



# Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

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DECEMBER 2022

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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# **RESTORING MY SOUL**

*A Five Day Devotional Guide*

**December 2022**

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## According to the flesh

Isaac married Rebekah when he was forty years old. **Gen 25:20**. They remained childless for twenty years, after which time, Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife. The Lord granted his plea, and Rebekah conceived twins. **Gen 25:21**. The children struggled together within her womb. The Lord declared to her the word of their predestination, identifying them as two nations. Notably, He said that the older would serve the younger.

When it came time to give birth, the first child came out red and hairy all over, and they called him Esau. Moments later, his brother was delivered and took hold of Esau's heel. For this reason, the child was named Jacob, meaning, 'supplanter, or deceitful; the one who takes the heel'. **Gen 25:25-26**.

Jacob was a man who pursued God's will for his life. His understanding of God's will was based on the word and culture of his parents, particularly Rebekah, who recognised that the priority would belong to Jacob because he was delivered after Esau. Jacob, however, found himself disadvantaged in the natural setting of his family because of the order of his birth. That is, the birthright and blessing belonged, according to custom, to the natural firstborn. Although he was motivated by the Spirit toward the birthright and blessing that had been prophetically promised to him in the womb, he pursued the blessing in a carnal manner, first by stealing the birthright from Esau, and then by obtaining the blessing from Isaac by deceit. **Gen 25:31-33. Gen 27:19**.

We see that Jacob was a fighter who refused to be discriminated against. Consequently, he did not initially pursue the blessing by faith, but in the flesh. This fruitless approach to obtaining the blessing was no different from the efforts of the Jews who endeavoured to be righteous through the works of the Law. Paul said, 'But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness [the life of sonship], *has not attained* to the law of righteousness. Why? *Because they did not seek it by faith*.' **Rom 9:31-32**.

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### Further Study GENESIS 25

## Sent away

The failure of pursuing the blessing of Abraham through the works of the flesh was evident in Jacob's life by the fact that he did not receive a change of nature after Isaac laid hands on him and blessed him. **Gen 27:27-28**. Rather, the events surrounding this blessing only served to further reveal his deceitful nature. As his brother Esau asserted, 'Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times.' **Gen 27:36**. Jacob was blessed by Isaac, yet it was clear that he would have to overcome the propensity to deception in order to obtain the blessing that belonged to his predestination.

To preserve him from the murderous intent of Esau, Isaac sent Jacob to the house of Laban, in the land of Padan Aram, Syria. **Gen 28:1-2**. In the course of his journey, Jacob came to a certain place where he decided to stay the night. He took a stone and put it at his head and lay down to sleep. **Gen 28:10-11**.

As Jacob slept, he dreamed of a ladder that was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven. The angels of God were ascending and descending on the ladder. Yahweh stood above the ladder, and beside it, and said to Jacob, 'I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' **Gen 28:12-14**.

When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he acknowledged that Yahweh was in that place. And, *being afraid*, he said, 'How awesome [fear-provoking] is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!' **Gen 28:17**.

## Learning the fear of the Lord

When Jacob proclaimed, 'How awesome [fear-provoking] is this place,' it demonstrated that he was beginning to learn the fear of the Lord. Gen 28:17. Significantly, an initial implication of the fear of the Lord was his awareness of, and connection to, the house of God. Jacob later described this fear as 'the fear of Isaac'. **Gen 31:42**. It was the reverent fear that his father Isaac demonstrated when he was figuratively bound to the offering of Christ, as Abraham prepared to sacrifice him on Mount Moriah. **Gen 22:9-10**.

The fear of Isaac was not merely a disposition that Jacob had acquired; it was the Lord Himself. 'The Fear of Isaac' is a name that belongs to Yahweh, who promised to be with Jacob as he commenced this next season of life. He said to Jacob, 'Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.' **Gen 28:15**. At the conclusion of his time with Laban, Jacob testified, 'Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and *the Fear of Isaac, had been with me*, surely now you would have sent me away empty handed.' **Gen 31:42**. In this statement, Jacob called the Lord, who said that He would be with him, 'the Fear of Isaac'.

