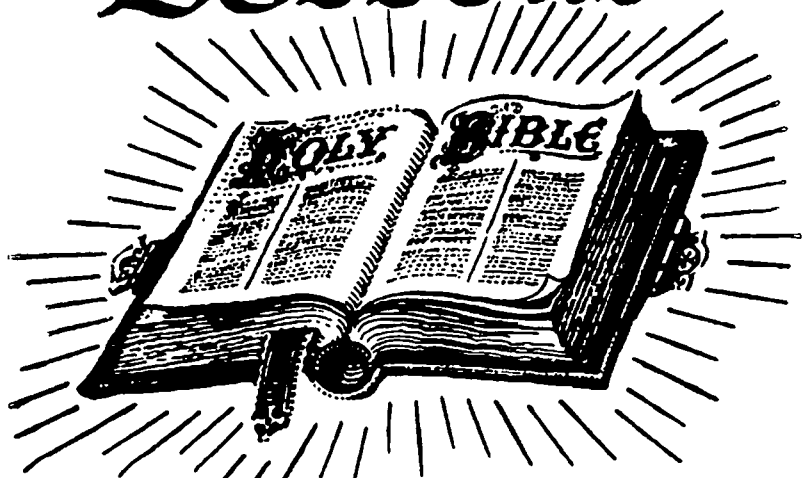


Bible Lessons



**Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED” II Cor. 3:18**

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 3, No. 2
May, June, July
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Vol. 3

April, May, June, 1971

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THEME FOR THE SECOND QUARTER

This quarter is mostly about Jacob and his life. We will notice in our study that God had chosen this one family of Abraham's to be the family through which, hundreds of years later, Jesus was to be born—our Saviour and the Son of God. The birthright was very important in this family. The one who inherited it was chosen of God for a certain purpose.

We insert a lesson about the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Continue to notice that the New Testament refers continually to the Old Testament, so it is important that we understand the Old Testament.

Again we want to say that we give you more material for one lesson than you can use in a short Sunday School session, so we trust you are studying with us at home.

—Sis. A. Marie Miles

April 4, 1971

VESSELS OF HONOR AND DISHONOR

2 Tim. 2:19b, 20, 21; Rom. 9:10b, 11-14., 20-24;

1 Thess. 5:9; Eph. 1:11, 12a

2 Tim. 2:19b The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these [sins] he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Rom. 9:10b When Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

11 (For the children [Esau and Jacob] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

1 Thess. 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

Eph. 1:11 In whom [Christ] also we [saints, verse 1] have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12a That we should be to the praise of his glory,

Memory Verse: Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Revelation 22:17b.

Central Thought: God would not be God if He did not know all about our life from the beginning to the end, yet He has ordained it so that it lies within our power of choice as to what kind of vessel we will be, and our own destiny.

Word Definition: Predestinate means "to appoint or ordain beforehand by divine decree." Predestination means "the purpose or decree of God from eternity respecting all events; esp., the preordination of men to everlasting happiness or misery; election." (Webster)

LESSON BACKGROUND

Prophecy was fulfilled concerning Ishmael as promised. (Gen. 17:20) He died at the age of 137. His descendants, like

those of Isaac, branched out into 12 tribes (sons), and constituted the bulk of the population which spread over the Arabian peninsula. Isaac was 123 years old when Ishmael died. (Gen. 25:17)

Isaac was not a man of heroic boldness like his father Abraham, but was rather a man of patience, of quiet meditative habits, a docile, obedient spirit, gentle and retiring. His great love for Rebekah and his mourning for his mother for three years, also communing with Ishmael at the death of his father brings out some wonderful graces and virtues in him. Though these are great virtues in the sight of God, yet they make but little noise in the world, so to speak.

Rebekah was barren for twenty years, so Isaac "entreated the Lord for his wife." The heir of promise was to be a child of prayer. (Gen. 25:21)

Before Rebekah's twins were born she inquired of the Lord about them. God told her, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." (Gen. 25:23) Here the Jewish race was divided. Jacob was chosen and Esau rejected. As in the past, Isaac was chosen and Ishmael rejected. Of the Jews, in future Bible history, many were carried away into Babylon, but only a remnant returned. Jesus said, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Only those of a desire to choose God and His holy ways will be chosen, although all have received the call.

Isaac was 60 years old when the twins were born. Esau was born first. (Gen. 25:25, 26.)

We will leave our account in Genesis and discuss the account that Paul gives of Esau and Jacob in bringing out the gifts and callings of God concerning humanity, also Jews and Gentiles. In discussing our lesson, don't forget the memory verse as a basis for "rightly dividing" the truth and error concerning predestination.

—M. Miles

Lesson References: ..Isa. 48:9-13; James 1:8; James 5:3-6; Jude 1:4; Romans 11:29; Romans 10:21.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There is a false teaching that is prevalent in the world today that every person is predestined to be saved, or predestined to be lost. They point out Judas, the one who betrayed Jesus, and also Esau and Jacob. Judas had the same privilege of knowing the truth as the other disciples, but he had wrong ambitions. He began to "steal from the bag," and Jesus knew his evil desires and tendencies. God knows all

things, just as God knew even before Esau and Jacob were born, that one would be of one nature, and the other of another nature. In the plan of God there was to be just one (Jacob) through whom the families of the earth were to be blessed by Christ coming to the world. Both boys were taught about God and had the same chance of obeying God, even if one was chosen, as our lesson states, "that the purpose of God according to the election might stand." It was God's purpose to have one chosen family (the Jews) through whom to bring Christ. Jacob was chosen. Was God unrighteous in this? Was it unrighteous for God to let His innocent Son, Jesus Christ, suffer for our sins? We find that "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. 11:32-34.)

Through the chosen family of the Jews, Christ came, and brought salvation to the Gentiles, also.

Notice our lesson says that God "endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath." No soul goes to eternal destruction without God having done all He could to cause him to turn to righteousness and become a vessel of honor; but if he refuses, he becomes a vessel of dishonor. Many mar in the hands of the potter, but if they will let Him, He will "make it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." (Jer. 18:4) When a person returns to the Lord after backsliding, God might place him in the body with a different gift. (1 Cor. 12:18, 27-31) It might be a lesser place than before. Can we reply against God and say "why hast thou made me thus?" It is our business to be a "vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Heaven is our destiny. The purpose of God for all those who are saved is for them to be with Christ and receive the inheritance of heaven. All the saved are predestinated to live in heaven in eternity.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Each human being is a vessel. The Word tells us that God made man upright. We must also recognize that a "will," or right of choice is given to every human, and at the age of accountability the individual himself becomes responsible before God for the conduct and condition of His own vessel. All recognize that infancy is pure. It does no wrong, for it knows no wrong, therefore it was made upright. But as knowledge comes, responsibility fixes, and we find the Holy Law applying,

"He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." No vessel is able to cleanse itself, for if it were we needed no Saviour. There are none that have not fallen under the blight of sin, for the Word has determined, "they all like sheep have gone astray . . . there is none that doeth good, no not one." Anyone who will recognize his condition and cry out to the Lord in humility of heart and repentance of soul for mercy will obtain mercy and his sins will be forgiven and cleansed away by the precious blood of the Lamb. This makes him a vessel unto honor. God can give honor to no vessel which is still languishing under the blight of sin. He can and does offer mercy and deliverance, which will produce a condition He can honor. Since His mercy is available to all and it is not His will that any perish, then it of necessity lies in the hands of the individual himself whether he be a vessel of honor or of dishonor. If man will supply the willingness, God will supply the means, and whosoever will can be vessels honored of the Lord, having been made holy, and who keep themselves holy by His grace. Holy vessels are worthy of honor. —C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Describe Isaac's natural disposition. 2. If we purge ourselves from all sin through Christ, in what three ways mentioned in our lesson can we become vessels unto honor? 3. What purpose did God have in making of Jacob the kind of vessel He did? How did He use him? 4. Discuss in what ways we can reply against God. 5. How does God deal with the "vessels of wrath" before they become such? 6. Who are predestinated for heaven?

THE QUAKER GIRL'S DREAM

I dreamed I was on my way to school, when suddenly I noticed a great crowd upon the green. People were hurrying to and fro, and when I asked what all this commotion was about, a girl said:

"Why, don't you know? It's Measuring Day, and the Lord's angel has come to see how much our souls have grown since last Measuring Day."

"Measuring Day!" said I; "measuring souls! I never heard of such a thing," and I began to ask questions; but the girl hurried on, and after a little I let myself be pressed along with the crowd to the green.

There in the center, on a kind of throne under the green elm, was the most glorious and beautiful being I ever saw. He had white wings; his clothes were of shining white, and he had the kindest yet most serious face I ever beheld. By

his side was a tall golden rod, fastened upright in the ground, with curious marks at regular intervals from top to the bottom. Over it, in a golden scroll, were the words, "The measure of a perfect man."

The angel held in his hand a large book, in which he wrote the measurements as the people came up at the calling of their names in regular turns. The instant each one touched the golden measure a most wonderful thing happened. No one could escape the terrible accuracy of that strange rod. Each one shrank or increased to his true dimensions—his spiritual dimensions, as I soon learned, for it was an index of the soul-growth which was shown in this mysterious way.

The first few who were measured after I came, I did not know; but soon the name of Elizabeth Darrow was called. She is the president of the Aid for the Destitute Society; and she manages ever so many other societies, too, and I thought, "Surely E. Darrow's measure will be very high indeed."

But as she stood by the rod, the instant she touched it she seemed to grow shorter and shorter, and the angel's face grew very serious as he said: "This would be a soul of high stature if only the zeal for outside works which can be seen of men had not checked the lowly, secret graces of humility and trust and patience under little daily trials. These, too, are needed for perfect soul-growth."

I pitied E. Darrow as she moved away with such a sad and surprised face to make room for the next. It was poor, thin little Betsy Lines, the seamstress. I never was more astonished in my life than when she took her stand by the rod, and immediately increased in height till her mark was higher than any I had seen before, and her face shone so I thought it must have caught its light from the angel, who smiled so gloriously that I envied poor little Betsy, whom before I had rather looked down upon. And as the angel wrote in the book he said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The next was Lillian Edgar, who dresses so beautifully that I have often wished I had such clothes and so much money. The angel looked sadly at her measure, for it was very low—so low that Lillian turned pale as death, and her beautiful clothes no one noticed at all, for they were quite overshadowed by the glittering robes beside her. And the angel said in a solemn tone: "Oh, child, why take thought for raiment? Let your adorning be not that outward adorning of putting on of apparel, but let it be the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price. Thus only can thee grow like the Master."

Old Jerry, the cobbler, came next—poor old clumsy Jerry. But as he hobbled up the steps the angel's face fairly blazed with light, and he smiled on him, and led him to the rod; and behold, Jerry's measure was higher than any of the others. The angel's voice rang out so loud and clear that we heard it saying: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

And then, oh, my name came next! And I trembled so I could hardly reach the angel, but he put his arm around me and helped me to stand by the rod. As soon as I touched it I felt myself growing shorter and shorter, and though I stretched and strained every nerve to be as tall as possible, I could only reach Lillian's mark—Lillian's the lowest of all, and I was a member of the church for two years!

I grew crimson for shame, and whispered to the angel: "Oh, give me another chance before you mark me in the book as low as this! Tell me how to grow. I will do it all so gladly; do not put this mark down!"

The angel shook his head sadly. "The record must go down as it is, my child. May it be higher when I come next time. This rule will help thee. 'Whatsoever thou doest, do it heartily as to the Lord, in singleness of heart as unto Christ.' "

And with that I burst into tears, and suddenly awakened to find myself crying. But, oh, I shall never forget that dream! I was so ashamed of my mark. —Selected

April 11, 1971

A RESURRECTED CHRIST

John 20:8-21

John 20:8 Then went in also that other disciple [John] which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed [not that he had risen].

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Memory Verse: He is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. Mark 16:6b.

Central Thought: Today we look not at the cross, but at the empty tomb, indicating a risen Saviour.

