

Jacob's Vow: Returning to My Father's House

Michael L. Ford, Th.D.

Sabbath Sermon

1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

2 Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.

3 And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;

4 And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

5 And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

6 When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;

7 And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram;

8 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father;

9 Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

11 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.

12 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.

13 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;

14 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.

15 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.

16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.

17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.

20 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,

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

22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee. Genesis 28

Introduction

My childhood had an advantage many in this world do not have. I was raised in the church. My father was ordained as a Deacon in the first church we attended in Macon, Georgia, and Mom and Dad were in church and they brought me right along. In those days I got my basic Bible education in Sunday School and preaching. It required no effort on my part. I was always being exposed to it whether my young mind was interested or not. I grew up thinking that I knew a lot about the Bible. This is the same childish idea even many people out in the world have, even when they are a lot older.

When did I begin to study the Scripture, you may ask? It was a haphazard thing until after I was a grown man with a wife and son. God had a hard time with me, and I am thankful that He is the kind of God that He is. As I began to study, people would say that I knew a lot about the Bible. I would tell them the one thing I had learned was that I knew how little that I knew.

The truth was, I still had a lot of growing to do. By the time I became a pastor when people said I was knowledgeable in the Scripture, I would reply that I am so ignorant I don't even know how much I don't know.

Now, I have grown old studying the word of God. I have to admit I still don't know how much I don't know, but I can say that each time I return to old and familiar passages and am open to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, I find hidden depths of wonders and endless treasures I never discovered before. What an exciting prospect it is to one day make my journey into eternity and be blessed with perfect knowledge and not only have all my

questions answered, but receive answers to questions I was not even smart enough to ask. I am sure of this one thing. I am going to have a wonderful time up there!

Now I am going to come back down to earth because I want to share with you a little of some blessings I have received in studying the word of God. This is a subject that the title I gave this sermon is inadequate to express, but if you love the truths of God woven in Scripture, as I do, you are going to enjoy this time we have in the word.

I am going to attempt to break down this insight into three areas that fit together as a whole:

The first area is the prophecies of Isaac and Jacob.

The second area is the commitment of God and the vow of Jacob.

The third area is the prophetic foreshadowing in the text.

Through all three areas runs the theme of obedience and a specific reference to "my father's house." There is not one, but two houses in view. The first is the house of Abraham and Isaac; the second is the House of our Heavenly Father in Heaven.

Since we are approaching Mother's Day, let me throw in a bit more in that regard. You will please take note of the difference between Esau and Jacob in their wives to be found in the text. I will raise the question for your future consideration. Do you not think that Esau would not have been aware of the guidance offered by the parents? Yet, he had already married two women of Canaan before Jacob would even be sent to find a wife. Remember the two young men are the same age That is also something to think about. But now I return to the subject at hand.

The first area of insight

The prophecies of Isaac and Jacob tell us a lot about the two people.

Isaac said, God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

The sequence of events in this chapter comes after his instruction to Jacob to go to the family of his mother to get himself a wife. I would suggest to you that Isaac understood Jacob had not yet looked to Elohim as his God. He had referred previously to God as Isaac's God and not "my God," when he credited God with something God had not done, at least not directly, the way Jacob had explained it to Isaac when the stew was brought so quickly.

There is a suspicion in my mind that Isaac recognized all along that the blessing of inheritance was to be Jacob's and not Esau's. This is why you do not see Jacob being reproved for his actions as one might expect. It was also another reason for Jacob's lineage not to be tainted with the genetic code of the Canaanites and other Gentiles.

The problem then was Jacob's spiritual state. For he was not the man he needed to be for God to make him truly the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. While God was not unknown to Jacob, he needed to make Elohim his God and then grow in what we call in the Christian Age, Sanctification, being more and more set aside to God.

The prophecy of Jacob is easy to miss, especially when we read it in translation. Allow me then to point it out:

And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. He called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was Luz at first.

