

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

12-4-19

Genesis 28

Isaac Blesses Jacob - Verses 1-9

¹So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him: "Do not marry a Canaanite woman. ²Go at once to Paddan Aram, to the house of your mother's father Bethuel. Take a wife for yourself there, from among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. ³May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. ⁴May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham." ⁵Then Isaac sent Jacob on his way, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, who was the mother of Jacob and Esau. ⁶Now Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he commanded him, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman," ⁷and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram. ⁸Esau then realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac; ⁹so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, in addition to the wives he already had.

28:1 Isaac blessed him, and charged him - Those that have the blessing must keep the charge annexed to it, and not think to separate what God has joined.

28:3 Two great promises Abraham was blessed with, and Isaac here entails them both upon Jacob. 1. The promise of heirs that God make thee fruitful and multiply thee. 2. Through his loins that all the families of the earth should be blessed.

28:5 Rebekah is here called Jacob's and Esau's mother - Jacob is named first, not only because he had always been his mother's darling, but because he was now made his father's heir, and Esau was postponed.

28:9 Ishmael was Isaac's half brother, the son of Abraham and Hagar, Sarah's servant girl (16:1-4, 15). After marrying two foreign girls (26:34), Esau hoped his marriage into Ishmael's family would please his parents, Isaac and Rebekah. However "he failed to consider that Ishmael had been separated from the house of Abraham and family of promise by the appointment of God; so that it only furnished another proof that he had no thought of the religious interests of the chosen family and was unfit to be the recipient of divine revelation."

This great story teaches that when God's people know His will they should not resort to deceptive, manipulative schemes to attain spiritual success but must pursue God's will righteously.

Every member of Isaac's family behaved in a self-centered and unprincipled manner, yet God graciously overcame their sins. This reminds us that His mercy is the ultimate ground of salvation.

Jacob's Dream at Bethel - Verses 10-22

¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. ¹¹ When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. ¹² He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ 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." ¹⁶ When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." ¹⁷ He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." ¹⁸ Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. ¹⁹ He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz. ²⁰ 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 ²¹ so that I return safely to my father's household, then the LORD will be my God ²² 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."

28:10-15 God's covenant promise to Abraham and Isaac was offered to Jacob as well. But it was not enough to be Abraham's grandson; Jacob had to establish his own personal relationship with God. God has no grandchildren; each person must have a personal relationship with him. It is not enough to hear wonderful stories about Christians in your family. You need to become part of the story yourself (see Galatians 3:6-7).

28:10-17 "The ladder was a visible symbol of the real and uninterrupted fellowship between God in heaven and His people upon earth. The angels upon it carry up the wants of men to God, and bring down the assistance and protection of God to men. The ladder stood there upon the earth, just where Jacob was lying in solitude, poor, helpless, and forsaken by men. Above in heaven stood Jehovah, and explained in words the symbol which he saw. Proclaiming Himself to Jacob as the God of his fathers, He not only confirmed to him all the promises of the fathers in their fullest extent, but promised him protection on his journey and a safe return to his home (Genesis 28:13-15). But as the fulfillment of this promise to Jacob was still far off, God added the firm assurance, "I will not leave thee till I have done (carried out) what I have told thee."

28:19 Bethel was about 10 miles north of Jerusalem and 60 miles north of Beersheba, where Jacob left his family. This was where Abraham made one of his first sacrifices to God when he entered the land. At first, Bethel became an important center for worship; later, it was a center of idol worship. The prophet Hosea condemned its evil practices.

28:20-22 "The assurance of God's presence should bring about in every believer the same response of worship and confidence it prompted in Jacob. This is the message from the beginning: God by grace visits His people and promises them protection and provision so that they might be a blessing to others. They in turn were to respond in faith, fearing Him, worshiping Him, offering to Him, vowing to Him, and making memorials for future worshipers at such places."

Jacob's relationship with God was quite different from what Abraham or Isaac's relationship had been. God tested Abraham, but Jacob tested God. God told Abraham to leave his country before he entered into blessing, but Jacob imposed conditions on God before he vowed to bless God. He was willing to accept God's promises, but he did not commit himself to God until God proved faithful to him personally. God blessed Jacob because of God's election and Abraham and Isaac's faith more than because of Jacob's faith at this time.

Many believers bargain with God as Jacob did here. They agree to worship Him on their terms rather than because God has proven Himself faithful in the past. God often accommodates such weak faith, but the fact that He does does not commend the practice of bargaining with God.

The revelation of God's presence and promised blessings inspires genuine worship. This worship is the appropriate response to such revelation.