

***"The Attack on the Heir and His Family Continues:
Jacob's Faith Tested -- But Israel's Blessing Assured"***

Review:

So far in our fellowship around this great theme, "The Long War Against God", we have seen God working miraculously in Abraham's life -- and then in Isaac's, as well.

In our last fellowships, the scene shifted to Abraham's and Sarah's grandson Jacob and how through deception Jacob had demonstrated his parents birth-naming wisdom, for his name literally means "supplanter", or, even, "thief".

Well, as we saw, the "few days" of verse 44 (where Rebecca sends Jacob off to her brother Laban thinking he would be soon returning) actually became many years (actually, 20!) as Satan's plot to destroy the family of the Seed of the Woman is brought to pass -- but, Satan's plan through Laban did not succeed as he had planned. Satan's "alternative" strategy was thwarted, as we saw, and the Seed of the Woman prophecy was again preserved whole as Almighty God's trustworthiness to his promises is again proven in Jacob's life.

But 20 years in "voluntary and indentured" servitude to Laban only brings great success to Jacob with several wives, many children, and eleven sons including much wealth. At the divinely appointed time, God then appears to Jacob in a dream and renews his pledge to him which he had made to him at the beginning of his journey.

[READ] Gen. 31:13 I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst 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.

But this new plan devised by Satan was to use Laban to harm Jacob. This plan did not even begin to be executed however because God appears to Laban in a dream and commands him not to cause any harm to Jacob. So they mutually agree to a pact of non-agression instead.

- **God's Preservation Prefigured (Gen. 32:1-2)**

Gen. 32:1-2

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 [or, "double-camp"].

A. A "double camp": One on earth AND one in the heavens!

- **Jacob's Fear of Death Revealed (Gen. 32:7-8)**

Gen. 32:7-8

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.

- **God's Preservation Promise Proclaimed (Gen. 32:9-12)**

Gen. 32:9-12

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.

- **Jacob's Failure to Trust Revealed (Gen. 32:13, 21-23)**

Gen. 32:13, 21-23

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

...

21 So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company.

22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, 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.

- *So Jacob's "human" plan was implemented here at least in part.*
- *But now there are really three "camps".*
- *And Jacob is very, very alone. I wonder if Jacob has forgotten the "two camps" revealed when he dreamed of the ladder to heaven and named that place Bethel, or the House of God.*

Now, even though we looked at the next verses (verses 24-32) in our last fellowship, I want to consider them again today, as we consider in our final fellowship today around this outline:

- *Jacob's Faith Tested (Gen. 32:24-32)*
- *But, Israel's Blessing Assured (Gen.)*

I. Jacob's Faith Tested (Gen. 32:24-32)

[READ] Gen. 32:24-32

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.

- *So Jacob was not alone at all, for there was a "man" with him who wrestled with him -- all night!*
 - *Who was this "man"? We looked at Hos. 12:2-6 where the same word for "man" here is translated "angel". So it seems clear enough that this was an "angel" or "messenger" of God*

with whom Jacob wrestled or fought.

- ***Some additional important observations:***
 - ***Jacob means struggler, supplanter or even thief (25:22) while Israel means that not Jacob but rather the Lord God is the one who rules, who is sovereign.***
 - ***But here Jacob is also called a “prince”. This word is also used similarly in other places of actual worldly princes, commanding officers, military officers in general, slave owners and herdsman among other uses. It simply means the one in charge.***
 - ***The language “hast thou power” means that Jacob struggled with Esau in the womb and this led to his naming.***
 - ***But here is also stated clearly that Jacob was victorious. . . but not in every instance as is so clearly proven here.***

- ***Yes, he had contended for Esau’s birthright and in that case he did succeed (25:29-34). The same was true regarding Esau’s blessing and also while dwelling with Laban. So it seems that as long as he was engaged in conflict with men he had succeeded.***

- ***But the whole point of the conflict here, the conflict with the angel of God, even, we think, the pre-incarnate son of God, is that Jacob cannot succeed against Almighty God as the supplanter or as the challenger, even the thief.***

No one can conflict with the plan of Almighty God and in the end, win. God is and always will be sovereign and his will shall be accomplished.

