

# Genesis 33 - Jacob Reconciles with Esau; Jacob Buys Land Near Shechem

## II. Epilogue: Patriarchal history (Gen 11:10—50:26)

- (3) Life of Jacob (Gen 27:1—36:43)
- (D) The preservation of Jacob (Gen 30:25—33:20)
  - (b) Threat of Esau (32:1—33:20)
    - (v) Welcome by Esau (33:1-11)
    - (vi) Proposal by Jacob (33:12-17)
    - (vii) Arrival in Canaan (33:18-20)

## Genesis 33

- (b) Threat of Esau (32:1—33:20)
- (v) Welcome by Esau (33:1-11)

**1** Then Jacob raised his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel, and the two slave women.

**1** Then Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids.

**1** When Jacob looked off in the distance, there was Esau coming toward him, accompanied by 400 men! So Jacob divided Leah's children, Rachel, and the children of the two servants into separate groups.

**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** He put the slave women and their children in front, and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.

**2** He put the maids and their children in front, and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.

**2** Then he positioned the women servants and their children first, then Leah and her children next, and then Rachel and Joseph after them.

**2** And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.

- Jacob positioned the three groups: this may have been a precaution in case Esau attacked the first group, the mothers would be spared
- It also may have been the way he wanted to introduce his family to Esau, from least to greatest

3 But he himself passed on ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

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3 Then he went out to meet Esau, passing in front of all of them, and bowed low to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.

3 And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

- The fact that Jacob went out to meet Esau first, putting himself in the most danger, shows that he aligned his family by how he wanted to introduce them to Esau rather than by value

4 Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

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4 Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him. Then he fell on his neck and kissed him. And they wept.

4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

- Esau was the one who made the first move of forgiveness to Jacob (Cf. Prov 16:7)

5 He raised his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, "Who are these with you?" So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant."

5 He lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, "Who are these with you?" So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant."

5 When Esau eventually looked around, he saw the women and the children. "Who are these people with you?" he asked.

"The children, whom God has graciously given your servant," he answered.

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 slave women came forward with their children, and they bowed down.

6 Then the maids came near with their children, and they bowed down.

6 Then the women servants approached, accompanied by their children, and bowed low.

6 Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves.

7 And Leah likewise came forward with her children, and they bowed down; and afterward Joseph came forward with Rachel, and they bowed down.

7 Leah likewise came near with her children, and they bowed down; and afterward Joseph came near with Rachel, and they bowed down.

7 Leah also approached, and she and her children bowed low. After this, Joseph and Rachel approached and bowed low.

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 do you mean by all this company which I have met?" And he said, "To find favor in the sight of my lord."

8 And he said, "What do you mean by all this company which I have met?" And he said, "To find favor in the sight of my lord."

8 Then Esau asked, "What are all these livestock for?"  
"To solicit favor from you, sir," Jacob answered.

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 But Esau said, "I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own."

9 But Esau said, "I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own."

9 But Esau replied, "I already have so much, my brother, so keep what belongs to you."

9 And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.  
- Esau had become wealthy as well, so Esau insisted that Jacob kept his gifts

10 Jacob said, "No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then accept my gift from my hand, for I see your face as one sees the face of God, and you have received me favorably.

10 Jacob said, "No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then take my present from my hand, for I see your face as one sees the face of God, and you have received me favorably.

10 "Please," Jacob implored him, "don't refuse. If I'm to receive favor from you, then receive this gift from me, because seeing your face is like seeing the face of God, since you have favorably accepted me.

**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.

- Jacob replied that Esau should accept his gifts because Jacob was glad to see Esau, and because Esau received him graciously

**11** Please accept my **gift** which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because **I have plenty.**" So he urged him, and he accepted *it*.

**11** Please take my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have plenty." Thus he urged him and he took *it*.

**11** So receive my blessing, which has been sent to you, since God has been gracious to me. Besides, I have enough." Because Jacob kept pressing him, Esau accepted the gifts.

