

## Lesson 3 – 16 May 2010

### Jacob Encounters God

**Lesson Scope:** [Genesis 27-35](#)

#### Lesson Focus

In the early part of the lesson scope, Isaac desired to bless Esau, but Rebekah schemed to have Jacob receive the blessing. The scope concludes with Jacob and Esau burying their father, Isaac.

After Jacob deceitfully obtained the blessing, he left home, beginning the five-hundred-mile journey to Haran on foot. Isaac sent him there to take a wife from Jacob's mother's family. Rebekah's concern focused on Jacob's safety in light of Esau's growing hatred and vow to kill him.

Most important during this time was the spiritual growth in Jacob's life. On the first night away from home, he had a very meaningful encounter with God (Genesis 28:10-22). Through the twenty years with Laban, Jacob had constant reminders of his responsibility to God and of God's blessing in his life. Finally on his return trip to Canaan, he had a life-changing encounter with God at Peniel.

Jacob's life was not without failure, but through it all, God was working with him to bring him closer to Himself. God is everlasting. He stands in the silence of eternity—unchanged, unchallenged, and undismayed. He fulfills His Word in the fullness of time, never in a hurry, never late, and never hindered. One day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. The last days of the church are as a dot on the vast panorama of eternity—so small but yet so important. We are ever living on the threshold of our eternal destiny. Now is the day of salvation; now is the day of opportunity with our families. Now is the time to make our calling and election sure. Now is the time to allow God to mold us and shape us, leading us into His perfect will.

"The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich." Truly God delights in leading His children to richer fuller blessings as they by faith seek them.

**Lesson Aim:** To learn lessons from Jacob's seeking and receiving God's blessings.

**Theme Verse:** [Psalm 34:15](#).

The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

**Lesson Text:**

**The Blessing Pursued**

[Genesis 27:22](#)

And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice *is* Jacob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau.

[Genesis 27:27-29](#)

And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son *is* as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed: <sup>28</sup>Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: <sup>29</sup>Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed *be* every one that curseth thee, and blessed *be* he that blesseth thee.

**The Blessing Confirmed**

[Genesis 28:10-15](#)

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. <sup>11</sup>And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and *put* them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. <sup>12</sup>And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. <sup>13</sup>And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I *am* the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; <sup>14</sup>And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. <sup>15</sup>And, behold, I *am* with thee, and will keep thee in all *places* whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done *that* which I have spoken to thee of.

[Genesis 28:20-21](#)

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, <sup>21</sup>So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:

### **The Blessing Received**

#### **Genesis 31:3-5**

And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee. <sup>4</sup>And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock, <sup>5</sup>And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it *is* not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me.

#### **Genesis 32:24-29**

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. <sup>25</sup>And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup>And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. <sup>27</sup>And he said unto him, What *is* thy name? And he said, Jacob. <sup>28</sup>And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. <sup>29</sup>And Jacob asked *him*, and said, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore *is* it *that* thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

### **Questions for Study**

#### **The Blessing Pursued**

1. Why did this blessing rightfully belong to Jacob?
2. What did Isaac's blessing include?

#### **The Blessing Confirmed**

3. What did God reveal to Jacob in his dream?
4. How did Jacob respond to this awe-inspiring, experience with God?
5. How does a sense of need contribute to receiving God's blessing?

#### **The Blessing Received**

6. What can we learn from Jacob's wrestling experience?
7. What was the significance of Jacob's new name?
8. How is God honored by prevailing prayer?

### **Analyzing the Passage**

Jacob deeply desired the birthright and the blessing, even though he used questionable methods to obtain them. God revealed Himself in special

ways as He worked in Jacob's life for his spiritual growth.

Jacob's dream at Bethel (house of God) came to him on his first night away from home as he was alone and in need of direction. The promise of Genesis 28:14 is prophetic of Christ.

The few days that Rebekah had envisioned for Jacob's absence turned out to be many years. Finally, the Lord told Jacob to return to Canaan, promising to be with him (Gen.31:3).

On their way to Canaan, Jacob and his family experienced much uncertainty. The final but stormy meeting with Laban culminated in a covenant between them. Meeting the angels at Mahanaim assured Jacob of divine protection. The dreaded meeting with Esau was yet to come. His preparation for that meeting, his night experience at Peniel (face of God), and wrestling and prevailing all reveal the intensity of his need and desire. Jacob's name change to Israel (a prince of God, having power with God) reflected the change that had taken place.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **The Blessing Pursued**

1. The desire for blessing is a noble one (Gen.27:22). God's blessing is foundational to a life of service, enabling us to be fruitful in whatever or wherever the Lord calls. This desire can never become too strong. One of the greatest threats to our spiritual zeal is our tendency to place too much value on the favor of other people.

2. God sovereignly superintends the dispensing of His blessings (Gen.27:22, 27). Esau did not qualify for the covenant blessing, even though Isaac intended to give it to him. God will accomplish what He purposes. Aligning ourselves with God's law allows us to experience His choicest blessings.

