

Jacob

by Eric Hughes

The sermon explores Jacob's life, emphasizing his struggles, deceit, and ultimate transformation into Israel as a reflection of God's sovereignty and the importance of spiritual integrity.

Duration: 53:29

Scripture: Genesis 28:16-22, Galatians 6:7

Topics: "Jacob"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the life of Jacob and how he didn't have a good start but finished well. The sermon emphasizes the principle of sowing and reaping, stating that what a man sows, he reaps. Jacob's life is examined through the four pillars he erected along his journey. The preacher also contrasts Jacob with Isaac, highlighting how Isaac had a good start but didn't finish well. The sermon encourages listeners to strive to finish well in their own lives.

Transcript

Now, you know this evening that we're thinking about Jacob, and we want to read first in chapter number 25 of the book of Genesis, chapter number 25, and down at verse number 19. These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son, Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel, the Syrian, of Padan-Aram, the sister to Laban, the Syrian. And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife because she was barren.

And the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her, and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels.

The one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger. And when her days were fulfilled to be delivered, behold, there were twins in her womb. The first came, red all over like a hairy garment, and they called his name Esau.

And after that came his brother, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel, and his name was called Jacob. And Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them. And the boys grew, and Esau was a cunning hunter, and a man of the field, and Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents.

And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison, but Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob sought pottage, and Esau came in from the field, and he was faint. 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. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die, what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day.

And he swore unto him, and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 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.

Now over please to chapter number 28. Chapter number 28. Verse 10.

And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went towards Haran, lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set. He took the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed.

And, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And, behold, an angel, the angels of God, ascending and descending on it. And, behold, a lawn stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, the God of Isaac, the land whereon thou liest.

To thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in thee and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed.

And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all the places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land. And I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob wakened out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place.

And I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God. This is the gate of heaven.

And Jacob rose up 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 it, on the top of it. And he called the name of the place Bethel, but the name of the city was called Lazardfest. 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, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house.

And all that thou givest me, I surely give thee a tenth unto thee. Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. Or a better translation would be, Then Jacob lifted up his feet.

Now, over to chapter 31, please. Chapter number 31. I think we can just move in at verse 43.

And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, Thee daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle. And all that thou seest is mine, and what can I do this day unto thee, my daughters, or unto their children which they have borne? Now therefore, come thou. Let us make a covenant, an eye and thou, and let it be a witness between me and thee.

And Jacob took a stone, and set it for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones. And they took stones, and made a heap, and they did eat there upon the heap.

And Laban called it Jerga Shaduthah, but Jacob called it Galid. And Laban said, This heap of witness between me and thee this day, therefore, was the name of it called Galid. For he said, The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another.

And then a little further on in the book, please, if you just come over to chapter number 35. Verse 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, my brother. Now, a little down in the chapter, if you come down to verse number 8. For Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak, and the name of it was called Alanbacchus.

And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob, thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name. And he called his name Israel.

And God said unto him, I am the God Almighty, be fruitful and multiply a nation, and a nation shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins. 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. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.

And Jacob set up a pillar in that place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone. And he poured drink offerings thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel.

And finally just down to verse number 19. And Rachel died and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. Sorry, Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.

And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave, that is a pillar of Rachel's grave, unto this day. And Israel journeyed and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edah. And God will bless to us that rather lengthy reading of his own precious word tonight.

Now, we want to go back to chapter number 25. And that is where we'll start tonight to think about Jacob. Now, you would understand that it's a very large section of the word of God that is given over to the life of Jacob.

And as we look at it, you'll find that Jacob is in chapter 26 and right on really to chapter 49. And then you'll read of him in the book of Exodus, you'll read of him in Leviticus, in Numbers, in Deuteronomy. You'll find him in Joshua and 1st and 2nd Samuel.

You'll read of him in the book of Kings and Chronicles and in the book of the Psalms. You'll go on to read of him, his name is in Isaiah and in Jeremiah. And in Lamentations and Ezekiel and Hosea and Amos.

And again you'll find that Obadiah, Micah and Nahum and Malachi all have Jacob's name in them one way or another. You'll read of him in Matthew, Mark and Luke and John. And in Acts and in Romans and in the epistle to the Hebrews.

The first mention of Jacob is where we began to read tonight in chapter number 21. And the last mention of his name is in Hebrews in chapter 11. The first mention is his birth and the last mention is his death.

And so you have this large section of the word of God given over to this man Jacob. So we couldn't hope to touch the very fringe of those things tonight. So you'll notice that I've read to you about his birth and then I've read to you the four pillars that he erected along his life's journey.