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:

And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

The actual prophetic portion of the text is *this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house*. He had already recognized the place where he had slept as Bethel which means the House of God or more specifically as the House of Elohim. The pouring of oil upon the stone was an act of consecration, but he uses the words "Shall be" and with the setting of the mastaba or pillar there is a future commitment that will only be fulfilled after the children of Israel come out of Egypt. This is the prophetic portion of what Jacob says.

The prophetic utterances of both Isaac and Jacob have in common the commitment of posterity. They involve those yet unborn. I could go off on a tangent on that subject, but let us keep some focus on the subject at hand.

The second area of insight

Next, we turn to the commitment or Promise of God and the vow of Jacob.

The promise of God is the unconditional echo of the promise made to Abraham and Isaac:

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.

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; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and the north, and the south: and in thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

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.

Notice the place of God in Jacob's dream, He is above the ladder; above the angels ascending and descending. In short, this is an image telling us He is running what is going on. Do not miss the message in his placement. He is in command of the whole show and therefore can keep what He is telling Jacob that He is going to do,

Also, you should not miss this is God appearing in human form. Thus we know which Person of the godhead is making the promise. It is Yeshua/Jesus who is speaking to Jacob. While Jacob will not see Jesus whether soever he goes, he will never be alone, Jacob will be one of those fortunate Old Testament personages for who the Spirit of God in the Person of the Holy Spirit shall never be far from for the rest of his life. Remember Jesus describes the Holy Spirit in the Greek New Testament as "another such as myself."

Jacob's vow in response to the promise is a bit more complex and has set the rabbis of Judah into discussions ever since:

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:

Though what he says seems to be rather straightforward in the English Bible translation we call the King James version it is not. The fact it is also not entirely straightforward in the Hebrew Bible has been why the rabbinate has approached it with questioning. Evidence you can see is that those things Jacob says which we understand conditionally are contradicted by his pouring oil on the stone before he speaks, and then setting up the memorial stone after he makes his statement.

I must remind you that nothing in the Bible is unimportant. The acts are important; the vow is important; the sequence in which things are done is important. Let me make the matter clearer if I can. The commitment to God had already taken place as evidenced in what Jacob said after the dream and with the naming of the place. His words are not those that signify when he would accept God, but when the relationship would become mature. In that sense, it was prophetic of the process of relationship with God we call Sanctification. It is a lifetime experience.

The third area of insight

Now it is time to address the prophetic foreshadows of the text. We have already touched on a facet of the foreshadowing in Jacob's life. The return to his father's house and spiritual maturation. Jacob would live alongside his father for a dozen years or so until Isaac was gathered to his fathers at the age of 180 and he and Esau would side by side bury him as Isaac and Ishmael had done with Abraham before. God had fulfilled the vow of Jacob to the end, but that is not an ending.

All of this was a foreshadowing of a greater matter. You will remember that God, Elohim, had spoken to Jacob from a position above the angels ascending and descending to carry out His will. In a figure, He had spoken from His Father's house. The Name of God, Elohim is plural, meaning that while Jacob saw the Person of Jesus, He was still with His Father. In effect Jesus was speaking from His Father's home, I say again.

There would come a day when the Son of God would leave his father's home to seek a Bride. In doing so He would undergo many hardships all in perfect fellowship with the Father, even as God was with Jacob in the years of his exile from home and he endured trials that seemed but a small matter for the sake of winning Rachel.

But there would come a day when the fellowship between God the Father and God the Son would be broken, It was the day He became cursed for the sake of redeeming the world, for it is written: "cursed is every man that hangs on a tree!" Jesus took on Himself our sins to become the perfect sacrifice for sin.

At that moment the skies became black and the earth reeled in anguish. But that was not the end of the story for Jesus overcame sin and death because of his sinless condition and He returned in peace to His Father's home because He brought with Him the perfect sacrifice for sin, Himself.

One day very soon Jesus will come to get His Bride and return with her to His Father's house in peace, even as Jacob returned to his father's house long ago. Do you see why I say this was a foreshadowing of things to come?

The ultimate destination of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the presence of the LORD. It is our ultimate destination as well if you have put your faith in Him and made your vow.

Jonsquill Ministries Sabbath Sermons 2024