We note that, in this encounter, Jacob saw the heavenly 'bride city' that has foundations, which his grandfather, Abraham, had earlier seen and desired. **Heb 11:9-10,16**. It would become a city of inhabitants that would spread to the west and the east and the north and the south. Through the testimony of these believers, individuals and families throughout the earth would receive the blessing of sonship. Evidently, the Lord was revealing to Jacob how he and his descendants would become 'the elect'. **Isa 45:4**.

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**Further Study PSALM 34**

## Established on the foundation stone

Jacob rose early in the morning, took the stone upon which he had laid his head, and set it up as a pillar, anointing it with oil. **Gen 28:18**. The stone was symbolic of Christ. Instead of continuing to stumble in his pursuit of the blessing through the flesh, Jacob was now committing to walk in a different manner. He was beginning to be built on Christ, who had formerly been to him a stumbling stone, and to walk by faith. **Eph 2:19-22**. He, through the Spirit, would now eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness (meaning the blessing of sonship), *by faith*. **Gal 5:5**.

Jacob's reorientation to faith through the Spirit was signified by the pouring of oil upon the rock. As Jacob proceeded to walk by faith, in the fear of the Lord, he and his descendants would be built on Christ, the foundation stone and capstone of the heavenly city. **Zec 4:6-10**. They would, themselves, become pillars in the house of God. Jesus Christ promised this to the *aggelos* and the church in Philadelphia, who overcame the synagogue of Satan and who kept the command to persevere. He said, 'He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more.' **Rev 3:12**.

Jacob called the place Bethel, meaning 'house of God'. Furthermore, he vowed to give to the Lord a tithe of all his possessions if the Lord would be with him; would keep him in the way that had been revealed to him; would feed and clothe him; and would restore him to his father's house in peace. **Gen 28:16-22**. Clearly, Jacob was committing himself to walk in fellowship with Jehovah Jireh – 'Yahweh will provide' – whom Abraham had introduced to Isaac. In doing so, he would maintain the same fear that his father, Isaac, had learned and demonstrated on Moriah. **Gen 22:8,14**.



## Mercy and illumination

Although Jacob's approach to the birthright and blessing had formerly been carnal, he found *mercy* and received *illumination* at Bethel. He continued to walk in this mercy and in the fear of the Lord which he had obtained through illumination. We know this because, at the conclusion of his season of affliction in the house of Laban, *before* he wrestled with the Lord, Jacob prayed, 'O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who said to me, "Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you": I am not worthy of the least of all the *mercies* and of all the truth which You have *shown* Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies.' **Gen 32:9-10.**

Jacob travelled from Bethel to Padan Aram, where he resided in the house of his uncle, Laban, for twenty years. During this time, Jacob married Laban's daughters, Leah and Rachel. **Gen 29:18-28.** He also took their maidservants, Bilhah (Rachel's maid) and Zilpah (Leah's maid) as wives. **Gen 30:4,9.** By the time that the Lord directed Jacob to return to the land of his fathers, these marriages had produced eleven sons and a daughter.

After the birth of his eleventh son, Joseph, Jacob desired to depart from Laban's house. However, his uncle insisted that he remain in his house. The Scripture recorded that Laban had *divined* that the Lord had blessed him for Jacob's sake. **Gen 30:27.** Jacob agreed to stay for wages comprising all the spotted and speckled sheep and goats from Laban's flocks. Although assenting to this arrangement, Laban cheated Jacob by removing all the pertinent beasts from his flock before his nephew was able to take possession of them. Laban gave the animals to his own sons, and they promptly put three days' journey between themselves and Jacob. **Gen 30:34-36.**

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### Further Study EPHESIANS 3

## The land of his affliction

Jacob remained in Laban's employ, enduring the injustices of his uncle's wage changes, by the fear of his father Isaac. This season of suffering was a *trial of faith* for Jacob. Having personally received the promise of blessing at Bethel, Jacob was being grieved by various trials so that the genuineness of his faith, being more precious than gold, would be found to praise, honour and glory at the revelation of the Lord. He was being tested in this manner so that he would receive the end of his faith, which was the blessing of a new name. **1Pe 1:6-9**. He obtained this blessing at the conclusion of the trial of faith, when he met the Lord a second time, wrestling with Him at Jabbok. **Gen 32:24**.