And it's really around those that we want to weave the ministry tonight so that you'll be able to remember the things that we want to impress upon you. So the life of Jacob is really very, very large. But you remember that we thought about the four altars which Abraham erected.

And we thought about the four wells that Isaac was associated with. And now we've looked and read of four pillars that were erected in the life of Jacob. Chapter 25 is birth.

And in that same chapter you have the birthright. And then of course in chapter 27 you have the blessing. And really what's associated with Jacob is birthright and blessing.

And he's a picture of a servant really when you look into the life of Jacob. He is God's servant. And as you look at him you will find that he is very typical of the nation of Israel.

You remember in regard to Jacob that he commences in the land and then he goes out of the land for 20 years and then he comes back into the land again. In the land he's marked by deceit and bargaining and all that kind of thing. And there doesn't seem to be anything spiritual about the man at all.

But then when you find him away from home he's just a sojourner. And he's moving in a strange country. And of course it's just like the Jew who today is just wandering as a stranger in this very world.

And then of course when he comes back again as we read in our final reading tonight you find he comes back and he comes into blessing. And really the Jew will be just like that. They were in the land when the Savior came.

They are out of the land in a sense. They're wandering all over the world today. I know the nation has been established but they're really out of the land.

The whole of the land will be emptied again won't it in the great tribulation before ever the kingdom is set up. And they'll be brought back into the land for blessing. So you could look at the life of Jacob from that standpoint and link it on with Romans 9, 10 and 11.

And there you will find the outline of a dispensational outline of the history of the Jewish nation. And Jacob is really typical of the Jew. But we don't want to think along that line too much tonight.

We want to think more in a practical way. And as we look at Jacob you'll find that he didn't have a very good start. He didn't have a very good beginning.

He didn't start well but he finished well. And that's a great thing about Jacob. He didn't start so well but he finished well.

You remember when we were thinking about Isaac on the last occasion last month that he is a man who had everything to start well but he didn't finish well. You remember there was 40 years of his life which goes into exclusion and you don't read anything about him. And you find really that once he begins to talk

about the blessing and his eyes being dim and he's got thoughts of dying.

Really he's a man who's prematurely aged in a sense. And thinking of death prematurely. He lived for a lot longer Isaac.

After that he gave the blessing to Jacob. But he thought that he was about to die. And he thought life was finished.

And yet he had many years yet to live. And you know sometimes saints are like that. You know you say to one brother about another what happened? Well he seemed to lose the will to go on with the thing.

And you know there's a danger of prematurely aging. And prematurely laying down the weapons of our warfare. And giving up on things.

And there's a danger of that. So we must be careful that we don't give up but we go on faithfully for God. And finish well like Jacob did.

Now you notice divine sovereignty here that God takes away the first to establish the second. When his mother found that she was in difficulty in regard to the children that she was carrying. She went into the presence of God.

And she inquired of the Lord. And the Lord in sovereignty tells her that the elder was going to serve the younger. And he was going to take away the first and establish the second.

And you find that of course as you come through your Old Testament. You'll find the sovereignty of God. You remember it's not Cain but Abel.

And then again you find that it's not Ishmael but Isaac. And now it's not Esau but Jacob. The elder shall serve the younger.

And as you go down that passage that we read together in chapter number 27. You'll find that rather chapter 25. That it's really a picture of the flesh and the spirit.

You find that in regard to Esau he was a man of the flesh. And Jacob really is a man of the spirit. He's not showing those characteristics.

But he's a man who have designs upon the blessing. And he's a man who coveted the blessing. Even though he went about the thing so often in a wrong way.

But nevertheless he wanted the thing. You find it here that immediately he was born. He's grasping the heel of his brother.

And you recall that that was what Jacob was like. He was one who would grasp every opportunity. And Esau is really the man who loved hunting it says.

And he loved savory meat and so on. And Isaac loved Esau because of his savory meat. And Isaac really is marked by the flesh as well.

But you find that Rebekah loved Jacob. And she had an answer from God. And she knew that the younger was to be the prominent one.

And the only unfortunate part about that was having received the mind of God upon the matter she thought that God needed help in bringing about his own purpose. And you know sometimes we're like that. We think God needs a helping hand.

But God doesn't need any helping hand in regard to his purpose. You see God could have brought about the thing on his own without her interfering. And you remember that as a result of her thinking that Isaac was going to give the blessing to the older son when he told him to bring in venison.

