

Leaving
God
Behind

Genesis 28:1 – 22



~ Our Spiritual Safari was awkwardly stuck in the cave-home of Isaac and Rebekah during a most uncomfortable family encounter which we witnessed ad nauseam in our last report; and we're still here for another rather sickening leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God. By the end of this report, however, we're leaving this home and moving out on the desert with Jacob as he spends his first night away from home - away from momma – out in the wilderness. Perhaps he won't be so lonely if we're along with him to hold his hand? Or maybe he still will be? Either way, in our previous report we witnessed the most despicable way man has of dealing with each other within a family; and this is a picture of the modern family today – not some caveman family – although it is barbaric.

Well, Jacob couldn't blame his own lying and deceitfulness on a bad family atmosphere. Those are choices we all make in life. He was loved and spoiled by momma Rebekah; and I'm sure by old man Isaac, too. However, Rebekah manipulated him into doing something that was shamefully dishonorable. Jacob did it; and he stole the birthright from Esau. It already belonged to Jacob; and the formality of the blessing was more of a family ritualistic statement than anything – totally unnecessary overall. God had been the One Who gave the blessing to Isaac in the first place; and it is God that is directing the blessing here with Jacob. God had already established that Jacob would have the birth right. This act by Isaac will cause the Lord to deal with Isaac very definitely very soon. Personally, I'm glad to see this example of the home here because it tells me that I am not the only one in the world with which the Lord has dealt with the hard way.

It was very logical and made perfect sense to Rebekah at the time to send Jacob back to her brother's house. Rebekah could do it under the guise of getting Jacob a proper wife, too. Of course, the real reason was to keep him

alive after tricking his dad and brother. Rebekah didn't mention any of that to Isaac - and Isaac was already old and well stricken in years anyways, remember. He didn't get out of the house much anymore. He wasn't totally in tune with what was going on outside with the family – nor within it. So, Rebekah and Jacob have no compunction whatsoever about deceit and false dealing – and they do it in the name of obeying God. This is exactly how it still happens today. This is how it happened back at the dawn of mankind. This is how it will happen in the future until Christ returns and, well, it's messed up, friends – and God absolutely hates it....

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.

~ It should be painfully obvious that there is absolutely ZERO spiritual perception here on the part of Esau. It must have been very, very frustrating for Isaac and Rebekah to see that Esau simply didn't comprehend why Ishmael was as rejected from this family as any Philistine's or Canaanite's would be. Remember, Esau's marriages caused Isaac and Rebekah a "grief of mind." That's a chronic, continual and disturbed mental state aggravated with tension and dysfunction on every level within the family - from which there is neither rest nor deliverance, my beloved. If you don't think God hates your deceitfulness and trickery – think again. It isn't good – and these are God's people. This must have been quite a wake-up call for Isaac that Esau really wasn't fit to be the priest of the family....

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.

~ Obviously, Jacob traveled quite a distance on the first day of his trip down to Uncle Laban's house. Bethel is about twelve miles north of Jerusalem and Jacob started out about twenty miles south of Jerusalem; maybe more - and up to thirty miles. Jacob wasn't wasting any time because he wanted to get as far out in front of Esau as he could. The problem was: the farther Jacob gets away from Esau the farther he gets away from home. How do you think Jacob felt that first night when he laid down to get some sleep? I, personally, think Jacob nodded off the minute his head hit the rock. Have you ever used a rock as a pillow? Bethel, where we now see Jacob asleep, and dreaming is a very dreary place. It has been described by another as: a bleak moorland, that is, not suitable for farming; it's just broad, forbidding, open land. Topically, Bethel is 1,200 feet above sea level and is just a string of bare rocks and exposed land with some hills.

It's nothing special – except it's going to be the place where Jacob will hit the high point of his spiritual life....

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.

~ Now the sun is coming up again. It's a brand-new day for Jacob; but he really misses his mom now. He's out in the middle of nowhere, and he looks around and says to himself, "....there's no turning back now." Jacob is probably so hungry right now - but there are no servants with bacon and eggs ready to go, 'ya know? He's also lonely. He can see a fresh perspective of his family from the outside that he never saw before. I'm sure he really missed them. So, Jacob begins to think. He thinks about this dream where God has just affirmed, re-affirmed and confirmed the promise first given to Abraham – then to his dad, Isaac – and now this has been passed on. Remembrance of last night's dream is a real comfort to Jacob right now.

The vision was of a ladder that reached to Heaven - and I think everyone has heard this story at some point. What does it really mean? Remember, the Lord Jesus will later call Nathaniel, that smart-aleck who asked, "....can any good thing come out Nazareth?" Well, Jesus still called Nathaniel - and

Nathaniel asked Jesus, "...how did you know Me?" - and Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree." Nathaniel said, "...Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; the King of Israel." Jesus saith, "you're pretty easy to convince" – and Nathaniel was pretty easy to convince. Thomas, on the other hand, took many years before he came into the light.

