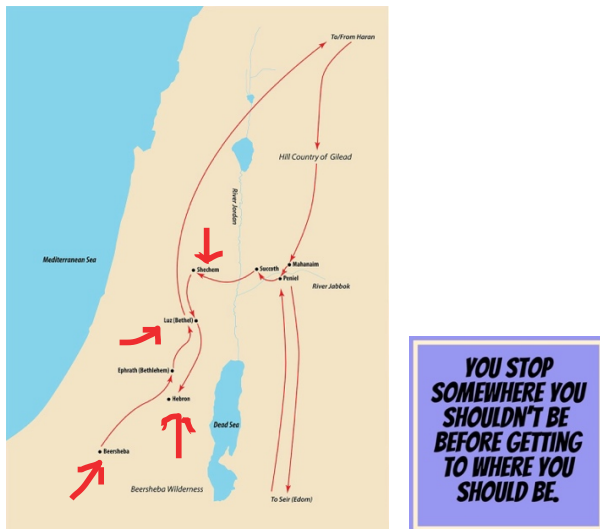


Genesis 57 Handout



Genesis 34:18 Their proposal seemed good to Hamor and his son Shechem.

19 The young man, who was the most honored of all his father's household, lost no time in doing what they said, because he was delighted with Jacob's daughter.

20 So Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate of their city to speak to their fellow townsmen.

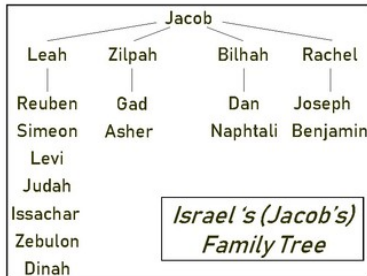
21 "These men are friendly toward us," they said. "Let them live in our land and trade in it; the land has plenty of room for them. We can marry their daughters and they can marry ours.

22 But the men will consent to live with us as one people only on the condition that our males be circumcised, as they themselves are.

23 Won't their livestock, their property and all their other animals become ours? So let us give our consent to them, and they will settle among us."

24 All the men who went out of the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem, and every male in the city was circumcised.

25 Three days later, while all of them were still in pain, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers,



took their swords and attacked the unsuspecting city, killing every male.

26 They put Hamor and his son Shechem to the sword and took Dinah from Shechem's house and left.

27 The sons of Jacob came upon the dead bodies and looted the city where their sister had been defiled.

28 They seized their flocks and herds and donkeys and everything else of theirs in the city and out in the fields.

29 They carried off all their wealth and all their women and children, taking as plunder everything in the houses.

30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me a stench to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land. We are few in number, and if they join forces against me and attack me, I and my household will be destroyed."

31 But they replied, "Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?"

<p>Sometimes God allows something drastic to happen in our life to get us to where we were supposed to be all along.</p>	<p>You are headed for a wreck.</p>	<p>What people are NOT hearing is REPENT.</p> <p>Turn away from your sin.</p>	<p>The only way we can tell if our faith is real is if we turn from sin.</p>
---	---	---	---

Psalms 119:11-I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Hebrews 12:

6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.

John 14:15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command.



1 Corinthians 9:24-27

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.

27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Galatians 5:7-8

7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?

8 That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.

2 Timothy 4:7

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.



Matthew 25:23

23 ... 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

Recently I heard that in Scotland, a voluntary survey was given to law enforcement officers of their religious affiliations.

That may not sound very interesting, but what caught my attention was that 8 of the officers claimed their religious affiliation to be "Jedi". I laughed at the thought because I was sure it was a prank, but I then discovered that having "Jedi" as one's religious affiliation is not a joke after all.

It was reported that there are an increased number of people who participate in light-saber trainings and meditation sessions to increase their Jedi skills. I'm not sure what I think of law enforcement having "Jedi" as their religious affiliation as we have all seen what happens when a Jedi turns to the dark side!

Anyways, I am a fan of Star Wars. I watch the movies. I watch the cartoons. I enjoy playing light-saber fights with my son. If you ask me about Star Wars, I will praise the movies, the storyline, and the special effects.

I will tell you that I think all of the movies were far ahead of their time in terms of technology, storyline, and

computer generated effects. But the Bible reminds me that if I want to grow in my intimacy with my Savior, there is a great difference between an admiring fan and a devoted follower.

Jesus searches for and calls His followers to be devoted followers, not admiring fans. While I am an admiring fan of Star Wars, I am surely not a devoted follower. While Star Wars entertains me, I do not change the way I live or the way I think based on the movie.