3. The fruitfulness of the earth is a direct blessing from God (Gen.27:28). God has entrusted man with the stewardship of the earth. Keeping our eyes focused on eternal values and goals will enable us to faithfully discharge that accountability. God maintains the life-sustaining cycles of the earth even when greedy men exploit, harm, or destroy the environment. The footprints we leave for future generations should point them to a life of careful stewardship. "The dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth" are immeasurable blessings.

### **The Blessing Confirmed**

4. God uses circumstances to make men aware of their need of His blessing (Gen.28:10-12). Predictable routine and abundant resources tend to make us feel secure. Changing circumstances come to us in many ways. Some build slowly to a climax, giving us time to adjust. Others come crashing upon us without warning, threatening our security. God alone knows what experiences we need to face. In all of them, anchor your faith in God. He never fails.

5. The Lord will fulfill His promised blessing (Gen.28:15). Each generation must choose to follow, God's way. We must believe all that God has recorded in His Word. By faith we must lay hold on what He has declared will yet happen. This unfolding of His promises will continue on into eternity. God declares: "As I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24). Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46:10).

6. A commitment to the Lord and obedience to Him assure His continued blessing (Gen.28:20-21). Jacob was careful to follow God's direction. Even in the midst of unfair treatment and threatening uncertainty, he turned to God. God expects and looks for the same response from us. God forbid that any of us would begin the process of apostasy, leading our posterity into worldliness and eternal ruin.

### **The Blessing Received**

7. The man of faith senses his desperate need of God's blessing (Gen.32:26). We need God to bless every moment of our days. We cannot function without it. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). The world looks for ways to hide from the "what ifs" that life may bring. In such times, the child of God is not signing insurance forms. He is pleading, imploring, and beseeching the eternal God.

8. God delights in blessing and answering those who persevere in prayer (Gen.32:26-29). Time and time again we approach the Father's throne for answers, for sustaining grace, and for help in time of need. "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

9. God's blessing makes it possible for man to prevail with Him (Gen.32:28). God has provided the way for us to come boldly, knowing that all things are possible with Him. When we do not have, we ask, when we do not know, we seek, when we do not understand, we trust.

## **Important Teachings**

1. The desire for blessing is a noble one (Gen.27:22).
2. God sovereignly superintends the dispensing of His blessings (Gen.27:22, 27).
3. The fruitfulness of the earth is a direct blessing from God (Gen.27:28).
4. God uses circumstances to make men aware of their need of His blessing (Gen.28:10-12).
5. The Lord will fulfill His promised blessing (Gen.28:15).
6. A commitment to the Lord and obedience to Him assure His continued blessing (Gen.28:20, 21).
7. The man of faith senses his desperate need of God's blessing (Gen.32:26).
8. God delights in blessing and answering those who persevere in prayer (Gen.32:26-29).
9. God's blessing makes it possible for man to prevail with Him (Gen.32:28).

## **Answers to Questions**

1. Why did this blessing rightfully belong to Jacob?  
The blessing belonged with the birthright, which Esau had sold to Jacob. Esau's attitudes and deeds disqualified him from the covenant blessing that Isaac planned to confer upon him.
2. What did Isaac's blessing include?  
Isaac's blessing included material prosperity and a place for his seed among the nations. The one blessed was assigned a place of authority in the family order. Special blessing was pronounced on those who favored his seed but a curse on those who would oppose them.
3. What did God reveal to Jacob in his dream?  
God revealed something of His power, His glory, His interest in Jacob, and His faithfulness to His covenant. God renewed the covenant, promising Jacob His presence and direction, as well as ultimate blessing on the whole world through Jesus Christ.
4. How did Jacob respond to this awe-inspiring experience with God?  
Jacob worshiped and vowed to be faithful to God and to give Him first place in his life.
5. How does a sense of need contribute to receiving God's blessing?  
Unless we sense our need, we will not seek God's blessings or listen for

His voice. A sense of need motivates our perseverance in prayer until we receive God's answer.

6. What can we learn from Jacob's wrestling experience?

The human preparations Jacob had made prior to meeting Esau were insufficient. Jacob felt unable to go on without God's blessing. God was ready to bless, but Jacob needed to first give up his own way.

Surrendering wholly to God is not an easy experience, but receiving divine blessing is worth every sacrifice.

7. What was the significance of Jacob's new name?

A change had taken place in Jacob's life, inside and out. He was now a prince of God, having power with God.

8. How is God honored by prevailing prayer?

Honor God by leaving the answers to our prayers in His hand, trusting Him to fulfill His purpose for our highest good. We honor Him by coming again and again, acknowledging Him as our only source of help and strength.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

When we walk with the Lord

In the light of His Word

What a glory He sheds on our way!

While we do His good will

He abides with us still,

And with all who will trust and obey.

—*John H. Sammis.*

### **Research Guide**

1. Ponder the positive response of Noah (Genesis 6:14-22) to the God-given instructions for a demanding building project.

2. Consider Solomon's humble request for the awesome task before him. (2 Chronicles 1:7-12).

3. Consider Gideon's hesitation as he pondered his God-given task. (Judges 6:36-40).