Word Definition: Sepulchres were natural or artificial caves used for burial places. They stood in gardens or by roadsides. Owners often prepared them before their deaths.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The first day of the week referred to in our lesson is Sunday, the day after the Jewish Sabbath. Early in the morning, the three women came to the tomb. Mary saw the empty tomb, and she ran and told Peter, John, and the other apostles.

John outran Peter and they saw the empty tomb. Our lesson begins with John following Peter into the sepulchre. There they saw that Jesus had been taken away. They did not believe that He had risen, as verse nine tells us, but that He was gone. We remember that the soldiers fell to the ground when the earth was shaken and our Lord arose. The soldiers went into the city and told the chief priests and elders what had happened. The chief priests and elders offered the soldiers money to get them to tell that the disciples had come by night and stolen Him away while they slept. (Matt. 28:11-15) This is one of the greatest proofs from man that Jesus truly did arise. We also have many other witnesses that He did arise.

Lesson References: Mark 16:1-20; 1 Cor. 15:50-58; Psal. 16:9, 10 (hell in this verse means grave); Acts 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:4-8.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

With great joy we give praise and thanks unto God for sending His precious Son to die on the cross and arise again for our salvation. Today we serve a living Christ. He is sitting at the right hand of God interceding for us. The empty tomb is the greatest witness that He did arise. Many saw that empty tomb. We are not weeping today as Mary did, because we believe that He has arisen. We do not doubt as Thomas did, but we believe that Jesus did arise and is our Saviour, Lord, and Master. Sad to say, we have many today in the world who are just like Mary was before she saw her Saviour. They are in despair because they have no hope in their souls. They feel everything they have put faith in has failed. Why? Because they are not looking at the right things. They are looking at earthly things. "The things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. 4:18. Mary was in confusion. Her Saviour was gone. But she did not go away. She lingered where He had been. She must have found comfort in the fact that He had been there. What a loving Saviour we are serving! He saw her despair and great love. No doubt she began to pray to God. He heard her cry. Jesus appeared unto her. How happy she was to see her Lord and Master! Oh! dear ones who might be in despair, linger and wait upon the Lord. Look to Him. He will come and speak to your soul. Look to eternal things and you will find help and hope in your soul.

Thomas could not believe, but Jesus appeared unto him. Today as we behold our blessed Lord who died on the cross for us, by the eye of faith, and see His hands that were pierced, his feet that have the nail prints in them, and His side that was opened, we say with a deep devotion and love, "My Lord and my God!"

Because Jesus arose, we will arise. "In Christ shall all be made alive. But every man after his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." (1 Cor. 15:22, 23) In that last day when the trump shall sound the dead in Christ shall rise first, and then those who are alive will be caught up together "to meet the Lord in the air." Thank God, He will come for His own. He is not coming to this earth, but we will meet Him in the air. (1 Thess. 4:16, 17) I want to be among that redeemed few who will be ready to meet our living Saviour in the air in the last day. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is nothing known to the human understanding that conveys the idea of complete finality as does that of death. It is a condition in which all voluntary vital functions cease and from which there is normally no reprieve. No one had even been known to arise from the dead before this Christ came along. He came proclaiming Himself to be the resurrection and the life, and even raised some from the dead before their very eyes, and then declared that all those who would believe in Him would never die. How disappointed His followers must have been when they saw this one who had led them to believe that through Him they could inherit eternal life—Himself expiring on the tree! How could He give life to someone else if He could not retain His own? So real was it all, undeniable evidence that they had seen with their own eyes, and could not deny, until they completely forgot that He had also taught them that though He would indeed give His life a sacrifice for many, yet on the third day He would rise again to live forevermore. Without this event of resurrection, His life and sacrifice were meaningless. This was the crowning feature of the entire affair, for if no life were available to Him, then He had none to offer anyone else. But with life restored to Him, thus proving that He came from the Father of life who was able to break the power of death, He could then proclaim to those at hand, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and unto my God, and your God." He knew His Father would not have glorified Him with life if His sacrifice had not been satisfactory and accepted. Since life was restored to Him, He knew His efforts were acceptable with His Father and consequently the plan of salvation for all mankind was effected. It is through this plan that we are born again and become the offspring of His and our heavenly Father. Praise His name!

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was it so hard for the disciples to believe that Jesus had risen from the grave before they saw Him? 2. Describe Mary's feelings as she wept by the empty tomb, and compare with people today who are in despair and disappointment. 3. As we, through disappointments, seek Christ with faith, will He comfort us as He did Mary? How? 4. Jesus said to Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." Why did He say this? What did Jesus say to the thief on the cross? (Luke 23:39-43) 5. What is the "first day of the week?" Do we commemorate the resurrection of Jesus by meeting on Sunday, as did the disciples? 6. How does the resurrection of Jesus from the grave affect us? (1 Cor. 15:5-58)

WAITING PLACE FOR THE SOUL

"What do you want to study tonight?" Mother asked Dale. "Daddy is with us tonight and perhaps he will talk with you. I shall listen."

"We talked about putting on a new body at the resurrection, but where does the soul go until the resurrection?" Dale asked his father.

"Son, there is a waiting place called Hades for the departed souls until the resurrection. Paradise is the place for the saved. The Bible tells us, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.' (Eccl. 12:7) We know that people die and their bodies perish and go to dust. We see that here in this world. Just as sure as the first part of the verse is true, the second part is, also. Our spirit goes back to God who gave it. Man is a two-fold being, 'outward man' and 'inward man.' (2 Cor. 4:16) This house of clay or outward man goes back to dust."

"When we go to heaven after the resurrection it will be more wonderful than paradise, won't it?" asked Darlene.

"Yes, heaven will be much better, but paradise is wonderful," Daddy answered. "A dying girl once was allowed to tell something of what she saw. She said, 'I hear music; don't you hear it? And, Mother, I see a door . . . It is open. I see inside. It is a beautiful place. It is heaven (paradise). I see forms clothed in white, many, yes, a multitude of beautiful things, their hands upraised. . . . Why, there is Pa! . . . Come, dear Lord, I am ready!'" An effort on her part to close her eyes and mouth, a few agonizing moments, and the open door received her gentle spirit."

"It must be wonderful to be able to see into the unseen world!" Darlene exclaimed excitedly.

"Where do the wicked, or sinners, go when they die?" asked Dale.

"In the account that Jesus gave us about the rich man we are told that he was in a place where he could see the beauties that Lazarus enjoyed. He saw him comforted in Abraham's bosom. But he could not go to where Lazarus was nor could Lazarus go to where he was. In verse 26 we are told that there is a great gulf fixed that they cannot pass. But we read how the rich man was tormented. Those who have died in their sins and gone to the place where the rich man is remember how they lived in this life and the many times they had chances to get right with God. They are troubled about their loved ones who might come to that place. It is an actual place of torment. It is called 'lowest hell,' or Hades. In Deut. 32:22 we read, 'Shall burn unto the lowest hell' (lowest sheol or Hades). Peter plainly tells us that God hath 'reserved the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.' (2 Pet. 2:9) What is that place where they are awaiting the Judgment? It is answered by the Bible. 'Reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.' (Jude 6) Demons are yet to be punished. (Matt. 8:29; Rev. 20:10). The demons together with the spirits of wicked people are reserved—kept—in 'chains of darkness' or in 'the lowest Hades.' There in 'pits of gloom' they await their awful doom, which falls upon them at the Judgment. Mercy gone and the past forgotten, they writhe in the depths of despair, knowing that they will be cast into the lake of fire at the Judgment."

"I don't want to go to that place," Darlene said as she shuddered.

"What will happen to Hades after the Judgment?" asked Dale.

"It will be destroyed," answered Daddy. "The happiness of those in Paradise, and the misery of those in the realm of dark despair, will be made complete when Hades is destroyed; when righteous spirits shall be united to their glorified bodies and enter the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, and when the wicked shall be cast into the lake of fire. We read in Rev. 20:14 where it says, 'death and hell (Hades) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death,' which means banishment from God for the wicked. Jesus said, 'where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' (Mark 9:46)

"It is getting late," Mother spoke softly. "We had better have prayer and go to bed. We can't get all the Bible links put together in one night."

—M. Miles

April 18, 1971

SACRIFICING THE FUTURE FOR THE PRESENT

Genesis 25:27-34; Heb. 12:1b, 15-17

Gen. 25:27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:

30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

Heb. 12:1b Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

17 For if ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Memory Verse: To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. Rev. 3:21.

Central Thought: The preference of the present to the future life in eternity is the very essence of worldliness. Strong faith in God will help one to prefer the spiritual to the sensual.

Word Definition: Birthright: "The firstborn, as the root of the people of God, conveyed to his posterity all the blessings promised in the Covenant: such as a right to possess the land of Canaan, and to be the father of Him in whom all the nations were to be blessed, and to explain and confirm these promises to his children in his dying blessing to them." (Macknight) This also included a double portion of the father's goods and rank as patriarch and priest of the house on the death of the father.

Pottage is made of different grain or lentil (small bean), bruised and boiled as a broth or gruel.

A profane person is one who despises or makes light of sacred and divine things, such as God's name, or Word of God, His ways and His people.

LESSON BACKGROUND

"Esau seems to have inherited from his mother the rash, sanguine temperament, but without her nobility of soul; from Isaac he derived a certain fondness for good living—at least for game. Jacob inherited from Isaac the quiet, contemplative manner, from Rebekah, however, a disposition for rapid, prudent, cunning invention. Outwardly regarded, Jacob on the whole, resembled more the father, Esau the mother." (Lange)

Esau was born first of the twins (Gen. 25:25, 26), and no doubt kept up this role as the elder son and heir during his father's lifetime. Jacob took a subordinate place in the household, living a quiet and religious life, yet seemingly ready for low cunning. Esau was a hunter, full of energy, and had elements of courage, yet was rash.

We add to our lesson today the words in the New Testament by the Hebrew writer concerning Esau, whom he calls a "profane" person, who sold his birthright for a "mess of pottage."

We learned last Sunday that even though Esau was the elder, yet God told Rebekah that Jacob was to have the birthright. Instead of letting God work it out, Jacob purchased it in a weak moment that Esau experienced.

Esau's name was changed to Edom, which means red.

Lesson References: Matt. 6:22, 23; 25:11; Luke 13:25-28. Concerning birthright privileges read Ex. 22:29; Deut. 21:17;

2 Chron. 21:3; Ex. 4:22. We are heirs and joint heirs with Christ to an eternal inheritance. Heb. 12:23. (first-born names written in heaven.)

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our spiritual birthright is to be with Christ in eternity. The call goes out to every soul. "Whosoever will" may have eternal life. It is up to us. It is our choice. Death is sure and our eternal destiny is certain. If we choose Christ and His ways here and crucify the fleshly desires, we will live with Him in eternity. Sad to say, many are indulging in the desires of the flesh and sacrificing the future life in heaven for the present desires. Some say, "I must have it, whatever the cost to me. If I cannot have it except at the peril of my soul, so be it. Let my hope in Christ be destroyed. Let my prospect of heaven be forever darkened, but give me the indulgence which my lusts demand." This is parting with heaven for earth, eternity for time, the Creator for the creature, an eternal life for a temporal one. In other words, it is selling our birthright for "one morsel of meat." How sad! "The pride of life" and the show and glitter of this present world, praise of men, self-will, discontent, envy, anger, malice, and revenge draw mankind away from eternal divine virtues and an interest in the Saviour and a title to heaven. This is living only for the present and not thinking of the future.

Even though it was unkind for Jacob to take advantage of his brother in his weakness, yet the Apostle, who was moved by the Holy Ghost, says that Esau was a "profane" person. Esau did not put the right values on the right things. He ate his mess of pottage, and then "rose up and went his way." People today are carelessly eating and drinking, and not giving heed to the call of God. Some day they will become alarmed when the death angel calls for them and they are not ready. It will be too late, though they might seek for help, there will be "found no place of repentance," just as Isaac's words were final.

