

# Through the Bible - Genesis - Part 3

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of following God's will and making the right choices in life, as seen in the lives of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.*

**Duration:** 56:28

**Scripture:** Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 28:20-22, Genesis 39:7-10, Matthew 6:33, Luke 5:32, John 7:37-39

**Topics:** "Expositional"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the story of Jacob's love for Rachel and how it inspired him to serve the Lord wholeheartedly. He shares his personal testimony of serving the Lord for 41 years, with 34 years being full-time ministry. The speaker emphasizes the importance of studying the scriptures, as it contains answers to every problem in life. He also highlights the sovereignty of God in Joseph's life, showing how God used even the negative circumstances for His redemptive purposes.

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## Transcript

We want to continue our study in Genesis. We have got as far as Genesis 24. We are more or less finished with the life of Abraham and just this concluding part where we begin with the life of Isaac.

And in this session, we want to look at the lives of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. First of all, in Genesis 24, it is a very long chapter, 67 verses. One of the longest chapters, perhaps the longest, I am not sure, in the book of Genesis.

And all that it describes is how Abraham arranged for a wife for Isaac. There are many marriages mentioned in scripture, but only two marriages which we know definitely were from God. One was Adam's.

There is no doubt about that. That his wife was God's choice. And the second was Isaac's.

His wife was God's choice as we read in Genesis 24. And people ask me, do you believe in arranged marriages? I said, yes. Marriage is arranged by God.

That may be through parents, it may be without parents, but it must be arranged marriage, arranged by God. The one thing I see, you see, both are valid. In Adam's case, he had no father to arrange a marriage for him, so God took care of that.

In Isaac's case, he had a father to arrange for him, so both are valid. But the important thing I want you to notice here is that Abraham had a concern for his son, and if you are a godly father, you will have a concern for your children's marriages. And if you are fortunate enough to have a godly father, I would say to you, consider his advice very seriously.

It's different if the father is a heathen or unbeliever. Even there, we must respect them, though they may not understand why we stand for choosing a believer. But where your father is a godly man, I would encourage you to seriously consider if he says no, because God may test you there.

Sometimes the no may be only for a period. And God tests you to see whether you are willing to bow under authority. But what I see here is that Abraham sent Eliezer and picked a wife.

It's a picture of God the Father sending the Holy Spirit into the earth to pick a bride for his son, Jesus Christ. It's what's happening in the world today. That's why this is such a long chapter.

I don't have time to go into it in detail, but look at it like that and you'll see some beautiful illustrations there. Of how Rebecca was a modest, hard-working girl. You know, one of the tests which Eliezer used was to see will she be willing to offer water to my camels.

Do you know how much water a camel drinks? It's quite a lot. And what Eliezer, the servant, was testing was, is this girl a gracious, hard-working girl? That's the type of wife you need. That's the type of bride God looks for.

And he sovereignly led to her. And he takes her from there on that long journey, which took probably four weeks, all the way back to Canaan from Mesopotamia. And what do you think Eliezer was talking to Rebecca about during that journey, Isaac? What do you think the Holy Spirit wants to talk to you about during this long journey before the marriage? He wants to talk to you about Jesus.

Not about doctrine. Not about the wealth of Abraham. Not how wonderful heaven is going to be.

I'm sure Rebecca wanted to hear about Isaac. And I want to hear about Jesus from the Holy Spirit in this long journey, till one day I shall see him face to face like Rebecca saw Isaac. And I shall enter into his tent, and I shall be his wife for all eternity.

Do you have that longing? Think about that when you read this chapter. In chapter 25, we read of Isaac getting married. And for many years, for 20 years at least, I think, she was barren.

Isaac's wife Rebecca. You know, you get a wife whom God has chosen for you, and then you have problems. Do you have problems when you got a wife from God? Barren? When you find that God has led you somewhere, and then you get problems, that doesn't mean it was not God's leading in the beginning.

It means you got to pray. It says Isaac prayed, verse 21, 25-21. Because she was barren.

And the Lord answered him, and she conceived. And the Lord said, there are two nations in your womb. And then we read that twins were born.

And it says here about Jacob that he came out grabbing his brother's heel, verse 26. They were twins, you know. And it says they were struggling together, verse 22.

I mean, normally babies lie quietly in the womb, but it was very different here. This chap Jacob, his struggle started inside the womb itself. He really wanted to, he dashed for the exit to come out first, missed it, the other fellow got in first.

Grabbed his heel. That was Jacob. That was the man who finally God chose to be his servant.

An example for us, a weak man, a grabbing man, like we grab for earthly things. But you see that right at the beginning. They called him Jacob, meaning grabber.

They saw him coming out grabbing this. We call him grabber. So his name was grabber.

