

Jacob (Gen. 28)

Part 1

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[00:00:01] Now let us read a few passages in the book of Genesis, first of all in chapter 28, beginning at verse 10.

Genesis 28, beginning at verse 10.

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

And he lighted upon a certain place, and tithed there all night, because the sun was set. And he took of the stones of that place, and put them there for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed. And behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and atop 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. [00:01:04] 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 to the north, and to the south. And in thee, and in 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. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place. And I knew it not.

The next chapter, and assuming that the story is reasonably well known, we shall read only verse 20, chapter 29, verse 20.

[00:02:08] And Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her.

And finally in chapter 45, verse 13.

We've gone over really to the story of Joseph, when he speaks about his father Jacob, in verse 13, he says to his brothers, And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen.

Ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt.

I'm sure that almost everyone who is a Bible reader, would understand that regarding the five Old

Testament characters, [00:03:09] concerning whom it is our purpose to speak together on the evenings of this week, that their story can be interpreted, in its meaning for us, in at least two clearly distinct ways.

In the first place, they are to us examples, in their own faith, walking before God, and being directed by him, and being made partakers of his holiness, and the purpose of God being worked out through his will in their lives. But quite distinctly from this, it is true of them, that they are very important pictures, or types, presenting to us the truth about God, the Father, and the Son, and perhaps about the dispensations that are spoken about in Scripture. [00:04:06] Now, this evening, it is my share to speak about the typical view of the life of Jacob, and Mr. Waller is to speak to you about the direct example of Jacob's life. When we think of these men, of whom we are speaking this week, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and David, the other four speak very clearly indeed.

I don't suppose any of us would have any doubt as to what is, in broad and general terms, the typical significance of the lives of these men of God in the Old Testament. Now, I don't for a moment say that this is not the same with Jacob. Indeed, I feel sure it must, in fact, be the same. But I certainly do have to admit that it isn't made clear to me with the same clearness [00:05:04] as I feel that I can see the typical significance of the lives of the others. Therefore, what I propose to do for the very few minutes is to make a few suggestions to you as to things that may help us together in making perhaps a little step forward in our view of the typical meaning of the life of Jacob. One of the first things that strikes us, if we begin to think about this subject, is that wonderful story in Exodus chapter 3 of how Moses turned aside to see that great sight, the burning bush, the bush burning and yet not being consumed.

And in the end, he realized the presence of God. He heard the voice saying, take off the shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy. Now, at that time, and indeed on other occasions, God called himself the God of Abraham. [00:06:07] First of all, the God of your father. But he says the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

Now, this in itself is a striking suggestion that there is some particular way in which concerning the revelation of God, these three names ought to be joined together in some kind of unity.

Now, there's no doubt in any Christian mind and heart. And we had the story very beautifully presented to us again yesterday evening. There's no doubt in any Christian mind and heart that in the story of Abraham and Isaac, we have the story of how the father sent the son to be the savior of the world. In the words, take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, [00:07:02] we seem to hear a kind of echo beforehand. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

And so we may reverently see that Abraham and Isaac in type present to us the knowledge of the father and the son.

Now, they have not been wanting those students of scripture who have thought, therefore, that there must be some sense in which Jacob being joined together by scripture as he is with the other two, there must be some sense in which Jacob is a representation to us in a typical sense of the Holy Spirit. Now, how this could be is by no means clear to me except in one particular respect. And that is the work of the Spirit of God in bringing his people into conformity with his will and with himself. We shall hear when we hear a little later about the direct significance of the life of Jacob. [00:08:06] How wonderfully God dealt with him, to call him, to direct him, to give him promises, to purify and to bless

him.

And in that sense, there may be a sense in which there is a representation to us here of the Spirit of God. But I think the direct, the only direct light that we can get upon this is that Jacob does represent the people of God. Indeed, he gives his name, first of all his name by nature, and then his name by grace, he gives his name Jacob and Israel to the people of God. And I think therefore we must take him first of all as being a direct representation in a typical sense of the people of God. Now, I have chosen these three incidents because I feel sure that in a typical light, they do present to us some truths about the people of God of great importance to us. [00:09:05] Let us think therefore just for a few minutes about this remarkable story in Genesis 28, so vividly told in the scripture of how when Jacob came to this place, he was resting and he had stones for his pillows when he lay down in that place to sleep.

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 upon it.

