

## Q2 L09 - **Jacob the Supplanter** - 2022-05-28

Shawn Brummund: Good morning, and welcome to another edition of the "Sabbath school Study Hour." My name is Pastor Shawn Brummund. It is my privilege both to introduce our "Sabbath School Study Hour" here this morning as well as teach it, so it is an honor to be able to represent the Granite Bay Hilltop Seventh-day Adventist Church here in the Greater Sacramento area of California, and it's a beautiful day here as far as weather goes. Whatever the weather is wherever you're watching from, I pray that God will bless you in a special way and that God will shine in your hearts.

We're continuing to come back to our study in the book of Genesis. It is one of my favorite books by far. It is the book that teaches the different ways in which God interacts with mankind. His grace, His love, His truth, His justice is all found in the book of Genesis. We're continuing to study it. We're looking at lesson number nine. Jacob is the next character of history that we'll be focusing in on both today as well as next week as well. So for the next two weeks, we'll be looking at those key chapters in the book of Genesis. And so, if you have your quarterly study with you, go ahead and grab that. Again, that is lesson number nine.

And before we, oh, continue to worship in song, I want to take advantage of this time to offer a free gift offer. Now, this particular little booklet is entitled "Satan's Confusing Counterfeits." "Satan's Confusing Counterfeits." You want to be able to know about those, and so make sure you go ahead and take advantage of this free gift offer. We'll send this book out to you if you live in the United States, North America, or any of the U.S. territories. All you need to do is dial the number 866-788-3966. Again, that's 866-788-3966, and ask for Offer Number 191.

Now, if you live in the United States and you'd like to download a digital copy onto your phone, even right now, you just need to simply text the number "SH058," and you want to dial that to 40544, and you'll be able to download a free digital copy. Now, if you're outside of North America and you'd still like to download this and you have access to the internet through your computer or otherwise, all you need to do is go to this web address that is study, [study.aftv.org/SH058](http://study.aftv.org/SH058). address that is study, [study.aftv.org/SH058](http://study.aftv.org/SH058). Please take advantage of that. Make sure you get ahold of that "Satan's Counterfeits," written by the founder of Amazing Facts, Joe Crews.

Well, before we get into our study here today, we want to welcome and thank our local Granite Bay Hilltop orchestra as well as the choir as they lead us out in song.

♪♪♪

♪ God bless the mom tonight, ♪  
♪ she feeds the heart and mind as she lives to ♪  
♪ share God's wisdom with her young, to teach them ♪  
♪ what to do, what is good and what is true. ♪  
♪ She is faithful to the work that's never done. ♪  
♪ Rise up and call her blessed. ♪  
♪ Rise up and show your love. ♪  
♪ Give thanks to the mother. ♪  
♪ Give thanks to God above. ♪  
♪ Through the years, through the tears, as she offers them her ♪  
♪ best, the children of a ♪  
♪ faithful mother are blessed. ♪  
♪♪♪

♪ Our precious little girl, her life will bless the world ♪  
♪ as she cares for her children day by day. ♪  
♪ We will raise and mark our own, ♪  
♪ by the Lord she is made strong as she lives to ♪  
♪ raise a family of faith. ♪  
♪ Rise up and call her blessed. ♪  
♪ Rise up and show your love. ♪  
♪ Give thanks to the mother. ♪  
♪ Give thanks to God above. ♪  
♪ Through the years, through the tears, as she offers them her ♪  
♪ best, the children of a ♪  
♪ faithful mother are blessed. ♪  
♪♪♪

♪ Little children rise and praise ♪  
♪ to bless her all her days, ♪  
♪ for gratitude is a wonderful reward. ♪  
♪ And when all is said and done through the battles lost and ♪  
♪ won, we can say she was faithful to the Lord. ♪  
♪ Rise up and call her blessed. ♪  
♪ Rise up and show your love. ♪  
♪ Give thanks to the mother. ♪  
♪ Give thanks to God above. ♪  
♪ Through the years, through the tears, as she offers them ♪  
♪ her best, the children of a ♪  
♪ faithful mother are blessed. ♪  
♪♪  
♪ Rise up and show your love. ♪  
♪ Rise up and show your love. ♪

Shawn: Today we are--continue to study into the book of Genesis. And the inspiration of the special gift that we have from our musicians here today, it is a honor to be able to continue to look at this very vital book and some very vital individuals that are found in one of the most important, if not the most important, family in all of human history, and that is the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

We continue to follow a family whose life events have huge effects on the Middle East and all over the world, and not only did we find these events changing that part of history, but we also find it changing even our current history. Even the Middle East today is very much a reality and very much a part--many--the largest parts of its reality is because of this family that we're following, and so it's no small family, and one of the things that we've discovered as we looked at this particular book is that--and this particular part of the book of Genesis is that not all the events were God-given, or maybe I should say not all the events were God-led.

