**Jacob’s Name Changed to Israel**

**A Bible Story From**

**Genesis 35:1-15**

**Bible Story Number: 1010320**

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**Bible Story**

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**Background**

God’s profound promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (called a covenant):

I will bless you and make you the father of a great nation.

I will make you famous throughout history.

I will protect your allies and punish your enemies.

I will bless the entire world through your descendants.

**Story from the Bible**

**Genesis 35:1-15**

This is what the Bible says.

God told Jacob to move to Bethel. He told him to build an altar there. The altar was to be to God who had appeared to him there when he was running away from his brother Esau. Jacob obeyed God.

Jacob instructed his entire family and everyone who was with him to get rid of all the foreign gods they had. He told them to purify themselves and change their clothes. He told them they were moving to Bethel.

Jacob told them he was going to build an altar there to the God who had answered him there while he was running away from his brother. He explained to them that God had been with him everywhere he had gone.

They gave Jacob all their foreign gods and their earrings. Jacob hid them under the oak tree near Shechem.

The fear of God came over the cities around where Jacob and his family lived. The townspeople were afraid and did not pursue Jacob and his sons.

So Jacob and all who were with him moved to Bethel, in the land of Canaan. Jacob built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, or God of Bethel, because God had revealed Himself there.

God continued to bless Jacob. He spoke to Jacob and changed his name to Israel.

God also said to him: “I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation, indeed an assembly of nations, will come from you, and kings will descend from you. I will give you the land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac. I will give the land to your future descendants.”

Then God withdrew from him. Jacob set up a stone marker at the place where God had spoken to him. He poured out a drink offering on it and anointed it with oil. He named the place where God had spoken to him Bethel.

That concludes this story from the Bible.

**Retelling the Story**

Let’s review this story by retelling it as a group. We want to retell it as faithfully as we can to the story from the Bible. We do not want to add to it or leave out anything important. Who will get us started?

**Questions**

* Why did Jacob move?
* What instructions did Jacob give his people to prepare them to move?
* Why did the people in the local towns not pursue Jacob and his family?
* Where did Jacob and all his people move?
* What did Jacob do when he arrived at Bethel?
* What name did God give to Jacob?
* What did God say to Jacob/Israel?
* What did Jacob set up to remember where God had spoken and what He had said?
* What did you like about this story?
* What did you not like about this story?
* What did you learn about God from this story?

**Prayer**

Prayer is more than a way to end the session. It is time to talk to God. Public prayer is a model for others. Boldly ask God to guide participants to use the Bible story with others. Ask God to give you and the participant’s insight and understanding as you think about this biblical event.