Now that this has a meaning behind and deeper than the words themselves in the story, is very plain from the first chapter of the Gospel of John. When Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him and said to him, Behold, an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile. [00:10:02] And Nathanael said, Whence dost thou me? And the Lord said, Answered him. And Nathanael said again, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel. Obviously with his heart deeply moved by the knowledge, personal knowledge of himself that the Lord had shown. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the thick tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And he said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

Now if we put the quotation in John chapter 1 alongside the original story in Genesis 28, we see that the angels of God were ascending and descending upon the ladder in the story [00:11:07] and the angels of God were ascending and descending upon the Son of Man and the Son of Man in its fulfillment presented to us in the first chapter of John. In other words, it is the Son of Man who is the one who brings together earth and heaven. When the time will come and the heavens shall hear the earth and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine. The earth and the heaven now so widely separated, they will be joined together and the one who will be able to join them together as the result of his work upon the cross is the Son of Man. It is upon him that the angels of God shall be ascending and descending when the time of his kingdom comes. Nevertheless, in an important sense, it is true today for the people of God that heaven is indeed open and there is a direct connection between God the Father in heaven and his people here upon earth. [00:12:04] And wherever that connection is, there is Bethel, the house of God. And so we have in this story of Genesis 28, we have the first mention of the house of God which we now know to be the place to be taken by the church.

Here, Jacob says, is none other than the house of God, none other than the gate of heaven. Now just touching very briefly upon that, the word I want to leave with you this evening is the word that Jacob spoke when he realized the tremendous significance of the fact that here was Bethel, the house of God, the gate of heaven. He said, surely God is in this place and I knew it not.

If we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, then we have been united to Christ [00:13:01] by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. And we form part of that structure which exists here upon earth and it is Bethel. It is the house of God. And we are old and we are young. And I know very well what it is to

be growing up in a situation where I am connected with the house of God. I suppose it's true of every Christian who grows up in these circumstances and others too that the moment comes when he or she says to themselves, it dawns upon them at last, surely the Lord is in this place and all the time I've known it not. You are associated with the church of God. It is the house of God, his dwelling place here upon earth. And all the lovely things that David says when he pours out his heart with the blessedness of dwelling with God. It's true of the assembly and the Christian's experience of it. [00:14:03] Oh how wonderful a thing it would be if the moment came for some of us when we were able to say, surely the Lord is in this place, though hitherto I have known it not. Then there lies before you something that you greatly need to strengthen you and to illuminate you in the Christian pathway. And that is the realization of the assembly with the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst. So that we begin to know him not only speaking with us and helping us and opening his word to us individually by the way, but when he reveals himself to us in the midst and we realize his presence perhaps for the first time. Let us take away and think over these words of Jacob. Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not.

Now the second instance we read, I'm choosing these of course, [00:15:03] because they are simply the points that appeal to me as having very plainly a typical significance as distinct from being direct examples to us. The next one of course is the story of Jacob and Rachel.

We all know how he was bound to serve seven years of Laban for his daughter Rachel.

And how in the seven years it was done, he was given Leah. And he served seven years again so that Rachel might be his. And these are the words that he spoke. He said that he served seven years for Rachel and there seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her. When afterwards, a few chapters later, we read of his remonstrating with Laban about the way that he had been treated by his father-in-law. [00:16:03] He spoke about what he had endured during those seven years. In the day, the drought consumed me and the frost by night.

He endured those seven years and then he made it 14 years and there seemed but a few years for the love that he bore her. Now the bride is a very important figure in the book of Genesis and in the Old Testament in general. We haven't had time to say very much about it. We all know that in the first place we have the picture of Eve. And in Eve we have the first presentation divinely explained to us as being a type of the church formed for Christ. We read there in the story in Genesis how it was out of the deep sleep into which God put Adam that he took a rib or might I suggest a side of him [00:17:03] and made the woman and presented her to the man and those two became one flesh.

It was the plan of God and it's being carried out through that deep sleep which is so plainly a presentation in type to us of the fact that God in a past eternity planned to form out of the deep sleep of death into which Christ came to form the bride that should be a help meet for him.

I think myself that it is we are intended rather to get the idea not so much of a rib as a side.

