

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

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Assurance

Scripture Passage: Genesis 35:1-15

The Point: God assures His followers, reminding them of His faithfulness.

I. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- A. The scripture for this session is on God's calling Jacob to return to Bethel.
- B. The Lord had appeared to Jacob at Bethel as he was fleeing from Esau (28:13-15).
- C. God blessed Jacob there, promising to be with Jacob and bring him back home.
- D. Now that Jacob had returned home he needed to the place where he had come to know and love the Lord God.

II. PURIFY YOURSELF (Genesis 35:1-4)

- A. Jacob's return to Bethel was going to happen sooner or later but because of the events that occurred at Shechem the time to move had arrived (v.1).
 - 1. God instructed him to leave and to settle at Bethel.
 - 2. The new altar was to be more elaborate than the stone marker previously established by Jacob and was to function as a place to worship God.
- B. Jacob did not want his household to come before God at Bethel with any other false gods (v.2).
 - 1. "get rid" = leave it all behind, no longer to be connected, burn bridges.
 - 2. "purify" = purification washing of themselves, a tangible way of pointing to their repentance and desire for spiritual cleansing.
 - 3. "change clothes" = the people's willingness to put off the old self and put on the new self.
- C. Jacob announces the purpose to the move (v.3).
 - 1. They were to worship God.
 - 2. God had saved Jacob during his difficult time and then Jacob states that all he has is because of God.
- D. Jacob and his family needed to put their past behind them and embrace fully what God had for them (v.4).

III. OBEY GOD'S DIRECTIVES (Genesis 35:5-8)

- A. The people of Shechem wanted to come after Jacob and his family for what they had done but God put a parallelizing fear over the people (v.5).
- B. Two reminders of God's powerful working (v.6).
 - 1. The area of Luz had been renamed Bethel but still has its old name.
 - 2. God had promised the land to Abraham's descendants yet here it is referred to the land of the Canaanites.
- C. Jacob did as he was commanded and built the place of worship (v.7).
- D. Deborah was Jacob's mother (Rebekah) servant (v.8)

IV. REMEMBER GOD'S PROMISES (Genesis 35:9-13)

- A. God appeared before and now He visits with Jacob again after his return home (v.9).
- B. The Lord reaffirmed the name change Jacob had received earlier (v.10).
- C. God provides instructions (v.11).
 - 1. He states that He is above and beyond all.
 - 2. Jacob/Israel is to grow.
 - 3. Not just one nation but many nations will come from this family.
 - 4. A king would be the highest level of achievement but God is referring to the sending of His Son Jesus.
- D. God reaffirms the promise of land that He gave previously to Abraham and Isaac (v.12).
 - 1. Also to be for all future generations.
- E. "withdrew" = went up (v.13).

V. TREASURE GOD'S PROMISES (Genesis 35:14-15)

- A. "marker" = an upright stone (v.14).
 - 1. Later the use of standing stones in the worship of the Lord was prohibited, probably because of their association with pagan worship (Lev. 26:1).
 - 2. The pouring of oil was a confirmation of a covenant.
- B. Jacob again affirmed what he had said earlier in renaming the location (v.15).
 - 1. He had affirmed God's past blessing and received God's current blessing.
 - 2. He was ready to embrace God's future plans for him.

VI. CONCLUSION & APPLICATION

- A. Believers are to purge themselves of things that contend for their devotion to God.
- B. God expects believers to follow His directives obediently.
- C. Believers can find assurance by focusing on God's promises and faithfulness.
- D. God's people need to reflect on God's promises found in His Word, seeking to understand and properly respond
- E. Teaching Ideas
 - 1. Create Interest
 - a. Ask the group discuss the causes for people not keeping their promises or commitments.
 - 2. Closing Challenge
 - a. Ask each person to identify how God has shown Himself faithful in their life. Just as Jacob set up an altar to worship God, spend time this week thanking God and telling other how He had blessed your life.
- E. Don't Forget!!!
 - 1. Assurance & Genesis 35:1-15
 - 2. God assures His followers, reminding them of His faithfulness.

Dr. Smith serves as the lead state missionary with the Georgia Baptist Mission Board and leads the Sunday School, Small Groups, Discipleship and Faith Development ministries. Visit their website at gabaptist.org/groups for more information and other resources to aid your class, group or ministry. You can also connect with Dr. Smith at facebook.com/GABaptistGroups. Dr. Smith is available for conferences or other speaking opportunities and can be contacted at tsmith@gabaptist.org.