

## GOD BLESSES JACOB

Genesis 27:1 - 31:54  
Key Verses 28:13-15

"There above it stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

In the past lesson, we learned about the faith of Isaac. Isaac was misunderstood by many people as a weakling who could not reach the standard of faith of his father Abraham. But in fact, Isaac is a very strong man of faith who was much better and more successful than his father. He was a man of prayer. Despite the famine and persecution, he remained in the land of God's promise by always digging new wells. He was an insurmountable stalwart. Finally, he achieved spiritual victory and received God's approval as well as the recognition of worldly people.

Today's lesson is about Jacob's faith. Humanly speaking, he was an impostor who took away the firstborn blessing from his older brother Esau and had to flee to Mesopotamia from his brother's vengeance. But God loved Jacob, much more than Esau, because Jacob loved God. God gave Jacob His promise and became his God in Bethel and in Mesopotamia. When Jacob held on to the God of Abraham and Isaac and the promise of God, he went from being a single person to being a great nation and a rich man. God bless us to know Jacob's simple but whole faith in the promise of God and to live as spiritual firstborns as faith patriarchs and spiritual leaders for God's work of spiritual revival and world mission.

### I. The God of Bethel (27:1 - 28:22)

Let us look at chapter 27. This passage records that Jacob received the birthright from Isaac, even though Esau was actually the firstborn. Humanly speaking, it was cheating. But biblically, it was God's choice. When the Bible says that God chooses someone, it means that someone chooses God. Why did Jacob get God's blessing instead of Esau?

First, Esau was a pragmatist and an opportunist. Esau said, "Look, I am about to die. What good is the birthright to me?" He probably also said, "What good is the Bible study and the testimony writing to me? What good is the master's course to me?" His motto in life was, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die." As a result, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a dish of red stew. The Bible comments that Esau despised his spiritual blessing of the birthright and was an "apostate" (Hebrews 12:16).

Esau was a lazy type: he was very diligent and enthusiastic in stuffing his belly and satisfying his lusts. But he was very slow and very reluctant to obey God and learn anything. Lazy guys are usually very nice people, like Esau. If you challenge them, they usually refuse very charmingly. But the

Bible lists lazy people among those who have a place in hell.

Second, Esau was an ignoramus, and he was willfully disobedient. Chapter 28:6-8 record that Esau learned that Isaac blessed Jacob. What did Esau see? Esau saw that his parents commanded Jacob that he should not take a wife from the Canaanites. Esau saw that Jacob obeyed the words of his parents. Esau saw that his father Isaac did not like to see the daughters of Canaan. Esau saw and understood everything. But instead of learning or repenting through it, he took yet a third Canaanite wife. He chose to ignore all spiritual insight and be deliberately disobedient.

Who was Jacob? Jacob is known as a deceiver. He is truly misunderstood. The Bible says that Jacob was obedient to his parents. Jacob obeyed his mother to get the blessing of Isaac, despite his fear of his older brother Esau. He also obeyed his parents to move to Mesopotamia. As a second son, Jacob was disadvantaged. But he did not give up; rather, he fought for and obtained God's blessing. That is why the Bible says, "But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first." (Matthew 19:30) Jacob chose God. Therefore, God chose him, too. That is why God loved Jacob but hated Esau (Rom 9:13). Jacob was actually the last, but he became the first.

King George V of England had two sons, Prince Edward and Prince Albert. The firstborn, Prince Edward, was handsome and very talented. But he gave up his birthright as king to marry the woman he wanted. His ulterior motive was, "The Nazis will soon conquer England anyway. What good is my birthright as king?" His younger brother, Prince Albert, was different. He was shy, of poor health, and had a severe stuttering problem. But he married the right woman and took up the mission of a wartime king. As King George VI, he guided England through the difficult time of WW2 with his speeches and addresses, overcoming his stuttering through much training and self-discipline.

I know a young man who remained obedient to the words of his parents, especially his mother, during the time of persecution. He did not act pragmatically or opportunistically, but he chose to be mistreated together with the people of God. He had once been the last, but he has now become a firstborn and is growing into the spiritual leader for this generation.

