

The Book of Genesis

Chapter Twenty Eight

Jacob's Bethel

Lesson Verse:

I. Lesson Introduction

A. Everybody needs a Bethel – a place where you meet God

B. In the last chapter we learned how Jacob deceived Isaac.

1. Jacob had taken Esau's birthright in ch. 26.
2. By the end of ch. 27 Esau is furious and threatens to slay Jacob.
3. Rebekah, not satisfied with the destruction she already caused, and fearing for Jacob's life, plots to send him to her brother's house in Haran.
4. It is here, that something happens to Jacob that plants the word of God in his heart, so that later on, it can produce fruit in his life when he is humble enough to believe it!

II. Lesson

A. Jacob's _____ (21:1-5) Jacob's Flight

1. Isaac's Charge To Jacob – Separation
 - a. An Old Testament and New Testament concept
 - b. Not to be friends with the world – friends with people, but not powers
 - c. Not to intermarry with unbelievers (2Cor 6)
 - d. The Christian's life is to be strange, peculiar, strangely different (1Pet 2:9)
2. Jacob's Age
 - a. Halley's Bible Dictionary records in their commentary on ch. 28, "Jacob is thought to have been 77 at this time. He was 15 when Abraham died. Was 84 when he married. 90 when Joseph was born. 98 when he returned to Canaan. 120 when Isaac died. 130 when he went to Egypt. 147 when he died. His first 77 years were spent in Canaan. The next 20 in Haran, then 33 years in Canaan and the last 17 in Egypt."
 - b. By our standards of today, he is too old of a man to be on the run. He ought to be settling down and enjoying his retirement. However, God has many more events in store for him. He has an older brother that vowed to kill him when their daddy is dead and they have mourned for him a proper amount of time, *Gen. 27:41*. Whoever said life was over at forty knows little about Jacob?
3. Travel to Padan-Aram
 - a. Laban.
 - 1) Laban was introduced to the avid Bible reader in ch. 24 as the brother of Rebekah. In reality Laban is a man that manifests many attributes of the Anti-Christ. He is a Syrian by birth. Jacob married two of his daughters.
 - 2) While Jacob was in Haran he worked for his father-in-law. For 14 years it was nip and tuck between these two. One was trying to out do the other. Laban tricked Jacob just as Jacob tricked Esau and Isaac. He also persecuted Jacob. This is what the Anti-Christ does to the nation of Israel and what he has done for centuries.
4. The Blessings of Abraham
 - a. It is recorded that Isaac trembled exceedingly 27:33 after he thought about the blessings coming to Jacob. After he finished trembling he stated: '**yea, and he shall be blessed**. God caused his eyes to be open and he understood the magnitude of the blessings that his young son would receive.
 - b. More blessings, v. 3-4. Isaac referred to the Lord as God Almighty. This is the El Shaddai that appeared to Abram, 17:1 and told him to walk before and be perfect. Isaac passed on the eternal blessing to his son Jacob.
5. Saying Good-bye

- a. Would never see his Mom again
- b. Must have thought he would never see his Dad again – it was because Isaac was so ill, that Isaac had wanted to pass on the inheritance

B. Esau's _____ (28:6-9) – affected his actions

1. Wrong view of things – very bitter
 - a. About being cheated twice
 - b. About losing out on the inheritance
 - c. About being cast out – he was just getting what his brother was supposed to get!
2. Sought revenge
 - a. Sought to kill Jacob
 - b. Sought how to hurt his parents
3. Saw how Jacob “seemed” to obey his parents
 - a. It was always very convenient and profitable for Jacob to obey
4. Married Ishamelite women
 - a. Once he found out that Jacob was commanded not to marry the daughters of Canaan Esau added insult to injury. He goes to Ishamel's family and married his descendants for spite. This was his way of saying if you hate these people so much, I will bring some into the family.
 - b. Is this any way for a 77 year old man to act? His actions are those of a spoiled child. There is one main thing to remember about Jacob and Esau: They did not get this way over night! He did not awake one morning and say, “You know, I think I will be a brat for the rest of my life. I think I will act like a child and make everyone as miserable as possible.”
 - c. He started acting this way 77 years ago. No one ever told him he was wrong. No one ever scolded him and told him to cease. No one ever disciplined him and told him if he continued to act childishly there would be more punishment. Little by little he pushed the boundaries. Each time he pushed the boundaries his parents did not draw the line. Instead they helped make him exactly what he is.
 - d. As parents are we aware of our children's actions? Have we been lulled into accepting the devil's lie that this is just a phase or stage of life that will not last? Do we honestly believe that one day our children, or even ourselves, will wake up one morning and say from now on I will be a responsible adult? How far are we willing to extend those boundaries for our children? For self?

C. Jacob's _____ (28:10-19)

1. Jacob left his old life behind and now he faces something entirely new in Haran. God is aware of all of this and for these reasons God came to him in a dream. It was in this dream that a promise is made to him as was made to his father and grandfather. It will be up to Jacob to claim those promises.
2. The Ladder.
 - a. In his dream he viewed a ladder that reached from earth to heaven. Angels were traveling back and forth from the spiritual realm to the earthly. At one end of the ladder stood the Lord. Just so Jacob would not be confused about what he was looking at, the Lord identified Himself.
 - b. The ladder presents us with a view of the workings of the Lord. He is our bridge from earth to heaven. By and through Him we have access to heaven. By and through Him we receive blessings from heaven.
3. The promises made by God.
 - a. The Lord once again affirmed His everlasting covenant to the seeds of Abraham. Before Jacob began his life in Haran the Lord told him he had an inheritance and that his seed would multiply and spread out to the four corners of the world.
 - b. Notice that God did not tell Jacob what difficulties he would encounter for the next 14 or so years. The Lord did not tell him of the dangers, the trials, the disappointments, and the family problems that were waiting just over the next horizon. He did not tell him that he would never see his mother again. He did not tell him he would have a long life and be rich. God kept back that he would return to his home land in fear of his life.

