

Sabbath School Lesson #9 – Jacob *the Supplanter* – 21-27 May 2022

Christ would have us desire a good name. What is your name as given you by Christ? It means something to have Christ give us a name. What did it mean when Christ named Jacob, even before he was born? It meant that he was a supplanter. After he had supplanted his brother, Esau said, “And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?” (Genesis 27:36). Christ named Jacob thus because that name expressed his character. And when Jacob’s character was changed, Christ changed his name to Israel. What does that mean? Prevalent. And it meant something to Jacob when Christ said, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed” (Genesis 32:28). To overcomers, Christ will give “a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*” (Revelation 2:17).

Sunday: Jacob and Esau – What lessons do we learn from the story of Esau and Jacob in regard to the inheritance promised to Abraham and his seed? The case of Esau furnishes incidental proof that the inheritance promised to Abraham and his seed was not a temporal one, to be enjoyed in this life, but eternal, to be shared in the life to come. The story is told in Genesis 25:29-34 in which Esau despised his birthright. In the Epistle to the Hebrews Esau is called a “profane person,” because he sold his birthright. This shows that there was something besides mere foolishness in the transaction. One would say that it was childish to sell a birthright for a meal of victuals; but it was worse than childish; it was wicked. It showed that he was an infidel, feeling nothing but contempt for the promise of God to his father. In the story, notice these words of Esau’s, when Jacob asked him to sell his birthright: “Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do me?” He had no hope beyond this present life, and looked no further. He did not feel sure of anything that he did not then actually possess in this present time. No doubt he was very hungry. It is probable that he felt as if he were really at the point of death; but even the prospect of death made no difference with Abraham and many others. They died in faith, not having received the promises, but were persuaded of them, and embraced them. Esau, however, had no such faith. He had no belief in an inheritance beyond the grave. Whatever he was to have he wanted now. Thus it was that he sold his birthright. The course of Jacob is not by any means to be commended. He acted the part of a supplanter, deceiver, which was his natural disposition. His case is an illustration of a crude unintelligent faith. He believed that there was something to the promise of God, and he respected his father’s faith, although as yet he really possessed none of it. He believed that the inheritance promised to the fathers would be bestowed, but he had so little spiritual knowledge that he supposed the gift of God might be purchased with money. We know that even Abraham thought at one time that he himself must fulfill the promise of God. So, Jacob doubtless thought, as many do still today, that God helps those who help themselves. Afterwards he learned better, and was truly converted, and exercised as sincere faith as Abraham and Isaac. His case should be an encouragement to us, in that it shows what God can do with one who has a very unlovely disposition, provided he yields to Him.

Monday: Jacob’s Ladder – What lesson did the Lord teach Jacob using the ladder? While Jacob believed the promise of God sufficiently to enable him to endeavour to secure its fulfilment by his own efforts, he did not understand its nature well enough to know that God alone could fulfil it through righteousness. So, the Lord began to instruct him. Jacob was on his lonely way to Syria, fleeing from the wrath of his offended brother, when he saw in a dream, “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” (Genesis 28:11-17). This was a great lesson for Jacob. Before this his ideas of God had been very crude. He had supposed that God was confined to one place. But now that God had appeared to him, he began to realise that “God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). He began to realise what Jesus told the Samaritan woman long afterwards, that the worship of God does not depend upon any place, but upon the soul’s reaching out and finding Him, wherever it is. Moreover, Jacob began to learn that the inheritance that God had

promised to his fathers, and which he had thought to get by a sharp bargain, was something to be gained in an entirely different manner. How much of the lesson he grasped at this time, we cannot tell; but we know that in this revelation God proclaimed the Gospel to him. The Lord said to Jacob, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In connection with this statement, was the promise of land, and of an innumerable posterity. The promise made to Jacob was identical with that made to Abraham. The blessing to come through Jacob and his seed was identical with that to come through Abraham and his seed. The seed is the same, namely, Christ and those who are His through the Spirit; and the blessing comes through the cross of Christ. All this was indicated by that which Jacob saw, as well as by that which he heard. There was a ladder set up on the earth, reaching up to heaven, connecting God with man. Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the connecting link between heaven and earth, between God and man. The ladder connecting heaven with earth, upon which the angels of God were ascending and descending, was a representation of that which Christ said to Nathanael, that true Israelite: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John 1:51). The way to heaven is the way of the cross, and this is that which was indicated to Jacob that night. Not by self-assertion, but by self-denial, are the inheritance and the blessing to be gained. "He that will lose his life," and all that life contains, "shall save it."

Tuesday: The Deceiver Deceived – In Genesis 29:1-30, how did Jacob react when deceived? We are told that, Jacob "formed the marriage contract with Laban for his daughter Rachel, whom he loved. After he had served seven years for Rachel, Laban deceived him and gave him Leah. When Jacob realized the deception that had been practiced upon him, and that Leah had acted her part in deceiving him, he could not love Leah. Laban wished to retain the faithful services of Jacob a greater length of time, therefore deceived him by giving him Leah, instead of Rachel. Jacob reproved Laban for thus trifling with his affections, in giving him Leah, whom he had not loved. Laban entreated Jacob not to put away Leah, for this was considered a great disgrace, not only to the wife, but to the whole family. Jacob was placed in a most trying position, but he decided to still retain Leah, and also marry her sister. Leah was loved in a much less degree than Rachel" – Ellen G White {SR 89.2}.

Wednesday: The Blessing of the Family – In Genesis 30 we read about Jacob's sister-wives and bitterness of polygamous marriage. What did Laban do to lessen future problems of this polygamous marriage? We are told, "Laban understood the wrong of polygamy, although it was alone through his artifice that Jacob had taken two wives. He well knew that it was the jealousy of Leah and Rachel that led them to give their maids to Jacob, which confused the family relation, and increased the unhappiness of his daughters. And now as his daughters are journeying at a great distance from him, and their interest is to be entirely separate from his own, he would guard as far as possible their happiness. Laban would not have Jacob bring still greater unhappiness upon himself and upon Leah and Rachel, by taking other wives. And Laban said "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives besides my daughters; no man is with us; see God is witness betwixt me and thee." – Ellen G White {3SG 126.2}. "Jacob made a solemn covenant before the Lord that he would not take other wives. "And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee; this heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac." – Ellen G White {3SG 127.1}.

Thursday: Jacob Leaves – Why did it take Jacob long to leave? "He would have left the artful Laban long before, but he was afraid of encountering Esau. He heard the complaint of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before." {SR 90.1}. "Jacob was distressed. He knew not which way to turn. He carried his case to God and interceded for direction from Him. The Lord mercifully answered his distressed prayer. "And the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." – Ellen G White {SR 90.2}.