And she thought that that was not going to bring about the purpose of God. And she intervened. And you remember there's lies and there's deceit.

And there's all sorts of problems arise because of her interference. But she didn't have to do that. God could have brought about his purpose himself.

You remember later on when Jacob's going to bless the sons of Joseph. And you remember that Joseph brings them in and he puts the old eldest to the right hand so he gets the blessing and the younger to the left hand. But you remember in divine sovereignty Jacob crosses his hands and Joseph tries to uncross their hands.

And he says not so my son. And he gives the blessing. And the younger gets the blessing you remember.

But God overruled. And there was no need. No need at all.

For Raham when she hid the messengers on the roof to tell lies about it. You see she told a lie but she didn't have to do that. You see the very God of heaven could have blinded the eyes of those men.

And would never have found them under the flax on the roof. But she spoiled the thing by telling a lie. She thought she was going to have to help God out in his purposes.

And that's what happened here. And you remember as you read down the chapter after the birth and after the blessing or the birthright here's the character of these two men coming out in chapter 25 you remember that Jacob has sowed pottage this red lentils and as Esau comes into the field he says give me of that pottage. And Jacob seizes the opportunity to sell me a birthright.

And he says what is the use of the birthright to me? I'm about to die. He wasn't about to die at all. He's going to live for many years.

He says I'm about to die. What use is it to me? And you see he was a man of natural tendencies. And he was a man of the flesh.

And he went according to the sense of his smell. He could smell the pottage. And he could only see what was near.

He looked at the pottage. That's all he wanted. He was hungry.

He wanted to satisfy his hunger. And that's all that mattered at that point. And Jacob sees the opportunity.

And he says well sell me a birthright. And he says what use is a birthright to me? And we've read here today in chapter 34 and the Hebrew epistle takes it up doesn't it? In verse 34 rather that he despised his birthright. And when later on of course he realized what had happened and what he had done it says that

he with crying and tears he wanted to reverse the issue but it couldn't be reversed.

And the blessing eventually as well as the birthright had gone to Jacob. You see he was a man who went by his senses and went by the things he could see. And he only had time for that which was present.

He had no time for the future. And we often preach the gospel from this but you know saints are like that sometimes. Saints can despise their birthright.

And saints can despise their blessing. Simply because they want to have a hold of that which is near. That which satisfies their senses and their feelings and their flesh.

And sometimes they allow those things to override what is spiritual. And because of that they lose a tremendous blessing. And they lose so often the blessing of God upon their life.

You see sometimes God gives us what we want and it's to our detriment. And so here's a man now who despised his birthright. But then when you come over to the chapter when here where Isaac is eyes are dim in chapter 27 and it came to pass when Isaac was old and his eyes were dim they could not see.

You remember the scene I'll have to trade upon your knowledge. But you remember that Esau has gone away hunting to get the venison to bring it back to make the savory meat and to get the father's blessing as the firstborn. But you remember that Rebecca hears about this and she knows what's happening and she gets her son and she dresses him up in Esau's garments.

She takes the flesh or rather the fur from the animal that had just been slain. She makes the savory meat. She knew what her husband liked.

And with the fur of the animal she puts it around his neck and upon his hands and he goes in before his father. You remember that when he goes in the father said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he says, I am. And right away he tells a lie.

And of course he then not only tells a lie but then he says, how is it that you've got the venison so soon? He says, God brought it to me. And he involved the name of God in his deceit and his lie. And his mother was insisting him, she says, the onus of the thing is upon me, you just go and do it.

And oh how sad. You see one lie leads to another. And that's got to be covered up.

And then he says, God brought it to me. And then he says, the blind father, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. And he confirmed the thing.

And he said, come near to me. And he smelled the smell of his raiment. And he said a remarkable thing.

I want you to get this. He says, the voice is the voice of Jacob but the hands are the hands of Esau. And the hands and the voice of Jacob did not agree as he stood before his father.

And his life was a life of deception and lies. And there's a danger sometimes that our hand and our voice doesn't agree. You see, if the hand and voice doesn't agree, it's better to say nothing.

You see, the Bible teaches us is that we are to live the thing before we preach the thing. And you've got to live it before you speak it. And that's an important lesson to learn in that chapter, though it's not a particular chapter before us tonight.

But you'll learn that lesson there. The hands are the hands of Esau, the voice of Jacob. And the hand and voice did not agree.

And of course you know as you go through the life and as we'll see tonight, in a few moments of the hours, that what a man sows, he reaps. And if you sow to the flesh, you love the flesh, reap corruption. If you sow to the spirit, to the spirit, you shall reap life everlasting.