- ***That is the profound meaning of this section. Jacob cannot prevail here for God is and shall always be the victor!!***

- ***So Jacob’s name is changed to Israel signifying not the truth of the sovereignty of God, but rather, Jacob’s full acceptance of that truth. For his new name, Israel, means “God rules” or “God commands”. Jacob realizes that he has been wrestling with God himself. Consequently he is humbled and names that place Peniel, or, “the***

face of God”, for, as we see in verse 30: “And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”

- **Jacob again and again has proven that he is “the supplanter” or the “contender” or even, “the thief”. BUT GOD HAS OVERRULED JACOB’S WILL ON EVERY OCCASION THOUGH IT MAY NOT BE KNOWN BY MAN!!**

WHAT A POWERFUL LESSON CONCERNING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF ALMIGHTY GOD IS FOUND IN THESE VERSES.

[Any comments / questions?]

We have well seen “Jacob’s Crisis of Faith” as it has sprung forth from these pages in Genesis and how that was brought about as Satan conspired against the plan of Almighty God regarding the Seed of the Woman prophecy. Now the stage will shift to “Israel’s Blessing Assured”. THE SEED OF THE WOMAN PROMISE SHALL BE ACCOMPLISHED!

II. Israel’s Blessing Assured (Gen. 48, 49, and Heb. 11)

Six Key Verses from Gen. 48-49 & Heb. 11 give us Israel’s (or, Jacob’s) testimony at the end of his life:

[READ] Gen. 48:15-16 "And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

[READ] Gen. 49:24-26 "But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:); Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

[READ] Heb. 11:21 "By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

- **Israel's (not Jacob's) God is here now boldly testified. Note well the total shift here from the God of his father and grandfather to his own God. And note well also how the foundation of Jacob's (now called Israel) testimony is on the unconditional promises regarding the Seed of the Woman as given in Gen. 3:15 and repeated and expanded many times later.**
- **We could also compare the Hebrews 11 verse with a verse found just before the chapter 48 quotation above, a verse that is referenced by the Heb. 11:21 verse.**

- **Indeed, Hebrews is the book of the Great Cloud of Witnesses to faith and its work in the lives of these believers down through the ages. And here in chapter 11 and verse 21 Jacob's faith (who is also called Israel), a faith testified so clearly in Genesis chapters 48 & 49, is highlighted.**

And the final act of faith of Jacob was the blessing of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

- **But what we should notice immediately when examining these scriptures is this, that Jacob (now Israel) is here testifying to his own personal faith. Yes, it is a faith in the God of his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham. But it is so much more. It is his own!!**
 - **Gen. 48:15: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads."**
 - **Gen. 49:24-26 "But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:); Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."**
- **Jacob, now Israel, has come to know, and to testify boldly, that the God of his father and grandfather, the God with whom he had an uncertain relationship for so long, was indeed his God, and that that very God was the one who had cared so tenderly for him all of his**

life, providing for his every need and "redeeming him from all evil."

- *And, in addition, at the very end of this chapter here, Jacob in his last words testifies as to his resurrection faith by requiring of his sons that his bones will be taken back to the Land of Promise and buried properly there in the ancestral burial plot of the cave of Machpelah, in Mamre, which is Hebron.*

- *See also Gen. 48:21 and 50:25 for this resurrection aspect so clearly revealed:*

Gen. 48:21 "And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers."

Gen. 50:25 "And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."

- *Joseph had promised that he would do just that in Gen. 47:30, and recorded for us historically in in the book of Exodus (also see Joshua 24:32 and Acts 7:15-16), it is recorded that they did exactly what was asked of them and also included the bones of the other patriarchs. Jacob and his fathers had the resurrection hope of being raised into eternal life there in the Land of the Promise. Their hope was an earthly one indeed, while ours is heavenly.*

This is most precious indeed.

Summary / Final Questions:

- *So we see how Jacob has chosen finally rather late in life (at about 100 years old) to testify clearly and boldly concerning his God, the very same God as that of his father and grandfather.*
- *He profoundly loved and respected his father and grandfather. In what way did he respect them in particular? Why was this not enough for him in his walk with God? Jacob had desired "more" of God (birthright, blessings, etc.) than his brother Esau. But to take God at his word and to personally believe that he belonged to the living God as he knew his father and grandfather had, was not an easy thing for Jacob. But, eventually, he did. And praise the Lord that it was not simply a work of his but rather the work of God himself. That is made so clear here in Genesis.*

Testimony:

For nearly 50 years I have found these verses so meaningful and encouraging.

Are they for you as well? We know well what Abraham “found” as he trusted the Lord of glory. The same was true, of course, of Isaac. And now we see how Jacob renamed Israel by Almighty God was humbled often under that same mighty hand and how in the course of his life God had revealed himself to him in ways that he could not ignore.

At the end of his life his testimony was powerful. May it be so for each of us as well.

Amen.