

The Road to Revival

(Genesis 35:1-29)

The Name “God” is never mentioned in **Genesis 34**, and we saw last week that it was a Godless chapter. However, **Genesis 35** uses the Name “God” 11 times and other names like “Bethel” (house of God) and “El Shaddai” (the Almighty God) another 11 times! Jacob’s road to revival reveals several principles that can lead to our own personal revival as well.

Six Signposts on the Road to Revival:

1) The Reason for revival - disobedience (ch. 34)

- There is no single experience that will ever allow you to say, “I have arrived”. We must continue to be faithful to God or else we will backslide. Jacob had experienced God at Bethel before, but through his own disobedience he had backslidden.
- Proverbs 14:14 - The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, But a good man will be satisfied from above.

Jacob’s Spiritual Journey: He is **saved** in ch. 28; He is **subdued** in ch. 32; He is **separated** in chs. 33-34; He is **surrendered** in ch. 35

2) The Response to God’s initiation (v.1 - go to Bethel)

- God is always calling His people back to Himself. Revival is always first initiated by God, not by man. We are to respond to His loving call.
- Bethel is only 30 miles from Shechem, and yet it’s been 10 years since Jacob’s return to Canaan, and a total of 30 years since he made a vow to God to return to Bethel. It seems like Jacob has been avoiding Bethel, at least for the last ten years. **Application point:** Sometimes, backslidden folks avoid the people of God and the house of God, which may be right in their backyard.

3) The Removal of idols (v.2 – put away the foreign gods)

- 2 Kings 17:41 - So these nations feared the LORD, yet served their carved images; also their children and their children’s children have continued doing as their fathers did, even to this day.
- 1 John 5:21 - Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

- 1 Thessalonians 1:9 - For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and **how you turned to God from idols** to serve the living and true God,

4) The **Reflection** of holiness (v.2 – *and be clean*)

- Jacob is no longer trying to straddle the fence. He is making a clean break and reflecting this with his garments.
- Sin must be put away. Habits have to change. Get serious about the sin in your life! Acts 19:19 says, “Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver.”
- Matthew 5:30 - And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you...

5) The **Resolve** to lead (v.3 – *let us arise and go*)

- Just as his actions have negatively impacted his family, now his obedience to God will positively impact them. Joshua 25:14 – As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

6) The **Return** to worship (v.3 – *I will make an altar to God*)

- **El Bethel** – The mighty God of the house of God (before it was simply “the house of God”)
- God does not give a new revelation, but a reminder of the old revelation. God reminds him of his name “Israel”, not “Jacob”.
- Genesis 35:14 - So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and **he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it.** (a picture of total surrender)
- Philippians 2:17 - Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. (see also 2 Timothy 4:6) The drink offering was poured onto the sacrifice where the flame was already burning, with the smell going up to the nostrils of God. This was totally consumed and irretrievable. (See Romans 12:1)

Evidences of Maturity and Faith in Jacob’s Life¹:

- 1) Jacob’s **hesitancy** in going to Egypt. (God has to reassure Jacob in Gen. 46:1-4)
- 2) Jacob’s **contentment** in meeting Joseph. (Gen. 46:28-30 – Jacob doesn’t complain, “God has robbed me of so many years with you!”)
- 3) Jacob’s **character** in blessing the Pharaoh. (Gen. 47:5-7).
- 4) Jacob’s **burial request** (Gen. 47:29-31; 49:28-33 – not in Egypt, but Machpelah.)
- 5) Jacob’s **blessing** of Joseph’s sons (Gen. 48:19 – our people will inhabit our land!)
- 6) Jacob’s **prophecy** (Gen. 49:10 – The line of Judah will reign until Shiloh, or the “Rest-Giver” comes. He is prophetically referring to Jesus.)
- 7) Jacob’s **name** in Hebrews 11:21. God affirms that Jacob evidenced faith.

¹ List is dependent on Stephen Davey, “Growing Old and Growing Up” (Genesis 33ff), wisdomonline.org.