Our newly baptized, Josua Elsholz, Samuel Abraham, Sarah Schweitzer, Peter Josef and Sarah Grace, as well as our Josiah and Ezekiel team, are seeking the spiritual blessing of obedience by cooperating for the work of God, for example, with history lectures. Therefore, like Jacob, God will bless them very abundantly and use them as the global spiritual leaders and firstborn.

Isaac and Rebekah sent Jacob to Mesopotamia to protect him from the persecution of his elder brother Esau, and so he could establish a house church with a woman of faith. Jacob obeyed the direction of his parents. He moved from Beersheba to Haran. He was all alone. When night came, he went to sleep. Since he had no pillow, he took a stone and laid his head on it. Perhaps he wept that, left alone by all the world, he had to sleep on the hard ground. That night he dreamed. In his dream he saw a ladder that reached from the ground to heaven. On this ladder the angels were ascending and descending. At the top of the ladder stood the Lord God. The Lord did not leave Jacob alone. The Lord spoke to Jacob and gave him His promise. Let's look at verses 28:13-15: "There above it stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have

promised you." What can we learn from this promise of God to Jacob?

First, God identified Himself as the God of his father Abraham and as Isaac's God. God acknowledged Abraham's faith and also Isaac's faith and was pleased to call Himself their God. God is not a God from unknown and distant times. He is the God of our parents, God's servants and countless predecessors in faith. Nor is it the case that everyone would have to find their own God. God is a God of history. God is the God of Dr. Samuel Lee and of M. Dr. Peter Chang. We stand on the shoulders of giants. Jacob looks like an impostor. But later we see that in his childhood he had learned the faith of his father Isaac very well. He always referred and invoked the God of Isaac, the "terror of Isaac." This became the firm foundation for him to overcome all difficulties and impossibilities and develop his own faith. In this regard, it is a great privilege that we can learn and inherit the faith and God of our parents, God's servants and the predecessors in faith in our childhood.

Second, God wanted to become Jacob's God through His promise. At the moment, Jacob was a fugitive. But God gave him the promise that He wanted to give him the land on which he was sleeping with his head on a hard stone. Jacob was all alone at the moment. But God gave him the promise to let his descendants become like the dust on earth that blew into his nose and eyes on his sleeping bed, to spread him out in all directions, and to make him a blessing to all generations on earth. Finally, God promised to be with him and bring him back to the land of promise.

When Jacob awoke from sleep, early in the morning he built a stone monument and named the place Bethel. Jacob also made a vow. What was the content of his vow? Let's look at 28:20-22: "Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's household, then the Lord will be my God

and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth." Here we see Jacob's simple but whole faith. Jacob's faith and desires at this time were very simple. We also see the good spiritual manners he had learned from his parents: to deal with God in a binding way, to build God an altar or house of worship, and to tithe. He did not complain or feel sorry for himself. Nor did he calculate whether God's promise was possible or not. What matters is that he chose God. He made a life decision that the Lord would be his God and to live with the promise of God.

I am very thankful to God that especially in this time of persecution and pandemic, I can see and learn the simple faith of the servant of God in the promise of God from Ezekiel 37:10. The servant of God did not pity himself, but chose to stand before God and to abide by God's promise that the spiritual bones of the dead would be made alive again and raised up as an exceedingly great spiritual army. With simple faith, despite his age, he challenged the work of God to form Bible study teams, mobilize the Next Generation and sheep through the spiritual life community, and even practically challenged the M-mission with our KBG workers.

I may also choose God and God's promise and live as a spiritual firstborn. My God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, of Dr. Samuel Lee and of my father. I stand on the shoulders of giants. I may move on to the land of medical school and M-mission and online mission with the promise of God from Ezekiel 37:10 and Ezra 7:10. I choose to hold on to the spiritual firstborn blessing of, for example, early morning prayer, life fellowship, breakfast fellowship, and spiritual cooperation, and may be used as a firstborn and spiritual leader for the spiritual revival work and world mission. God bless each of us, like Jacob, to make a life decision with simple faith to choose God and God's promise and live as spiritual firstborns.

