

Dr. Kenneth Mathews, Genesis, Session 20, Jacob's Daughter and Return to Bethel, Genesis 34:1-37:1

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This is Dr. Kenneth Mathews in his teaching on the book of Genesis. This is session 20, Jacob's Daughter and Return to Bethel. Genesis 34:1-37:1.

Session 20, concerns the last chapters of the Jacob narrative.

It's focused on Jacob and his descendants, his 12 sons. So, what we want to do is to work through chapters 34, 35, and 36, these three chapters, and we will discover that there is a transition from the past to the present, especially the future of Jacob's lineage. And the evidence of this kind of transition from the past to the future, I'll point out as we work through the chapters, but just to give a preview of this, we're going to discover that there will be mention of four burials pertaining to the past, the chief of which is the burial of Jacob and Esau's father, Isaac, which signals an end to that era.

Also, we'll notice that there will be a fulfillment of the promise made to Jacob at Bethel in chapter 28, that he would return to Bethel and worship the Lord, and that will occur in chapter 35. Additionally, you'll notice there's a geographical movement from Jacob as he moves further south. As he had, you'll recall in meeting Esau, that he had passed through the Jordan River, and then to Shechem, and then to Bethel, and then to Hebron.

We'll notice that transition. The focus on our passage will be on Jacob's sons, and what we will discover is a bit disheartening, I would think, and that is the moral decline of Jacob's sons. Chapter 34 is beginning to expose very dramatically the moral decline on the part of Jacob's sons.

Then, we will find parallels with this: what is the antidote, so to speak, to the wretchedness, the corruption, the moral decline, and the moral disintegration of Jacob's sons? Will God's promise overcome the moral decline of the sons? And we find that it will occur. In chapters 42 through 44, we will see that there is repentance on the part of the sons in the way in which they had sold off one of their own brothers.

Joseph. So, we will see that chapters 34, 35, and 36 help prepare us for understanding the Joseph narrative and the deceit that occurs there. Throughout the remaining stories, we will see time and again how deceit functions in the story as an important ongoing motif and how this idea that began as early as Abraham in his

practice of the wife-sister deceit had its, not really its culmination, but certainly its high point in the person of Jacob, who is the chief deceiver.

But the culmination of this is found in the Joseph story, which we'll take up next time. To see the background then of what's occurring in chapter 34, we can look at chapter 33 in the last paragraph beginning in verse 18. There, Jacob came from Paddan Aram, the plain of Aram, and that's reported to us in chapters 32 and 33.

You remember the struggles in chapters 32 and 33. His struggle with God, and then when he meets Esau, is recounted in chapter 33. And the reconciliation that occurs.

So, he arrives safely, we're told, at the city of Shechem, which would be in central Israel. That was one of the places where Abraham had sojourned and built an altar in worship, and that's recalled for you in chapter 12. In any case, he had arrived in Canaan and camped within the sight of the city.

For a hundred pieces of silver, he bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, who, in this case, is a person. So, Shechem can refer to the town or city or to the person of Shechem. And so, this is the Shechemites.

Now, in chapter 24, verse 16, you'll recall that there is a reference made to the purchase of the burial site at Machpelah. In that case, it was bought for a burial site, and so here he bought a site not just for burial but as a place where he could set up shop and where he would have a positive relationship with the Shechemites. So, he purchased the land, and he pitched his tent, meaning his community of Jacobites, you might say, which would be his children, his wives, his various servants, his host of animals, and anything else that would be a part of his possessions at that time.

And there he worshipped El Elohei, the God, El, God, the God of Israel. It's very important that he worshipped like his fathers Abraham and Isaac, who also set up altars. So you have this continuing legacy of acknowledgment of the God of the fathers.

In this case, the generic term is used El Elohei. Now, the God of Israel, second, the importance of the name Israel. And you can well imagine that those who are reading Genesis in the context of the experience of the people who became Israel during the time of Moses, and subsequently when they entered into the land of Canaan, how important it would have been in their identification with Jacob and the stories that will follow in the book of Genesis.