And there's a divine principle that holds good in the lives of the unsaved as well as the saved. What a man sows, he reaps. Now, when we come to the end of that chapter, we find that as a result of his lies and the result of his deceit, and this deception, there's murder in the heart of his brother.

His brother's going to kill him when he realizes what's happened. And so, the mother intervenes and says, now, you'd better go away for a short while. And you go to your Uncle Laban's and there you'll find a wife and so on.

And so away he goes. And he goes on his journey. And, uh, you know, he didn't realize it.

The mother said, only be for a short while. But when he left home that day, he would never see his mother again. The last time that he saw his mother when he left home.

And then we come over to chapter number 28. And as we come to chapter 28, we find where Jacob raises his first pillar. And here he is, a man who's away from home.

He's a fugitive. And, uh, he's going to be away for 20 years. And he's going out now.

And he's leaving the land. And he's left his home. And he's going out into the school of God.

And God is going to teach Jacob. And God is going to discipline him. But when he's at his first night away from home here in chapter 28, you'll find in 10 to 15 that Jacob lies down to sleep.

And then in verses 16 to 22, Jacob is awake. Now, notice the beholds in the chapter. I can only point these things out to you.

I won't be able to enlarge upon them. But you can build the sermons around them anyhow. Notice that there are four important beholds.

Been pointed out to you before I'm sure. Verse number 12, behold the ladder. And then again verse 12, behold the angels.

And then verse number 13, and behold the lawn stood above it. And then notice verse number 15, behold I am with you. Behold the ladder.

Behold the angels ascending, descending and ascending. Behold the lawn. Behold I am with you.

And then notice that there is the vision and there's a voice and there's a vow in this chapter. The vision he had, the voice that he had, and the vow that he makes. As you look a little closer to that, you'll find that it says here that God is the God Almighty.

And God Almighty is El Shaddai. He's the one of the source of strength and every grace. And El is God.

Shaddai is the all-bountiful. And Jacob finds God to be the all-bountiful God. The one who'll be able to supply all his needs.

Behold a ladder. As he sleeps, he sees this ladder between earth and heaven. And he sees that there's a connection, a connecting thing that connected heaven with earth.

A ladder connecting two places, heaven and earth. And really, that was a stairway in a sense, between heaven and earth. And you remember that in regard to that matter when the Lord Jesus is speaking to Nathanael in John's Gospel in chapter 1. He says, When I was under the fig tree, I saw thee.

And Nathanael confesses that the Lord Jesus is the King of Israel. And he says, What if thou shalt see angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man? And really, Jacob is getting a vision here, I take it, of what was going to be in the future when heaven and earth were going to be linked. And God was going to link heaven and earth.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And here was a link between heaven and earth. And that's impressed upon the mind of Jacob at the beginning.

Then he says, Behold the angels. That's the care of heaven. Behold the ladder is the communication between heaven and earth.

Behold an angel is the care of heaven. And here is angels ascending and descending. And these angels, of course, are those who would take care of Jacob.

Angels in the Old Testament are very interesting. And they're there to help and to guide and to direct the people of God. And then behold the Lord Jehovah.

Covenant relationship here. And he says to him, Behold the Lord and covenant relationship. And he says to Isaac, The Lord God of Abraham, the Father God of Isaac, the land thereon thou liest, I will give it to thee.

And here's the promise of the land now, you see. It's the covenant God. Behold the Lord, the Lord Jehovah.

Covenant relationship. And the land is given. And not only the land, but in verse 14, the seed.

So the land and the seed are promised to Jacob. See how the picture comes to the surface now, of Jacob being a picture of the nation. And God is promising these things, you see, to Jacob.

So it's behold the ladder, behold the angels, behold the law. And then he says, Behold, I am with thee. Behold, I am with thee.

And you need to note here in these verses the 13 to 15, the I shall, shalls and I wills. And there's a constant repetition of shall and I will. Let's read it together.

Verse number 13. Behold the Lord stood above it. I am the Lord God of thy father Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

The land whereon thou liest, I will give it. And so there's verse number 13 tells us that he's the Lord. I am the Lord God.

That's the person. 13 and 14 is the provision. I will give it to thee.

And here's God promising to provide and give the land. Verse 15. I am with thee.

Here's his presence now. A promise to Jacob of his presence. So there's his person.

I am the Lord. There's his provision. I will give thee.

There's his presence. I am with thee. And then again in verse 15 is protection.

I will keep thee. And so here's the protection of God upon the life of this man. And then in verse 15 again, the preservation of God.