- c. However, what the Lord told him is more important, for in examining what the Lord told him, are found abundant blessings. God did tell him his future. If any of us desire to know the future, let us peer into these promises and see if they also apply to us.
 - d. Look at these seven promises made to him.
 - 1) A land grant, v. 13.
 - 2) Every nation blessed through him, v. 14.
 - 3) I am with thee, v. 15.
 - 4) I will keep thee, v. 15.
 - 5) I will bring thee back, v. 15.
 - 6) I will not leave thee, v. 15.
 - 7) I will do everything I promised, v. 15.
4. Jacob is a man of many types.
- a. Once again the Author of our Bible presents us with a perfect example of the believer living by faith. These same seven promises that God made to Jacob are promised to those who love the Lord and walk accordingly as He instructs. If we want to know what the future holds for us, all we have to do is claim the promises.
 - b. A land grant, **John 14:1-3**. Jesus told the early church to not be troubled over his departure. He was going to prepare a place for them and would come back and take them home with Him. We have a vast land awaiting us. All we have to do is claim it. We have an inheritance not made by hands. All we have to do is claim it.
 - c. Every nation to be bless through Him, **Acts 9:15**. The great Apostle Paul, a descant of Jacob, took the gospel message over Asia Minor and into Europe. Each nation that received the message was blessed. Even so today as we sent out missionaries, we receive a portion of their blessing, for we are spiritual seeds of Abraham..
 - d. I am with thee, **2 Cor 1:20-22**. He established us in Him. He will never leave us. He has a perfect will that He wants us to do as individuals and as a church body. He will help us accomplish His will. He is ever knowing and is abundantly aware of the tasks and perils. He does not tell us what we will face and when. It is enough to know that He is with us.
 - e. I will keep thee, **Jude 1:24**. He will keep us and present us unto Himself. In so doing it gives Him great joy. The God of Creation, the God that inhabits Eternity, our Lord and Saviour is looking forward to the day when He presents us in the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. People may not glory in what we do here on this earth. We might not get the praise for doing the Lord's will. However, one day He will glory and be joyful over what we accomplish. I will keep thee! What a promise!
 - f. I will bring thee back, **Eph 2:5-7**. The day we were saved we were seated, spiritually, in a heavenly place known as the throne of grace. One day He will bring us back into this heavenly place bodily. There we will enjoy for eternity all that our Lord has.
 - g. I will not leave thee, **Heb 13:5**. Here is a promise never to leave us. He already said He would keep us. We have the Lord of Creation vowing to be with us, why should we want and be discontented? All of heaven is ours so we should not be envious of the world and what it has to offer.
 - h. I will do everything I promised, **1 Th 4:16**.
5. Jacob's reaction.
- a. Jacob realized there was something different about the place where he slept. He called the place Bethel, which means the house of God. Jacob is like many born again saved folks in that he is sleeping in the house of God. Jacob woke up and was afraid.
 - b. One day these sleepers will wake up and say this is a dreadful place. I did not realize that God expected some things from me. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God. What is more dreadful is they must answer for their laziness in not allowing God to perform His will in them.
6. Jacob's conclusion (28:16-19)
- a. He had heard from God
 - b. That place was a holy place
 - c. That place needs to be marked as a holy place in his life
 - d. But the following are important to note

- 1) Jacob is not spiritually aware yet (Mt 18:20; 1Sam 3:7; Ex 3:5; Job 9:11)
- 2) Comes to the wrong conclusions – superstitions
- 3) Very shallow understanding of God

D. **Jacob's _____** (28:20-22)

1. What he said he would do.
 - a. Jacob performed a religious act and left the house of God. With all the doubts of a new born babe in Christ he said, ***IF God will be with me...***, v. 20. Now what is wrong with that statement? If always implies doubts. Jacob walked out of the house of God after making his vows that if God does such an such, then I will do such and such. Jacob is only going to perform his vows after the Lord performs his. Is this a walk of faith?
 - b. The only thing that the Lord said that really registered with him was that God would bring him back again into his father's house. Jacob at this point in his life is oblivious to the promises God made. He only heard what he wanted to hear. His heart was back home with his parents, and not in claiming the promises of the Lord.
 - c. Jacob walked away not really believing. It will be several years later before these promises begin to register with him as to their eternal consequences. Some few years later God reminded him that he made a vow, ***Gen. 31:13***. Is there a record of Jacob ever paying his vows?
2. What do we (did we) say we would do?
 - a. As we look at Jacob and the promises made and in the future chapters we study how he treated them.
 - b. What each of us should do is examine the promises God made to us and see if we have claimed them as our own.
 - c. Are we impressed with missionary work?
 - d. Do we support missionaries with our money, time, and prayer?
 - e. Are we claiming the promises that He will never leave us even when life is bad?
 - f. Are we content with such as we have or do we envy the wealthy men of the world?
 - g. Are we sleeping in church?
 - h. Do we come to church thinking it is a social organization where we can look, dress, and act like the world?
 - i. Do we delight to do the Lord's will? Is it a delight to come to church or is it a dread?

III. Conclusion

IV. Study Questions