So, the naming of Jacob as Israel is found in chapter 32, verse 28. So here we have a coming together of the preceding stories of struggle. And now we're going to move into a new kind of struggle.

And that is the struggle with the local Shechemites in chapter 34. And this is through the whole of the chapter. And what's important for you to keep in mind is that Leah bore a daughter, Dinah.

She was also the mother of Simeon and Levi, so Dinah has a close blood relationship with them —full brother and sister. That's going to be important to their response to Shechem humiliating Dinah.

And how they take revenge and avenge her humiliation, and her disgrace, by using deception against the Shechemites, leading to murder, led by these two brothers. And then I think that they were joined by their other brothers in the slaughter of the Shechemites. This is a horrific story.

It's a horrific story that shows us right off how the decline in the morality of the Jacob's sons. I'm not really impressed with Jacob either, because when he learns of what they have done, he is certainly self-interested. And he doesn't make any remark about correcting his sons.

He scolds them because they're not doing the right thing. He says I will become odorous in the view of the local neighbors. In other words, he's concerned about any kind of retaliation by neighbors.

He is concerned that a peaceful relations with them will be jeopardized. And that his whole group will become judged with suspicion. So in chapters 34, verses 1 through 31, we will see, rather verses 1 through 4, I should say, we will see the background incident that will lead to the murderous betrayal on the part of Jacob's sons and a betrayal of their father, Jacob.

So even though Jacob has had a high point in succeeding with his wrestling with God and his meeting with a repentant Esau and reconciliation, the pain and sorrow that has traveled with him wherever he went because of his low character will continue. We saw this as well in previous narratives where, for example, Adam and Eve, their crime in the garden led to a legacy of sinfulness and wickedness on the part of all those who followed all human beings. And the telltale sign of that was what followed immediately in chapter 4, where we have a fratricide.

We have a kinsman, a brother, killing and murdering his brother Cain against Abel. So Dinah, the daughter of Leah, whom Leah had born to Jacob, went out to visit the women of the land. So, this is the occasion then that leads to Shechem's observance of her and his attraction to her.

Now, notice that the Shechemites are also called Hivites, and you'll see this in verse 2. The Hivites were a people group that lived in the land of Canaan. There are seven people groups or nations that are seen as, as you might say, the representative seven

of the whole of the Canaanite people group. The Hivites are mentioned with the seven nations as the enemies of Israel when they enter into the land.

The Hivites, as far as their history and etymology, are difficult and really not settled. But the fact that you could exchange Shechemites and Hivites and refer to the same people should not be all that troubling for us. We do the same thing.

When, for example, we might refer to, in my case, I'm a Texan, but also an American. Now, when Shechem, the son of Hamor, the Hivite, the ruler of that area, so he is described as a ruler in the New International Version, here he is a prince. And hence a ruler of that Shechem region.

Notice that it is speaking of a region here, an area that's broader than simply the city-state itself. Now, the language that's used in describing his observation of Dinah reminds us of Genesis chapter 6, where you have the daughters of men observed by the men identified as the sons of God. Here, we call that. Notice that here we have that language, saw, took, and that's what is described in Genesis chapter 6. They saw the daughters of men, and then they took them to be wives.

In this case, took is not a metaphor for marriage. In this case, he actually forced her, in my judgment, forced her. And then we have the word violated her in the New International Version.

Some versions will read molested. Now, traditionally, that has been translated rape, and there's been some debate about the meaning of this Hebrew word, which can mean, and is broadly means, humiliation. There's not really a one-word technical term for rape in the Hebrew.

