

BIBLE STUDY LESSON: 10 PEOPLE IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Jacob

- Gen. 28:13-14 And there was Jehovah, standing above it; and He said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, I will give to you and to your seed. And your seed will be as the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.
- Rom. 9:11 Though *the children* had not yet been born nor had done anything good or bad (that the purpose of God according to selection might remain, not of works but of Him who calls).

I. ONE WHO INHERITED GOD'S PROMISE

- A. On the way during his escape to his uncle Laban's, Jacob slept on a stone, which he took for a pillow, and dreamed about a ladder set up on the earth, with God at the top of the ladder, saying, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac...and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 28:10-14)
- The promise that all the families of the earth would be blessed was given first to Abraham and then to Isaac; here, it was mentioned to Jacob
 - God gave Jacob this promise so that the promise given to Abraham and to Isaac might be established and continued in him
- B. Jacob was one who inherited the promise, and all his descendants also were descendants who received the promise (Rom. 9:4)

II. SYMBOLIZING ONE WHO IS CHOSEN BY GOD

- A. Jacob was Esau's twin brother
- Struggled with Esau while they were yet in their mother's womb (Gen. 25:22)
 - When the time of delivery came, the two fought to be born first in order to obtain the birthright
 - Jacob, who was the loser in the struggle, held on to the heel of the winner, Esau (Gen. 25:24-26)
- B. Even before they were born, God had already told their mother that the elder would serve the younger. (Gen. 25:23) This signifies that God had chosen:
- Jacob, who was born second, to be the firstborn son
 - Esau, who was born first had failed to obtain the birthright
- C. When the two were not yet born, before they had done anything good or bad, God chose Jacob, that the purpose of God according to selection might remain, not of works, but of Him who calls (Rom. 9:11)
- D. Jacob symbolizes one who is chosen by God

III. SYMBOLIZING ONE WHO HAS BEEN REGENERATED AND TRANSFORMED

In Jacob we see one who struggled, one who was a heel holder, a subtle and greedy one, yet one who, under God's dealing, was ultimately transformed into Israel, God's prince.

IV. BY THE SUFFERINGS IN HIS CIRCUMSTANCES

- A. Jacob was born the second, having lost to his brother the struggle in his mother's womb
- B. He continually tried to supplant his brother in order to grasp the birthright
- C. When he seized Esau's birthright and the blessing of his father through deception, Esau hated him and wanted to kill him
- D. He then had to leave his parents and escape to Laban his uncle
- E. At Laban's place, Jacob was deceived by Laban
- Served Laban fourteen years for Laban's two daughters and six years for his cattle
 - Laban changed his wages ten times
- F. In the day Jacob was consumed by drought, and in the night by frost, and sleep departed from his eyes (Gen. 31:40-41)

- G. The competing, envying, and wrestling between his two wives, Leah and Rachel, in childbearing (Gen. 29:31—30:24) put him in a predicament
- H. When he returned to Shechem in Canaan, his only daughter, Dinah, was defiled by Shechem, son of Hamor the Hivite, and Jacob's sons plotted to get revenge
 - a. First, his sons Simeon and Levi killed Hamor and Shechem and all the men of the city
 - b. Other sons came and spoiled the city
 - c. Causing Jacob to be frightened and troubled (Gen. 34) and to have no peace
- I. After this, his beloved wife, Rachel, died while giving birth to his youngest son, Benjamin (Gen. 35:16-20)
- J. His concubine was defiled by Reuben, his oldest son (Gen. 35:22)
- K. He was deceived by his sons to think that his most beloved son, Joseph, had been devoured by wild beasts (cf. Gen. 37)
- L. All the sufferings in his circumstances were used by God to deal with Jacob from all sides that he might be transformed

V. BY GOD'S DIRECT DEALING

- A. Jacob's transformation was accomplished also by God's direct dealing
 - a. At Penuel, God in the form of a man wrestled with Jacob until dawn
 - i. God did this to expose Jacob's natural life
 - b. God touched the hollow of his thigh, and he became lame (Gen. 32:22-32)
 - i. Signifies that throughout Jacob's life he was struggling with God
 - c. Finally, in the matter of Joseph's being sold, Jacob was brought by God to a place where he no longer had any strength
 - i. Had become lame
- B. He understood God's dealing, and matured in life to become Israel
 - a. *El* in the name Israel means "God." God gave Jacob this name to signify that he had experienced God's dealing and had reached maturity
 - b. He was God's overcomer, God's prince
 - c. He was full of God's element and became God's expression
- C. Therefore, he symbolizes one who has been regenerated and transformed

VI. SYMBOLIZING ONE WHO CAN BLESS PEOPLE ON GOD'S BEHALF

- A. After Jacob had become mature in life, God accompanied him to Egypt (Gen. 46:4a)
- B. According to the record in the Bible, there he did nothing but bless others
 - a. First, he blessed Pharaoh
 - b. Later, he blessed each of his own sons

VII. KNOWING THE DESIRE OF GOD'S HEART

- A. In contrast to Isaac, Jacob did not bless blindly
 - a. His sky was clear and he knew the desire of God's heart
- B. Joseph brought his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to Jacob that he might bless them
 - a. He led his older son, Manasseh, toward Jacob's right hand and his younger son, Ephraim, toward Jacob's left hand, expecting that Jacob would place his right hand on Manasseh's head and his left hand on Ephraim's head
 - b. However, when Jacob stretched forth his hands to bless them, he crossed his hands
 - c. Joseph was displeased and lifted up Jacob's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head and place it on Manasseh's head
 - d. But Jacob refused and said, "I know it, my son, I know it" (Gen. 48:8-20)
 - i. Although Jacob's eyes were dim with age, his spirit was clear
 - e. He knew that God's desire was to place Ephraim above Manasseh
- C. Therefore, he did not bless according to Joseph's arrangement but according to the desire of God's heart

VIII. THE BLESSINGS BECOMING PROPHECIES

- A. Jacob's blessings became prophecies
 - a. His blessings were shining with light and fit in with God's purpose

- b. The blessings he gave to his sons became God's prophecies to them
- B. All that is recorded in the Bible from Exodus to Revelation constitutes the accomplishing and the fulfilling of the prophecies in Jacob's blessing

IX. SIGNIFYING THE STAGE OF MATURITY IN THE LIFE OF A COMPLETE, SPIRITUAL MAN

- A. In his old age, when Jacob heard the Joseph had been made governor in Egypt, his reactions were twofold: "his heart was numb" and "his spirit revived" (Gen. 45:26-27, lit.)
 - a. His soul-life had already become dead, and his spirit and soul could be divided
 - b. When he arrived in Egypt, he did not demand anything; he only blessed others
 - c. Thus, Jacob in his old age signifies the stage of maturity in the life of a complete, spiritual man
- B. In this respect, Jacob is:
 - a. Unlike Abraham, who signify only the initial stage of the experience
 - b. Unlike Isaac, who signify the life of a spiritually mature person,
 - c. He signifies the maturity of a spiritual person

Focus: Jacob was chosen by God, as the direct inheritor of God's promise originally given to Abraham. Jacob was transformed through his earthly circumstances and under God's direct dealings. As a result of this transformation, he was able to bless abundantly, in line with God's heart. As a picture of the Christian life, Jacob signifies the maturation of the life of faith, through the discipline and perfecting of God's sovereignty.