Here is a Scripture that I trust you will not forget, and will always use as your code for evaluating things and in making right decisions. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; [will perish; no reward] but the things which are not seen are eternal" (soul, heaven, rewards).

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We see in the example of the lesson a cunningly devised snare of the enemy of our souls. He just loves to crowd some of God's little ones into such a corner of despair until they feel that unless something is done now, there won't be any future to worry about. This is exactly the type of reasoning Esau did. What good was a birthright to an inheritance if he were going to starve to death anyway? He wouldn't get it either way, so how could he lose? It is under pressures like these that folks make wrong decisions and set in motion sequences of events that will somewhere on down the road deprive them of blessings. Just as Esau realized later that his blessing was being lost, so do folks today realize that the blessing is not as full and rich as it once was, but they are unable to detect why. Esau could find no place for repentance because to his way of thinking there was no place where he had done wrong. Repentance is not necessary except where wrong has been committed, and he could see no wrong in acting to stay alive, therefore he found nothing to repent of. This was a clever camouflage of the enemy, and he is working the same identical scheme yet today! Folks under pressure make decisions and take action that over and over again they regret, realizing that their rightful blessings are being hampered because of it, but they find no deliverance because they can see nothing else they could have done under the circumstances. Oh, how important it is that we walk close with the Lord and allow Him to help us to put the proper value on the proper things and thus avoid much sorrow and heartache and disappointment. —C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Explain what the birthright of Isaac's family was.
2. What is our spiritual birthright through Christ? (Rom. 8:16, 17)
3. Do we have liberty to sell our spiritual birthright? What did Jesus do when He was "an hungered" as Esau was?
4. Name some of the things people sell their spiritual birthrights for, which are just a "mess of pottage" which satisfies only for the present.
5. What is a "profane" person? How can people be such today?

SUFFERING FOR JESUS

It happened in China. There were three men who were preachers. Orders came that they were not to preach. But they went to the officials and said, "We must preach. We want to tell the people about Jesus."

"You do, do you?"

"Yes," they insisted.

For answer, the officials commanded that the men were to be hanged by their thumbs. So the three men were hanged by their thumbs just so their feet could not fully touch the floor without pulling on their thumbs. When they stood with their feet flat on the floor the ropes pulled their thumbs. When they stood on tiptoe, then their thumbs got relief, but before long their feet were tired and they had to let their heels down to the floor. Then their thumbs hurt. So it was moment after moment, hour after hour—day and night.

The second day the official came and said, "You still want to preach about your Christ?"

"Yes," they all said.

So they were left up another day. After some length of time one of the men felt that he simply could not stand the suffering any longer. So when the official came and said, "You still want to preach Jesus?" he said, "No, I don't want to preach about Jesus any longer."

So he was freed, but the other two did not back down. "We still want to preach Jesus," they said.

The man who had gone back on the Lord went home. But oh, he felt terrible! Then he got very sick. His wife wanted to call the Christians to pray, but no, he felt he couldn't ask God to heal him after he had gone back on Jesus. But the Christians did pray. And do you know what Jesus did? He healed the man. When the man found himself well, he was so overwhelmed by God's love that he went straight back to the official and to his two friends who were still hanging by their thumbs.

"What do you want now?" demanded the official.

"I want to preach Jesus," said the man. "Put me up with the others. I, too, want to preach Jesus."

The official was so moved by this man's willingness to voluntarily suffer more for Christ, that he said, "I can't do anything with crazy men like this." Then he commanded the other two to be freed. So off they went, preaching Jesus. Don't you think they belonged to the "tribe" of Peter and John? Or Paul? I do. (A true story.)

—Z. M. L.

April 25, 1971

PEACE WITHOUT HELPS BRING PEACE WITHIN

Genesis 26:6, 12-17, 19-22a, 23-26a, 28, 29, 31

Gen. 26:6 And Isaac dwelt in Gerar:

12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him.

13 And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great:

14 For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.

15 For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.

16 And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we.

17 And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

19 And Isaac's servants digged in the valley and found there a well of springing water.

20 And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdman, saying, The water is our's: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him.

21 And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah.

22a And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not:

23 And he went up from thence to Beersheba.

24 And the Lord appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

26a Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar,

28 And they said, We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee:

29 That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the Lord.

31 And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

Memory Verse: If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Romans 12:18.

Central Thought: He who works out, through Christ, great purposes of charity toward mankind must be prepared to make large allowances.

Word Definition: Envy means "spite, discontent at the excellence or good fortune of others; resentful, begrudging." —Webster.

Following is the definition of the wells Isaac named after they were dug, which show his feelings about situations. Esek means contention, Sitnah means hatred, Reheboth means room.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Isaac and his family faced a famine, which was about a hundred years from the famine Abraham had faced. God told Isaac not to go down to Egypt as Abraham had done, but to stay there and He would care for him, which He did. This was another blessing from the Covenant Angel of God. Isaac dwelt in Gerar, which probably was a commercial town, trading with Egypt, and therefore Isaac's wants were supplied.

Lesson References: Eccl. 4:4; Rom. 12:18-21; Matt. 5:9.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Notice the great yield God gave Isaac when he sowed his seed. It has been said that in ordinary cases, the return is not greater than thirty-fold. Jesus speaks of the Word falling on the good ground of the heart and bringing forth, some, thirty, some sixty, and some a hundredfold, which seemed to be the range of fertility in that land. (Matt. 13:8)

It has been said that "envy is the constant companion of prosperity." We read how the Pharisees envied Jesus; Saul envied David; Korah envied Moses; Joseph's brothers envied him because he was favored by his father. The Philistines envied Isaac and broke a former treaty of peace made between

Abimelech and Abraham. (Gen. 21:25-31) Envy will work a disadvantage to itself to satisfy its thirst to do evil to the one envied. A well of water in those countries was a great possession of immense value. In war it was good strategy to fill the wells of the enemy with earth or sand. In Isaac's case this was a gross violation of a treaty of peace.

Isaac keenly felt the wrong that had been done to him. He was not insensitive to those wrongs. Jesus also felt the wrongs done to Him, and asked, "Why smitest thou me?" While He forgave the wrongs, still He felt the cruel taunts and shame. The mere absence of strife is not peace. Isaac had a deep peace within his heart (where peace must be planted) which was his stay in the storm. "The waves which lash the surface of the sea are only on the surface; below, the depths are calm." As Isaac quietly left place after place, he felt the depths of his soul untouched. What was the loss of a well, or ten wells, to him who had God for his portion, his exceeding and all-sufficient great reward!

What a beautiful example this lesson is to us! Much lies within us in living peaceably with others. Not long ago a wife called me. She was telling me about her husband and the way he was treating her. She felt she could not put up with it. Whereupon I instructed her that it lay in her lap to keep peace and hold her family together, even if it meant being walked on. She seemed to be able to understand this truth, and she restored peace in her home. It was not that she had not been wronged, but she became willing to be a peacemaker. Isaac was willing to be a peacemaker. Notice how it eventually brought peace without.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Notice the difference in character of these two men. Isaac served the Lord and in return the Lord blessed him abundantly so that he increased in all of his endeavors. There is a vast difference between an accumulation at the hand of the Lord and an acquisition of goods through greed and covetousness. Prosperity does not make nor need to break righteousness. Job was a wealthy man, and righteous at the same time, but when the wealth vanished, he remained righteous just the same. Accumulation bestowed upon one as a blessing from the Lord does not leave one hungry and grasping for more and more.

Abimelech knew how greed and covetousness worked, for he had observed it in others, and possessed it himself, also. When another began to prosper and accumulate, he knew it would not be long until that one would begin to look at the possessions of others about him and begin to work to obtain

theirs, too. In order to prevent that, he came and sought terms of peace. Little did he know that this man of God was only receiving the blessings of his heavenly Father and had no covetous eye upon the possessions of those about him. God's people do not envy, but rejoice when they see another prosper.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it that those whom the Lord blesses and uses become objects of jealousy? 2. How did David face envy? Jesus? Joseph? Isaac? 3. What great lesson can we learn from Isaac's actions in facing jealousy and envy? 5. Did great possessions cause Isaac to forget God? Relate what he did. Is it true that being willing to strive for peace must come from God dwelling in the soul? What is the price to be paid and the price received in the end?

DIGGING A WELL

It is not such a hard job to have a well dug today. Those who have the equipment can dig it and have water in a short matter of time. But in the olden days wells were dug by hand. Not too many years ago Bro. and Sister Sam Abbott dug a well. I heard her tell about their experience. She said they dug a big round hole. Finally that hole became deeper than their ladder. Bro. Abbott fixed up a windlass, which is a frame across the hole with a rope tied to a board on which it could be wound. A large bucket was tied to the end of the rope. She said that many times she would get into the bucket and Bro. Abbott would let her go down. She said she would dig in the middle, because she wanted to get to the water first. Then some neighbors came along and they would let Bro. Abbott down into the well and he would dig all around the edges. How happy they were when they dug up some mud. Water was real close. Finally they dug to a big rock. Some of the neighbors said, "You might as well quit now. There is no water." But Bro. Abbott told them he was going to dig through that rock. When he got through the rock, water began to spring up and he had to get out quickly.

Jesus told us that a man that "heareth my sayings, and doeth them" is like a man that "digged deep" (Luke 6:47, 48.) There are many things in one's life that have to be thrown out to get cleared up before God. Our lesson in Gen. 26:15 tells about how the Philistines, who were enemies of Abraham and Isaac, had filled the wells up with "earth." There are many earthly lusts that have to be dug out and thrown out of the heart. "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, . . . and

these are contrary one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. . . . Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:17, 19-21) One seeking after God must dig deep and throw out everything so he can hit the rock. The last thing might be like the rock that Bro. Abbott hit, but he didn't give up. He dug a little harder, and out came the water. Jesus told us about the great joy that would be in those who drink of the water of salvation after they have thrown out the earthly lusts and sins. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall never thirst again: . . . but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:13, 14) Praise the Lord for that "springing up" within the soul of the "born again" child of God. Such a soul is satisfied. One should be careful and not let earthly things stop up that well of water once it has started flowing. —Sister Marie Miles

May 2, 1971

ISAAC BLESSES JACOB

Genesis 27:22-34; Heb. 12:17; 11:20

Gen. 27:22 And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.

23 And he discovered him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

24 And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.

25 And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat; and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed:

28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:

29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.

30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

31 And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

32 And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau.

33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it to me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed.

34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.

Heb. 12:17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

Memory Verse: Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds. Col. 3:9.

Central Thought: In spite of all the evil purposes and schemes of men, God still works out His great designs.

Word Definition: Venison is deer meat.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It would be well to read the first 21 verses in the 27th chapter of Genesis, which are before the printed portion. There we note how Isaac had become blind and felt his time to die was close. He was now 137 years old. His son Esau had married a Hittite woman and this was a grief to his parents.

The Hittites had been cursed by God and were to be punished. It has been said that one of the greatest griefs of this world is that caused by children to their parents. Esau had now been married 37 years. Even though Isaac thought he was near the end, he lived 43 years after giving the blessing to Jacob.

Rebekah schemed with Jacob to deceive Isaac into giving him the blessing God had promised to her for Jacob even before he was born. It was God's plan that Jacob receive the blessing, even though Isaac did not seem to fully recognize it. Be this as it may, sin is sin.

Throughout this whole revolting scene of deceit and graft, we can never forget that Rebekah was a mother. Her act sprang from devotion to a person, rather than to a principle. Rebekah loved her son more than she loved the truth which is God. Some might call her acts beautiful since she said if there were to be a curse, it should fall upon her, but one cannot love truly unless he love honor more. "If any man love father or mother more than me, he is not worthy of me," Jesus has told us.

While Esau was gone to get venison to cook and bring to his father to eat that he might receive the blessing, Jacob took the goat meat his mother had fixed just as his father liked, to Isaac and told him that he, Jacob, was Esau. Rebekah had put goat skins on Jacob's hands and neck because Esau was a hairy man and Jacob was a smooth man.