In the meantime, as Jacob continued to labour in the land of his affliction, the Lord provided for him, causing him to become exceedingly prosperous. This was despite Jacob's inclination to employ various artifices, such as rods of green poplar, and of the almond and chestnut trees, in an attempt to enlarge his flocks. At the conclusion of his time in the household of Laban, Jacob became aware of, and acknowledged, the fact that his prosperity was not the fruit of his cunning devices but, rather, was the provision of God. **Gen 31:9-12**.

Because Jacob had increased in wealth, the countenance of Laban and his sons was no longer favourable toward Jacob. **Gen 31:2**. Marking the end of Jacob's trial of faith, the Lord said to him, 'Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you.' **Gen 31:3**. In the course of Jacob's departure, Rachel stole the idols (teraphim) that belonged to her father. This signalled her loyalty to the familiar culture of her father's household. She had taken this initiative upon herself, entertaining an alternative word in the household without any reference to Jacob. **Gen 31:32**. Her familiar practices had a detrimental effect upon the culture of the household.

## Initiating reconciliation

On his return journey from Laban's house, the angels of God met Jacob at a place where he camped. Notably, Jacob called that place, Mahanaim, meaning, 'double camp'. **Gen 32:1-2**. In this encounter with the angels of God, Jacob acknowledged that he had emerged from the season of his affliction as *two companies*. **Gen 32:10**.

It appears that the angels of God directed Jacob to engage with Esau because, from Mahanaim, Jacob *then* sent word to his brother, saying, 'I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favour in your sight.' **Gen 32:4-5**. Jacob had defrauded his brother when, through deceit, he secured the blessing of Isaac. Consequently, Jacob was directed by God's messengers to reconcile with his adversary. In doing so, Jacob was observing the command of Jesus, 'Agree [lit: reconcile] with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him!' **Mat 5:25**.

Esau responded to Jacob's entreaty by gathering four hundred men to accompany him as he came to meet Jacob. This impending confrontation caused Jacob considerable consternation. **Gen 32:6-7**. It was at this point that he prayed to the God of Abraham and Isaac. In this prayer, Jacob confessed that he was not worthy of the multitude of God's mercies, nor of the illumination that he had received, noting that, because of mercy and illumination, he had become 'a double portion' household. Jacob humbled himself, casting all his cares upon the Lord, and he prayed according to the word of his sonship. He said, 'Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. For You said, "I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude"' **Gen 32:11-12**.

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### Further Study 1 SAMUEL 25

## Jacob wrestled with the Lord

Having already sent all of his possessions and his household over the ford of Jabbok, Jacob was 'left alone' in the night, and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. **Gen 32:22-24**. This Man was a theophany of Jesus Christ for, after this wrestle, Jacob noted that he had seen God 'face to face', and lived. Gen 32:30. Through this interaction, Jacob received a new name, which was the knowledge of the glory of his sonship from the face of Jesus Christ. **2Co 4:6. 2Co 3:17-18**.

In the first instance, Jacob did not choose this wrestle. Rather, the Angel of the Lord had come to resist Jacob's entry into the promised land of his inheritance. The Lord would not allow Jacob to enter the land of promise while his fallen carnal propensities to deception remained a motivating influence in his life.

When the Lord saw that He did not prevail against Jacob, He weakened Jacob's natural strength by touching the socket of his hip, causing its dislocation. **Gen 32:25**. Of course, the Creator of the universe did not need to weaken Jacob in order to prevail over him. Rather, Jacob needed help to overcome his own fleshly propensities. His carnality was undermining his capacity to obtain the blessing of sonship that was predestined for him. Until he was helped in this manner, Jacob was cleaving to the Lord with deceit, for his name was still 'Deceiver'.

Now unable to prevail by the strength of his flesh, Jacob clung to the Lord by the Spirit! He declared to the Lord, 'I will not let You go unless You bless me!' Moreover, he *confessed* that he was a deceiver. **Gen 32:26-27**. In response, the Lord said to Jacob, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel [meaning 'prince with God']; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed!' **Gen 32:28**. By this means, Jacob was blessed by the Lord. Paul described this blessing as 'the promise of the Spirit through faith'. **Gal 3:13-14**.

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**Further Study GENESIS 32**

## Prayer in Gethsemane

Jacob obtained the blessing because, through this night of wrestling, he was personally connected to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. In the first instance, he was connected, by the Spirit, to the prayer of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane. **Rom 8:26.** We recall that the Son of Man began to pray in the garden of Gethsemane at about *midnight*.

