

LESSON ELEVEN

**JACOB BECOMES ISRAEL**

TEXT: Genesis chapters 29 - 36.

**A. JACOB AT PADAN-ARAM:**

The spiritual experience that Jacob had at Bethel encouraged him greatly. In the Hebrew the first verse of chapter twenty-nine reads, "*Then Jacob lifted up his feet.*" The heaviness which he had was now gone and he went on his way lightheartedly. It was some five hundred miles from Beersheba to Padan-Aram and the long journey seemed to be uneventful.

We note the difference between Jacob and Abraham's servant as he approached Haran. Abraham's servant prayed and sought God for guidance but there is no mention of prayer with Jacob. However, he did consult some shepherds instead.

It was neither by chance nor accident that Rachel came to the well just when she did. God had the meeting pre-arranged; the meeting was of Divine appointment. It was love at first sight with Jacob.

Here we see another side to Jacob's character. He rolled away the stone, watered the sheep, kissed Rachel and burst into tears. We find that Jacob possessed warmth of natural feeling that was not revealed until now.

Uncle Laban gladly welcomes Jacob but lets him know almost immediately that he expected Jacob to work and serve him while he remained there. The question of "wages" is raised and Jacob agrees to work seven years for Rachel. Jacob loved Rachel so much that the seven years seemed to him but a few days (Genesis 29:20).

We now come to the treachery of Laban. The principle that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap is certainly seen here. The deceiver is deceived. Jacob had deceived his father, and now was deceived by his father-in-law. In Jacob's deception he, the younger, had taken the place of the elder, now, the elder Leah, had taken the place of the younger. Because of this Jacob agreed to serve Laban for another seven years. This tells us much about Jacob's character.

**B. THE TWELVE SONS:**

Because they became the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel, the student should be familiar with the names of the twelve sons, their mothers, and the meaning of each name. The significance of the meaning of these names and why the mothers named them thus certainly tells us much about the tribes descended from them.

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>MOTHER'S NAME</u> | <u>MEANING</u>  |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Reuben   | Leah                 | See, a Son!     |
| 2. Simeon   | Leah                 | One that hears. |
| 3. Levi     | Leah                 | Joined          |
| 4. Judah    | Leah                 | Praise          |

|              |                        |                      |
|--------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 5. Dan       | Bilhah (Rachel's maid) | Judgment             |
| 6. Naphtali  | Bilhah                 | Wrestling            |
| 7. Gad       | Zilpah (Leah's maid)   | Troop or Company     |
| 8. Asher     | Zilpah                 | Happy                |
| 9. Issachar  | Leah                   | Hire                 |
| 10. Zebulon  | Leah                   | Dwelling             |
| 11. Joseph   | Rachel                 | Adding               |
| 12. Benjamin | Rachel                 | Son of my right hand |

### C. JACOB AT PENIEL:

After Jacob had spent twenty years at Haran, his prosperity caused envy among the sons of Laban. The Lord spoke to Jacob to return to Canaan. Jacob sets out without telling Laban and Laban pursues for a seven-day journey.

Laban accused Jacob of stealing his gods. Jacob did not know that Rachel had taken them. It was Rachel who caused Jacob trouble. Rachel had retained her idolatry and at this time she deceived and tricked her own father.

Jacob accused Laban that he had changed his wages ten times during the twenty years. Finally the two men are reconciled, make a covenant, and erect a memorial. Laban kissed his daughters, blessed them and then returned home.

Soon Jacob learned that he was facing more trouble. He had made peace with his father-in-law but now he heard that his brother, Esau, was coming to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob was afraid and his need was great. Jacob sent on ahead a peace offering and presents for Esau. He thought that these would appease Esau (Genesis 32:20). Finally he sent his wives and children ahead and he was left alone.

At this time Jacob had one of his greatest spiritual experiences. *"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day"* (Genesis 32:24). This man who wrestled with Jacob was a Theophany of God. We should note that it was not Jacob wrestling with the angel but the angel with him. Jacob's resistance had to be overcome and his opposition broken down. Finally Jacob realized his helplessness; he ceased to strive and began to cling. Then came the blessing, a new power, and a new name. His name was changed from Jacob to "Israel" for he had power with God and had prevailed.

Jacob names the place "Peniel" for he had seen God face to face and his life had been preserved.

Jacob had "prayed through" and was now ready for the trial that lay ahead.

### D. BACK TO BETHEL:

For twenty long years Jacob had nursed a guilty conscience. He dreaded and feared meeting his brother. However, after Peniel Jacob was a changed man. He had been taught to surrender and cling to God, instead of relying upon his own ability. He is now ready to meet Esau.

Jacob passed over the brook Jabbok and rejoined his family. Almost at once he saw Esau coming with four hundred men. Jacob had only time to arrange his family placing in the rear those whom he loved the most. As he drew near to Esau he bowed to the ground seven times. He seemed anxious to impress Esau that he was willing to be subordinate to him. The brothers

meet and the reconciliation appears to be genuine. However, Jacob was quite hypocritical. He was chiefly interested in appeasing Esau's wrath and winning the safety of himself and his family.

Esau offers to escort Jacob on his way home. Jacob reveals his old nature of suspicion and distrust. He made many excuses and promised Esau that he would follow. While he promised Esau to follow he planned otherwise. The dust of Esau's party had hardly settled over the horizon when he started travelling in the opposite direction. Instead of going southeast, he goes directly opposite, northwest. This falsehood was absolutely inexcusable. This shows us that Jacob needed still another experience with God.

Because Jacob did not travel on to Bethel he had to suffer some very bitter experiences. He made his home for a time at Succoth and then moved on to a city of Shechem. He bought property and settled quite close to the Canaanites. He followed the example of Lot who pitched his tent toward Sodom for material gain, and as a result, experienced trouble and heartache with his family. His only daughter, Dinah, was ruined. The treachery and cruelty of his sons could not be excused. Jacob's rebuke to his sons was very weak (Genesis 34:30). He thought only of his own reputation and safety. This lesson teaches that one cannot reprove his children unless his own life has been right.

God again spoke to Jacob and he was now ready to return to Bethel. It was now ten years since his experience with God at Peniel but all this time Bethel was only thirty miles away. Here at Bethel they cleansed themselves from all the idols, which they had gathered over the years. God renewed his covenant to Jacob.

Shortly afterwards Benjamin was born and Rachel died in childbirth and was buried at Bethlehem.

# COURSE: GENESIS

## LESSON ELEVEN

### SELF HELP TEST

A. Name the twelve sons of Jacob.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

B. Show that Jacob needed still another experience with God even after Peniel.

C. Trace Jacob's journey from Haran back to Bethel.

If you wish to obtain your AIS Bible and Theology Certificate or work toward your B.A. Degree from Indiana Bible College, complete this Self-Help Test as completely as possible and return it to: AIS, P.O. Box 47917 Indianapolis, IN 46247 or email it to: [ais@apostolic.edu](mailto:ais@apostolic.edu) or fax it to: (317) 781-7700.