Some of the choices, some of the events that took place actually threatened God's purposes for their future, but God's purposes always prevail, and these chapters testify that God can and that He does use us for His plans and purposes in spite of ourselves, and that's one of the greatest hopes that I pulled away from this. Outside of the fact that God was developing a nation to be a light to all nations and to all the world, to develop a nation that was to bring forth the promised Messiah and Savior of the world that you and I so desperately need, is that God fulfills His plans and purposes through this world and through His people in spite of themselves.

I'm thankful to know that God uses me in spite of myself, and, that is, He continues to grow me and learn me and educate me and form my character. He continues to use me, and He uses you too, and we all play our small but important part of fulfilling the gospel commission and bringing the truth to the world. I'd like to invite you to open your Bibles here this morning to Genesis chapter 25. And Genesis chapter 25, is where we find ourselves picking it up with this lesson study that we looked at over the last week, and we're picking it up with verse 20.

So Genesis chapter 25, and verse 20. So in Genesis 25, verse 20, it says, "Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah, his wife, the daughter of Bethuel, the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian." And so Isaac is on record of marrying his wife at 40 years of age. She is the sister of Laban, and, of course, we're going to learn more about Laban as we continue in the chapters ahead. "Now Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife, because she was barren, and the Lord granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived."

And so this is no small verse, you know, because verse 26, later on, in the same chapter, if we go ahead just briefly here in the same chapter, it says that she conceived, and she gave birth when Isaac was 60. So we want to do some math there. Isaac got married at 40, but he didn't have his first children until he was 60. So that's a 20-year gap, and so we find ourselves fast-forwarding 20 years, and so that tells us something important and reminds us of something important.

We find this all over the Bible, and many of you have found it by your own personal experience is that, when we pray to God for something, more often than not, His answer comes much later than we would've chosen or would've liked. And I'm sure Isaac is no exception when he pleaded with the Lord as they tried through the years and no answer, no answer, no answer, but Isaac continue to plead to the Lord, "Please give us the child that we need. Give us that son or sons that we need to continue to propagate this plan, this mission, this vision that you gave to my father, Abraham, that our descendants will be as great as the sand of the sea, will be as the stars of the heavens that will form a nation and be a blessing to all peoples, all families within the earth."

And so, as he was praying that, again, we find that God took His time in our reckoning of time, and it was 20 years before Rebekah conceived, and Isaac and Rebekah had their first children. Now, as the later verses revealed to us, indeed, these were no ordinary children, and there was no ordinary family story that was the follow after she did conceive. Verse 22, says, "But the children struggled together within her, and she said, 'If all is well, why am I like this?' And so she went to inquire of the Lord." And so she

had some pregnancy difficulties that not very many of us experience.

It kind of reminds me of when Elizabeth was pregnant with John the Baptist, and Mary was told by the angel of the Lord--Gabriel himself had appeared and said, "You shall have a Son, and His name shall be Jesus. He shall be the Savior of the world, and you'll be conceived with the Holy Spirit even before you are married or lay with a man." And so Mary, being with child, found herself going down and visiting her relative, probably her aunt, but doesn't specify exactly how she's related, but as she goes to visit Elizabeth, who is well endowed in age compared to that of young Mary, who was more likely to be 17 or 18 years of age, she goes to visit what is, again, likely Aunt Elizabeth. And as soon as they see each other, the Holy Spirit moves upon John the Baptist, and John the Baptist leaps within her womb, and so she kind of found this experience in her womb and in her belly in a way that she had never experienced before.

And we find that there's a similar experience that's found here in Rebekah's pregnancy. And so later in the terms when the babies, these twins that are forming in her womb, are finding themselves more and more large, they begin to wrestle within the womb, and so, you know, brothers like to wrestle when they get out of the womb, but not too many mothers have troubles with the brothers wrestling in the womb. But this is one of those exceptions, and so it's to the point where the mother is actually sincerely distressed, and she sees this as some kind of sign.

She's starting to sense some kind of divine signal that's taking place here, and she goes, "It is well with us, this wonderful promise of God through Abraham and now through my conception and through years of praying and begging God to give me fertility, and so on, and now I have this problem." In verse 23, it says, "And the Lord said to her--" but before we go on, there's another thing I want to point out. It says, "So she went to inquire of the Lord." Now, we don't want to skip over that too quickly because this is something that is reminding me, and, hopefully, to also remind you as well is that she did something that all wise believers do.