## II. The God of Mesopotamia (29:1-31:54)

Finally, Jacob came to the region of Haran and sought his uncle Laban. He stopped for a rest at a well. There Rachel, Laban's daughter, also came to the well with her father's sheep. When Jacob saw Rachel, he was very happy and fell directly in love with her. Laban also had another daughter, Leah, who was actually the first daughter. Leah was a faithful and inwardly beautiful woman, but she had an eye problem, very likely a strabismus problem, so that her eyes were without luster. In contrast, Rachel was beautiful in stature and had a beautiful face. That is why Jacob was only interested in Rachel. For Rachel, Jacob wanted to work for Laban for seven years. Because of the hope of marriage, the seven years passed like seven days. Then they celebrated a big wedding. But the next day Jacob realized that his uncle Laban had given him his first daughter Leah as a wife. Jacob did not want to accept this. He was intransigent and wanted Rachel at any price. So he committed himself to work for his uncle for another seven years.

What was Jacob's family life like? Let's look at chapter 29:31-30:24. Leah loved Jacob so much. To Leah, Jacob was her dream husband. But Jacob despised Leah and loved only Rachel. Leah was at an incredible disadvantage compared to Rachel. Her situation was hopeless from a human point of view. But Leah did not become depressed. She fought. She struggled with God. When the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, he made her fruitful. Leah gave birth to four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. When Leah was so fertile, Rachel realized that she could not rest on her beauty, but that she also had to wake up and fight. She gave Jacob her maid Bilhah as a wife, so that two more sons, Dan and Naphtali, were born to Jacob. It was a fight to the death. Rachel testified, "Beyond all measure I have fought with my sister, and I have conquered." But Leah did not rest either, but continued to fight. She gave Jacob her own maidservant Zilpah as a wife, resulting in two more sons, Gad and Asher.

Rachel was very desperate. Therefore, she bought love apples from Reuben, Leah's son, at the price of allowing Leah to hold conjugal communion with Jacob. Although it seemed like a bargain, the Bible says that God answered Leah's prayer (17). So Leah bore Jacob another Issachar and Zebulun, for a total of six sons and a daughter Dinah. Finally, God remembered Rachel and had her also bear a son, Joseph. Rachel eventually learned humility and confessed, "God has taken my shame from me." She also learned to pray to God and asked God for His grace to give her another son.

For 14 years, Jacob could not do much except work very hard. He first became an assistant shepherd for seven years and then a specialist shepherd for another seven years. He would go to work early in the morning and return late at night, and then fall asleep dead tired. During this time, the work of God was happening through the strong women of faith who fought to the death. Thus, although Jacob was very bound by his work and could not do much, 12 sons were born. These became the progenitors of the 12 tribes of Israel.

In the time of crisis and being bound, the work of God often happens through the strong women of faith who, like Rachel and Leah, are spiritual warriors who struggle with God. When I was studying and working in the business mission for 9 years and had no job or proper earnings, M. Pauline struggled heroically to cooperate with the servant of God and also gave birth and raised four 3rd generation missionaries by faith through early morning prayer. When Sh. Johannes was working in the intensive care unit, M. Maria Chang struggled to serve the pioneering work of the medical school and the invitational work and also the 3rd generation work. M. Monica struggled to build the house of God. M. Deborah struggled to serve the one-to-one bible study and disciple making ministry. In this time of persecution, our Mothers of Faith are struggling to serve the Next Generation with the Servant of God, the Work of God, the sheep, e.g. with the Psalms Master Course, and also

challenging the World Mission through KBG and the M-Mission. By doing so, God makes His work grow and prosper mightily especially in the time of persecution.