And it says here, in the boys grew up, verse 27. Now you know the story. I don't want to go into the details of this story.

But the thing I want you to notice here is that Isaac was not as wise a father as Abraham. And that often happens. You have a godly father and then he has a son and the son grows up.

And the son, when his turn comes, he's not such a godly father. Because we find here partiality in the home. Isaac is on Esau's side and Rebekah is on Jacob's side.

The best way to split a home. You know why Esau and Jacob became such enemies? Because of partiality in the home. One parent favored one son and the other parent favored the other son.

And so they became jealous of each other. And no doubt it separated Isaac and Rebekah too. They were supposed to be together.

What a beautiful marriage they had. Beware of partiality towards your children. And not only that, the reason for the partiality, it says in verse 28, Isaac had a taste for good food and he liked the venison, the deer that Esau brought.

Jacob was not such a clever hunter so he couldn't care less for him. Imagine being attracted to a son because of food, because the fellow can go and hunt. Isaac doesn't come forth as a worthy son of his father.

It was that love for food and partiality that caused problems. And you know how Jacob got the birthright once. Now, we read something further about Isaac.

That in chapter 26, verse 7, Isaac was living in Gerar and the men of the place asked him about his wife and Rebekah was a pretty girl. And he says the same thing that his father said. She's my sister.

You know, the characteristics in a father are very often reproduced in the children. Sometimes you see someone and you say, hey, he looks just like his dad. That's right.

He looks just like his dad. And here you find he behaves just like his dad. That's it.

His father had said, this is my sister, concerning his wife, Isaac says the same thing. And Isaac is rebuked by this man. What is this you have done? It's almost a similar story to what happened in his father's case, 26:10.

And then we read further. Not only did he follow his dad's example in the bad things. Here's the good part of it.

He followed his dad's example in the good things as well. We read of a time in verse 18 of Isaiah, Genesis 26, that Isaac dug the wells which his father had dug and which the Philistines had closed up. They were his wells.

His father had dug them. It takes a lot of effort to dig a well. It must have taken a lot more effort those days.

And it belonged to him. The one who dug the well, it belonged to them. But the Philistines had closed them all up after Abraham died.

Isaac opened it up again and gave them the same names that Abraham gave. And the Philistines, the herdsmen of Gerar, quarreled, just like Lot's servants quarreled with Abraham's servants. It's almost a similar situation.

Verse 20. They said, the water is ours. So, they went and asked Isaac.

Isaac said, let them have it. Yeah, a godly son of a godly father who made mistakes, just like his father. That's our encouragement.

But who did not grab. Then they dug another well, verse 21. They quarreled over that one also.

They came to Isaac and said, these fellows are fighting for the second well we dug. Isaac said, let them have it. And he moved away and he dug another well.

And for this they were ashamed by now. They didn't quarrel anymore. And so he named it Rehoboth, saying, the Lord has made room for us and we shall be fruitful in the land.

I want you to think of that phrase. Rehoboth. The Lord has made room for us.

I did not make room for myself. I did not push people out and make room for myself. I gave up my rights and the Lord made room for me and we shall be fruitful.

This is the way to build Jerusalem. This is a stream that begins with Abraham, Isaac and goes on to Jacob and Joseph and on. But this is the principle.

I don't fight. I don't grab. I say, let the worldlings and the worldly Christians have what they want.

I will take what's left over. And from the leftovers, God will make room for me and I will be fruitful in the land. And those fellows who got Sodom and Gomorrah and everything else and all these wells, they'll be barren.

This is God's way. The way of Jerusalem is the way of giving up and giving up and giving up. The way of Babylon is the way of grabbing and grabbing.

Remember, Jacob was a grabber and he had to be converted before he could become Israel if he was to continue that stream of Jerusalem. Otherwise, he would have built Babylon. These are important principles that we find in this book of Genesis that apply to us today.

Do you know the number of people who are seeking for position and honor in churches to be elders? In our churches, I have said to the elders of our churches, I said the number one qualification to be an elder is that you don't want to be an elder. And you are thoroughly convinced that you don't deserve to be an

elder. You don't want it.

The Lord makes room for you. Then you'll be fruitful. If you make room for yourself, you will never be fruitful.

That's for sure. And we read in chapter 26, verse 30, this man who was his enemy who comes to him and says, we see plainly, verse 28, the Lord's been with you. He made a feast for him.

That is God's way. God's men make feasts for their enemies. If your enemy is hungry, feed him.

That is the way in Jerusalem. We read in verse 34 and 35, when Esau was 40 years old, Isaac's son, he married Judith, the daughter of Beriah the Hittite, and Basimath, and the daughter of Elon the Hittite. They brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

And there we see something. Isaac was not as careful as Abraham. To find a partner for his son.