I will bring thee. He'll not only protect thee, but he'll preserve thee. He'll bring thee back again, says God to Jacob.

And then not only his preservation, but his promise in verse 15 again. I will not leave thee. I will not leave thee.

And then of course verse 15 again is purpose. Till I have done. Till I have done the thing.

And so here we are. The person, the Lord, the provision, the presence of God, the protection of God, the preservation of God, the promise of God, the purpose of God are all given in this dream as Jacob's lying there. Notice that he speaks to Jacob about the dust and the sand, but no stars.

You remember to Abraham he said the dust and the sand and the stars, but to Jacob just dust and sand, no stars. You see it's all in relation to the coming kingdom blessing that's going to come to the Jewish nation in the coming day. Now these are all unconditional promises.

Remember that. It's a good thing to face up the amillennialists with this. You see these are unconditional promises and they're all the promises on God's path that is to say.

And God will fulfill them. And God has never extended them. They've never been abrogated.

The promises remain and they will come to pass. And you remember that great statement in verse 16 I will not leave thee until he had completed his purpose. And you know how that through the Bible that promise is reiterated.

It's spoken of in Deuteronomy as the people are journeying. God makes the same promise. He makes the same promise to Joshua in chapter 1 verse 5. And to Solomon in the building of the temple you remember in 1st Chronicles 28.

And he says to us again, the final mention of it is in Hebrews 13 in regard to daily provision. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Now that's one of the verses, perhaps the only verse in the Bible I think, which you can read both ways.

I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Thee forsake nor thee leave never will I. And so it's a promise of God that can be read either way. And it means the same.

And God made that promise right down through the Old Testament. And it's in the New Testament for us tonight. 16 to 22 Jacob awakes.

And as he awakes he says this is Bethel, the house of God, the place of the divine presence. Now the house of God is the place of the divine presence. And that's still the same today.

This is an embryo here. Here's a picture of the house of God. And Jacob said it's marked by the divine presence.

It's his dwelling. It's the house of God. It's God's dwelling place.

And it's the place where the divine presence is. And you see even a little room like this when the assemblies gather together it's God's dwelling place. And it's also the place of the divine presence.

We can claim that. Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them. And then of course we find that it says it's the gate of heaven.

So it's not only the house of God where God dwells. It's not only the place of divine presence but it says it's the gate of heaven. What's the gate of heaven? Well that's divine administration.

It's the place of divine administration. It's the place where divine order is. The gates in the Old Testament always spoke of administration.

We haven't time to think about the different instances like Boaz going up to the gate you see. The place of administration. The gate of heaven.

And it's the place of testimony. He anoints the pillar there. And he pours the oil upon it.

So we've got a divine dwelling. Divine presence. Divine administration.

And a divine testimony. As Jacob makes then tremendous statements at the end of this chapter. And then it says that he rose up.

He lifted up his feet and he went on his way. Now in this chapter Jacob is able to appreciate certain truths about the house of God but he's not morally suited to it. That's the problem with him here.

He's not morally suited to it. And there are many people who appreciate the doctrines of Scripture and the doctrines of the house of God but they're not morally suited to it. And that was Jacob here.

He was not morally suited to the house. You notice at the end he couldn't rise any higher really after all of this than food and raiment. Verse 20.

Jacob vowed a vow saying if God will be with me and then notice it's I, I, I. I go and I will give he says so that I come again and he constantly is reiterating things about himself. He does not rise any higher than his own blessing and he's not morally suited to the house. He felt completely out of place.

He said this is a fearful place. This is a dreadful place. And he felt completely out of place at that point.

Now let us move on and look on the next section where we thought about his second pillar and you'll notice that in this second pillar it's the point where he has been in the house of Laban. You notice how that he travels 400 miles and he gets to the very spot and he's standing by the well and God has brought him to the very spot and he's at the very well and they said do you know anything about Laban and he said well yes we know him and they're all waiting for the stone to be removed from the well's mouth and just at that point you remember that Rachel comes down and immediately he is brought into contact and he falls

