

I. Introduction:

The climax of the story is over and now we just need to tie up the loose ends. God is the one who drove the narrative. God is the one who drove the action of the story. Here God is the one to dictate the happily ever after. God gets what he's wanted all along, Jacob's love, worship and loyalty.

II. The Story of Jacob: Genesis 35:1-15

35 God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau." ² So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments." ³ Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone." ⁴ So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

⁵ And as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. ⁶ And Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him, ⁷ and there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed himself to

him when he fled from his brother. ⁸ And Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried under an oak below Bethel. So he called its name Allon-bacuth.

⁹ God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. ¹⁰ And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." So he called his name Israel. ¹¹ And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body." ¹² The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you." ¹³ Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him. ¹⁴ And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it. ¹⁵ So Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him Bethel.

III. Into the Word:

1. What happened the first time Jacob was at Bethel (Genesis 28)? Why does God tell him to go back there?
2. Why does his family worship foreign gods? Why does Jacob, up until this point, allow them to worship those gods?
3. God reiterates his blessing to Jacob many times throughout Jacob's life. Why does he do this?
4. Compare the worship that Jacob gives God in verse 14-15 to 28:18-19. What are the similarities and differences?

IV. Application:

Recommitting our lives to God constantly is very important. Even the physical places, and the rituals and acts of commitment hold meaning. Jacob recognizes that God has come through for him fully and completely. He will no longer worship other gods. He has commanded his family to worship God only. For many of us, we worship God, but we also care a lot about other things. We care about our jobs, family, homes and friends. But God wants us to worship him only.

5. What is a place that is special to you in your relationship with God? Why is that place special? Have you been back there to rededicate yourself to God?
6. Have you fully committed yourself to God? Or is he one of many different things that you worship? Are you willing to fully commit yourself to God today?