Lesson References: John 8:44; 1 John 2:21.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jacob lied in two different ways—by his words, "I am thy firstborn"; by his actions, taking the flesh of a kid and pretending it was venison; by his deeds, putting on Esau's clothes and the hair of a kid. A person can tell a lie in more than one way. We can lie when we speak, when we act, by saying nothing, or just by a look. Rev. 21:8 says, "All liars shall have their part in the lake of fire." Sin can neither be looked upon lightly, nor excused. One lie generally requires another to cover up the first one, thus the cords of sin are wrapped tighter and tighter around a person. Jacob suffered greatly in later life over his deceit, as we will study later. You can't do wrong and get by. Remember that Jacob did not have God's laws as we have them today. He had only his conscience to guide him. God was trying to teach him right from wrong.

Jacob was blessed in six ways. The channel of spiritual blessings to mankind was in the blessing, "Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." Though

expressed differently, it is about the same blessing God gave to Abraham. Through the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth were to be blessed; that is, through Christ who was to come. "Salvation is of the Jews." It must come forth through them. All who reject and despise the salvation provided through the seed of Abraham, that is Christ, will bring condemnation upon themselves. Christ was "set for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel." Jacob and his descendants were termed Israel. Jacob's greatness given in the blessings prefigured the glory and spiritual dominion which belong to the kingdom of the Messiah (Christ). All great blessings of spiritual value and glory come to us through the kingdom of peace dwelling within us. "The dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth" are a shadow to us of the doctrines of the gospel and the graces of the Holy Spirit shed forth upon men.

Notice our lesson says that Isaac "trembled very exceedingly." This no doubt was from a sudden realization that God had interposed in his giving the blessing to Esau when God really meant it for Jacob. No doubt he fully recognized that it had been Jacob who had been there. He suddenly recognized the fact that the Lord had been there and he knew it not, and he acknowledged the will of God and said to Esau, "I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed." —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This accounting of events was for a long time a puzzler to me until finally the Lord helped me to realize that He was involved, as well as the people. God is all-wise, all-powerful, and ever-present. For anyone to imagine that he could cheat and lie and deceive and thus obtain a blessing from God that He did not intend to give is ridiculous. God knew what was going on all the time. Keep in mind that all men were carnal as no provision had been made for them to be otherwise. That included Jacob as well as Esau, and all the rest. They acted according to the dictates of a carnal nature, but God worked His will in spite of it. God was using the episode to paint a much larger picture that would reach to men of all ages. He was again demonstrating His long-range plans on a small scale. Study the blessing that fell upon Jacob and see how completely it describes the position held by the Son of God when He came and established His kingdom! Read also the portion given to Esau. (Gen. 27:39, 40) The fatness of the earth and the dew of heaven were extended to both, but abundance of corn and wine accompanied the one. The old law dispensation could not have existed without earthly material to work with, nor would it have been anything without the heavenly element. By the

same token, the gospel age flourishes on the souls of men—fatness of the earth—and the heavenly element is present also, the Son of God, who supplies “plenty of corn and wine” or in other words the fullness of the Word and the Spirit. Isaac’s blessing was exclusively dominion over people—all were to come into submission to him. Is not this the position of our Christ? Esau was to live by the sword and serve his brother. What a fitting description of the old Law dispensation where victory was constantly won on the literal battlefield, and all the while its warriors looked forward to and reached out for something better—the Christ. The law system had the dominion and broke the yoke when it crucified the Saviour, but it only worked to their own destruction. The blessing was upon Him and He would prevail, breaking the power of death in the process.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Should we be influenced by our devotion to a person and forget the principle of right? 2. Tell how God still carries out His plans and designs, even though man may try to hinder or help. 3. Explain the two ways in which Jacob lied. What is the doom of those who do not repent of lies? 4. What part of the blessing refers to Christ coming through the posterity of Abraham and Jacob? 5. Why did Isaac tremble exceedingly when he realized he had given the blessing to Jacob instead of to Esau as he had intended?

LOOK TO JESUS

“If you want to be distracted, look about; if you would be miserable, look within; but if you would be happy, look to Jesus.”

The voice of the accusing spirit of the devil is harsh, cruel, nagging, or exacting; God’s Spirit is mild, gentle, and encouraging. When God’s Spirit reveals anything, it is made clear and plain. The accuser bewilders, confuses, and discourages. Our kind heavenly Father is not watching for an opportunity to cast us off, but rather He is seeking, by the wooings of His gentle Spirit to lead us into green pastures and beside still waters, where we may nourish our souls and become strong to meet the battles of life. He will show us our shortcomings, but not in a way that will discourage or crush us. We should not be always feeling our spiritual pulse. It is just as detrimental to one’s spiritual condition as it is to one’s physical health to always be counting the pulse or heart beats. Just as a patient would be likely to imagine himself afflicted with heart-trouble, so the same habit in the spiritual realm, if continually indulged in, would prove disastrous to constant peace and victory.

—M. Miles

May 9, 1971

ESAU'S HYPOCRISY AND ANGER; JACOB FLEES

Gen. 27:41, 42, 46; Gen. 28:1-4, 7-9; Matt. 23:28; 15:8

Gen. 27:41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

42 And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.

46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

28:1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

2 Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.

3 And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;

4 And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

7 And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram;

8 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father;

9 Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

Matt. 23:28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

Memory Verse: If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 1 John 4:20.

Central Thought: Jacob was no sooner blessed than he was banished. The very rage of the wolves seeking to destroy God's children works for good, drawing them closer to God and to each other. Hypocrites are always trying to secure favor.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Esau was bitter about losing the blessing. He said that Jacob (which means supplanter) was rightly named. Isaac gave Esau three blessings. He was promised increase, prosperity, pre-eminence, and renown in war. But with this there would be the bitter portion of servitude to his brother. Sometimes he would break the yoke off his neck, but it would be but a brief victory. (2 Kings 8:22) But nothing from heaven enters into this blessing. In later references to Esau's posterity, he is called Edom. See Gen. 36th chapter.

Rebekah tells Jacob about Esau's hatred and intentions. She tells him she wants him to go to her home and there find a wife, and after his brother's anger cools she will send for him. These "few days" proved to be a period of twenty years. We do not have record that Rebekah ever saw her beloved son again.

References: 1 John 3:12; Psalm 64:5.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In studying these lessons our sympathies may go to each one involved, but there is wrong in each. God had certain designs for Jacob, and He had made it known to Rebekah. It seemed that Isaac was slow in acknowledging it, but nevertheless, he became certain. There is a lesson here for us. Even though we may know God's will, it is not our place to try to bring it to pass. God accomplishes His own purposes in His own way concerning us and others. We need to have patience to wait upon Him. If we step in, we make a lot of trouble for others and for ourselves as well, still, God will continue to work out His purposes.

God saw something in Jacob that He could work with, but Esau was worldly minded. He did not feel the birthright was important, but Jacob regarded it highly. God had a right to choose through whom salvation was to come to the world.

Jacob was reaping what he had sown. No sooner had he received the blessing than he was banished from his home and parents. If he had let God work all this out, no doubt he would have been able to stay at home and have his brother's favor. He was sorry too late. How true it is with those who try to lead in God's will, instead of following.

Esau heard that Isaac charged Jacob not to take the daughters of Canaan for a wife, so he thought this would be a way to get his father's favor. He already had taken two of them for his wives, but now he goes to the family of Ishmael and takes another wife. (Ishmael was dead.) Esau felt this would please his father, Isaac, but Ishmael was not in the line of the covenant. His family had already quit worshipping God. His scheme did not accomplish his purpose. A hypocrite wants to do something to be in favor with others. He will appear religious and pious, but his heart and designs are not right with God. All the time Esau had hatred and evil in his heart. I heard one person admit he had joined a certain sect church just for business opportunities.

I have a newspaper clipping which reads: "There are about 30,000 Communist clergymen . . . reared in the Soviet or satellites of the Soviet under their 10- and 20-year plans who are now ordained ministers and clergymen of all religions throughout the world, but more heavily concentrated in the United States. These men of the cloth are playing havoc with religion . . . and ripping apart all principle and practice . . . changing tenets . . . destroying from within . . . all under the guise of righteous or much needed change." Through this, the saints of God will receive persecution which will bring us closer to God and His designs will be worked out. Let us wait on God and not take things into our hands. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Somehow in the sequence of events that caused the blessing to be bestowed as it was, Isaac must have recognized the working of the Lord. As carefully as he worked to make sure the blessing went to his elder son, and as remorseful as he was when he discovered that another had obtained it, he was yet able to accept the final outcome, and apparently without grudge, go ahead and bestow the fullness of the blessing. Isaac realized that the blessing of Abraham that had fallen upon him was now transferring on down to Jacob, and he seemed to accept it without question, and acknowledge it. I wonder how many times we come face to face with the Lord's will, and because it was not what we wanted, or that which would disappoint us in some way, we refuse to acknowledge His will,

or if we do admit to it, we do it reluctantly in a cold half-hearted manner. It seems real easy for humanity to get its mind made up about things and how things ought to be, and if it goes some other way to be real disappointed. Our ways are not His ways, nor our thoughts His thoughts, for He is far above us on all lines. It is certainly our place to fall in submission to Him and accept His way and know it is always right.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What will nursing an injury cause to spring up in the heart? 2. Why were the heathen daughters-in-law such a grief to Rebekah and Isaac? 3. Should saved people marry those who are not saved? Why? (2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 7:39) 4. What are the desires of a hypocrite? Do they get by with God? 5. How did Esau play the part of a hypocrite before his father? Did it work? 6. Will God work out His own designs and purposes regardless whether we interfere or not?

"TELL MOTHER I'LL BE THERE"

The mother of President McKinley lay dying. While he hurried about the great events of state and the duties of his country, he anxiously waited for the news about his mother. An engine and a private car waited at the railroad station, steamed up, ready to go. A carriage waited at the door. A telegram came saying the mother was low and calling for him. He wired back, "Tell Mother I'll be there!" And the train rushed him to the Ohio town and by his mother's side for the last goodbye.

The words of that filial president moved the heart of Charles M. Fillmore and he wrote this famous gospel song, "Tell Mother I'll Be There."

When I was but a little child how well I recollect
How I would grieve my mother with my folly and neglect;
And now that she has gone to heav'n I miss her tender care:
O Saviour, tell my mother I'll be there!

Though I was often wayward, she was always kind and good;
So patient, gentle, loving, when I acted rough and rude;
My childhood griefs and trials she would gladly with me share:
O Saviour, tell my mother I'll be there!

When I became a prodigal, and left the old rooftree,
She almost broke her loving heart in mourning after me;
And day and night she prayed to God to keep me in His care.
O Saviour, tell my mother I'll be there!

One day a message came to me, it bade me quickly come
If I would see my mother ere the Saviour took her home;
I promised her, before she died, for heaven to prepare.
O Saviour, tell my mother I'll be there.

Tell Mother I'll be there in answer to her prayer—
This message, blessed Saviour, to her bear!
Tell Mother I'll be there, heav'n's joys with her to share,
Yes, tell my darling mother I'll be there.

May 16, 1971

JACOB'S VISION OF THE HOUSE OF GOD

Genesis 28:10-22; 1 Timothy 3:15

Gen. 28:10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13 And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.

17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.

20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God:

22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

1 Tim. 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Memory Verse: For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? 1 Peter 4:17.

Central Thought: Christ touched earth through His death and resurrection, and became the ladder for us to climb to reach our eternal home.

Word Definition. Dreams: They are a strange combination of our waking thoughts in fanciful forms. Bethel means the house of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jacob was fleeing from the anger of his brother, Esau, after he had deceived their father and had taken Esau's blessing. He had bought Esau's birthright when Esau was very hungry. Jacob was on his way to Haran or Padan-aram.