He just allowed his son to do what he liked. He had spoiled Esau. He was more interested in the food that Esau brought.

The venison. The deer. And the most important thing, a wife.

Esau chose for himself. And they brought grief to their parents. These are warnings in scripture for us today.

And we read here, now we come to Jacob. In chapter 27. How Isaac, when he is old, the last thing we see about Isaac is, his eyes were dim to see.

Now that's okay as we grow older, we get a little blinder. But the sad thing is, Isaac's spiritual vision was also clouded. See, God's will for us is, as we grow older and older and older, we may be physically weaker, but our spiritual vision should be sharp.

But Isaac's was not. He knew what God had said when the two children were in the womb, that the younger will serve the older. But he decides to give the blessing to the older person.

Can you see the folly of that? Can you see the folly of saying, Esau, go and get some, the day of my death is near, verse 2, please go and get your quiver and your bow and get some food for me. This old man is one foot in the grave and he is still thinking of food. No wonder he lost his spiritual vision.

The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9, if I don't subdue my body, I will preach to others and be a castaway myself. This is the reason why the word of God encourages us to fast, to keep our bodily passions under control, to keep our sexual passions under control, to keep our bodily visions under control, so that we don't worship our stomachs, we worship God. Remember Isaac, it was his love of food that made him spiritually blind.

And there are lots of preachers today, it's their love of food that's made them spiritually blind. They do not know how to keep their bodily passions under control. Yeah, and he says, go and bring this food for me, that I may bless you before I die.

I know God said something to me many years ago, forget it, I'm sure God's changed His mind, and He'll understand, you've been a good son, you've given me a lot of good food, now I'm going to bless you. Can

you imagine the stupid thing that Isaac does here? But God made sure it never happened. Yeah, and we read here that, about Jacob, that he pretends, you know the story, he pretended that he was Esau, and that's how we hear about him beginning his life, grabbing, deceiving.

Now, Rebekah was on Jacob's side, Rebekah knew, hey, God had said that the younger must get the blessing, and here I hear that, my husband's going to give the blessing to Esau, so she schemes along with Jacob, and says, listen, Esau's going to take some time, I'll just, I'll make some good curry, which your dad likes, and you take it, and put on some animal skin, and pretend to be hairy Esau. My question is this, did God need all these techniques, to give the blessing to Jacob? This is the same mistake that Abraham made with Hagar. God needs help.

It looks as if, the promised seed will not come, I better go into Hagar and have a son. The same thing here, oh, God needs help, because it looks as if, somebody else is going to get the blessing, I better grant, for God's sake, you bring the name of God into it, in a lot of things we do. We're doing it for God's sake.

I want to say, God doesn't need any help, like that. He certainly doesn't want you to deceive, He doesn't want you to cheat, or tell lies, in order to do His work. There are a lot of people, who think today, that the end, justifies the means.

That means, provided your ultimate goal, is good, it doesn't matter how you get there. That's not Christianity. The goal must be spiritual, and the way to the goal, must also be spiritual.

If it is God's will, that Jacob should get the birthright, the way you get it, must also be spiritual. If it is God's will, that the heathen should be evangelized, right, the way we do it, must also be spiritual. Not, oh, somehow or the other, we must get the heathen evangelized.

Somehow or the other, we must build the church. No, not somehow or the other. In a godly way, we will reach a godly goal.

And if, as a result of choosing a godly way, we find that we are not able to do as much, as other people can do, with the ungodly ways, I say, God bless them. If he can, I don't know whether he will, but, that's up to God. But let them do it their way, I'm going to do it in a godly way, and I want to spend all my life, building a small little structure, of gold, silver and precious stones, rather than a massive structure, of wood, hay and straw, that will be burnt up in the final day.

What are you doing? Are you building, in a godly way, towards the godly goal? Or, are you like Rebecca and Isaac, who say, well, our goal is good, we got to get the birthright, God said, Jacob's got to get the birthright, we have to scheme and manipulate and plan. No, you don't have to. Esau despised his birthright, and it says in verse 34 of 27, 27-34, that when he heard, that he had missed the blessing, he cried out, with an exceedingly great and bitter cry.

Then he regretted, the decision he had taken years earlier, and he saw that, he had thought when he gave his birthright, as a young man, to Jacob, yeah, I'll give it to him now, I'll get a bit of soup from him now, but later on, I'll get the birthright too, I'm a clever fellow, but God knows how to catch the wise, in their own craftiness, and God made sure, that Esau never got the birthright. Some of us may think, we are very clever, and we do a lot of clever things, and we say ultimately, we'll get the same place as somebody else. Yeah, you think so.

It's not going to be like that. God can catch the clever person, in his cleverness. We reap what we sow.