This fellowship of prayer with the Father and the Holy Spirit revealed the altar of incense in the true tabernacle of God. As Jesus was praying, He was strengthened with Eternal Spirit from the Holy Spirit. Being in agony, and enabled by Eternal Spirit, Jesus began to pray more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great clots of blood falling to the ground as He overcame the will of our flesh, and began to fulfil the obedience that belongs to God's will for our lives. **Luk 22:41-44.** He did this as an offering for sin.

As Jacob was connected to this fellowship of prayer at the altar of incense, he was able to acknowledge his fallen nature. Answering the Lord's query, 'What is your name?', he confessed that he was Jacob, a deceiver. **Gen 32:27.** This was possible as he received, from the Spirit, the capacity of Eternal Spirit, joining him to the travail of Christ. We could liken Jacob's confession of his iniquitous nature to the prophet Isaiah's confession that he was a man of unclean lips when he saw the Lord of hosts. **Isa 6:5.**

We recognise that this was 'a second time' experience for Jacob. He had first met the Lord in Bethel, where he began to receive mercy and the illumination that was necessary to endure his trial of faith in the house of Laban. Now, however, in order to continue to obtain the promised blessing of his sonship, Jacob needed deliverance from the desires associated with his fallen nature, and to begin to walk blamelessly before the Lord. **Pro 28:18.**

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### Further Study ROMANS 8

## In the darkness of the depths

The blessing of Eternal Spirit, which enabled Jacob's confession, joined him to the second aspect of darkness associated with Christ's offering and sufferings. This was the depths of the lake of fire that Christ endured on the cross during the three hours of darkness from midday until three o'clock. **Gal 3:13-14**. Jesus endured the judgement of God that belonged to Jacob on account of his deceitful nature. However, at the same time, 'in the lowest parts of the earth', Jacob's sonship was being fulfilled by Christ and recorded in the book of life. **Psa 139:15-16**.

When Jacob, by the Spirit, confessed that he was a deceiver, he was acknowledging that he was with Christ under the judgement of God. However, having become poor in spirit, he was able to choose to suffer with Christ. In doing so, he was redeemed by God, and was joined to 'the circumcision of Christ'. **Col 2:11**. In the same way that Abraham received a new name with circumcision, Jacob received the name that was authored and finished for him by Christ in the lowest parts of the earth. Jacob's limp became for him a daily connection to the sufferings of Christ. In this regard, they were his 'momentary and light affliction' through which he was now obtaining the blessing of his sonship as 'an eternal weight of glory'. **2Co 4:16-18**. This is the true blessing of God that Jacob desired.

After crossing the ford at Jabbok, which Jacob named Penuel (meaning 'face of God'), he lifted his eyes and saw Esau coming towards him, accompanied by four hundred men. **Gen 32:30-31**. **Gen 33:1**. Jacob divided up his household. **Gen 33:2**. He then went before them, *bowing himself to the ground seven times* until he came near to Esau. **Gen 33:3**. This action of bowing seven times was prophetically significant, revealing the circumstances in which Jacob's descendants would be established and perfected as the corporate Israel of God.

## Subject to seven kingdoms

The Lord said to Rebekah that the two sons in her womb would become two nations. Esau became the nation of Edom, whose dwelling place was the region of Seir. **Gen 32:3. Eze 35:15.** In the prophetic Scriptures, Edom is 'a code word' to describe the nations of the world. For example, the prophet Isaiah wrote, '*Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of the Lord is against all nations, and His fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter ... for My sword shall be bathed in heaven; indeed it shall come down on Edom, and on the people of My curse, for judgement.*' **Isa 34:1-2,5.**

Jacob's bowing to Esau revealed that God's covenant people would be subject to seven world kingdoms – Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the present world kingdom. Under the oppression of these kingdoms, God would establish and refine a people for Himself. **Psa 135:4.** At the same time, He would judge the nations of the world.