Lesson References: Numbers 23:10-21; Heb. 10:19, 21.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We find a solemn and serious Jacob traveling along the lonely road toward Haran. Childhood is a state of dependence, but man passes from the state of dependence into that in which he must stand alone. It is a serious crisis, because the way in which it is met often decides the character of the future life. No doubt, deep questions beset him. What do I really want in life, and where will it take me in the end? What are the most important steps I should take to bring peace of mind and soul to my life and that will cause me to be a blessing to others and pleasing to my Creator, Redeemer, and Judge in the end? The young man or woman is very wise if he or she seeks God for an understanding of the real values in life.

Jacob, no doubt, was sorry for his past sins, and had come to the conclusion that he needed God in his life. But how to find God? After his questionings and tears of helplessness, Jacob finally slept, and God appeared to him in the wonderful dream we have recorded in our lesson. God is not far away from any of us. He is close at hand when we humble ourselves before Him. Jesus came to reconcile us to God and to give us peace of mind and guidance in this life. He came to bring a closer union than at one end of a ladder. Jesus came to dwell within us by His Spirit and be our Comforter and perfect Friend, and to unite us to God.

In the House of God, which is the "church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," we find the angels as "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. 1:14). What a comfort and blessing to be in the House of God! We have come "unto the city of the living God, . . . and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling." Heb. 12:22-24. Praise the Lord for the comfort of God upon our souls!

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Folks who are looking for someone with whom to unite their souls are in a good condition to start toward the Lord. Movement in that direction will automatically uncover truths that are solid and secure. An accumulation of these truths will eventually present what appears to be a resting place for the weary soul, and so gathering them together, they prepare to rest upon them. But the truth is only part of the picture. The Word or Truth implanted in the heart gives the spirit

material to work with, and He activates or quickens the Word to become alive and real and dynamic. It is not something man figures out, or that can be taught him from a text book, it is the direct working and revealing of the Holy Spirit within a man's heart. This team, the Word and the Spirit working together, can and will open to a man's understanding the wonders of God's kingdom and how it works. It brings mortal man into contact with a heavenly realm and allows him to associate with heavenly beings. It reveals access to higher heights than he has ever known before and it inspires within him a deep yearning to be partaker of that holy environment.

The Spirit is alive and active and moves about at its own will and discretion. Man cannot control it. But truth is constant and steadfast and secure and can be stored up within our hearts. Let us, like Jacob of old, put these truths together into a pillar and saturate them with the oil of praise, thanksgiving, and obedience, and treasure them within our hearts that the Spirit may find abundant material at His disposal whenever and wherever He chooses to use it to His glory.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think were Jacob's thoughts as he left home and lay down to sleep on the stones for his pillow?
2. What should young people do first in life when they realize there are decisions and choices for them to make?
3. Could it be applied that Jacob's ladder would also mean that angels take up our prayers to God?
4. How did God comfort Jacob and give him the promise of a Saviour to come to the world?
5. What promises did Jacob make to God that day?
6. Spiritually speaking, what is the house of God today?

INCARNATION

Long before our world of wonders
Rolled in space through skies above,
Christ, the Word of God, was dwelling
In the realms of perfect love.

It was lovely up in Heaven,
With the angels, pure and good,
And with God, His precious Father,
Where approved He'd always stood.

But in love and pity, gazing
Down upon this world of woe,
Steeped in sin, the Lord of Glory
Said to God: "To them I'll go!"

God prepared His Son a body—
Made Him flesh and blood, to die
For us wretched, rebel sinners—
Giving us a Home on high.

When He came, the angels worshipped,
Shepherds lowly worshipped, too;
But "His own" no welcome gave Him—
With Him naught they'd have to do.

Not a stable, but a palace,
May He have within each heart;
For such love—so unsurpassing—
Should possess us, every part.

All the hosts of Heaven praised Him,
Till they made the welkin ring;
Shame on mortals for rejecting
Such a Saviour, such a King!

—Mabel Glenn Haldeman

May 23, 1971

REAPING WHAT YOU SOW

Gen. 29:1, 2a, 5, 6b, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21a-23, 25-28, 30

Gen. 29:1 Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east.

2a And he looked, and behold a well in the field,

5 And he said unto them, [men by the well] Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him.

6b Behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep.

11 And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.

14 [Rachel tells Laban] And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.

15 And Laban said . . . What shall thy wages be?

17 [Laban had two daughters] Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured.

18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.

20 And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.

21a And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled,

22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.

23 And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.

25 And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah; and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?

26 And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.

27 Fulfill her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.

28 And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also.

30 And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.

Memory Verse: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6:7.

Central Thought: God is faithful to help those who love Him even if they are reaping what they have sown.

Word Definition: Verse 17, "Leah was tender-eyed," which means "weak-eyed." Verse 27, "Fulfill her week," means to be with her to finish the accustomed days of the wedding feast.

LESSON BACKGROUND

God had blessed Jacob at Bethel and promised to go with him and bring him back to that land. So he "went on his journey." The Hebrew language here would read, "Jacob

lifted up his feet." His heart was light, and his feet were light, also. He walked alone for 450 miles to Mesopotamia, east of Palestine, and arrived at Padan-aram, yet he felt God's presence with him.

Many times in the Old Testament the grandson is spoken of as a son of his grandfather. Here in our text Laban is called the son of Nahor, who is Abraham's brother. But Laban was the son of Bethuel, who was the son of Nahor.

It was a custom among the ancient nations that men gave dowries for their wives. (This custom still prevails in many countries.) Jacob had nothing to offer for Rachel but his labor, thus he served 14 years for her, after having been deceived and given Leah first. It was humiliating to do this, and Hosea, the prophet, reminds the children of Israel, who had grown haughty, concerning their ancestor: "Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep." (Hosea 12:12)

Remember that Jacob and those of early Bible times did not have the understanding that we have today since Jesus has come to teach us. They were permitted to marry more than one woman. However, under the law of Moses, which was given after this time, it said, "Thou shalt not take a wife to her sister, to vex her, besides the other in her life-time." (Lev. 18:18) Today the New Testament teaching is plain on having just one wife "until death do us part."

In those days the bride was heavily veiled, therefore Jacob was deceived by not knowing he had been given Leah instead of Rachel.

Lesson References: Prov. 13:15; Prov. 4:26; Prov. 20:17; Matt. 2:6. (Herod mocked the wise men and is mocked of them.) Acts 9:1, 16. (Paul causes disciples of the Lord to suffer and he later suffers greatly.)

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jacob deeply desired the gifts of God. He even connived to obtain them by deceiving his father and getting the birthright, although God had planned that it be his. He was not willing to wait on the Lord. Deceit is wrong, even if you feel it is for a good purpose. There is a reaping for sin. Even if God does forgive sin, there will be a certain amount of reaping; however the child of God has the Lord to help him reap.

Jacob had deceived his own father; now, he himself was being deceived. The measure that he had meted out was measured to him again. Jacob had met another man who was harder, more grasping, more crooked, and more cunning than

he was. It seemed to be God's plan to let Jacob see in another those things that were despicable in himself. God has many ways of showing us what our hearts are really like. If left to ourselves, we would choose pleasant conditions and people to work with in whatever we do. But God has a purpose in our lives. He is concerned about our spiritual growth. Laban was unlike Jacob. Apparently he did not love God, for we are told about his idols. (Gen. 31:30) God did not allow Laban to harm Jacob, but God's method was perfect in bringing Jacob to where he was broken of his own ways and willing to take God's ways. It took Jacob 20 years to learn his lessons, but he showed great strength of character and love for God by not running away from the discipline God had for him. He learned to trust God. "Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Psalms 37:5.

Remember when you are sowing that there is a reaping to be done. Even if sin is forgiven, there is a memory of it and a lingering shame because of it. Young people (and older people, too) marry hastily, which brings sad reapings. Young people disobey their parents and the advice of the elders, which brings much sad reaping. Eternal damnation is reaped by those who continue on in sin. "Be not deceived," God has said.

—Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Dealings among people produce some very interesting situations. They also bring about spontaneous reactions. When a fellow is "down and out" and needs a helping hand for a little while, it is somewhat of a tragedy for his fellowman to take advantage of him while he is in that condition. To take an unfair advantage of someone because he is in need and defraud them or in some other way "short-change" them while they are unable to help themselves is nothing short of plain thievery. Many times when there is an urgent need for something and none available, when one does become available the price goes way up simply because someone has to have it regardless of the price. The world calls this a "good deal" for the seller, for he hit a windfall and made some money. The same deal is a "tough break" for the other fellow, because he was unable to protect himself from the first man's greed! Such dealings as this don't do much to promote the best of good will between fellows. Many times grudges build up over such very things as this and last for years and years in people's hearts. God wants all people to treat everyone right. If they do that, the world will be a much more pleasant place in which to live.

But thanks be to God, He has enabled His people to do right whether everyone else does or not.

Many a youth matures into manhood with a bitter feeling in his heart toward someone older than he who took advantage of his immaturity and exploited him. He didn't know how to protect himself, and so became gullible to the greed of some unscrupulous older person.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think caused Jacob to weep when he met Rachel? 2. What was humiliating about Jacob's offer to work for Laban? 3. How did Jacob feel about the seven years of labor for Rachel? 4. How was Jacob deceived? 5. How did he reap what he had sown? 6. How do we reap what we have sown when our sins have been forgiven?

HOBO

In the city of Chicago, some years ago, a man stood at the side door of a saloon at two o'clock in the morning. His clothes were soiled and worn. His long, unkempt hair was matted. His watery eyes were mere specks in an unshaven face. He was a pitiful sight. At the door he waited, hoping some one would come along and give him the price of a drink.

Two young men, reporters on a morning paper, came down the street. As they neared the poor fellow, one said to the other, "Did you ever see such an appeal for a drink?"

The other man smiled and said, "Come on, hobo, have one with us."

The three men lined up at the bar, the glasses were filled and the tramp took his glass and drained it. "May I have another?" he pleaded.

"Help yourself," was the reply. The tramp took the second drink. Then lifting his hat he said, "Young men, you call me a hobo, but that is a compliment—I am worse. As I stand in your presence my thoughts flash back across the years and in you I see a picture of my lost manhood. Once I had a face as fair as yours. I wore good clothes, I had a home. Once I had a beautiful wife and a sweet child. Once I had ambitions that soared as high as the morning star. For strong drink I gave all. You call me a hobo. I am a preacher without a charge, a lawyer without a brief, a husband without a wife, father without a child, a man without a friend. I thank you for the drinks. Go to your homes and may sweet dreams go with you; I'll go out and sleep on yonder bench in the night wind. A few more drinks, a few more drunkard's dreams, I'll go out into a moonless, starless night and a hopeless forever."

He slipped out of the door and wended his way along the deserted street. At the corner he crossed over to the park. A big moon flooded the scene with silver light. The trees of the park cast long, dark shadows and the cool breeze rustled the autumn leaves that made a melancholy music. An iron bench hidden in the shadow of a clump of bushes offered a bed to the tired, tottering body and the weary soul.

Sleep soon came and the once brave heart, wrapped in the ragged coat paused and ceased to beat. The hand that had penned legal master-pieces, lay helpless and still. The mind through which flowed brilliant thoughts, no longer functioned. The golden voice that had thrilled many a courtroom, was hushed forever. The loving eyes that had sparkled, now were cold in death.

The purple of the dawn, tinted with crimson of the rising sun, crept across the sky. The pulse of a busy city began to throb. A policeman strolled along the winding pathway and glanced at the bench, concealed in the thicket. The evening paper stated, "This morning a man—a hobo—was found dead in Douglas Square. No marks or means of identification."

"The wages of sin is death" (eternally). —Selected

May 30, 1971

GOD SEES GOOD AND EVIL

Prov. 15:3; Gen. 31:1-9, 11, 12b, 13, 14a, 16, 20

Prov. 15:3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

Gen. 31:1 And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory.

2 And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before.

3 And the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred: and I will be with thee.

4 And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock.

5 And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me.

6 And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.

7 And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me.

8 If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked.

9 Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.

11 And the angel of God spoke unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I.

12b I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.

13 I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointest the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.

14a And Rachel and Leah . . . said . . .

16 For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is our's, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.