It says in Hebrews chapter 12, Let there be no profane person among you, like Esau, who for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright, and you know that afterwards, when he wanted the blessing, he couldn't get it. You make a choice in life, when you are young, you come to a fork in the road, when you are young, do you want the birthright, the eternal blessing, the spiritual blessing, or do you want the temporal blessing, the immediate one, the bowl of porridge, that will satisfy your bodily need. That's the choice, that faces a lot of young people today.

That which is eternal, and that which is immediate, temporary. That which is spiritual, and that which is material. We all come to the fork in the road.

Moses came to that, and he refused the riches of Egypt. He refused the pleasures of sin. Many of you are at that fork in the road, and you may say, well, I can indulge a little bit in these things, and I live a little bit for these things, and ultimately I'll get the spiritual at the end.

You will not. I tell you, you will reap what you have sown. Esau did.

Make the right choice now, because it says, let no man fail at the grace of God. That's what it says in Hebrews 12. Read that passage, the commentary on this.

Let no man fail at the grace of God. Be like Esau. Make the right decision now.

In chapter 28, we read how Jacob goes off, is sent off by Rebecca to her brother's place, to Laban's place. He's not married yet. He's maybe 50 years old, or 70 years old, I don't know, over 40 or 50 at least.

And he goes off, and on his way, God meets with him. It says here, he came to a certain place, verse 11, and spent the night there, because the sun had set, 28-11. Now even though it says, it's a geographical fact, that the sun had set, there was something that was happening in Jacob's life also.

The sun had set in his life, spiritually also. The man was living for the world. The man had grabbed, he had deceived, he had cheated.

And now he was going to his uncle's place. And God meets with this man, and says, do you know Jacob, I have got a great purpose for your life. I am the Lord of your father, God of your father, Abraham, verse 13, and Isaac.

And I'm going to give you this land, and to your descendants, and all the families of the earth, will be blessed through you. Verse 14, do you know that this is the blessing of Abraham. When God called Abraham, he said, I will bless you, and you shall be a blessing, and all the families of the earth, will be blessed through you.

That's what he said in Genesis 12, verse 2 and 3. He repeats it to Jacob. Here in verse 14, all the families of the earth, will be blessed through you. That's the blessing of Abraham.

In Galatians 3, verse 14, we are told that this blessing of Abraham, comes upon us, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit. Do you know the purpose of the fullness of the Holy Spirit? It's not just to speak in tongues. That may be one of the gifts God gives to some people.

That's not the main thing. Unfortunately, a lot of people have made much of that. It's not even for physical healing.

Paul did not get physically healed, from the thorn in the flesh. The primary purpose of the fullness of the Spirit, is Galatians 3, verse 14. That we might have the blessing of Abraham.

What is that? All the families of the earth, will be blessed through you. That means, when God fills me with the Holy Spirit, every family, or every person from a family, whom I meet, I'm going to be a blessing to them. Nobody can meet me, without getting a blessing.

It's like these heavily perfumed ladies. Have you met a heavily perfumed lady? You walk even a few feet away, and you can smell it. It's a perfume.

Anywhere she goes, people can smell it. This lady is perfumed. It's something like that.

That when God fills us with the Holy Spirit, we are going to be a blessing, to the families of the earth. If I go into a home, I leave that home, I bless that home and gone. Whether I've gone for five minutes, or stayed for five days.

That's how all of us should be. This is the blessing of Abraham. This is the fullness of the Spirit.

This is the rivers of living water, that flow, rivers that flow, blessing thirsty people everywhere. And God says to Jacob, that's my calling for you. I'm with you.

When God fills us with the Spirit, He's going to be with us. I will keep you, verse 15, I'll bring you back. I will not leave you, until I've done what I promised.

And Jacob woke up. This was Bethel. He said, how awesome is this place.

This is none other than the house of God. Bethel, the house of God. This is the gate of heaven.

Now, see how he responds to this fantastic promise. He says, Lord, I'm not interested in all those things. Just, verse 20, just take care of me on this journey.

Just give me enough food. Just give me clothes to wear. And make sure I don't have any accidents or robbers on the way.

Bring me back to my father's house. And that's all I need. This business of blessing to the families on the earth, now forget it.

This is enough for me. And I will build a house for you. And I will give you my tithes of everything I earn.

Lord, bless my business. And I promise you, I'll give you 10% of everything I earn. You see the response? This is the response of many Christians today.

God says to all Christians, I want you to have the blessing of Abraham. I want to fill you with the Holy Spirit. I want rivers of living water to flow out through everyone who believes in me.

I want you to be a blessing wherever you go. I don't want you to be a sluggish, useless Christian. I want you to be a spirit-filled Christian.

