

ONE in the word

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me (Jesus).” (John 5:39)

January 13

TODAY’S READING: Genesis 28-31

OVERVIEW: Isaac confers the Abrahamic covenant upon Jacob; the vision of Jacob’s ladder; Jacob’s journey to Haran; Jacob’s marriages to Leah and Rachel; Laban’s jealousy; Jacob flees.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS: The remainder of the Book of Genesis focuses primarily on Jacob. Joseph will most certainly be spotlighted, but his story is actually contained within the context of the account of Jacob’s life.

The name Jacob means “supplanter” (i.e. deceiver, schemer, and conniver). As we have already seen in chapters 25 and 27, he more than lived up to his name. Jacob is a graphic picture of the worldly/fleshly believer who trusts the arm of the flesh to provide what God, in many cases, is more than willing and fully intending to provide by His own hand. For example, what Jacob’s mother deviously schemed and Jacob deceitfully carried out in order to obtain the firstborn blessing from Isaac in chapter 27 was totally unnecessary, because God had already determined and had already clearly revealed to Rebekah that the firstborn blessing was to be Jacob’s when Jacob and Esau were yet in her womb (25:20-23). We do not know *how* God would have accomplished bestowing the blessing upon Jacob since it appears that Isaac was intending to be willfully disobedient to God’s word by giving the blessing to Esau, but God most certainly could and would have been able to pull it off without Rebekah and Jacob’s deception and dishonesty. When God reveals something to us it is for the purpose of preparing us – *not* for us to act upon to bring it about. We are to just sit back, watch, and enjoy the amazing “ride!”

As we have already seen through the first half of the Book of Genesis, and will continue to see in the midst of our journey through the remainder of the word of God, there are always painful consequences to sin. Although Jacob received the “blessing” from Isaac in chapter 27, his deception in obtaining it brought “cursing” (conflict) upon him. For example:

- ← Esau wanted and intended to kill him, causing Jacob to run in fear for the next twenty years.
- ← Once he left his home in chapter 28 in his attempt to flee from Esau he never saw his beloved mother again.

- ← He was deceived by his uncle Laban. (The “supplanter” was “supplanted;” the “conniver” was “connived.” i.e. He reaped what he sowed.)
- ← His family life was riddled with conflict (Proverbs 11:29 “He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind.”) Beware!

As Jacob leaves his home in chapter 28 on his way to Haran, he comes to Bethel. As he lies down to get some rest from the long journey, he uses a stone as a pillow and has a very unusual but very significant dream... the infamous “Jacob’s ladder.” The dream verified that God was going to give Jacob **by His Spirit**, what Jacob was striving so tenaciously to gain **by his own flesh**. This is the great temptation for all of us if and when God should reveal something to us. Jacob was the one to whom God intended to establish the Abrahamic Covenant all along.

In chapter 29, Jacob “the deceiver” becomes “the deceived” by his own father-in-law Laban and thus the statement, *“what goes around comes around!”* By the time chapter 29 ends, Jacob has two wives and in chapter 30 he falls prey to “the sins of the fathers” in great Abrahamic fashion, taking the handmaid of each of his wives through which to have children. The result, as can be imagined, is great conflict, and yet it is through Jacob’s relationship with these four women, his 12 sons were born and through whom God established the 12 tribes of Israel.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

- In JACOB’S LADDER – Genesis 28:11-13a

Note: Genesis 28:11-12 foreshadows that the promises would culminate in something that would bridge heaven and earth. In John 1:43-51, Jesus identifies Himself as the Ladder. He is the One who opens heaven for us and brings heaven’s blessing to our lives. He alone is the One who can bring us to the Father.

- In the BIRTH OF JOSEPH – Genesis 30:23-24 (Genesis 50:20; Matthew 1:21; 1 Timothy 1:15; John 3:16)

Note: Joseph was born into the world to save and preserve his people.

- As the ANGEL OF GOD – Genesis 31:11