

# Community Bible Church

## The Book of Genesis

### Chapters 34-35

As previously discussed, in Old Testament narratives, including **the book of Genesis**, there are **three levels** of the story being told that are happening simultaneously in the biblical text. These are: **(1) The top level**, where God's overall redemptive plan from creation to the cross is developed, centering on the work of Jesus. **(2) The middle level** focuses on the call of Abraham and the establishment of the nation of Israel over many centuries. **(3) The bottom level**, which includes the hundreds of individual stories that make up the top two levels.

An awareness of this hierarchy of narratives will help you in your interpretation (hermeneutics) of the Old Testament. For example, in this week's lesson, **the bottom level** story has the harsh details of the treatment of Jacob's daughter and the deceptive and violent response of Jacob's sons, forcing Jacob to move. Yet, in **the middle level** narrative God enters the story **(35:9)** and reminds Jacob of his role in the Abrahamic covenant. Finally, **the top level** is highlighted when God tells Jacob that **"a king shall come forth from you" (35:11)**. This is a reference to Messiah. All three levels are present.

The two chapters (**Genesis 34 & 35**) in this week's study can be outlined as follows:

<b>Deception</b>	<b>Jacob's sons deceive the pagan sons of Hamor.</b>	<b>34:1-24</b>
<b>Destruction</b>	<b>Two sons kill and loot the Hivite men in revenge.</b>	<b>34:25-31</b>
<b>Departure</b>	<b>Jacob's large family flees to Bethel.</b>	<b>35:1-15</b>
<b>Death</b>	<b>The son of Abraham, Isaac, dies.</b>	<b>35:16-29</b>

1. The central story of **chapter 34** is given in **34:1-17**. Recall that the patriarchal family of Jacob was not to intermarry nor have binding social interactions with the pagan Canaanite people. From this passage (**34:1-17**) describe what occurred. Do you see any deceptions or sinful patterns arising out of these actions? What are some personal applications from this narrative that could apply today?
  
2. The situation worsens. What occurs in **34:18-25**? At this point, do you consider the motives and intentions of both sides of this conflict to be pure and trustworthy?

3. Now read the shameful and violent conclusion to this narrative in **34:26-29**. What actions of sinful behavior are represented here? From **34:30-31**, what was Jacob's response? What is the status of this patriarchal family at this point in history?
  
4. Fortunately, God dramatically enters the narrative at this time. From **35:1** what does God say to Jacob?
  
5. How does Jacob respond in **35:2-7**? Do you consider this response to represent true repentance and an attempt at spiritual renewal in Jacob's life?
  
6. During this time of family stress, God again graciously appears to Jacob in the town of Bethel. There, God reaffirms His covenant promises and reviews what Jacob had been told in **chapter 32**. How does God encourage Jacob in **35:9-12**? How did Jacob respond in **35:13-15**?
  
7. The narrative in **35:17-29** covers many years in the history of Jacob's family. Read this passage and write a brief summary of the events that concluded this chapter.
  
8. Once again, write a list of the twelve sons of Jacob given in **35:23-26**, knowing that eventually these would form the twelve tribes that would be involved in the founding of Israel.