in love with that woman and she makes known the thing to Laban and he goes into the house and as he comes into the house you remember that he's moving into the school of God and he comes into the place where the discipline of God is going to be upon him now you remember that when Laban in chapter 24 and verses 29 and 30 saw the bracelets and all these riches and treasures that had come from the household his eyes opened and he was very interested in what was going on and what he would receive of that and you see he's a man who was a very crafty person and a man who bargained and Jacob was the same and now in these chapters you find that here are two men two giants meeting in the arena and you've got Jacob the man who of deception and the man who's crafty and the man who can drive a bargain and then of course you've got Laban in the same situation and here they are they're going to battle it out and put their wits against one against the other but you see it's really God that's overruling and Jacob is in the school of God and he's going to be under the discipline of God and discipline in the scriptures is formative, God disciplines us in order to form Christ in us and it's also educative says the Hebrew epistle we can be educated by discipline and Jacob was educated by discipline it can also be punitive and we can reap what we sow and so here we find Jacob and Laban the two great giants and they're going to battle it out and the first question is in verse 15 what shall thy wages be? what shall thy wages be? says Laban well seven years for Rachel and the bargain was struck and the trap was set and he was to labour for seven years and at the end of the seven years you remember that the great feasting took place at night, the wedding took place and in the morning when he wakes he finds that it's not the bride that he expected, it's not Rachel and of course you remember how hurt he was and how wounded he was and what a difficult thing it must have been for Jacob to realize but what has happened here?

Here's Laban now showing to Jacob that great principle that the situation of the firstborn has got to be honoured he should have honoured the firstborn and he didn't do you remember he took and robbed the firstborn and now he's been taught a lesson here and Esau was made to feel or rather he was made to feel as Esau must have felt when he was robbed of his blessing and he was made to feel also what his father must have felt as he realized he blessed the wrong man and he has also had to realize how God feels when his people deceive and lie and cheat and the Pharaoh on his hands and you know deceiving with the kid and with the coat and you remember that these things come back to him and he learns that the way of the transgressor is hard and the way of the transgressor is still hard, we sow what we reap.

You remember that Pharaoh decreed that all the boys that were under a certain age were to be thrown in the Nile but you remember too that at the end of his history that that man perished in the Red Sea with his soldiers you see the very thing that he meted out fell upon him, all the males died in the Red Sea, you remember Adonai Bezek was a great man and the awful punishment that he inflicted upon the kings as he cut off their thumbs and their right toes and they all ate under his table but you remember that when Judah went to war with him and captured him in the book of Judges chapter 1 the very thing that he had did to the captains of the armies of others was done to him, his thumbs were cut off and his toes were cut off and he had the same thing you see he reaped what he sow you

remember the book of Esther that Haman is the man who built the gallows and he was going to hang Mordecai upon it but you remember he was hung on his own baton the very scaffold he erected for another was the very thing that he died upon, you see the principle what a man sows he reaps Naboth, you remember the vineyard of Naboth and you remember how Jezebel said that she would get it and you remember as a result there was the death of Naboth and you remember that the dogs licked the blood but as you turn over the next chapter you find the very same thing happens in regard to Ahab that the dogs lick his blood you see these are divine principles and God has said in his word what a man sows he will

reap and all of these things came home to Jacob in these chapters and he's in the school of God

and he's being disciplined and he's learning the hard way and God is moulding his servant but over against all of that you see not only is he a good servant but he's a good shepherd too and he can give an account of his work as a shepherd and I would like you just to catch this in the closing moments of our meeting tonight when he escapes you remember and leaves Laban's household at the end of his service there and he's going to run away you remember that Laban had gone to shear the sheep and he decides that he's going to move off with all his household and so on and then eventually Laban overtakes him now there's an important lessons in these chapters that I wouldn't like you to miss because number one is divine guidance you'll find in chapter 31 and there are three principles here that

we must have if we would know the guidance of God if you're going to make a move any serious move you go in any particular direction you've got to have these things before you I was once in Newcastle and the brother took us down to the harbour and I think it was Newcastle anyhow and he said you see these lights here well when the ship's out at sea and there's a gale blowing and it's very difficult to make the harbour if they get these lights in line they go straight in follow those lights once they're in line and you follow them they're into the harbour safely and there's three lights here that you must get in line one was in the early part of the chapter you'll find that he found that the countenance of Laban was not towards him and his sons anymore and you find that things have changed,

circumstances have changed and his wages have been changed and all that kind of thing and the circumstances are very serious and it's making him think that it's now time to move and you get that don't you? the circumstances begin to point to you and you say I should get out of this I must move from here but then the second thing was that God appeared to him and God spoke to him and God indicated to him that he should move so the second thing was the voice of God so the first thing is the circumstances the second thing alongside of it must link up and dovetail is the word of God we must have the word of God for what we do and then of course he has a family council you remember and he lays the matter before his family and you remember they all acquiesced and they said what you want to do