Let us look at chapter 30:25-43. Here we can learn about Jacob's struggle of faith. Jacob had become a chief shepherd by now. But there were no gifts for him. Jacob negotiated with Laban that all the spotted, speckled and dark-colored animals should be his reward. Laban said, "Yes, very gladly!" But practically speaking, Laban took all the dark-colored animals away from Jacob. It is said that it is impossible to become rich under a boss like Laban. It is also said that in Germany it is impossible to become rich or to serve the disciple making ministry. But Jacob did not give up. He developed a special breeding method so that the white animals suddenly produced many colored animals. His method was logically incomprehensible, but his method was very creative and fruitful. So Jacob became rich beyond measure in 6 years, so that he had many sheep, maids and servants, camels and donkeys.

The servant of God sometimes invents methods that are not so understandable at first sight, but very creative and fruitful, e.g. Inductive bible study, GLEF, Master Course, International Bible Seminar, Leadership Seminar in the morning with history lectures. Thus, God has been working among us very powerfully in the past two years in spite of pandemic and persecution, making us exceedingly rich.

Let's look at chapter 31:1-20. When Jacob became very rich, richer than Laban and his sons, Laban's attitude toward Jacob changed. In this, God's guidance was evident. Let's look at verse 3: "Then the Lord said to Jacob, "Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you."" But it's not easy to leave your longtime boss. Jacob first consulted with Rachel and Leah. Jacob witnessed to Rachel and Leah, who had become not only his wives but also his fellow warriors, the God of Isaac and the God of Bethel. Rachel

and Leah competed very fiercely with each other without compromise and without giving anything to each other. But when it came to God's direction, they worked very well together and supported Jacob, saying, "All now what God has said to you, do!" Encouraged by his co-workers, Jacob separated himself from the Laban organization with his family and with all his belongings.

How did Laban respond? After three days, it was noticeable that Jacob had stopped coming to work. Laban realized that he had lost his best worker. So Laban and his brothers chased after Jacob and caught up with him after seven days in the mountains of Gilead. But God, the God of Bethel, to whom Jacob had entrusted his life, protected Jacob and kept his promise. Chapter 31:24 says, "Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad." Laban and Jacob made a covenant with each other. They swore to each other by the God of Nahor and by the God of Isaac, the "terror of Isaac." As a parting gift, Jacob invited Laban and his brothers to dinner. Thus they parted in peace and on equal terms.

After 20 years, Jacob returned to the land of promise. It all began with the God and with the vow of Bethel. In the beginning, Jacob had faith only in the God of Abraham and Isaac. But within 20 years, Jacob grew in his own faith in the God of Bethel and in the God of Mesopotamia. His faith and testimony grew deeper and more confident. In the beginning he was alone. He had only the promise of God in his pocket. But after twenty years, he became a great people and a rich man, much greater and richer than Esau, and returned to his homeland. We can learn here that God fulfills His promise and that God blesses and becomes the God of those who live by faith in God's promise and keep God's promise. We can learn here that faith in the promise is as small as a mustard seed at first, but in time it becomes as large as a tree under which the birds of the air make their dwelling.

A missionary was sent out to a mission country. He was alone and had only 100 USD in his pocket. That's why when he wanted to rent a center and was asked for collateral, he said to his landlord, "Don't worry, my father is very rich." A servant of God gave him God's promise from Mark 6:37: "You give them something to eat!" The missionary struggled with this promise to serve the students at Rutgers and Princeton University with Bible study and many next-generation co-workers and many international guests with five loaves and two fish. Within 30 years, his work became a great work and he also became a rich man with many houses and apartments. He is like a Jacob; but a servant of God helps him to continue living with the promise of God for world mission.

Our sheep, e.g. Olaf and our Next Generation, look small at the moment, like a mustard seed and a Jacob, respectively.

But through faith in the God of their parents and the servants of God and the ancestors of faith, and a life decision to base their lives on the promise word of God, they will become a great people, in the next 20 years.

In today's text, we have learned that everything begins with the blessing of God, namely with faith in the God of our parents, servants of God and ancestors of faith. We may struggle like Jacob to inherit God's blessing and grow as the firstborn for the work of God. Let us, like Jacob, make a simple but whole life decision like the vow of Bethel with a word of promise from God, and thus live by faith.