When they met, Jacob said to Esau, 'If I have now found favour in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have *seen your face as though I had seen the face of God*, and you were pleased with me.' **Gen 33:10.** Making this statement, Jacob acknowledged and accepted Isaac's prophecy concerning the two sons. When Isaac blessed Esau, he declared that Esau was predestined to serve his brother. However, he also prophesied that Esau, or Edom, would break this yoke of service from his neck, indicating that Esau would presume upon the blessing that belonged to Jacob, and would endeavour to rule over him. **Gen 27:39-40.**

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**Further Study DANIEL 2:17-49**

## The ancient hatred

The Scriptures describe the enmity between the heirs of promise, represented by Jacob, and the children of the flesh, represented by Esau, as 'the ancient hatred'. **Eze 35:3-6**. This enmity was first evident between Isaac, the son of promise, and Ishmael, who was born according to the flesh. **Gal 4:28-31**. In viewing Esau's face as the face of God, Jacob understood that God would use the consequences of this enmity to process Israel, and to bring to pass His word concerning their inheritance.

The presumption of Edom, prophesied by Isaac, was acutely manifest through the establishment of the Herodian dynasty. This was instigated when Antipater, an Idumean by descent, was installed as procurator of Judea by Julius Caesar in 47 BC. Idumea is the Greek name for Edom. This means that the Herodians were descendants of Esau. They were also descendants of Ishmael through Ishmael's daughter, Mahalath, who married Esau. **Gen 28:9**. Antipater's son, Herod the Great, was eventually appointed as king of Judea. He was the ruler who attempted to eliminate Jesus by having all the male infants from the region of Bethlehem put to death. **Mat 2:16-18**.

Herod Antipas, one of the sons of Herod the Great, was the ruler of Galilee and Perea during the earthly ministry of Jesus. As Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem in preparation for His offering, some Pharisees came to Him, saying, 'Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.' **Luk 13:31**. In response, Jesus said to the Pharisees, 'Go, tell that fox, "Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.' **Luk 13:32-33**. With this statement, Jesus warned Herod that He was coming to fulfil the word of the Lord concerning the destiny of Jacob and Esau.



## Jesus and Herod

In the course of His offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary, Jesus was set before Herod, who desired to see a sign from Christ to support his claim over Jerusalem and the temple. We read in the Gospel of Luke, 'When Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but *He answered him nothing*'. **Luk 23:8-9.**

Having already interacted with both Caiaphas and Pilate on His offering journey, it is remarkable that Jesus was *completely silent* during this encounter with Herod. If Herod's kingship and temple had been validated by Christ, the yoke of Jacob would have remained broken off the neck of Esau and his descendants. However, Jesus answered him not a word. His only resolve was, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up'. **Joh 2:19.**

We continue to read in the Gospel of Luke, 'Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate'. **Luk 23:11.** As Herod mocked Christ's kingship, and sent Him to the Romans to be abused and crucified, Herod's authority was removed from him. He was disempowered and conquered by Christ, the obedient Slave of the Father. **Php 2:8-11.**

In this way, the right of the Arabs and Edom to the blessing of Abraham was removed from them and was established in the true Israel of God. Moreover, the principles of calling and election for the true Israel of God were realised in Christ. Christ was established as the only door through which Jews and Gentiles would obtain the blessing of eternal life. **Joh 10:9.**

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**Further Study LUKE 23:1-25**

## Reformation at Shechem

Having separated from Esau, Jacob travelled with his household to Shechem. At Shechem, Simeon and Levi brought great trouble upon Jacob when they deceived, and then slaughtered, Hamor and Shechem, and all the males of their city, in retribution for the defilement of their sister Dinah. On account of their deceit and cruelty, Jacob said of his two sons, 'Let not my soul enter their council; let not my honour be united to their assembly; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they hamstringed an ox. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel!' **Gen 49:6-7.**

Following this incident, God again directed Jacob to return to Bethel and there to make an altar to God. In response, Jacob commanded his entire household, saying, 'Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone.' **Gen 35:2-3.** Accordingly, everyone in his household gave Jacob the foreign idols that were in their hands, and the earrings that were in their ears, and he hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem. **Gen 35:4.**

Through this command, Jacob took an initiative toward the culture of his house. He destroyed all of the idols that his children had embraced and imbibed through the familiar influence of Laban's household. In purifying themselves, they had to turn from even appearing to be like the world; hence forsaking the earrings in their ears. Significantly, Shechem was the place where the Lord first promised the land of Canaan to Abram. **Gen 12:6-7.** Later, Shechem was the place where Joshua made his final address to the children of Israel. **Jos 24:1.**