**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.

- "...gift" - Jacob refers to the gifts as his blessing

- This was a reference to the patriarchal blessing, which Jacob is now sharing with Esau

- "...I have plenty" - in Hebrew, a better translation is "I have everything"

- So while Esau had "enough," Jacob had "everything," meaning more than enough

- The acceptance of a gift is equivalent to the striking of a covenant of friendship

- If your present is received by your superior you may rely on his friendship; if it is declined you have everything to fear

- It was on this ground that Jacob was so urgent in pressing Esau to accept his present

- Esau took it and so gave Jacob an assurance of his complete reconciliation

#### (vi) Proposal by Jacob (33:12-17)

**12** Then Esau said, "Let's journey on and go, and I will go ahead of you."

**12** Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey and go, and I will go before you."

**12** Then Esau suggested, "Let's set out and travel together, but let me go in front of you."

**12** And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.

- Esau offered to travel with (ahead of) Jacob, as an escort

**13** But he said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds that are nursing are a matter of concern to me. And if they are driven hard *just* one day, all the flocks will die.

**13** But he said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds which are nursing are a care to me. And if they are driven hard one day, all the flocks will die.

13 "Sir, you know that the children are frail," Jacob suggested, "and the ewes and cows with me are still nursing their young. If they're driven even for a day, the entire flock will die.

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.

- Because of Jacob's young children and young flock, he was concerned that he couldn't travel at the speed in which Esau could

14 Please let my lord pass on ahead of his servant, and I will proceed at my leisure, at the pace of the cattle that are ahead of me and at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir."

14 Please let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir."

14 So allow yourself to go ahead of your servant while I travel more slowly, letting the herds set their own pace with the children until I arrive to see my lord in Seir."

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.

- Jacob's counteroffer was that Esau should travel ahead, at his own pace, and Jacob would follow at a slower pace

- As the context later shows, Jacob did not go to Seir, and there is no record of Jacob ever going to Seir

15 Then Esau said, "Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord."

15 Esau said, "Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord."

15 Esau said, "Let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." "Why do that?" Jacob asked. "I've already found favor in your sight, sir."

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.

- Esau offered Jacob an armed escort; Jacob politely declined

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

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

16 So Esau set out that very day back on his way to Seir,

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

17 But Jacob journeyed to **Succoth**, and built for himself a house and made booths for his livestock; therefore the place is named Succoth.

17 Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built for himself a house and made booths for his livestock; therefore the place is named Succoth.

17 but Jacob set out for Succoth, built a house there, and constructed some cattle shelters. He named the place Succoth.

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.

- This was the separation of Jacob and Esau

— Both were still on the east side of the Jordan, so Jacob was outside the Land

— Since Jacob "built him a house" and "made booths for his cattle" there, it shows that he lived there for some time. For some unstated reason, Jacob seemed reluctant to return to the Land immediately.

- "...Succoth" - from saccac, to entwine; i.e. booths

(vii) Arrival in Canaan (33:18-20)

**18** Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city.

**18** Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city.

**18** After Jacob had arrived safely from Paddan-aram, he entered the city of Shechem, which was located in the territory of Canaan, and encamped facing that city.

**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.

- Jacob finally entered the Land, after residing for an unknown amount of time east of the Jordan

- This verse is a fulfillment of 28:15; 31:3

- Shechem, while in the Land, is far north of where Isaac lived; it is unknown why Jacob did not return to the area of his father Isaac

**19** He bought the plot of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money.

**19** He bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money.

**19** Then he bought a parcel of land for 100 pieces of silver from the descendants of Hamor, Shechem's father. He pitched his tent there,

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.

- This parcel was the only piece of the Promised Land that Jacob actually owned
- God promised him the whole Land, but the part he actually owned he had to purchase
- Years later, this is where the bones of Joseph would be re-buried (Joshua 24:32)
- The well Jacob would have dug here would become the Well of Sychar (John 4:6,11-12)

20 Then he erected there an altar and called it **El-Elohe-Israel**.

20 Then he erected there an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

20 set up an altar, and named it El-elohe-israel.

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

- "...El-Elohe-Israel" - "God, the Gods of Israel"
- The first word (*El*) is the singular form for God; the second word (*Elohe*) is in the plural form
- This use of Israel was the first use of Jacob's new name