Who is a blessing to people. And what are the prayers of most Christians? Lord, please heal me of this sickness. Please take care of me here.

Please give me a good job. Lord, I'm planning to build a house. Please help me to complete that house.

And Lord, my children need to get married. You know, that's a great need. Lord, please take care of that.

And a whole lot of earthly things. And Lord, if you bless my business, I promise you, I'll give you my tithe regularly. And all these things happen.

And say, praise the Lord. Is that why God called us? Do you know the number of people who are like this? Who have missed God's best. Because they settle for something earthly when God calls them to something heavenly.

They settle for something temporary when God calls them for something eternal. They settle for something which is just material and physical when God calls them for something which can change them and change other people forever. God doesn't want us to have regrets in eternity.

No wonder, it says, the sun has set. Truly the sun has set. But God doesn't leave Jacob.

He goes to Laban and he discovers that Laban is a smarter fellow than him. This man who cheated so many people. Jacob cheated his father, cheated his brother.

Now he finds somebody smarter than him. Who cheats him in marriage. I don't have time to show you.

But it's very wonderful to see how Laban cheated Jacob. You know, those days they had marriages. They had a big feast and then the marriage.

So Laban was a clever chap. He said, let's have the marriage at night. That's the first step.

Let's have it at night. You know, at night everybody is relaxed. Let's have it at night.

Let's have a feast. And he made sure that Jacob got thoroughly drunk in that feast. Jacob didn't know where he was going, what he was doing.

And Laban put his hand into some girl's hand and said, okay, you're married. He said, yes, I will. And got married.

And he wakes up next morning and says, hey, you're not the one I wanted to marry. Jacob had met his match in a man who cheated him by giving him the wrong wife. Yeah.

And he had worked seven years. And he says, I wanted Rachel. And Laban says, sorry, Leah is older.

You've got to marry her first. You've got to work another seven years. And he says, okay, I'll work another seven years.

There's a beautiful verse here which I want to point out to you, which came home to my heart many, many years ago. Verse 20 of Genesis 29. When I was a young man, the Lord spoke to me through this verse.

It says, Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her. Jacob's love for Rachel was so passionate and so strong that he worked and it wasn't a desk job. He was out in the fields.

He says that later on. I was out in the sun, out in the night, looking after the sheep. I lost my health.

I did all that for seven years. And it says it was just like a few days. And what the way it came home to my heart was if a man could serve like that for a woman.

How shall I serve the Lord who loved me and gave himself for me? I said, Lord, I wanted to be like that in my life. That I serve you and years of service through much suffering and pain and misunderstanding will be just like a few days. I said that to God 40 years ago.

From that verse. Today, I want to testify. In all these 41 years that I've served the Lord, 34 years full time.

They have been like a few days. I say, Lord, I haven't finished yet. Give me 25 more years to serve you at least.

Of health to serve you. A few more days. The most wonderful thing in the world is to serve the Lord.

There's absolutely nothing to equal it. I don't believe I could have had this attitude if I had spent my life, even as a Christian, making money as a businessman or any such thing. They seemed unto him a few days.

Do you find your labor for the Lord heavy? It's because you don't love the Lord. I decided when I started serving the Lord that I would not serve him for money or honor or position or acceptance or fame. I would only serve him because I love him.

Because he had purchased me. Jacob served out of love. That's what will change your service.

And your service will only be like a few days. It will never be heavy. We read here further in chapter 30.

You know how Rachel couldn't have any children. And then finally, Jacob begins to cheat Laban and collect even his property. And one day he schemes to leave secretly back to Canaan.

That's in chapter 31. And then he hears that Esau is coming to meet him. And he's scared.

Because he thinks Esau will kill him now. And we see a wonderful verse here in chapter 32. Even though he was like this, he was scheming, manipulating.

Even after 20 years, he's still the same old grabber, deceiver, schemer. Yet we read on his way, chapter 32, verse 1. The angels of God met him. Now we would never waste our time with such a man.

After working 20 years, which company would employ a man? 20 years he's deceiving, scheming, manipulating. The company would say, sack him. But God doesn't sack Jacob.

And he doesn't sack you or me. I praise God for that. That even though we fail, we come short.

He still sends his angels to us. Angels means messengers. When God sends a messenger across your path, it's a mark of his love for you.

He's trying to turn you. He's trying to encourage you still. When God's finished with you, he won't send you any more messengers.

Angels are messengers. In our Indian translations, it says, doodin. That's a messenger.

God sends his messengers to us to show us his love. Particularly when we are going to encounter a danger. He was going to encounter Esau.

And before that, it's good to meet the messengers of God. And when he meets Esau, he still schemes how to escape. It's very interesting to see how he schemes.