Now, there's a description of rape in two or more words, and I think the description here, as we find with especially the word took, is indicative of the fact that she was forced into a sexual relationship, a violation of her person. And if you were to say, okay, what would it mean if he simply humiliated her? Perhaps it had to do with, of course, kidnapping her would be a humiliation. And not going through the proper process of betrothal and then marriage where there would be a dowry paid and a family of Dinah brought into the process and would be respected.

But I do think there was a sexual violation here, a premarital rape on his part. His heart was drawn to Dinah. So, this has the idea of approaching her and noticing that it says he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her.

Now, in some cases, this is not what occurs when there's this kind of violation. But he had a genuine heart of love for her. We don't know to what degree she participated or cooperated in this.

Certainly, her violation would have been most offensive, most terrible, most horrific. There are laws that are provided in the Mosaic Covenant law that provide protections for such a horrific act against an innocent woman. So, we really don't hear from her throughout the remainder of the narrative.

And so, in that sense, the story that is told here does not go into detail at this point, but rather focuses on what was the outcome of this violation. So, he says to his father, Hamor, I would like for you to begin negotiations, and I want her as my wife. Now, notice that it says in verse 5, and this begins a section that will lead to his leaving Shechem and going to Bethel, 5 through 15.

And in 5 through 15, or rather I should back up on that, 5 through 24, really. 5 through 24, we have this Hivites negotiation of marriage to Dinah. Notice how he hears of this, and his sons were away, but he kept quiet about it.

See, this is what I was speaking of earlier. Jacob, he has a setback in terms of his spiritual development. He, as a result, is interested only in his survival.

He sacrifices his morality and his leadership over his sons, his family, because I think he is afraid of what this will mean for the various neighbors. So, then it moves on to the negotiation, and the sons, we are told in verse 6 and 7, hear of this. They come in from the fields, they hear of this.

First, they are grieved. They're going through a grieving process because the locals have impugned not only their sister but the whole Jacob clan. See, this has an impact on their respect for them and their recognition.

And then it says they were as angry as angry can be. Fury is a good translation here in the New International Version. Why? Because of the disgraceful thing in Israel.

And what's striking about this is, if you take this as in Israel, then of course it's told from a perspective of when Israel becomes a nation, becomes a large people group, as opposed to the person Israel. But it could be read as Jacob because it can be translated as a disgraceful thing against Israel. By lying with Jacob's daughter, a thing that should not be done.

Now, that's the language of covenant law that's found in the Pentateuch. This language of a disgraceful thing is often associated with sexual immorality and transgressions. And so, the explicit here, by lying with Jacob's daughter, makes it pretty clear to me, doesn't it, that there is a sexual humiliation.

Then, in verse 8, Hamor said to them, my son Shechem has his heart set on your daughter. Notice it says your daughter as though the daughter is also of the sons, but

actually it's his sister. But the point is, is the father Jacob and the sons are seen as in solidarity, in unity.

So there is respect on the part of Hamor; it's too late, of course; he gives, please; this is a respectful way of entering into a negotiation. Jacob had experienced many negotiations. And so here, intermarry with us.

Give us your daughters and take our daughters for yourselves. Now, this in and of itself seems rather benign, but actually, it's threatening. You find many times in the Pentateuch, in what is told of the history of Israel and Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, that intermarriage with local populations inevitably, in every case, leads to idolatry.

That there is an entanglement between two worldviews, that is, the idolatrous worldview and then the worldview of Yahwism, worship of the one true God. So this is threatening. You would only appreciate that if you knew the story that is to follow as you trace what becomes of Israel in its apostasy, which is brought on in part by intermarriage.

And then we'll move to verse 10. See what is in view here. You can settle among us.

See how attractive this offer is. It's a region. They're evidently a powerful people.

There would be a treaty here of mutual safety and protection. The land is open to you. Live in it, trade in it, and acquire property in it.

In other words, it's a carte blanche opportunity for them to become even, that is the Israelites, more enriched. The Jacob clan can have a security by virtue of their connection with the Shechemites. But this is a looming threat.