Stay with me here – we're talking about Jacob's ladder. The Lord Jesus saith unto Nathaniel, "because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? You shall see greater things than these. Verily I say unto thee you shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." The ladder is Christ! This book is about Christ. The Spiritual Safari is ABOUT CHRIST! The Bible is Christ. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God, and the Word was with God....and the Word became flesh. It's Christ! We are looking for the Son of God with Whom He is well pleased on EVERY SINGLE PAGE of Scripture. I try to point Him out as often as I can; but I don't find Him as much as I would like to, I can tell you that. That doesn't mean He isn't there. No, the problem is with me, friends. God is ONLY speaking to a lost and dying world through His Word today. You can't barge directly into the Throne Room of the Father whenever you want to and in just any condition. You would be killed at the outer gate. You wouldn't even get close! It doesn't work like that.

Amongst the 99.666% of useless testimony I hear in the church today, someone says, "...well, I was converted and I just came directly to God because I have access to Him." – Friends, no, it's not like that – and it never was in the Word of God - and it never will be. We ONLY have access to God through the grace we are given by the Lord Jesus Christ. There's no other way. Jesus Himself said, "...no man comes unto the Father but by Me." The biggest hindrance to that fellowship with the Father is unconfessed sins, too, by the way. The angels are ascending and descending on the ladder of Christ because they come from Him – from Christ Jesus Himself! Sinners don't climb this ladder, my beloved; they climb the corporate ladder of the world.

So, this first time the ladder parable is given it's given to Jacob. The Lord Jesus said to Nathaniel, "in you there is no guile." That means there's no

Jacob the deceitful trickster in Nathaniel. Nathaniel was just a wise guy being humorous when he asked about any good thing from Nazareth. Jacob, on the other hand, will be dealt with very harshly by God because Jacob's actions were despicable. Jacob has so much to learn. How about us today, friends? Does this expedition show you how little you really know? It does that to me. Most people probably already knew that about me, though. I feel like I could expand all of these subjects out into full reports. Sometimes, in fact, always, I'm never sure where to draw the line on the comment – I am heavily dependent on Our Guide, the Holy Spirit Himself! It's no wonder God has to discipline me as He does. Every son He receives He scourges and disciplines. Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. God disciplined Abraham - and He disciplined Isaac – and now – Jacob

There are too many church members today who don't know the Lord – they just take up space. What's worse is: Jesus doesn't know them. It can be painful to watch them act out their charade of religion. There are make-believers on this forum on which I teach, too, of course – and they are the biggest hypocrites in the world. You will see them come and go as we move through the entire Word of God in our Spiritual Safari. Discipline will come to us and it happens so we might develop some backbone in our walk for God - and it will allow us to make it across the myriad landscapes we will soon traverse in our safari. This knowledge all puts courage in our lives and enables us to stand for God; and the mechanics are made possible by angels ascending and descending on the Son of God....

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.

~ This is the perfect verse to dedicate a church with. I know that in twenty years Dr. McGee dedicated at least 25 churches and used this verse exclusively. How dreadful is this place? It's a shock to most people and the rest of the message is spent trying to get them to be your friends again, which never works. The ones who agree are the ones who are NOT running away from their family. The gossiping sinner who refuses to confess their sins and who is constantly running away from God – if they are even still reading this report - just had a realization that the Lord is in this place! See, when Jacob ran away from home he had a very limited view of God. Jacob

was sure that when he left home he was leaving God behind, also; but he found out last night God was one step ahead of him. What makes the house of God dreadful? Every House of God should be dreadful to the sinner running away from God - because they teach the Word of God properly, correctly and completely; completely being the keyword here. The church is where we are to meet with the Lord and come Face to face with Him via the ladder let down from 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,

~ Jacob honestly believes he is very smart here; but he has already lost – because he’s STILL trying to horse-trade with God! Jacob is attempting to strike a tit for tat deal when the Lord has already told Jacob He was going to get him home one day. Jacob has so much to learn. God had already said He was going to keep Jacob and bring Jacob back and give him the land from the birthright so he can pass it on to his children. That’s when Jacob says, “....if You’ll do this, I’ll serve You” - but God doesn’t do business with us that way, friends - and He didn’t do business with Jacob that way that day, either.

If God had struck a deal then Jacob would NEVER have made it back home again – trust me. He might not have made it to Uncle Laban’s! God brought Jacob out of the land and God brings Jacob back into the land by His grace and mercy. Period. When Jacob finally comes the other way back by Bethel – when he is running from Laban - he’ll be a much wiser man – but in the same sorry condition. However, when Jacob comes back through Bethel it will be to praise God and worship Him and thank Him for His mercy and grace; and God will be merciful to Jacob. If you love God you will really

want to serve Him because He is merciful. It's bondage in love. That's the way God wants you and that's the way God wants me – and it's the only way He will accept either of us....

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.

~ So, incredibly, we end this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God with Jacob still trying to wheel and deal with God - but God still isn't doing business with Jacob. That causes Jacob to disguise his praise with a caveat. Jacob says, "....if God gives to me I'll give back to Him." Well, that thinking will literally get you stuck with God, friends. Most Christians today are in a veritable Mexican stand-off with the Lord in their everyday lives. They never study the Bible. Thinking like theirs reveals that they haven't learned anything, really. It means they are separated from this safari group. Of course, those people stopped reading a LONG time ago anyways. Well, either way, this also shows how we need many, many, more lessons in the Word of God ~