He puts all the wives he doesn't like up in front. And he puts Rachel and himself right at the back. So that if all the other fellows get killed, he'll finally escape.

He's the same old selfish person. It's a tremendous encouragement to me that God picked up such a man and made him Israel. It's a great encouragement to me because I say, Lord, I'm also such a selfish person.

You can pretend to be spiritual, but you know the selfish things you do in your life. But God wants to change you. And he changed Jacob.

That's a wonderful message. We read there at the end of this chapter how God met with Jacob, wrestled with him, broke him. Dislocated his hip.

God can do drastic things, if necessary, in order to bring us to the place where he wants us to be. He broke him and then said to him, Okay, from now on, verse 28 of chapter 32, your name is not going to be Jacob. You're going to be Israel.

When could God call him Israel? After 60, 70, 80 years of struggling with him. Finally, he dislocates his hip and says, okay, you're broken. Let me go.

And that's the time when Jacob says, I will not let you go. Verse 26, till you bless me. This man who had been grabbing money, grabbing birthright, grabbing women, grabbing sheep, grabbing property.

Now he leaves everything and grabs God and says, God, I want you now. I've lived for money, women, property, so many things. I've finished with all that.

I want you. God is waiting for such a day in our lives. And he will say to us, too.

You will no longer be called grabber, deceiver, schemer. You will be called a prince of God. Because you have striven with God and with men, verse 28, and have prevailed.

He's become an overcomer. When? When his hip is broken. Right from the beginning of scripture, we see this message.

God has to break us before he can empower us. It's the broken man who leans upon a staff like Jacob, who's got a dislocation, who becomes the prince of God. Not the great, strong, mighty he-man.

God has to break you, my brother, sister, before he can make you what he wants you to be. And then we read, verse 31 of chapter 32, the sun rose upon him. We saw where the sun set many years earlier, 20 years earlier.

Now the sun rises. Spiritually, also, it is true. There's something wonderful in these little geographical facts mentioned in scripture, behind which is a hidden spiritual truth.

The sun rose and Jacob. And it says, Israel journeyed on. That's how it is.

And finally, I want you to look at chapter 34, just briefly. Jacob had 12 sons, but he also had a daughter. And that daughter got him into a lot of trouble.

And her name was Dina. I just want to mention in passing how this girl decided to take a private trip, wandering off in strange territory all by herself. A warning to young girls.

You young girls, read Genesis 34. And see the problems that Dina caused for her father. And please don't be like her.

She wandered off by herself. She says, I can take care of myself. Somebody falls in love with her.

And rapes her. And a lot of problems. Her brothers get upset.

They go there and murder them. And Jacob's name stinks all over that area. All because one girl decided to take a private walk one day.

That's a little warning I want to mention in passing. And finally, chapter 35, the Lord said to Jacob, go to Bethel. You know, if Jacob, Jacob's fault too, maybe he allowed his daughter to be like that.

If he had gone straight back to Bethel after God met with him, there would have not been this interlude in chapter 34 where his daughter got raped. You know, if we go to the place where God wants us to go straight away, this is where God wanted him to go. But instead of that, he wandered around all these other areas.

Before he went where God wanted him to be. Anyway, we read that that's sort of the end of Jacob's life. And not the end, I mean this part of it.

I want to go into Joseph's life before we come to the end of Jacob's life too. Jacob had this son. He had 12 sons.

Again, we find him making the same mistake that his father made. What was his father's mistake? Partiality. We find Jacob doing the same thing in chapter 37, verse 3. Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons because he was the son of his old age and he made him a very colored tunic.

Here is a man. The best way to destroy your children is by being partial to one of them, giving one special gifts which you don't give the others. Now he had seen what partiality did in his father's home, he does and repeats it in his home too.

And it almost had serious consequences. All the other 10 older brothers became jealous of Joseph because his father showed partiality. There are parents who praise one of their children in the presence of the other children.

What is the result? Those other children become the enemy of this child, sometimes for life. The fault is whose? The father's, the mother's. There are lessons in the scripture for every part of our life.

I have discovered in 41 years that this book contains an answer to every problem in life, if you know where to find it. That's why we need to study the scriptures. In Genesis chapter 37, towards the end, we see about this plot that his elder brothers make against him.

And they want to get rid of him. But you see the sovereignty of God there. That at that time, one of the brothers said, let's not kill him.

Let's just sell him to these traders, these slave traders. Who sent those slave traders there at that time? That was God. God timed it so that those Ishmaelite slave traders would land up there exactly when Joseph was about to be killed.

And what I learned from that is the sovereignty of God. It's a wonderful thing we see in the life of Joseph, the sovereign ruling of God. That if God has got a plan and a purpose for your life, nobody can frustrate it.