## Dealing with uncleanness

In Shechem, Joshua commanded the nation of Israel in the same manner as Jacob had commanded his household, saying, 'Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, *and put away the gods which your fathers served* on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' **Jos 24:14-15.**

It is important to recognise that Jacob's family had no access to, nor participation in, the house of God, represented by Bethel, until they repented of their uncleanness and idolatry. They were not recipients of God's blessing simply because they were under Jacob's roof. Jacob was God's messenger to them. As he proclaimed the word of the cross, Christ was publicly portrayed before them as crucified. **Gal 3:1.** They were caused to look on Christ whom they had pierced through their idol worship and worldly conduct.

It is apparent that each person in the household began to mourn with godly sorrow under the influence of grace and supplication, because they all turned from their idolatry and from their familiar conduct. **Zec 12:10.** They figuratively availed themselves of the fountain for sin and uncleanness that was opened for everyone when Christ, who was manifest as I AM on the cross, was pierced with the soldier's spear. The blood and water that flowed from His side was a fountain for sin and uncleanness. Speaking of this provision, the Lord declared, ' "In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. It shall be in that day," says the Lord of hosts, "that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land." ' **Zec 13:1-2.**

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### Further Study ZECHARIAH 12

## The true Israel of God

Jacob's family journeyed from Shechem to Bethel. At Bethel, God appeared to Jacob again, and blessed him, saying, 'Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name.' **Gen 35:10**. Jacob had already received a new name when he wrestled with the Lord at Jabbok. **Gen 32:28**. God was now addressing a corporate Jacob, consisting of the inhabitants of his household, who were to become the Israel of God. We know this because God then said to Jacob, 'I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land.' **Gen 35:11-12**.

The prophet Hosea summarised the initiative of the Lord toward Jacob to establish him as Israel. He declared, 'The Lord also brings a charge against Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his deeds He will recompense him. He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength he struggled with God.' **Hos 12:2-3**. In this passage, Hosea noted that Jacob's action of taking his brother by the heel, for which he was named Jacob, was the same trait that was initially evident when he began to wrestle with the Lord. It revealed his natural propensity to pursue the blessing of God through the works that belonged to his own strength.

However, Jacob began to weep and mourn, and to obtain the favour of the Lord, which is resurrection life, through his connection to the offering and sufferings of Christ. This was by the Spirit! Making this point, Hosea further proclaimed, 'Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; he wept, and sought favour from Him. He [Jacob] found Him in Bethel, *and there He spoke to us* – that is, the Lord God of hosts. The Lord is His memorable name.' **Hos 12:4-5**.

## There He spoke to us!

Hosea declared concerning Jacob, 'He found Him in Bethel, and there He spoke to us'. **Hos 12:4**. This is an amazing passage of Scripture. It identifies God's covenant people – those who have been born again and baptised into Christ – as belonging to the corporate Jacob. It specifically refers to the house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel and have come from the loins of Judah, through Christ. **Isa 48:1**. Hosea was declaring that the Lord speaks to those who have come to Bethel, and who call themselves after the heavenly Jerusalem.

However, as we have considered through the steps of Jacob, we are unable to arrive at Bethel and to receive the word that ensures our election, until we negotiate the issues of idolatry and uncleanness that Jacob raised with his household at Shechem. Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord was clear on this point. 'Therefore thus says the Lord, who redeemed Abraham [at Shechem], concerning the house of Jacob: "Jacob shall not now be ashamed, nor shall his face now grow pale [as it did through the deceit and cruelty of his sons at Shechem]; but when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, they will hallow My name, and hallow the Holy One of Jacob, and fear the God of Israel."' **Isa 29:22-23**.

We are affirmed as the children of Jacob, and our citizenship as the Lord's elect is made sure, as the work of the Lord's hand is effective in our lives – individually, as households, and as churches. The work of the Lord's hand is through the ministry of the word from the star presbyteries of lampstand churches. By receiving these commands, we are delivered from iniquity, and are cleansed of the filth of our idolatry and familiar ways. We learn the fear of the Lord and are affirmed, symbolically, at Bethel, as part of the Israel of God. This is where He continues to speak to us and to establish us in the fellowship of His name.

