

# Genesis 32-36 Concise Lesson Outline

Based on Chuck Smith's narration - prepared as a compact teaching handout for Bible study review.

## 1. Jacob meets the angels of God - Genesis 32:1-2

- After parting from Laban, Jacob is met by the angels of God.
- He calls the place Mahanaim, meaning "two camps" or "two hosts."
- This encouraged Jacob: he had just seen Laban's host, and now he sees God's host.

Teaching point: God often gives reassurance before a major trial, not after.

## 2. Jacob fears Esau's approach - Genesis 32:3-8

- Jacob sends messengers ahead to Esau.
- They return saying Esau is coming with 400 men.
- Jacob becomes greatly afraid and distressed.
- He divides his people and flocks into two groups, hoping that if one is attacked, the other may escape.

Teaching point: Jacob still shows his old tendency - even after prayer, he immediately starts managing the situation himself.

## 3. Jacob's prayer: honest, humble, and rooted in God's promises - Genesis 32:9-12

- Humility: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies."
- Gratitude: He remembers crossing Jordan with only his staff, but now he has become two companies.
- Honesty: He plainly says, "I fear him."
- Faith in God's Word: He reminds God of His promise - "You said... I will surely do thee good."

Teaching point: This is a strong model for prayer - remember God's promise, admit your fear, confess your unworthiness, and ask directly for help.

## 4. Jacob still tries to 'help God out' - Genesis 32:13-21

- Jacob sends a massive gift to Esau: goats, sheep, camels, cattle, and donkeys.
- He arranges the animals in waves to soften Esau before they meet.
- His thinking: "I will appease him with the present."

Teaching point: Jacob believes God, but still struggles to fully rest in God. That has been one of Jacob's lifelong weaknesses: trusting God while also relying heavily on his own schemes.

## **5. Jacob wrestles with God and is changed - Genesis 32:22-32**

- Jacob is left alone at night.
- A man wrestles with him until daybreak.
- When Jacob will not yield, the man touches his thigh and cripples him.
- Broken and weeping, Jacob clings and says in essence, "I cannot let You go unless You bless me."
- God changes his name from Jacob to Israel.
- Jacob = heel-catcher, supplanter, self-driven man.
- Israel = governed by God, prince with God.

Teaching point: Sometimes God has to weaken what we trust in so we will trust Him fully.

## **6. Jacob and Esau are reconciled - Genesis 33**

- Jacob approaches Esau with humility, bowing seven times.
- Esau runs to him, embraces him, kisses him, and they weep together.
- The feared confrontation becomes reconciliation.

Teaching point: God answered Jacob's prayer. The brother he feared most became the brother who embraced him.

## **7. Jacob settles at Shechem - Genesis 33:18-20**

- Jacob comes safely to Shechem.
- He buys land and erects an altar.
- He calls it El-Elohe-Israel - "God, the God of Israel."

Teaching point: Jacob is beginning to live more openly in his new identity.

## **8. Dinah and the sin of Simeon and Levi - Genesis 34**

- Dinah goes out among the daughters of the land.
- Shechem defiles her, then wants to marry her.
- Jacob's sons respond deceitfully, demanding the men of the city be circumcised.
- While the men are recovering, Simeon and Levi kill them.
- The city is plundered.
- Jacob says they have made him stink among the inhabitants of the land and brought danger to the whole family.

Teaching point: The Bible does not hide the failures of God's people. God's chosen family was deeply flawed.

## **9. God calls Jacob back to Bethel - Genesis 35:1-7**

- God tells Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel."
- Jacob tells the household to put away strange gods, be clean, and change garments.
- They bury their idols and return to Bethel.
- Jacob builds an altar there.

Teaching point: When compromise and fear have entered, God calls His people back to the place of earlier devotion.

## **10. God confirms Jacob's new identity - Genesis 35:9-15**

- God appears again and confirms that his name is Israel.
- The covenant promises given to Abraham and Isaac now belong to him.
- Nations and kings will come from him.
- The land will be given to his seed.

Teaching point: God repeats His promises not because He has forgotten, but because His people need reassurance.

## **11. Rachel dies giving birth to Benjamin - Genesis 35:16-20**

- Near Bethlehem, Rachel goes into hard labor and dies giving birth.
- She names the child Ben-oni, meaning "son of sorrow."
- Jacob renames him Benjamin, meaning "son of my right hand."

Teaching point: Jacob refuses to let the child carry only the name of grief. Even in sorrow, grace gives a new name.

## **12. Reuben's sin - Genesis 35:21-22**

- Reuben lies with Bilhah, his father's concubine.
- Jacob hears of it.
- Though the full rebuke comes later, this sin becomes part of why Reuben loses his place of honor.

Teaching point: Sin may seem briefly overlooked, but God does not forget it.

## **13. Isaac dies - Genesis 35:27-29**

- Jacob finally returns to Isaac.
- Isaac dies at 180 years old.
- Esau and Jacob bury him together.

Teaching point: Even after years of conflict, family reconciliation is seen again at their father's death.

## **14. The generations of Esau - Genesis 36**

- Chapter 36 records Esau's descendants, the Edomites.
- The line is named, then moved aside from the main story.
- The central covenant line continues through Jacob.
- Chuck notes that some of the names in Esau's line may help place the timing of Job around this general era.

Teaching point: Scripture traces many lines briefly, but it keeps returning to the covenant line because the story is ultimately moving toward Christ.

## **Main Themes for Teaching Tonight**

- God meets us in fear.
- Honest prayer matters.
- Self-reliance must be broken.
- God can reconcile what seems impossible.
- God's people are imperfect.
- God calls us back to Bethel.
- God's promises continue despite human failure.

## **Very Short Teaching Summary**

Genesis 32-36 shows Jacob moving from fear and self-reliance into deeper surrender and identity in God. He prays honestly, wrestles with God, is changed from Jacob to Israel, is reconciled to Esau, faces painful family sin, and is called back to Bethel for renewal. Through all of it, God remains faithful to His covenant promises.