No matter to the sons of Jacob. They're going to take out their vengeance. They're going to murder the Shechemites because of this occasion.

And so, what do they do? Well, this is described in verse 13. Because their sister Dinah had been defiled, Jacob's sons replied in the translation here, deceitfully. Deceitfully really rings a bell, doesn't it? From what we've been learning about the patriarchal clan at large, and then certainly about Jacob in his transformation from being deceitful at every point to encountering God, learning from his mistakes, repenting of his mistakes, his reconciliation with Laban, his reconciliation with Esau.

And now this is going to turn on him and haunt him. Jacob's sons replied deceitfully as they spoke to Shechem and his father. And they said, no, we can't do this.

We can't enter into this kind of treaty with you because we can't give our sister to a man who is not circumcised. Now, what do they have in view? In chapter 17, you remember that circumcision is the covenant sign for the covenant, the relationship that God had made with Abraham, and all the promises pertaining to the Abraham covenant. Now, circumcision was an appropriate sign because so much of the attention of the Abrahamic covenant has to do with his future descendants.

And, of course, the removal of the foreskin of the male sexual organ that produces descendants would be an appropriate marker to distinguish and to identify the descendants of Abraham. And so, on the eighth day, all males who are either naturally born or are brought into the family of Jacob by purchase and are to all be circumcised on the eighth day. So, this is what they're referring to.

That is, you've got to enter into our tradition, our legacy of the Abrahamic covenant. You've got to commit yourself to our way of life and our way of thinking and adopt our customs. That's what you must do.

This would have been a significant change in the minds of the Shechemites, which they chose to do. And then the deception continues in verse 16. Only once you've agreed to circumcision, then we can have intermarriage.

And then all that is positive between our two people groups and what this might mean for a good economic and social interaction between our two groups is one that is possible. And then we continue. We'll settle among you and become one people with you.

So that union, that solidarity between two people groups is what they propose. It seems evidently very attractive to Shechem, his father Hamor, and the whole group, the Shechemites, who will agree with this proposal. And of course, Shechem is very convincing when it comes to convincing the Shechemites to enter into this league.

Now, what is so terrible about this is it's not just a matter of a simple deception by agreeing to enter into this treaty, but the way in which they did it shows you how decadent, decadent, how morally low the sons of Jacob had become. Because what they were using was a holy, sacred feature of their commitment to God and his commitment to them. And I think that's what is so disgusting when you hear about people who are particularly religious or say a pastor or missionary that absconds with money that people have given to the church for the work of the Lord in their way, a sacred offering.

But then the leadership takes that money and uses it for wretched purposes. Those kinds of things where there is abuse at work and there's not a sacred attitude towards sacred, holy things, a grave offense against God and a grave offense against God's people. And that's what's at work here.

Here, the parade signal, the sign passed down from generation to generation of God's

love for the patriarchs and in turn, the people of God in their love of God. And this is used for the worst of purposes. Well, what we find in the subsequent chapter, or rather, I should say, paragraph, is the negotiation must extend to the people, the Shechemite people themselves.

And so, in verse 21, you have Hamor and his son discussing this with the ruling elite of the Shechemites. And so these men are friendly toward us. See, they're thoroughly snookered.

Let them live in our land and trade in it. The land has plenty of room for them. So, everybody's eyes will be on the wealth that can be accrued through this relationship.

And so, we can enter into marriage. But the men will consent to live with us as one people. So, there is a true representation of the offer.

And they seem to be, for the most part, accurate. Although, of course, they presented in a very positive light to the townspeople. But our males must be circumcised.

Now, what we need to remember is that circumcision was not altogether novel. Circumcision was practiced by other people groups. You remember that the Philistines, however, did not practice it.

And hence, they were demeaned by the Hebrew people, who would refer to them as the uncircumcised. So, circumcision was usually seen in these other people groups as a puberty rite. That's what it is in Egypt.

