

Study notes, Sunday 24th February 2019

Jacob returns home (Genesis 35:1-15)

Starter Question

- Have you ever been away from home and called to return sooner than planned? What was the situation? How did it feel? **OR**
- Share briefly about the time you first encountered God / committed yourself to God

Worship

- Read John 14:1-4 together. Thank God that he has prepared a place for us, that Jesus will come back and that we can be where he is
- Listen to/sing "Heart of Worship": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-Zp586pvZg>

Word – Jacob returns home (Genesis 35:1-15)...

Re-cap...

(Verses 1-5)...**God:**

- speaks to us personally, gives us clear commands, expects our obedience
- is holy, demands purity, requires unrivalled devotion
- is to be feared, offers protection

(Verses 6-7)...**Jacob:**

- returns to Bethel – the "House of God", his spiritual home
- renames the place El Bethel – "God of the House of God" – a sense of God's dwelling, presence, person, revelation

(Verses 9-13)...**God:**

- reveals himself, blesses Jacob, reminds Jacob of his name and his new name – Israel, reminds Jacob of his covenant promise – a community of nations, kings

(Verses 14-15)...**Jacob:**

- sets up a memorial, makes an offering to God, gets ready to move on again

Our response?....

Possible discussion questions (select a few)

- What does the way in which God speaks to Jacob in verse 1 tell us about their relationship?
- What means does God use to speak to us in a personal way that we can relate to and understand?
- What does Jacob's response in verse 2 tell us about the journey of faith he has come on?
- Is an immediate response to God's call always appropriate or are we better to wait for a "push"?
- To what extent are we responsible for the "purity" of those who journey with us?
- What "foreign gods" might we need to get rid of in order to approach our holy God?
- What are some of the things we find ourselves being afraid of? How can we trust these fears over to God?
- What are some of the places we might regard as being our "spiritual home"?
- What are some of the names and/or promises God has given us (either generally or personally)?
- Are there ways in which we need to "come home" to the place of our first encounter with God and to re-commit ourselves to Him?
- How does "coming home" enable us to move on again?

Prayer and witness

- Pray for each other in response to your discussions
- Pray for those who are currently "back home" (e.g. Neil and Jane) and those who are serving "away from home" (e.g. Emily Fuller – BMS, Kolkata, Katie Mumford – YWAM, Sydney, Johnny – away for a week from this Thursday with Turkic Belt Ministries, Izmir)
- Pray for those with no home to return to (Night Shelter guests) or those unable to return home (refugees)