Man as originally designed and formed and created by God had a complete side taken away from him and out of that side the woman was made and they're therefore absolutely essential to each other if there is to be one man complete according to the mind of God. [00:18:04] Eve is a picture of the bride as designed by God for his son and formed out of the deep sleep of his death. Then we had if we had time I'm sure we'd have come to it yesterday evening. We have the picture of Rebecca. I suppose Sarah though she was in fact a bride rather typically represents the mother rather than the

bride and so we'll ignore her for the time being. Rebecca is a very wonderful picture of another part of the truth altogether and that is how once Isaac had been in tight race from the dead and he had been made the heir of all his father's goods then that nameless servant was sent back into the land of his birth his father's birth in order to bring a bride for Isaac and the question is asked will thou go with this man and she took that long journey over the desert in order to be joined to him. [00:19:03] There is typified the quest of the Holy Ghost sent down from God in order to gather together a bride for Christ and in order to conduct her through this long journey of the time that intervenes until in the end she's presented to Christ without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Now when we come in comparison and in contrast of these things to the story of Jacob and Rachel then we see all that he suffered all that he endured all that his love enabled him to do in order to purchase her to be his bride. We're told he endured these seven years. I repeat in the day the drought consumed him and the frost by night it seemed but a few moments for the love that he bore for her. What time shall I ever be able to tell what our Lord Jesus Christ endured [00:20:03] what he underwent what his love led him to do when the world was fulfilled Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. This is presented to us. Now I suppose we would be strictly inaccurate to say that the church is the bride of Christ. I suppose what the scripture presents to us in the New Testament is that the church is destined to be the bride of Christ. What the Apostle says in 2nd Corinthians is I have espoused you as a chaste virgin to Christ and I am jealous with a godly jealousy lest as the serpent beguile Eve through his subtlety so he may corrupt your hearts from simplicity as to the Christ. And in these circumstances what is expected what is desired by the Lord from you and me the individual members of that body that is to be his bride [00:21:04] is single hearted faithfulness and devotion to him in his absence. We fall part of that which is to be the bride of Christ. And ever and anon the serpent who once beguiled Eve through his subtlety is active in order to seduce to ensnare us from that single devotion of heart to the Lord which springs up when we realize the great love wherewith he has loved us.

And finally I read that one verse in Genesis the end of the book chapter 45 when Joseph tells his brothers asked his brothers to tell old Jacob his father of all his glory in Egypt.

Now I have made a serious contact with Mr. Stollert that he would allow me to have this little portion of the life of Joseph [00:22:03] because it is so clearly linked with Jacob. It seems to me a very essential part of the story of Jacob that in his old age he received the message of his son's glory in Egypt tell my father of all my glory.

Now this always has to those whose hearts have been set after the knowledge of the father and the son this has always been a word which has spoken to the people of God of our privilege in telling over in God the father's ear the beauties the excellencies and the glories of Christ.

It's not impossible that someone may say now I can't see any sense at all in this idea of telling over to God what is known far far better to him than can be known to us.

Well if we stop just for a moment and think of this [00:23:02] if we speak to God if we bring to God if we offer to him the glory the excellency the sweet savour of our Lord Jesus Christ we are bringing him a gift an offering we are presenting to him a gift and an offering there is something from the heart of his people that is rising to God and therefore this is a direct fulfillment of the passage that says we are a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual gifts or offerings acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. If we do this we are bringing an offering to God not only are we bringing something to God but we are bringing to God the one name in heaven and earth which is always in every time and in every place a sweet savour to him. This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

[00:24:03] Everyone knows that we take a very very imperfect earthly picture of this kind of thing. We know how a mother is absolutely moved and thrilled at hearing the praises of her children. When we think a rather perhaps scornful way of this well of course of course every goose is a swan in its mother's eyes but when we think that we are thinking here of the person who really has all the marvellous excellences and perfections which the holy scripture presents to us then when we speak to God of him we are sharing with God the Father the thing which is capable of giving unending delight to the great heart of God himself and therefore is able to fill to overflowing our poor tiny little hearts. We are speaking to God what is to him a sweet savour [00:25:05] and we are sharing with him his delight in his well beloved son and this there can be no doubt at all is the true worship. We can't do this unless day by day and moment by moment we are storing up in heart and mind and love for ourselves and for the delight of our own hearts that sweet savour of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we do this then we can do what is typified in this verse from the simple story of Jacob we can tell the father of all the glory of his son. I pray that the Lord may illumine these few scriptures presenting to us a few suggestions as to the typical meaning of Jacob.