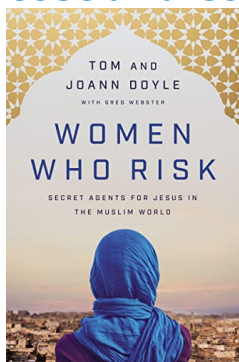
I do not seek to learn more about the force outside of the movies. I don't train in or engage in light-saber battles (except with my 6 year old son). I don't spend time with people discussing the dynamics of Star Wars. I don't practice using my Jedi skills to control other people's thoughts (although that does sound rather fun). While I do enjoy the sights, sounds, and action that the movies provide, there is nothing significant that changes in my life because of those movies.

It may be unfortunate, but there are many people in the church who are admiring fans of Jesus. There are many who applaud the carpenter from Nazareth and the cross from 2 thousand years ago. There are many who enjoy hearing about the miracles Jesus performed, the inspiring stories from the scriptures, and hearing the jokes that Pastor will share during weekend services, however, nothing changes in their day to day lives.

There are too many people who speak well of Jesus and the church, but neither He or His church affects what they do outside the church walls. Jesus entertains them and they enjoy the sights and sounds that the church provides, but there are no significant changes to the way they live or how they think. They are admiring fans of Jesus!

In my walk with Jesus, as I read the Bible I must be sure that I am not just an admiring fan but a devoted follower. Jesus says in Matthew to "make disciples of all nations." He doesn't want a large crowd of fans speaking well of Him. He doesn't want fans of the cross and people whose faith simply entails the wearing of a cross around their neck and a bumper sticker on their car.

Jesus wants followers, or disciples, whose hearts are thrown across the line, who make it their passion everyday to please Him, and who are willing to follow Him with a reckless abandon for His cause. I must move from being one who admires what He has done, can do, and is doing, to one who is devoted to following Jesus regardless of the cost and consequences.



Thirty years have passed since Jacob made a vow to God at Bethel. Twenty of those years were spent serving his father-in-law, Laban, and ten years living in the ungodly city of Shechem, which almost destroyed his family. From a physical point of view, only 30 miles separated Jacob from God and His appointed destination of Bethel. That thirty miles had separated him from God's will for 30 years!

FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS, HE WAS NEAR BETHEL BUT NOT NEAR TO THE GOD OF BETHEL.	We need a good housecleaning in our hearts.	They had too much garbage, and it had gotten out of hand.	God couldn't use Jacob until Jacob stood up - took a stand - and got his family in order.
--	--	--	--

<i>It's the little pieces of garbage or sin that we don't deal with that slowly erodes our faith.</i>	The little things he never dealt with.	Enough is enough.	My life does not represent that at all.
---	---	--------------------------	--

Genesis 35

1 Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau."

*OUR SIN
HINDERS
THE RACE*

Hebrews 12:1

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Romans 12:2

2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think...

John 8:

10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. **"Go now and leave your life of sin."**

Heb 12:1...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus...

Genesis 35:2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes.

How does something like this translate into our own experiences? Some people have security guards, but everyone has security *gods*. Before we return to the Lord, we must get rid of our security gods.

Jacob had been living with these idols and other religious paraphernalia for years. You'll remember that Rachel had stolen her father's household gods, thinking it wouldn't hurt to have a little extra security. They didn't choose these idols instead of God—at least not in their own minds.

These gods just added a little security to whatever God would give. It used to be easier to identify idols. People used to give them bodies and hands.

But now idols usually wear an invisibility cloak. They're there—on our mantles or by our beds—but we can't see them.

The regional marketing manager position could be a god, for example, or the prestige of an advanced degree. For some, the pursuit of health has become a religion. For others, it is "finding the power of their true self."

3 Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone."

4 So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem.

Psalm 51:1-4

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

Lee Eclov: Before we can go back to a holy place with God,

We have to root out the other gods that have wormed their ways into our lives, and bury them under the old oak tree.

Next, we have to come clean. Jacob said to all his people, "Purify yourselves and change your clothes."

This was an Old Testament version of baptism for the Christian. For Jacob's household, the ceremonial washing and putting on of clean clothes was an outward sign of the need for an inward change.

Some of you have a favorite T-shirt that is old and ratty. You wear it on your day off or when your work is going to get you dirty. Your spouse wants you to get rid of it, but you like it. It's comfortable. You don't mind the stains.



Our inner lives have spots and smudges and stains, picked up from who-knows-where. Something I watched left a stain. A snide remark left another. Some sly game I played to get ahead is behind a certain grease spot. And this is what I like to wear! I'm comfortable dressed like this!

Cleaning up for God can be painful! We can't wash our sins and stains away, of course. Only God can do that. But deep repentance is not easy, and it isn't easy to throw away a shirt we love to wear.

Ephesians 4:22 throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception.

23 Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.

24 Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

Psalm 139:23–24

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24 Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.