This is not a puberty rite. This is a rite that has to do, of course, uniquely on the eighth day of a child for this covenant relationship. I'm sure these men would have been very surprised and struck by this that they would undergo circumcision at their advanced adult age.

And then, again, to further convince the men, verse 23, won't their livestock, their property, and all their other animals become ours? Well, that's an optimistic portrayal. So let us give our consent to them and they will settle among us. And they agreed.

Boy, we're going to become very rich as a consequence of this. And so, they were circumcised. Now, this disables them to put up a defense against the plans of Simeon and Levi, which three days later, is to attack them and murder them.

Now, why three days later? Well, it's because they would have been at their most painful, debilitating state at the removal of their foreskins. So, they were defenseless. And they went through the unsuspecting city, killing every male.

And then it describes a little bit later how all of the brothers, I suspect, were involved in this slaughter and how they robbed them of their wealth and took the women and children and plundered the Shechemites. Now, let's look at Jacob's response. He said to Simeon and Levi, you have brought trouble on me by making me a stench, figure of speech, of course, odorous to the Canaanites and the Perizzites, another very important people group in that region, mentioned first in chapter 13, verse 7. So, the people living in this land, we are few in number.

See, I think this is why he feels very vulnerable to these nation states that have... He's in hostile land. There's a potential for great hostility against him. We are few in number.

And if they join forces against me and attack me, I and my household will be destroyed. That's what his concern is. And he doesn't address the immorality of his sons, only the consequences.

Now, notice how they respond. There is no hint of repentance on their part. Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute? I really don't think that we can take this response and conclude anything positive from it.

Rather, what they are saying is a justification for their immoral behavior. Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute? That's a statement. No, and anyone who mistreats us, we will give an accounting.

They will have to give an accounting for that. Now, when we move to chapter 35, and here we have a blessing and a struggle at birth. We see God's blessing, but we will also see a very sad series of deaths that will occur.

Then God told Jacob to go up to Bethel and settle there. So, they're in Shechem, and the promise has to do with returning to Bethel. And that's the intention behind commanding Jacob to leave Laban's household and go back to Bethel.

So, he tells him to settle there and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau. This brings around a whole circle. Departure from Bethel and now the return to Bethel.

Now, we're going to have our first burial that takes place. It's a burial of the household gods. And remember that Rachel had stolen the household gods of her brother Laban, had hidden them.

And whatever else may have been accumulated, things pertaining to idolatrous worship and divination, things of that order. So he says, first, get rid of the foreign gods you have with you and cleanse yourself, as seen by these purification rituals. It would be indicative through a rite, through a ritual of purging themselves of any hint of idolatrous worship.

Change your clothes. Again, a signal of contamination that has got to be put aside, put away in the past. So that's what occurs is the admonition to go to Bethel.

And then he shares that, Jacob does, and says, let's go. Let's move from this region and let's go to Bethel. It would be a reminder, see, of God's providential will and purpose for Jacob.

And that's why I speak of it as the burial, first burial because that is what is occurring in verse 4. And Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem. And then they set out and the terror of God fell upon the towns all around them so that no one pursued them. That is a striking effect.

It's actually the opposite of what Jacob feared, namely that these enemies, potential enemies, would strike back against the Jacob clan. But in fact, God intervened. This is the terror that God imposed on the other peoples to protect, to provide.

Let me pause here and draw out a very important point. And that is, as we read through the remainder of this book, we see the deception, the kidnapping, the murdering, oh, so distasteful. We wonder how it is that God could possibly work with such a people. And so, it does speak to the faithfulness of God's promises.

And it also speaks to the way in which God starts where they are. And by working with them, unbeknownst to them, in various ways, he draws them to himself and leads them to repentance. And we will discover, including Levi, including Simeon, all the people, tribes, the brothers who were responsible for the kidnapping, the selling of Joseph, that there is an act of repentance.

Repentance. They humble themselves. They acknowledge that God was at work.