you do we realise that that's the situation you carry on and so in the harmony of his own household the people with him now when those three things are in line you can go forward quite satisfied that this is the mind of God for you but if one of these things are absent then I would question whether you should make that move but let us look now as Laban hears about what's happened and as he does so he makes his journey and overtakes them and he comes upon him and you remember that they had a discussion and he's asking him why he's done all of this thing and you remember that it got rather heated and in verse 36 we find that Jacob's temper snaps and he says he was very rough and he chod with Laban and he has an argument with Laban but in his argument with Laban in chapter 31 you find that

there's some very great principles come out in regard to his shepherding and his care for the flock of God notice what he says here now he says in chapter 31 and verse 36 his responsibility as a shepherd in verse 38 he says this twenty years have I been with thee the ewes and the she-goats have not cast their young and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten why did they not cast their young because he gave everyone individual attention he was a good shepherd and he saw that he gave individual attention to every sheep and he cared for that, he looked after it and you think of what it must have meant as a sheep, a lambing how difficult it would be but he did that he gave the individual attention and he saw that the ewes did not cast their young and then he says the rams have I not eaten you

see that was his right that was his lot it was the right of the shepherd to be able to feed from the rams but he wouldn't have that he was sacrificial in his self-denial as a shepherd and so he was a man who cared for every individual of the flock he was a man who would not have his rightful lot he was marked by self-denial and then in verse 39 he says the torn of the beast torn of beast he says I have not brought to thee he says I have taken full responsibility for that you remember in the book of Amos it says in chapter 3 that a shepherd would take out of the mouth of the lion a leg or a piece of an ear, why would he do that risk his life to take the leg or the ear from the mouth of a lion simply to present to his master to show to him that it was not his fault that the thing was lost

and so that he would not lose his remuneration, his wages and so says Jacob I didn't do that he says I bear the loss of that you see he was sacrificial and he was prepared to take full responsibility for anything that was lost you know we could do as shepherds like that today couldn't we, giving the flock individual attention you know caring for each saint and then again refusing our right and to work sacrificially you know Paul says in the Corinthian epistle though it was his right like Peter to lead about a wife and to take a wage and to get remuneration he says I haven't done that he forewent that in order to conserve them and you know we should be prepared to be sacrificial in that way and then to take full responsibility for the saints and then again he says in verse 40 that there

was the frost the drought of the day and the frost of the night he endured these extreme hardships in the day and the night in the very night he says the sleep departed from my eyes physical endurance he went to no end of difficulty physically to look after the flock and then of course he says materially I suffered because you've changed my wages ten times and he was prepared for that and at verse 55 it shows to us that he rose up in the morning and he gathered all the flock and went on his way someone has said all the flock will be gathered together in the morning and they'll all be there safely but you know Jacob was a good shepherd in that respect you can go back to chapter number 30 or on to chapter 33 and notice again there just turn your bible to that point and it's interesting to

notice in verse 13 and 14 and he said to him my lord knoweth as he's met Esau now and they've settled their differences and difficulties and verse 13 and he said unto him my lord knoweth that the children are tender in heart of the shepherd you see or easily fatigued as they were and the flocks and herds with young are with me and if we should over drive them one day all the flock will die so he wasn't going to over drive the sheep and those that were great with young he had a sympathy for them he wouldn't get the whip out you see and drive them on sometimes the saints are being driven you know and they fall under it mustn't drive them he says I will lead them he said quietly and then he says in verse 14 let my lord I pray thee pass over before his seven and I will lead on softly

according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure it until I come unto my lord unto Zia and so you see he had a care for the flock and for the family and he would lead them on gently that's what a shepherd should do lead all the flock and all the children on gently and Luke can take care of them and you'll notice too that in chapter number 30 if you go back and it's verse number 27 I think oh yes he says in verse 26 as he's met Laban he says give me my wives and my children for whom I have served thee and let me go for thou knowest my service which I have done for thee verse 27 listen this were a testimony for a man like Laban would that we all had this Laban said unto him I pray thee if I have found favour in thine eyes tarry for I have learned by experience

that the lord hath blessed me for thy sake and he said appoint me thy wages and I will give it and he said unto him thou knowest how I have served thee and how thy cattle was with me for it was little which thou

hath before I came and it is now increased unto a multitude and the lord hath blessed thee since my coming and now when shall I provide for mine own house also and so that was a good testimony wasn't it that the thing had increased and blessed because of Jacob's coming in spite of the man that he was there was that which is within him you see spiritual and careful and tender you know I know of a man he's died recently gone home to heaven but he was in four different assemblies and each of those meetings I could mention them to you in the south of England and when he went the thing

