

Old Testament Lesson 11

“HOW CAN I DO THIS GREAT WICKEDNESS?”

Prepared by Duane S. Crowther, March 2002

1. Events in the Youth of Jacob’s Children:

A. *Gen. 30:31-43; 31:1-9: The Lord prospered Jacob*, but diminished Laban’s wealth.

1. Laban’s cheating of Jacob and his daughters: *Gen. 29:18-28; 30:31-34; 31:7-8, 15-16; 31:36-42.*

2. *The Lord diminished Laban*: *Gen. 30:41-43; 31:1, 6-9, 12, 14-16.*

B. *Gen. 31:1-55*: Jacob’s flight to Gilead, Laban’s pursuit: their confrontation and covenant of peace. The Lord directs and protects Jacob: *Gen. 31:3, 11-13; 24, 29.*

C. *Gen. 32:1-21: Jacob fears* the wrath of his brother, *Esau*, but prepares to meet him.

D. *Gen. 32:24-32: Jacob wrestles with the Lord*, and *the Lord changes his name from Jacob to Israel*, “for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” [v. 28]

[Locate *Gilead* [7 days journey from Haran: *Gen. 31:23*], the *River Jabbok*, and *Penuel*. [Map 10] See *Gen. 35:10.*

E. *Gen. 33:1-16: Esau* [coming north from Edom] *met Jacob* and they were reconciled.

F. *Gen. 33:17-20*: Jacob bought land in Shechem and tarried there. [Map 10, B4]

G. *Gen. 34:1-31: Shechem the prince raped and abducted Dinah*, then sought her hand in marriage. Jacob’s sons convinced all the men of the city to be circumcised, then Simeon and Levi came and killed all the men of the city “when they were sore.” The sons of Jacob spoiled the city and took the wives and children captive.

H. *Gen. 35:1-8*: The Lord told Jacob to move his family [30 miles south] to Bethel. Jacob caused his people to repent and put away their “strange gods.” As they made the move God protected them from attack by the surrounding cities.

I. *Gen. 35:9-15: The Lord appeared to Jacob again*, and continued elements of the Abrahamic Covenant, saying: (1) “Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel.” (2) “I am God Almighty.” (3) “Be fruitful and multiply.” (4) “A nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, (5) and kings shall come out of thy loins.” (6) “The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, (7) and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.”

J. *Gen. 35:16-20*: Jacob and his family continued to move southward from Bethel towards Hebron. As they came to Bethlehem, *Rachel went into hard labor*. She gave birth to another son, *Benjamin*, *but died* and was buried there near Bethlehem.

K. *Gen. 35:22: Reuben, Israel’s oldest son, committed sexual sin*: “Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine.” He paid a heavy price, “forasmuch as he defiled his father’s bed, his *birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph* the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright . . . the birthright was Joseph’s.” [1 Chron. 5:1-2]

L. *Gen. 35:27-29*: Israel’s father, *Isaac*, came to live with Jacob and his family in Hebron. He *died at the age of 180*, and was buried there by his two sons, Esau and Jacob.

M. Genealogical matters:

1. *Gen. 35:22-26*: The list of the twelve sons of Jacob.

2. *Gen. 36:1-43*: Lists the descendants of Esau. “*Esau is Edom*, . . .” and “the father of the Edomites in mount Seir.” [vv. 8-9] [Map 10, C8] Both he and Jacob were rich, and had many

possessions. [Gen. 36:6-7] His sons reigned as “dukes,” or tribal chiefs. [vv. 15-19]. They were “kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.” [v. 31]

2. **Judah and His Sons’ Procreative Adventures:**

A. *Gen. 38:1-5: Judah had three sons* by Shuah, a Canaanite woman: *Er* [v. 3], *Onan* [v. 4], and *Shelah* [v. 5]. [Time passed.]

B. *Gen. 38:6-7: Judah took a wife for Er, named Tamar.* But Er was wicked, so the Lord slew him.

C. *Gen. 38:8-10: Judah told his second son, Onan, “Go in unto thy brother’s wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.”* But Onan knew that if they had a child, the child would be counted as his brother’s seed, so he intentionally kept Tamar from becoming pregnant. This displeased the Lord, so He slew Onan also.

D. *Gen. 38:11-14: Judah told Tamar to remain a widow until his third son, Shelah was grown, and then he would be given to Tamar.* But Tamar saw that Shelah was not given to her.

E. *Gen. 38:12-26: Tamar, wanting children from her husband’s line,* dressed as a harlot and tempted Judah [who didn’t know the harlot was his daughter-in-law]. She demanded a payment pledge: Judah’s signet, bracelets and staff. Judah came in unto her, and *she conceived.* When Judah sent his payment to she whom he thought was a harlot, she was nowhere to be found.

F. *Gen. 38:24-26: Three months later, when Judah learned that his daughter-in-law was pregnant, he said, “Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.”* (See *Lev. 21:9*) When she was brought, she said, “Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff.” Judah, recognizing that they were his, acknowledged them, and said, “She hath been more righteous than I, because that I gave her not to Shelah my son.”

G. *Gen. 38:27-29: Tamar gave birth to twins: Pharez* (a scarlet thread was tied to his hand) and *Zarah.* [Pharez’s 9th generation grandson was *King David.* See *Ruth 4:18-22, Mt. 1:3.*] [Zerah’s descendant, Pethahiah, was among those with Nehemiah who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. [*Neh. 11:24*]

3.. **Events in the Youth of Joseph, Jacob’s Eleventh Son:**

A. *Gen. 37:1-11: Joseph was 17 years old.* [v. 2] Israel loved Joseph more than any of his sons, because Joseph “was the son of his old age.” He made him a *coat of many colors.*” [v. 3] His brothers “hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.” [v. 4] Joseph dreamed two dreams, which showed him he would someday rule over his brothers:

1. **Dream 1:** They were binding sheaves in the field; his sheaf arose and stood upright; the others’ sheaves made obeisance to his sheaf. [vv. 6-8]

2. **Dream 2:** The sun and moon and eleven stars made obeisance to him. [vv. 9-11].

B. **Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt:**

1. *Gen. 37:12-17: Jacob sent Joseph from Hebron to Shechem to see how his brothers were doing while tending their father’s flocks.* He traveled north 45 miles to Shechem and then another 12 miles on to Dothan. [Map 10, B4-6]

2. *Gen. 37:18-28: When they saw him coming, his brothers conspired to kill him.* They took his coat, and threw him into a pit. When they saw a company of Ishmeelites coming from Gilead and headed for Egypt, they decided to sell him into slavery, and sold him for 20 pieces of silver. Reuben and Judah were instrumental in saving Joseph’s life. [vv. 18-28]

3. *Gen. 37:29-35: The brothers dipped Joseph’s coat in blood and sent it to their father Israel, who assumed Joseph had been killed by wild beasts.* He mourned for many days.

4. *Gen. 37:36: The Midianites sold Joseph into Egypt unto Potiphar, Pharaoh’s captain of the guard.*

3. **Joseph Resisted the Seduction of Potiphar’s Wife:** (*Gen. 39:1-23*)

A. When Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph, he exclaimed: "how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" [v. 9]. He quickly "fled, and got him out." [v.12] << *Come back next week for the next thrilling episode in the world's first "soap opera."* >>

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