And Joseph recognizes that as well. So, I think it's important for us to remember that God works with these people, not because of their merit, not because of their high standards of righteousness, but rather God works with these people, it says in Deuteronomy, out of his love for the fathers. And he is going to set about to draw them to himself in a series of experiences, appearances to them, and then circumstances that follow with that.

So, I'd like for you to hear that from a psalm. The psalmist speaks to this in Psalm 130. It says in verse 1 that if you wanted to turn there, you certainly may.

Verses 1 through 8. I'm reading again from the New International Version. Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord. Notice he doesn't say, Lord, pull me out of the depths.

This is a way in which in times of trial and suffering, but also in times of sinfulness, repentance is what is called for. Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord. Hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, who could stand? The Almighty God would bring wrath and judgment against sinners. But rather, with you, there is forgiveness so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

This is a complete turnaround. And that's what's in view here. And especially when you pick up the word Israel in verse 7. Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love.

And with him is full redemption. He himself, see, he will instigate this. He himself will initiate and redeem Israel from all their sins.

So even in the midst of this darkest hour in the life of the patriarchs, in the life of Jacob and these sons of Jacob, there is hope. Now, then we find that there is a return to Bethel described in verses 5 through 15. And the key idea is verse 9. This is the point of 5 through 15.

It's the central message. After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again. So, this is an appearance, and it's visual.

And blessed him. So that's the message that this chapter speaks of. And God said to him, your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob.

Your name will be Israel. So, he named him Israel. So, this is a repetition of the importance of naming Israel, which means he struggled with El.

He struggled with God. And the consequence of that is that it led to repentance. It led to his understanding of dependence upon the Lord God, although he certainly has not reached to the point of perfection.

And no person does so. But God is working with him where he is. And he's on a journey.

He's on a journey of spiritual development. And that's true for every one of us. As the psalmist points out in the psalm we read, that it is God's inclination to forgive, to restore for those who will repent.

And he delights in doing so. But when sinfulness occurs, and wickedness and wretchedness occur, it does provoke him to chase. That is the necessity of correcting his people so that they may rid themselves of the past sinfulness and take on the new clothing, the new clothes after ritual purification of a new life of faithfulness.

And then we have the identification of God. This is the language we've heard chapter after chapter after chapter. This is bringing forward, you see, transition, bringing forward what we have seen in the past.

It repeats much of the identity of God, who had revealed himself as such when it came to Abraham, El Shaddai, God Almighty, in chapter 15. Be fruitful, increase in number. Again, the repetition of prosperity and procreation, building a great nation reminds us of the Abrahamic promises.

Then, the specificity that's found in chapter 17 is that this community of nations will come from your own body, not through a servant, Eleazar, not through Hagar, a handmaiden. And then there's the land promise. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants.

And then God ascended, the Lord God ascended. And that's where Jacob set up a stone pillar, as he did in chapter 28 at Bethel, an indication of a memorial made to his communion with God. His meeting with God is so important in his spiritual development.

It's personal. God is intensely personal. God is not indifferent.

He's not impersonal. God is not a holy device. He's not a holy computer, but he is personal and has created men and women to be persons so that there can be, as we say, a personal relationship, an encounter, an engagement.

This relationship will take on a dramatic advance, dramatic development, dramatic intensity, and meaningfulness. When God comes himself in the Lord Jesus Christ, when the Son of God takes on human nature and its characteristics, yet without sin, so that he might perfectly accomplish what God is beginning here in these opening chapters, God creating humanity, God creating a special nation, God having a plan as it's unfolding across generations, across various people groups. For as we will see in the subsequent chapter 36, there is a blessing for those even beyond Israel.

There is a blessing for other nations, and so he will indeed become a king of nations. Then we have the telling of the deaths of Deborah and Rachel, who gave birth to Benjamin. That's the 12th and youngest son, and this is so important that we understand that Joseph and Benjamin are the offspring of Jacob and Rachel, his beloved wife.