was almost on the floor and by godly care and shepherding he built the thing up and it was far better when he left it than when he went into it and then he went to the next place and the same thing happened again and he finished off in an assembly which wasn't so good when he went but there he died it flourished and it was strong he gave himself over and it was far better after he had been there than before he went and you know it's lovely isn't it if we leave things in a better condition when we've gone you know the lord always left a blessing behind him for other people now we can't go any further we would like to have gone over and finished off and looked at the last chapter where Jacob erects his pillars you know in the as god instructs him to go back to Bethel in chapter number 35

and it's interesting because it's a chapter of burials just give me a minute I'll just point out to you it's a chapter of burials notice that now conditions have changed he's been and wrestled with the angel in the earlier chapter and god has touched his thigh and now he's a man who's not standing in his own strength but he's clinging and he's dependent upon god he's a prince with god and with men and he's halting upon his thigh and he comes now and god says to Jacob arise go to Bethel where thou didst make a vow and god reminds him that the vow that he made earlier on as we've been reading about it tonight was to be redeemed and he was to go back to Bethel he said where the lord appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother now notice the change Jacob said unto

his household that were with him put away the strange gods that are among you be clean and change your garments the strange gods of course she'd stolen the terrapins away and she was very crafty in doing that because by the terrapins they were able to discern which way they would have gone on their journey you see by divining and she stole them you remember and sat upon them when they came to search the stuff but the idols you see they're still amongst them put away the strange gods from among you and there's a cleanliness and a purification to take place there was to be a holiness and a sanctification now about them and then he says take away the earrings from your ears you see the ear was to be now free to listen to the voice of god and the earrings were taken away and what happened to

them in verse 4 they were hidden they were buried under the oak that's the first burial burying those things under the oak in verse number 4 and then notice that the link with the old life in verse 8 is buried Deborah Rebecca's nurse there's no indications of the death of Rebecca but Deborah's nurse Rebecca's nurse died and she was buried that's the last link with the old nature with the old life and it's dependence upon the old life as a nurse she was buried beneath Bethel under the oak and the name was called Ellen Bacchus the oak of weeping so that's the second burial and then you come that Jacob reaches the house of God and he sets up his pillar and he anoints it and pours a drink offering upon it notice the difference now not only anointing it but the drink offering on it there's

happiness and there's joy whenever you get the drink offering and Jacob now is happy in the presence of God and Jacob called the name of the place God the God of Bethel he called it God the God of Bethel how wonderful to think as he erects his pillar and anoints it it's in Bethel then in verse 19 Rachel dies and is buried in the way and of course Rachel really is his nearest and his dearest the only one really that he

ever loved Rachel and she dies and was buried in the way to Ephrathah which is Bethlehem and in verse 20 Jacob sets a pillar upon a grave that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day and he erects a pillar against the grave of this one that he loved the only woman really that he ever ever loved and so there's the pillars and there's the burials in that chapter but

Jacob you know had come triumphantly through the school of God and he arrives safely now back at Bethel and God blesses him and you find the spiritual man he was in Genesis chapter 49 you hear him now giving out his blessing to his sons so in chapter 28 you have his pillar of testimony this is the house of God and then you have his pillar of harmony and peacefulness as he set up the pillar between him and Laban the Lord watch between me and thee then there's the pillar of dedication and worship in the house of God and then finally the pillar of loving affection that he erects over the very grave of his nearest and his dearest and they're both together at the end of the chapter as they bury Isaac that's as far as we can go along that lovely life of Jacob but I trust there's some practical

things that we would be able to fasten upon tonight that would be helpful to us in days that lie ahead shall we pray Our Father we give thee thanks for thy word again tonight we thank thee for this life of Jacob we thank thee forever that thou didst leave upon record the life of this man and we bless thee O God for all the lessons that we can learn from such a man as this we thank thee for thy patience with him we thank thee for thy sovereignty over ruling all things we read sometimes the words of the poet truth forever on the scaffold wrong forever on the throne yet that scaffold weighs the future and amidst the dim unknown stands God among the shadows keeping watch above his own and we thank thee O God that thou didst stand in the shadows in the life of Jacob and thou didst keep watch

above him and O God we thank thee that thou didst teach him and thou didst teach him valuable lessons and we thank thee O God that he was a better man at the end than he was at the beginning and we bless thee O God the one that came into the world grasping the heel of his brother the liar and the cheat we thank thee that he left the world leaning upon his staff and worshipping

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