20 And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled.

Memory Verse: For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. 2 Chron. 16:9a.

Central Thought: We want the changing of men's countenance toward us to drive us to Jesus who changeth not and seeth all things.

LESSON BACKGROUND

God gave Jacob eleven sons and one daughter. He had only one son by Rachel. These children were born while Jacob lived with Laban, his father-in-law, and worked for him. Jacob wanted to leave Laban and go to his own country, and take his wives and children, but Laban said, "Tarry with me: for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." Jacob agreed that Laban had little when he came, but the Lord had increased him greatly. Jacob insisted that he needed to provide for his own household, so Laban asked him what he wanted for his wages since he had finished his promise to work fourteen years for his two wives. An agreement was made for Jacob to be paid in cattle, sheep and

goats. Jacob was to have the partly colored animals for his pay. Through scheming Jacob "increased exceedingly, and had much cattle and animals, also servants" even if Laban did change his wages ten times. God was patient with Jacob in his scheming, and continued to have mercy upon him. God's mercy is great.

Clarke, the commentator, sums up the scheming of Jacob concerning the cattle thus: "The whole account, with all its lights and shades, I consider as another proof of the impartiality of the Divine historian, and a strong evidence of the authenticity of the Pentateuch. Neither the spirit of deceit, nor the partiality of friendship, could ever pen such an account."

The book of Genesis was written by Moses, and our present lesson took place in the year of 2265 B. C.

Lesson References: Psa. 11:5; Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 3:12; Psa. 11:5

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

How often what a man hears said about him will determine his course in life! But this should not be. We need to look to God for direction. We notice here that Jacob had an inner desire to see his kindred, but he did not move until God spoke to him for the first time in twenty years and told him to return, and He would be with him. When seeking God's will, combine inner desire with God's command, and then agreeing circumstances before making a move. Be careful when any one of these is missing. "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass." Psa. 37:5. Jacob stayed with Laban through many hardships and learned many lessons. Just because we can't get along with someone is not a good reason to move. We need to stay until we are assured we have done all we can to bring peace. Then we can know God will take care of the rest as He did for Jacob in next Sunday's lesson. We are glad that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:13.

God's great loving eyes are looking down upon you and me. He sees all about us and all the things that touch our lives. God can see right into your heart. He knows your secrets. He knows all about your motives and thoughts. He knows your plans and your feelings about every person with whom you come in contact. He knows if you desire to resist selfishness and pride to bring peace. He knows if you are being mistreated and are taking it patiently. He knows if you are being unjustly treated by others, and just how much you pray for that person or persons. He knows if you secretly wish them harm. His eyes see all things. God saw Laban and his greediness and

unjustness. God also saw Jacob's thoughts about his being justified in scheming, as he felt through just measures, to get possessions. God's "eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Jer. 32:19. We stand or fall before God, and will have to meet Him, and give an account of our doings. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It seems a little hard to distinguish between the righteous and the unrighteous in the account of Jacob and his father-in-law, Laban was greedy and deceitful, and took unfair advantage but Jacob also had a few things hard to reconcile with what we would term righteousness today. After all, he was down in Laban's country to avoid the consequences of some of his own doing at home! How is it then that God was willing to recognize one more than the other? We must remember that all men are conceived in sin and are under the influence of a carnal nature. No provision had been made at that time for any deliverance from its influence, and so all men would manifest it. All carnality is contrary to the laws of God, for the Word tells us that "the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8:7. If God should, and He surely did, recognize one more than the other, it had to be on some other basis than that of conduct, for both obviously displayed something less than straightforward honesty. The one outstanding feature that separated them was that one believed in the one true God as taught him by his father, and the other worshipped idols. God did not recognize Abraham because he was righteous, but rather because he believed, and God accepted that FOR righteousness. God knew if He could only get men to believe in Him, in time to come He could lead them to righteousness, and so He counted the beginning of the procedure the same as the accomplished fact, and accepted belief as the righteousness which it would produce. The true righteousness that God desired would not be available until the coming of the Christ, but until then God would accept a believing heart as though it were righteous. God saw the evil and disdained it all, but notice that in the transactions between the two men they all—Laban, his sons, Jacob, and all—acknowledged that God had blessed. Through one man's belief, many were compelled to believe. —C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of feelings did Laban and his sons have toward Jacob when they saw God prospering him? 2. What did God

say to Jacob? Discuss how we should seek God's will in making moves. 3. Discuss Laban's treatment of Jacob. To whom did Jacob attribute his prosperity? 4. Did God see Laban mistreating Jacob? Does He see us and all that touches our lives? 5. Should God's children expect justice in this world from unjust men?

A DIRTY STORY

It was lunch hour! Five of us guys, in fact, all except Tom, were in a huddle, telling some of the funniest stories. We had some great times—boy, did we laugh—the dirtier the story, the more we laughed.

Well, on this day I am telling you about, we ran out of stories just as Tom walked by. "Hey, Tom," I says, "know a good story—a good dirty one?"

At that everybody laughs, for they know Tom is a Christian. He says these stories make him feel bad. He never will listen. Great guy, though, for he's no hypocrite.

Say, you can imagine my surprise, when Tom stops, and says, "Sure, Bill, I'll tell you a story; but it's so dirty I don't think you fellows will like it. What do you say?"

Honestly, I wished Tom hadn't said that, for I had always secretly looked up to him. The other guys didn't say a word, so I comes out quick-like with, "Shoot the filth, Tom."

"Well," says Tom, "there was a guy who worked at this store who was a dirty son of the devil. You fellows know him.

"He was bad to drink. Many nights he got so drunk he lay unconscious in his filth and vomit. One night he almost killed a man in a fight he didn't remember. Twice he wrecked his car. Once he even struck his mother in his drunken rage. He was a dirty guy.

"When he was drunk he was also bad for women. Some nights he lay in a brothel until they got all his money. His boy became diseased from his sin. In his lust, he deceived an innocent girl, gradually broke down her resistance, and at last set her feet on a path of sin from which she never departed. Then he kicked her out. He was a dirty guy."

As Tom told about this guy, we all sat still. His eyes held us with their intensity. Then he continued, kind of soft-like, and a tear seemed to tremble in his eye.

"One night this fellow drifted by a street corner. Some nice, clean-looking young people were singing so sweet and with such happy faces, that he stopped and listened. It was an old song that he had heard his mother sing!

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.
The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away."

"The dirty fellow grunted and staggered on back of the building. There he fell, crouched in a corner, and cried like a baby.

" 'O God,' said he, 'O God, forgive me and save me.' And God did.

"Fellows, that dirty guy was me. It's the dirtiest story I know."

Nobody laughed or said a word. All the boys just walked away. When they left, I sneaked after Tom. He was back of the tool-house, alone.

Well, to make a long story short, he told me how to be saved. He said, "Repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved," and, "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

So, I accepted Christ, and I am glad I did!

"Christ died for our sins, and was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3, 4.) All who call on the name of this ever-living, soon-coming Saviour shall find peace in Him. Dear reader, won't you accept Jesus now?

—Selected

June 6, 1971

JACOB SEEKS FORGIVENESS FROM ESAU

Matthew 6:15; Genesis 32:1-13, 16, 18, 20

Matt. 6:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Gen. 32:1 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

2 And when Jacob saw them he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

4 And he commanded them saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now:

5 And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.

6 And the messengers returned to Jacob saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks and herds, and the camels into two bands;

8 And said, If Esau come to the one company and smite it then the other company which is left shall escape.

9 And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.

12 And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

13 And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother;

16 And he delivered them [animals] into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove.

18 Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us.

20 And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; per-adventure he will accept of me.

Memory Verse: And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. Mark 11:25.

Central Thought: There is only one road to travel to find peace, and that is the road of humility.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Laban pursued after Jacob and overtook him. When Laban confronted Jacob, he said that it was within his power to hurt him, but God had told him to be careful. Jacob said, "I have been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle; and thou hast changed my wages ten times." Jacob told Laban that God had seen his troubles and had rebuked Laban in the dream. They agreed to part peacefully. They heaped up stones and Laban said that would be a witness between them that they would not harm each other. Laban said, "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another." Jacob then offered a sacrifice to the Lord. The next day Laban rose up and kissed his sons and daughters and departed.

Jacob's present sent to Esau in three droves were 20 she goats, 20 he goats, 200 ewes and 20 rams, 30 milch camels with their colts, 40 kine, and ten bulls, 20 she asses, and ten foals. This was a magnificent present. Jacob was willing to lose much so he could return with a feeling of security to his land of inheritance. Peace is costly.

Lesson References: Psa. 91:11; Heb. 1:14 (ministering angels); Psa. 50:15. (Call upon God in trouble.) Matt. 5:44; Romans 12:20, 21.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

When you are on the mountain top and keep walking, you will descend into the valley. Just so, in a spiritual sense, when you have victory and are on the mountain top and keep going on, you can expect to descend into the valley of trial. No doubt Jacob rejoiced when he and Laban, who had been his enemy, parted in peace, but then he "went on his way," to face another and fiercer enemy, his brother, who had vowed to kill him when he had fled from him twenty years before. But thank God, He does not let us face our problems alone. We notice that the angels, whom Jacob said were "God's host," came to help him. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Psa. 34:7.

Notice the words that Jacob uses in seeking forgiveness and peace with Esau. He calls Esau "my lord." He refers to himself as "thy servant." He has taken a very humble place before his brother whom he feels will kill him. He truly wants forgiveness and works for it. He gives Esau a great present, and does all he can to find peace. Suppose he had gathered together his men and had gone to battle Esau and his 400 men, what then? Or if he had taken a stiff attitude and let hatred mount up in his heart, would he have found peace? Can we find forgiveness and peace with others if we take wrong attitudes and not seek God's ways and His divine help? This is a lesson for us. We are to "seek peace and pursue it." Unless we forgive others who do us wrong our heavenly Father will not forgive us. It is a serious thing not to forgive others.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jacob found himself in quite oppressing circumstances. His deceitful dealings with his own brother prompted a vow that his life would be taken, and so he had fled to the country of Laban. While Laban was not altogether upright himself, yet Jacob also was engaging in some questionable practices. Finally it progressed to the place where friendships began to fail, and frowns replaced smiles. All was not going well for Jacob. True, the Lord told him to move, but the place the Lord indicated was back where his brother was waiting to slay him. He had to leave where he was because of his illicit dealings, but he could hardly face the alternative, either.

It is circumstances and conditions like these that get men down to business about seeking the Lord. The rewards of sin are bitter, that is true, but when the yoke is hard enough long enough folks will finally reach their extremity and cry out for mercy. Jacob realized the situation he was in and knew full well he was powerless to help himself. Both of the parties he feared had good reason to feel toward him as they did, and he knew it. He also knew that quite possibly there would be no opportunity given him to make amends for his underhanded ways. His only hope was in God, for only God can really tender the heart of a man. When he was willing to humble his heart and acknowledge his condition and cry out to the Lord for help and mercy, then the Lord stepped in and went before and softened his brother's heart.

"Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear—
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer."

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss what the Bible tells us about angels. 2. What attitude did Jacob take in seeking peace and forgiveness of Esau? 3. According to Jacob's prayer, did he feel he deserved God's help? 4. What sacrifice was Jacob willing to make in order to have peace with his brother? 5. What lesson do we learn from Jacob's actions?

PRIDE VERSUS HUMILITY

What is humility? Literally it means a low estimate of self. However, all estimates are relative. The value of anything depends on its standard use. Everything hinges on the unit. Sailing down the river, a man thinks his yacht is passing swiftly until he meets a swifter. So long as a dwarf lives among dwarfs, he thinks himself a giant. Saul was humbled when he saw Goliath. The Catskills are huge until they see the Alps—the Alps until they see the Himalayahs. The atmosphere is clear as crystal till the room is darkened and a ray of sunshine steals through the crevice; then millions of floating particles can be detected.

