wife.

Wonderful, how God plans that we get employed in the right place. We have to believe in the sovereignty of God here, for the fulfillment of His purpose, for testing us, and also for the fulfillment of His purpose. We

praise God that He'd do the same for us, what He did for Joseph.

Amen.

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