So, he does show favoritism toward the two, and that will be important to us when we move into the Joseph narrative next time, next time to follow. So here is her struggle to give birth. Now, that may well be a reminder, an echo of the Jacob Esau struggle in the womb of Rebekah and how that prophecy, how the elder will serve the younger, that prophecy you see, has an important step of fulfillment in what we have found in the Jacob Esau accounts.

Now, later, we will see what Genesis points to will come to actuality as we trace the history of Israel and Esau's descendants, the Edomites, and the up-and-down relationship, especially the antagonism that describes the Edomites and the Israelites in their long history. But the prophets speak of a future time, as do the psalmists, of reconciliation between Israel and all of these various people groups, that the people groups that are described in Genesis chapter 10, the table of nations, that the gospel is for them, the plan of blessing is for them as well, through Abraham and his descendants. And we will see that this expectation born in Genesis, shown in a shadowy way, implied, will take on reality in its fullest way with the admonition of Jesus, the one true offspring, that is the ideal blessed offspring, descendant of Abraham, and how he commissions and equips, that's important, with the Holy Spirit to go among all nations and present the kingdom of God, the presence of God now available to them in their midst if they will receive this offer through repentance and belief.

One last thing that we want to look at is that Israel and this is important, they're using here again the term Israel, which brings to mind the promises made to Israel as a people, moved on again and pitched his tent beyond MacDowell, it must have been somewhere in the region of Bethlehem. While Israel was living in that region, there was a calamity. Who would have possibly thought that the firstborn of the twelve, Reuben, would have committed incest by having a sexual union with Bilhah? And what a horrible act on the part of Reuben, who would have been standing, you see, in the most privileged possession of being firstborn, not only biologically, but also receiving the blessing from his father, Jacob.

But he has disqualified himself in this way. And that was, of course, a motivation for listing these twelve sons. And so, notice it says, to make the point we just made in verse 23, Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob.

Now, later, when we read of the blessing that was received from Jacob, we will find that the writer of Chronicles he makes the point that the blessing given to Joseph, to his two sons, and we'll get into that toward the end of Genesis, and Jacob will give the blessing to Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. From the perspective of the chronicler, this will be the way in which the blessing will fall upon Joseph's offspring. Now to conclude chapter 5, notice that Jacob came home to his father Isaac.

And what you will read, I overlooked that you have the death of Deborah, and who is the maidservant to Rachel. You have the death of Rachel. And now we have the burial of Isaac.

With the burial of the gods, you have four burials. In the past, we're moving forward. We're not leaving it all behind.

We're taking it, and they are moving forward with it with a new focus now on the sons. Then we have, just like in the case with the description of Ishmael, his descendants, the offspring of Ishmael, 12 tribes. Here we have in chapters 36, a listing of his Esau's wives and his chieftains who emerged from him.

Then the Edomites take up the Edomites who are descendants of Esau, but focusing now on the nation. And interestingly, we have some insight provided for us in verse 31 of chapter 36. These were the kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite king reigned.

And so, this must be a subsequent note of insight. Insight and this is for later readers. How does this work for later readers? Well, it's the idea that yes, we see all of these chieftains that are born to Esau and these kings that emerge, but this doesn't mean that the Israelites are left out.

On the contrary, we will find within Genesis itself hints that there is a coming king. And this is a coming king through one of Jacob's sons, and that is Judah. And from the tribe of Judah comes David.

And then from the lineage of David will come the Lord Jesus Christ. We will see how all of this is played out as we have the Joseph cycle and narratives beginning next time with chapter 37, verse 2. This is the genealogy. This is the account of Jacob pointing forward like we've seen with this catchphrase, pointing forward to Jacob's sons.

This is Dr. Kenneth Mathews in his teaching on the book of Genesis. This is session 20, Jacob's Daughter and Return to Bethel. Genesis 34:1-37:1.