Now a man's standing according to the Bible is his standing in God's sight. The apostle writes: "We all have come short of the glory of God." God in the world must be the standard of the world. When you wish to learn the true character of your life, measure it by the laws of God. They that know their God will be humble. They that know themselves cannot be proud. If prosperity raise thee to a dizzy height, then lest thy head be turned, look up. Do not stoop till you are smaller than yourself. Stand up at your real stature by the side of something larger. For a little time walk with God. Look up and grasp His greatness; then look down and contemplate thine own littleness; thus is pride slain. A leading feature of true Christian perfection is a consciousness of imperfection.

Do not try to act humble. Some of the proudest people are those who are trying to be humble. They are proud of their humility.

"The devil did grin,
For his daring sin
Is pride that apes humility."

"Pride is the attic of the house—the highest room and the emptiest." It is a magnet pointing selfward. Proud people are self-centered and so lifted up with what they are that they blind themselves to what they might be.

The certain cure is a vision of the ideal; for the proud man is looking away from God. He has turned his back on the fountain of light. He has set himself against the spirit of incarnate Love, who said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, for I am meek and lowly in heart." Thus does he make of his life a discord, a jar.

Moreover, pride unfits for service. We cannot do the Master's work until we are "clothed with humility," and have the Master's spirit. "I beseech," wrote Paul, "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." "In lowliness of mind let us each esteem other better than himself."

Pride hinders one from forgiving. Pride picks up faults in others and tries to excuse one's own faults. Pride will cause one to step on another to try to rise in the estimation of others. Pride brings heartaches to others and to the one who carries pride. Through Christ we can be delivered from the spirit of pride. Only through walking humbly with Christ can one keep delivered. —Parts Selected

June 13, 1971

JACOB QUITTS STRUGGLING AND SURRENDERS

Luke 9:24; Genesis 32:21-32

Luke 9:24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

Gen. 32:21 So went the present over before him: [Jacob] and himself lodged that night in the company.

22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.

23 And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

31 And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

32 Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

Memory Verse: And he said to them all, If any man come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Luke 9:23.

Central Thought: "A religion that costs us nothing is to us worth nothing."

Word Definition: "Sinew which shrank." I read where a doctor explained the sinew of the thigh as being the strongest part of the human body. Only by being twisted can it be disjoined. Israel means a prince of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This is an important lesson to us. It is an example, and it also explains why Jacob's name was changed to Israel. This is where the name, Israelites, used in the Bible to refer to God's people, came from. All the descendants of Jacob were called Israelites, for his name was changed from Jacob to Israel.

"At thy feet I fall, Yield Thee up my all.

To suffer, live or die, For my Lord crucified."

Our lesson begins with Jacob waiting for the arrival of Esau with 400 men.

Our first Scripture in our lesson are the words of Jesus. We must lose the self-life and find the Christ-life to find rest and peace.

Jacob "halted upon his thigh." Jacob was now a broken man. The sinew was not removed, but shrank. The flesh, or our nature, is not removed by the Holy Spirit, but is purged, or crucified with Christ. The sin principle is removed and the power of the flesh is broken. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Gal. 5:24

Scripture References: Matt. 26:41; Luke 24:28, 29 (clung to Jesus); Isaiah 6:1-8.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Through Laban, God tried to get Jacob to see himself, as Laban had some of the same qualities as Jacob. God had waited twenty years for this day. Jacob was now alone with God. Dear ones, get alone with God. Look at yourself in the light of God's Word, quietly and honestly. But do not be surprised if you find there is still some self-life working. You will have a wrestle. Peace will only come when you say as Jesus at Gethsemane, "Not my will, but thine be done." the self-life must be broken. We must lose our life and take the Christ-life. We cannot obey the lusts of the flesh and still please God. God wants us to "yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Rom. 6:13.

Notice God started the wrestling, and Jacob resisted continuously. He still felt he was competent to manage his own affairs, apart from God. Jacob had succeeded in almost everything he had attempted, and it was natural he thought he could win out against this powerful foe. It is a serious thing to resist God. This was a physical struggle, yet in importance it is second to the spiritual struggle. God has to deal with us many times on physical and material levels to get lessons of spiritual importance to us. The losses that come to us are intended to draw us closer to God and help us to surrender to God. Let God work and let Him receive the glory.

Jacob's thigh had to be broken before he would surrender. Paul spoke of the "thorn in the flesh" which he prayed three times to be removed, but God did not remove it; He only promised sufficient grace. Paul surrendered, and said, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. . . . I take pleasure . . . in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Cor. 12:9, 10. Jacob in his helplessness said, "I will not let you go except you bless me." Now he is prevailing and clinging after he surrendered to the will of God. He confessed that he was Jacob, which means "a supplanter." Now since his surrender to God his name was changed to Israel, which means he now has power with God and man. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Man is an interesting creature. He erects many barriers about himself to hide his inmost self, and he advances the barriers to make himself appear what he would like to be. If he feels himself inadequate in some area, he will go to great

lengths to convince others that such is not the case. It is only when he is thoroughly satisfied that they are convinced that he will feel secure in that area. But for all men there comes a "moment of truth," a time when barriers and fronts and erections of all kinds are smashed to splinters, and he must face himself as he really is, naked and open and exposed. The classic example of this is the man under deep conviction. This is the reason he grips the seat until his knuckles turn white and he begins to shake and tremble. God does not deal with fronts and barriers that men erect to shield themselves, but rather He goes right to the very heart and deals with the man as He knows he is. The barriers offered the man a degree of protection, and a feeling of security, but when God's truth applied by His Holy Spirit crumbles the barriers, then of course the man trembles with fear because he faces himself as he really is. As a general rule, it takes the application of some pressure to break down the barriers. How often do we hear the testimony, "I had come to my wits' end before I got saved!" Enough pressure will remove the barriers and allow the man and the Lord to deal with reality. Once in a great while someone is able to be honest enough with himself to just surrender, but most usually folks get in some sort of distress before they are willing to face themselves and approach God undefended.

In the lesson it looked like Jacob had enough trouble on hand to worry about without having to wrestle with God, too, but it was these very circumstances he faced that brought him to the proper condition of heart to wrestle with God. God was not wrestling for exercise, He was wrestling to prove Jacob, and to determine the sincerity of his heart in the struggle. When He was convinced the quality was there, He gave the blessing and Jacob became a changed man. How beautifully this portrays an experience of salvation. When we in our distress of sin allow Him to destroy the barriers, face ourselves as we really are, acknowledge ourselves sinners and in need of help and then pursue until the blessing falls, we go forth changed men, walking in newness of life. Glory to God! —C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Name the many advantages to be found in being alone with God and His Word as we search our hearts and look honestly at our lives and attitudes. 2. We notice in our lesson that God began the wrestling. Does God many times have to break us down through dealing with us physically and through material things? 3. Name some of the losses that touch lives which bring a realization of a need before God and make one feel

his dependence upon Him. 4. God had been dealing with Jacob for twenty years, yet Jacob wrestled on and kept resisting God. What did God do to break him down? 5. After Jacob became a broken man, he began to cling to God. Can we prevail as Jacob did when we cling through prevailing prayer to God? 6. Who are the Israelites?

ABSOLUTE SURRENDER

Among a large number of refugees that came into one of the Armenian relief camps one day there was a young girl whose big dark eyes were full of pain and whose body seemed hardly able to bear longer the strain of waiting for the doctor. Occasionally she would put her hand to her neck or shoulders, but she said no word of complaint.

At last someone, seeing how sick she looked, said to her, "Would you like to lean against me for a time? I am strong and would be glad to help you."

"No," said the girl. "I cannot lean. I must stay this way until I am better."

"Have you been hurt?" asked the new friend.

"I am bearing the cross," she said. "I bear in my body the cross of Jesus Christ. I know now how He suffered."

Just then a nurse came near, and seeing how much she needed care, she bent to help her.

"Wait," said the girl, "I must show you first. You will see." Then slipping the loose dirty dress from her shoulders, she showed them a cross which had been branded with hot irons into the shoulders. It was burning with fever, and all about it was swelling and infection.

"Day by day," she said slowly, "they add to my cross. 'Mohammed or Christ? Mohammed or Christ?' they said to me each day. When I said, 'Christ,' they brought the iron and gave to me the cross of Christ. I thought I should also die with Christ and for Him, but the Americans came, and they saved me from death. I bear the cross. As long as I live I shall bear the cross of Christ. Some day I shall be glad."

Lovingly they led her to the hospital and dressed the cruel wounds that had been given to her because she had been faithful to her Lord. Lovingly they thought of her bravery and courage. Eagerly they waited for her recovery that they might come to know much better the Armenian Cross Bearer.

Are you absolutely surrendered to Christ, that you could do as this girl did? Are the pressures around you driving you closer to God or farther away? Are you undecided to live for God, or give up the fight and surrender to the world and the enemy of your soul? There is grace for you and help

through Christ, but it only comes through completely surrendering yourself and selfish interests and being willing to bear the cross of Jesus.

It will cost you many things to be a Christian who is absolutely surrendered to Christ and His teachings and plans. Absolute surrender cost Daniel a trip to the lions' den. Absolute surrender will bring peace to your soul here and an eternal home in glory with our Lord and Saviour.

If it is to be absolute surrender, we must deny ourselves and follow the admonition of Jesus. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it. . . . For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. 16:24-26.

—M. Miles

June 20, 1971

BROTHERS BECOME RECONCILED

Genesis 33:1a, 3, 4, 8, 11, 16; Matt. 18:7, 14-18

Gen. 33:1a And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men.

3 And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

8 And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord.

11 Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.

16 So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir.

Matt. 18:7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Memory Verse: But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 15:57.

Central Thought: It is God's will that we be at peace with our brothers and sisters in Christ and all people.

Word Definition: Offence means "insult, injury, trespass, any cause of anger or displeasure."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Esau arrived the next day after Jacob had wrestled all night with the angel of God. After they were reconciled, Jacob introduced his family. When Esau did not want to take the presents of animals sent to him, Jacob said, "Take the presents, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." Jacob told Esau that in seeing his face, it was as though he had seen the face of God. He was happy that Esau was pleased with him and forgave him. Jacob told Esau to let him follow to their home as his flocks and herds were young and the children tender. He said, "I will lead on softly." So Esau left Jacob and went on to Seir, his home.

Our Scriptures in Matthew are the teachings of Jesus concerning those who might have some difficulties arise between them.

Lesson References: Luke 17:3; James 5:20; 1 Tim. 5:20; 1 Peter 3:1.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

A wonderful reunion and the peace that Jacob so much desired had come to pass! The Psalmist David said, "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge . . . Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." Ps. 46:7-10. We need to learn that God will work out our problems for us if we will become humble and wait upon Him, willing for God to have His way in our lives.

It is God's will that we live in peace with all. Yet we know that there are times when misunderstandings will arise, or someone might transgress God's law to the extent that he needs to be rebuked according to the command of God's Word. In doing so, the one rebuked may not accept it, and there will be more trouble and added problems. Things can become very complicated. The steps now necessary are plainly set forth in our text. It would be well for each to follow them and seek after peace, with humility of heart and mind, ever seeking God to melt hearts that might be rebellious. We need to feel toward others as Jesus felt. He was not willing that any perish, as our text tells us. He loved us when we did not love Him, and were His enemies. We can love our enemies, also, and do all we can to help them. Those who have been dealt with and will not submit to the Word of God are bound by the Word of God, which is binding in heaven, also. It is a serious thing to fail to submit to God's Word which is used to judge a person in these cases. The Bible tells us to "submit yourselves one to another." Even if you do not feel in your heart you have done wrong, it is good to ask forgiveness for anything you might have said or done that would cause the other person to take the attitude he has taken, or cause him to feel hurt in any way. Taking the humble side will always work for good.