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**Further Study PSALM 85**

## Sown into Egypt

Journeying from Bethel, Jacob and his household made their way to Ephrath, which is the primitive name for Bethlehem. Not far from this town, Rachel went into labour. Her labour was traumatic, and she died not long after giving birth to a son whom Jacob named Benjamin. **Gen 35:16 -20.** Rachel's passing was a great grief to Jacob; however, more grief was to follow. We recall that Joseph, the son whom Jacob favoured, was sold into slavery by his brothers. If it were not for the intervention of Reuben, his brothers would have killed him. Instead, they cast him into a deep pit in the wilderness, figurative of the land of forgetfulness. Joseph's brothers killed a goat, dipped Joseph's coat into its blood, and reported to Jacob that a wild beast had devoured him. **Gen 37:12-36.**

Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for Joseph many days. He refused to be comforted by his children, saying, 'For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning.' **Gen 37:34-35.** We know, of course, that Joseph's 'death' was the beginning of the trial of his faith. As the Scriptures recorded, 'Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him'. **Psa 105:19.**

Through Joseph, the Lord provided for Jacob's household in the midst of a severe famine that had come upon the whole region. When Joseph made himself known to his brothers in Egypt, he said to them, 'God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.' **Gen 45:7.** He directed his brothers to bring Jacob and the rest of the household to Egypt, where they would be preserved during the five years of famine that still remained. Significantly, Jacob and his household entered Egypt as a company of seventy-two people, being the firstfruits of a whole nation that would eventually be delivered from Egypt and would inherit the land that God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

## Jacob blessed his sons

At the end of his life, Jacob called his sons to himself, saying, 'Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days: gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, and listen to Israel your father.' **Gen 49:1-2.**

Jacob passed on the blessing, with which he had been blessed, to his twelve sons. He did this through the prophetic word that he proclaimed to them as he laid his hands upon them before his decease. That is, he declared to them the promise of the Spirit that would enable them to receive the change of nature that was necessary for them to inherit the blessing that belongs to the elect. Significantly, he said to them, 'Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days.' **Gen 49:1.** The blessing with which Jacob then blessed each of his sons revealed the carnal propensities from which they would need deliverance in order to inherit the blessing of sonship that was promised to Abraham.

Referring to this inheritance, the apostle Paul noted that Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, 'dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' **Heb 11:9-10.**

From this passage, we recognise that the inheritance of sonship is a person's citizenship of the heavenly Jerusalem. **Heb 12:22-24.** The heavenly Jerusalem is the bride city that the apostle John observed in the book of Revelation. John saw 'the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband'. **Rev 21:2.** In his description of this great city, John observed that the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on the gates of the walls of the New Jerusalem. **Rev 21:12.**

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### Further Study GENESIS 49

## The twelve tribes

When the Father takes His seat, at the beginning of the time of the end, the overcoming remnant from lampstand churches will be sealed as the firstfruits of the true Israel of God. In the book of Revelation, the tribes that belong to the true Israel of God are listed as being Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. **Rev 7:4-8**. We note that Dan was missing from the sons whom Jacob addressed, and that Joseph was identified as a tribe in the place of Ephraim.

Being built into the walls of the New Jerusalem as the elect of God is the blessing that Jacob proclaimed to his sons, as he told them what would befall them 'in the last days'. **Rev 21:12**. Why did Jacob bless his sons by describing their nature and their carnal propensities? He did it because, in order to obtain the blessing of this inheritance, Jacob's sons would need to experience a change of nature, in the same way that Jacob did when he wrestled with the Lord at Jabbok. **Gen 32:8**. That is, each son would need to receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, enabling them to confess their particular fallen nature, and to join the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. **Gal 3:13-14**. In this fellowship, they would find deliverance from their uncleanness, and would be able to fulfil the works that belonged to their sanctification as a son of God.

Every person is *called* to be a son of God and is predestined to *election*, in Christ. Those who accept their call, and who make their election sure, as part of the true Israel of God, are built into the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem as part of one of the tribes of Israel. **2Pe 1:10**. Jacob's descriptions of his sons identify the particular carnal dispositions that the elect must overcome in order to obtain the blessing of their inheritance in the heavenly Jerusalem. **1Pe 2:1-5**.





Restoring  
my Soul