Not your jealous brothers, not your foolish father, nobody. That's what we see here. That God showed Joseph in dreams that I've got a purpose for you.

When he was a young man, sometimes God reveals to a young person, he's got a purpose for his life. I want to say, don't complain that older people are not giving you an opportunity to preach and sending you to difficult places. No, no, no, no, no.

Are you a servant of God or men? God is sovereign. Nobody can mess up his plan for your life. Do you know the number of people who were jealous of my ministry when I was a young man? Older people, much older than me.

They suppressed me. They wouldn't allow me to speak and pushed me to the back of the assembly and made me sit there for three years. And I sat there.

The Lord said, don't ever rebel. Humble yourself. And I went through all that.

But they couldn't hinder God's plan for my life. When the time came, God's plan for my life was fulfilled. And that's an encouragement to you.

Don't ever complain against people. The only person who can mess up God's plan for your life is you yourself. Please remember that.

We see here further that when these Ishmaelite traders picked up Joseph, where were they going? They were going to Egypt. See, God had a plan for Joseph in Egypt. So he sent these slave traders who were going to Egypt and he used the jealousy of his brothers to fulfill his plan for Joseph's life.

See, it's not just that the jealousy does not harm us, but the jealousy God makes it work for us. I mean, if we were protected against the evil that other people did to us, that itself would have been a good thing. But God does something more.

He says, I'm going to use the evil that other people do to fulfill my plan for your life. Think if those brothers had not been jealous of Joseph. Think if they had a good relationship with Joseph.

He would never have gone to Egypt. How did he go to Egypt? First step, the brothers were jealous of him. Second step, they wanted to get rid of him.

And they make, sell him to slave traders. And that fulfills God's plan for him to take him to Egypt. You know, some of the things which you think other people are doing to harm you, if only your eyes could be opened, they're actually fulfilling God's plan for your life.

You may be going through some difficulty. You know, it wasn't easy for Jacob, Joseph to be a slave in Egypt, but he was fulfilling God's plan for his life. Praise the Lord.

The man of faith reads these things and says, this is the same God whom I serve. The God of Joseph is my God. And if I'm sincere before him, any number of people can be jealous of me.

Any number of people can scheme and evil against me, but they will not be able to fulfill God, hinder God's plan for my life. Have that faith. Chapter 38 is a little diversion where we read of Judah falling into sin with his own daughter-in-law.

I just mention it for this reason. It's a terrible sin to commit adultery with your own daughter-in-law. But when that daughter-in-law got twins, the names of the twins were Genesis 38, 29, and 30, Perez and Zerah.

What I want you to know is that it is from that person that Jesus was born. Through Judah committing adultery with his daughter-in-law. You read that in Matthew chapter 1. From her.

Her name was Tamar. And from her, through Judah and Tamar, this incestuous, adulterous relationship, Jesus chose that line from heaven. Saying, I'll come through that line.

Why did he choose such a line? How many of you would choose a bad family line to come through? Do you know Jesus chose that? In order to show that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners. He identified with the transgressors. Chapter 39 is a wonderful story of a faithful man.

Faithful young man tempted strongly by an attractive woman, a powerful woman. And how there's only one thing. The Bible says we must flee immorality.

Run away from immorality, and that's exactly what Joseph did. It says here, in Genesis 39, 7, his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph and said, Lie to me, and he refused. And he would not even be with her, it says in verse 10.

He didn't just say no to her. See, you can't avoid temptation if you're always hanging around with people who tempt you. It says in verse 10, he would not even be with her.

As soon as she was there, he'd go off somewhere else. He's looking for such men who run away from temptation. And one day, she was alone with him and caught him.

And he left his coat and ran and she screamed and told a lie. Accused him falsely. Her husband was furious, believed his wife.

Locked up Joseph in jail. Look at what he's suffering. Jealousy from his brothers.

False accusation from a woman. Falsely judged in court, put in jail. And those days, jails were terrible dungeons.

With rats and mice and cockroaches and everything. It was a terrible place to be in. And it says here, just one word.

In verse 21. But the Lord was with Joseph in the jail. It doesn't matter if there are cockroaches and rats and mosquitoes and everything else.

If the Lord is with you, that's enough. That's all he wanted. And there in the jail, he meets Pharaoh's butler.

And gets an introduction to Pharaoh. You see how God's plan is working out? It's not just that God protected Joseph from the evil that Potiphar did to him. He made the evil that Potiphar do work to fulfill God's plan.

See, this is the wonderful thing you got to learn from these scriptures. That the evil that other people do is working to fulfill God's plan for our life. How would he have met Pharaoh's butler and got an introduction to Pharaoh if he didn't go to that jail? And if Joseph could have seen all this in the beginning, he'd have been praising the Lord in the jail.