Notice it says, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Jesus did not want you to tell everyone else about it. God's ways are always right. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

No man can engage the Lord in mortal conflict, wrestling for his life, and win the blessing, and then go forth the same man. Esau met the same physical being that he recognized as his brother, but the inner man was far changed from the brother he had known, for this man he met now had had contact with God. For Jacob to send offerings in advance to appease his brother's wrath was perhaps good strategy, and no doubt was a good attitude of heart on his part, but it seemed to have little effect upon his brother. Esau didn't seem to be much concerned about them, and only by insistence was he persuaded to take them. But there is more involved here than the mere getting together of two long-separated brothers. God had a part in the thing, also. Let us go back to Genesis 27 and read verses 28 and 29. At the bestowing of the blessing God had put Esau in subjection to Jacob, and pronounced Jacob lord over his brother and declared that his mother's sons should bow down to him. That work was already done. God

had taken care of that in faithful compliance with the blessing. It obviously was not Esau that needed attention then, it was Jacob. God had blessed Esau with the "fatness of the earth" (Gen. 27:39) according to his blessing until Esau was satisfied and contented, and so he no longer felt the hardness toward his brother that he felt when it looked to him as though Jacob had received all and he nothing. But what if God would allow Jacob to move in on his brother as he was, deceitful and con-ning and underhanded in his dealings, and Esau made subject to him? God knew that would mean tragedy, and would destroy his blessing to Esau, so he put Jacob to the test. He brought Jacob forth a man fit to have others in subjection to him: It takes something more than human nature to have others in subjection and not take unfair advantage of them. It takes a contact with God and a blessing that will work a change of heart. What a privilege we have to enter into that within the veil and be transformed into His very likeness by the power of His blood!

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Did God work upon Esau's heart when he saw how Jacob humbled himself by referring to himself as a servant, and by the sacrifice of sending the gifts? 2. Describe the meeting between Esau and Jacob. 3. What is the first thing you are to do when someone trespasses against you? 4. What does it mean to take it before the church? 5. Even if the one who trespasses against you does not ask forgiveness, are you to forgive him and pray for him just the same?

I CARRIED WITH ME A PICTURE

Several years ago five young men left their homes in western Pennsylvania and went out into the great Northwest. They found things quite different from what they were in the old home town, and the temptations were many. Some time later all returned to their former homes. Four of the five showed that they were much the worse because of their experiences in a strange country. But the other young man came back seemingly all the stronger and better because of the experiences through which he had passed.

When asked why he, too, had not gone the way of the other four, he calmly replied, "Because I carried with me a picture."

"Oh, yes, the picture of some young maiden back home, I presume," remarked a friend.

"Oh, no; not that kind of picture," said the young man. "It was a picture of quite a different kind. It was my last

morning at home. We all sat down to breakfast as usual; Father at one end of the table and Mother at the other. As they realized that there was to be a breaking of home ties in a few hours, conversation was not very brisk that morning. After breakfast, as was my father's custom, he took down the old Bible and started to read the morning lesson. But he didn't get far. A lump kept coming up in his throat, and he was so blinded by tears that he could not read, and handed the Book over to my mother, motioning to her to finish reading.

"After she finished the chapter, we all knelt to pray. Father started the prayer, as was his custom, but he didn't get far until that lump came up in his throat again and choked back further expression. Then Mother reached over and put her hand on my shoulder and began to pray, saying, 'O God, we thank Thee for our son. We thank Thee that Thou hast kept him true and faithful, and that we are able to send him out from our home chaste and clean. Keep him pure and clean, and may his feet never stray from the paths of virtue, purity, and the truth in which we have tried to bring him up. Bring him back to us as pure and true as he is going out from us.'

"It was the vision of my last morning in the atmosphere of a godly home, and the remembrance of my precious mother's prayer. I could not bear the thought of breaking the heart of my father and mother and dishonoring my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ whom they taught me to love." —Selected

June 27, 1971

HER SOUL WAS IN DEPARTING

Gen. 35:1, 7a, 11-13, 16, 19; 2 Cor. 5:1, 6, 7, Luke 23:43; Luke 16:22, 23; 1 Pet. 1:17; Gen. 35:28, 29

Gen. 35:1 And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.

7a And he built there an altar,

11 And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;

12 And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

13 And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.

16 And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour.

19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.

2 Cor. 5.1 (Paul says) For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

Luke 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, [converted thief] Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Luke 16:22 (Jesus said) And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

23 And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

1 Pet. 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

Gen. 35:28 And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years.

29 And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Memory Verse: All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward. Eccl. 3:20, 21a

Central Thought: When we die our soul separates from the body which is its house of clay, and goes to the waiting place for the departed souls until the judgment.

Word Definition: In the Memory Verse the word "upward" is given. The margin words are "is ascending." Ben-oni means "the son of my sorrow." Benjamin means "the son of my right hand."

LESSON BACKGROUND

"When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Prov. 16:7. Esau accepted Jacob's present, a sign of friendship in eastern countries. It seems that circumstances hindered Jacob from going very soon to his father's home. He journeyed to Succoth and built a house and made booths for his cattle. Later he went to Shalem in the land of Canaan and there bought a field and spread his tent. Something sad happened in this city, which is recorded in a chapter before our present lesson. Jacob told his two sons, Simeon and Levi, that "ye have troubled me and made me to stink among the inhabitants of the land," and he felt the people might slay him since he and his family were "few in number." However, God protected him. We will notice later in our study of Jacob that this act caused these two boys to be passed over as heirs of the birthright, which they might have had since Reuben, the oldest, was excluded because of an unclean act. (Gen. 35:22). The birthright was given to Judah, the fourth son, and it was through his family that Christ was born.

It seems as a result of being in contact with others, the sons of Jacob and their families had some strange gods. Rachel had brought her father's god with her, unknown to Jacob. (Gen. 31:34) Jacob took all the idols, also the earrings, and buried them under the oak tree in Shechem before he went up to Bethel to worship the Lord.

Deborah, who was Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried under an oak in Bethel. We do not have any record of Rebekah's life and death after Jacob left her home that morning and went to his Uncle Laban's home, except in Genesis where it says she was buried at the same place as Isaac, Abraham, and Sarah, in the cave which was close to Mamre.

Lesson References: Eccl. 5:16; Psa. 105:6-15; Heb. 11:8-10, 20.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

From the study of the Word of God we learn there are three states of abode for the human spirit or soul. The soul lives in the body in this world. Then when death claims this body, the soul goes to the unseen world, which is called Hades, which is a Greek word for the waiting place for disembodied souls. The Hebrew word for it is Sheol. The literal meaning of Hades is "invisible; the unseen world or the unseen state." In the Bible it says the happy abode of separated spirits is in Paradise, or Abraham's bosom. It is a heavenly realm where "the wicked cease from troubling [them]; and there the weary

be at rest." (Job 3:17) There the saints of all ages meet and rest from their labors. (Rev. 14:13) They are in a state of blessedness; for "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." John the Revelator also saw disembodied souls reigning with Christ in paradise. (Rev. 6:9-11)

Those who die unsaved, or who have not sent their sins up before to be forgiven, go to what the early church fathers and Josephus called Tartarus or lower Hades. We notice in the account of the beggar and the rich man who died that the rich man saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. A great gulf was fixed and he could not pass over, but he was in torments in hell. He was in the place of waiting souls until the judgment, but was in torment.

The third place of the soul's abode is to be after the final resurrection and judgment. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Cor. 15:52. "The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the [living] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." (2 Tim. 4:1) Paradise and lower Hades will be emptied and those in the world will be judged and all will go to their eternal abode, whether it be eternal damnation or eternal bliss.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What happened at Bethel which was real special to Jacob, and brings good thoughts to us? 2. Explain the promises given to Jacob at Bethel. 3. Some want to deny that the soul leaves the body in death. What does our lesson say about this? 4. What is our hope, by faith, if we are saved when we die? 5. What does the Scripture in our lesson teach about the two compartments of Hades, or the waiting place of the souls of people?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As prevalent as death is about us, and everyone subject to its power, it is hard for us to visualize a time when man lived, but knew no death. Yet, we know he did, for in the midst of the garden grew the tree of life whose fruit was available to man at all times. God evidently intended for man to live on and on in the garden. In Psalm 36:9, the writer recognizes that in God is the Fountain of life. Let us reflect for a moment what this really means. To possess the fountain, or source, of life would automatically dispense with the fact of death. If God, and we believe He does, possesses the fountain of life, then we can readily see why He is from everlasting to

everlasting. Nothing could destroy life but death, but to possess the source of life means that death would have to fall in subjection to life. Death cannot abide where life is, thus we recognize God as being eternal.

There is only one thing we know of that is able to destroy life and that is sin. Since God is not only eternal, but also holy, we know that He will never sin and lose the fountain of life. His Word tells us that He cannot even be tempted! Such absolute holiness is almost beyond human comprehension.

The fact of physical death fell upon man when he sinned in the garden. His access to the tree of life was removed, and it was appointed unto man once to die. It is so commonplace and completely accepted by now until we expect nothing else. Anywhere we encounter life we automatically make allowance for death and operate on the premise that sooner or later death will prevail and life will succumb to its power. We attribute to death power over life, but actually the opposite is true. Where is there any mention or allusion made to a fountain of death? There is none. Death appears only when life is withdrawn. When life re-appears, death again is compelled to depart. Read the account in John 11. Physical death is able to exercise itself upon humanity only because the fountain of Life gave it power to do so.

In at least two cases, we have record where life stepped in and thwarted the power of death and translated the intended victim. All recognize that these corruptible bodies are not enduring, but will be replaced with one more substantial, for the Word speaks to us of this corruption putting on incorruption, this mortal putting on immortality, this natural body being replaced with a spiritual body. (1 Cor. 15:44.) All physical life is under the sentence of death, placed there by the Source of Life. When death comes, the natural body simply decays and returns to the dust from whence it came, oblivious of the things of time and sense, for it is simply a carcass. Not so the spiritual, immortal, incorruptible body that replaces the physical. It is this body that will never lose its consciousness of being.

It is while in these mortal, physical bodies that we have the privilege of making preparation for the disposition of our spiritual glorified body. If we confess our sins and call on the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, He will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We are born of His Spirit, resurrected from a dead state of sin, to walk in newness of life. If we continue in that life and allow it to continue in us, we have the promise from the Source of Life that our spiritual body will be gathered unto Him, and we, too, will enjoy life

forever. If we refuse to yield ourselves to Him and fail to be born of His Spirit, He has already pronounced our disposal. He will withhold the fountain of life from us and spiritual death will wreak its vengeance upon us, forever and anon, weeping and wailing, gnashing of teeth, tormented on and on in a ceaseless flame, ever dying yet never able to die and become oblivious. No hope can comfort the tormented soul, for the Source of Life has already decreed and made it clear that when His provision for entering into life is rejected here it will never be offered again. Just as sure as His appointment of physical death is carried out, just that sure will His appointment of spiritual death be executed, also. Is it any wonder that the Saviour exhorted us to fear not those who can kill the body, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell? Dear reader, life is available to everyone, for it is not His will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Where are you going when you leave this world behind? The decision is up to you.

—C. W. Wilson

PAUL MARTYRED

But Nero now having the government firmly established under him, and henceforth plunging into nefarious projects, began to take up arms against that very religion which acknowledges the one supreme God. . . . Under the influence of this, he did not proceed to destroy so many thousands with any calculation, but with such indiscriminate murder as not even to refrain from his nearest and dearest friends. His own wife and mother, with many others that were his near relatives, he killed like strangers and enemies, with various kinds of deaths. And, indeed, in addition to all his other crimes, this too was yet wanting to complete the catalogue, that he was the first of the emperors that displayed himself an enemy of piety towards the Deity. This fact is recorded by the Roman Tertullian, in language like the following: "Examine your records. There you will find that Nero was the first that persecuted this doctrine, particularly then when after subduing all the east, he exercised his cruelty against all at Rome. Such is the man of whom we boast, as the leader in our punishment. For he that knows who he was, may know also that there could scarcely be anything but what was great and good, condemned by Nero." Thus Nero, publicly announcing himself as the chief enemy of God, was led on in his fury to slaughter the apostles. Paul is therefore said to have been beheaded at Rome. . . .

—Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History
(64)