I don't know whether he did. But I know that Paul and Silas did. They praised the Lord because they had studied the scriptures.

And I hope you can do that because you studied the scriptures. And when you're in a tight situation because of the evil that other people have done to you, falsely accused you, perhaps put you in jail with a false accusation. Never mind what people are saying.

What do you think people said about Joseph when he was in jail? We thought he was a good man. But now we discover the fellow is an adulterer. There are all types of stories about him.

The man was the most upright man in Egypt. There are so many false stories that have been spread about godly servants of God. What is our job? Keep quiet.

Leave it to God to defend your reputation. And God will honor you. Nobody can mess up God's plan for your life if you honor Him.

And we read that finally he comes before Pharaoh. And you know the rest of the story. How his brothers, when they are hungry for food, there's a famine.

They have to come to Joseph and bow down before him. And the dreams of many many years earlier, of 15 years earlier, are now fulfilled. Joseph had a dream that his brothers would bow down before him.

And it's fulfilled. God fulfills what he says. The other thing I want you to notice here is that, like it says in chapter 43, verse 1 and 2, when the famine was severe in the land, Jacob told his sons, go to Egypt, go and get some food.

See, when there's a famine, you have to go to get food from those who were wise before the famine came, to store up food. That's the lesson you learn here. Joseph was wise in the seven years of plenty.

He stored up food. So therefore, other people who were careless had to come to him. The Bible says, go to the ant, you lazy man, and learn from that ant how it stores up food for the winter.

Now apply this spiritually. In times when you have the opportunity to study God's word and become rich, if you don't take that opportunity, years later, when you don't have the time, pressures of life are so much, you won't know where to turn. But if you are one who has stored up, not only will you have enough for yourself, you'll have plenty for other people.

Let me tell you my own testimony. Almost everything that I have studied of the Bible, I studied before I got married 32 years ago. I spent seven years while I was working in the Navy, studying the scriptures in

every moment of my spare time.

I would also go out into the streets and preach the gospel, twice a week, in all the streets of Arunachalam when I was in the naval base there. But along with that, now I'd come back and I'd study the word, study the word, study the word, study the word, use a concord and study the word, and soak my mind. It also kept me as a young man from a lot of temptations.

It was a time of plenty. Plenty means plenty of time. I had plenty of time.

Because I was a bachelor, I was single. And I could use the time to study, study, study the word. Once you get married and you have children, you don't have that time.

Go and ask any married person who's got children. They don't have the time. And if you have been foolish in the years of plenty, you won't have anything either for yourself or to give other people in the days of famine.

Please learn that lesson and apply it to yourself. And we read further how God, how Joseph deals in a very godly way with these people and he tells these people in chapter 45 verse 5, It was God who sent me before you. Again in verse 7, God sent me before you.

Again in verse 8, It was not you, God who sent me before you. He tells his brothers, It was not you who sold me to the Ishmaelites. It was God.

It was not Potiphar's wife who sent me to the jail. It was God. Can you say that? Don't say, Oh brother, that person is harming me, this person is harming me.

It was God. It was God who sent me. That's a wonderful testimony.

That's how it is for any person who is a godly person. And it says here, He prepares a great feast for them and gets the best place, the land of Goshen, chapter 46 verse 34. The best area of Egypt, He gives to whom? To the people who had prepared a pit for Him.

That's a godly man. When you can give the best land to people who have prepared a pit for you and sold you to slaves. You see another thing here about His tremendous respect for His Father.

In chapter 46 verse 29, He goes out, this great ruler, He went out and met His Father and respected Him. I believe godly people always respect their parents. And Jacob, I just want to say a few things about Jacob before we close.

Jacob, we see at the end of his life, has learned his lesson and he becomes a prophet. In chapter 47 verse 9, we read that he blesses, verse 10 we read, he blesses the greatest ruler in the world, Pharaoh. And, he blesses the ten tribes.

You know, there's just one instance I want to mention there. Jacob, Joseph brings Manasseh, the older one and Ephraim, the younger one to Jacob and says, put your right hand on Manasseh and your left hand on Ephraim and Jacob says no. He crosses his hands.

He can't see very well. He's just like his father Isaac. But he had spiritual vision.

He was different from Isaac. He knew whom to bless. Because he had gone through all those trials.

Isaac never went through trials. He had it easy. So he never had spiritual vision.

Thank God for trials. So that's how we conclude Genesis. I just want to show you one more verse.

Genesis ends with, the last words, a coffin in Egypt. Begins with, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Ends with a coffin in Egypt.

This is the history of Genesis. The confusion that man brought. But from that coffin in Egypt, we see how God brings redemption.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us to be godly people in this generation for you. Fulfilling your plan and purpose for our lives.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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