Now, sometimes we're not always as wise as we should be, and even some of the greatest, like David and others, you know, they just kind of went ahead of the Lord. In this case, she said, "Okay, there's a difficulty. There's a problem. I need to go to the best counselor that I can possibly find," and that's Jesus Christ. And so she went to her Father, went to the Son, Jesus Christ, and as she went to the God of heaven, she inquired of Him, and we need to remember to do that as well. And so, yeah, some of the best are on record in the Bible of forgetting to inquire the Lord, but this is a reminder for you and me.

Verse 23, it says, "And then the Lord said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb.'" So the Lord responds in a prophetic way, and he says, "Two nations are in your womb. Two people shall be separated from your body. One people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger."

And so this reveals a couple of different things to us, first of all, it reveals that Rebekah actually appears to have the gift of prophecy, and so not only is Isaac receiving communication and direct prophetic messages from the Lord, but now we have Rebekah also receiving direct prophetic communication as well, and this was no small prophecy that God gives to her. He says, "Listen, first of all, you have twins."

Now, we have to remember, they didn't have sonograms, and she probably was--I'm guessing they--she was developed enough at this point and the boys were developed enough that she was starting to sense that "Hey, listen, I think maybe there's more than one child going on in there." And this definitely confirmed it, and they didn't have ultrasounds and all the other technology that we have today. And so this confirms, first of all, that she has twins and, second of all, that they are both giant figures in history. "Two nations are in your womb. Two people shall be separated from your body."

In other words, the descendants of these two boys, these two boys that will become men and marry and have children, will eventually develop into two entire nations. "One people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger," and those two nations are? Well, we have Jacob, which--whose name was changed to Israel, and so we know, certainly, that was--would be one of them--was Israel, and then we also have Esau, and he developed the nation of--some of you know--Edom, okay? So

the Edomites came from the descendants of Esau.

And so we have two boys, Esau and Jacob, and this is why, when we fast-forward from Genesis several hundred years, just over four hundred years to the time of Moses and now the Israelites, the children of one of these two nations--the children of one of these two boys and twins is that of Israel--and Moses is one of them. And him and his brother Aaron are leading the people out of slavery in Egypt and into the Promised Land. Well, when they get to Kadesh Barnea, when the 40 years of time-out or punishment for the Israelites have taken place and this new generation is at the border of the Promised Land or just about to enter into the border of the Promised Land, there was a nation in the way of getting into the land of Canaan, and that was the nation of Edom.

And so Moses goes ahead and sends messengers ahead to the king of Edom and says, "Listen--" in fact, let me read it for you, Numbers chapter 20, in verse 14. Numbers 20, verse 14, it says, "Thus says your brother Israel--" this is the message to the king. It says, "Thus says your brother Israel, 'You know all the hardship that has befallen us,'" and then he goes on and recalls, reviews for the king, which the king and all the nations would've heard by now, you know, "and has done wonderful things. God has done wonderful things, delivered us out of slavery and bondage and horrible oppression in the land of Egypt, and now your brother has been freed. The Lord has freed us, and He has promised a land beyond yours, and He's promised that we're not going to take your land. All we ask is just free passage. We just want to go through the King's Highway," which is kind of the interstate of the land of Edom, back then, you know, the I-80 of the ancient time.

It says, "We're just going to stay on the I-80, and we're going to go all the way through, and we're just going to--if we have to stop and feed the livestock or whatever, you know, we'll pay for whatever we use on the way, but we have no plans of using anything on the way. Just let us through." Sadly, Edom's king found himself sending back and say, "No. Brother or not, whether the--regardless of the fact that we share the same grandparents," or in this case, the parents, the same parents, Isaac and Rebekah, "we're not going to let you through." Well, that's another story we don't want to get too sidetracked on, but it is relevant to the prophecy that we're just reading here now.

Well, we continue on in verse 24. It says, "So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first one came out red." Well, babies come out red even today sometimes, don't they? It's not unusual. He comes out red. Babies quite often come out red around skin, then so on until they kind of adjust, and their pigment adjusts and so on. "He was like a hairy garment all over, and so they called him Esau." They called him hairy.

Now, this is different from the Harry's that we know. There's a gentleman that comes to our classes here and attends our church. His name is Harry, but I don't think it's spelled H-A-I-R-Y. So this is a different kind of "Harry." Not "Harold," Harry, but "hairy" hairy, and so, for back then, you know, Esau, we think, well--so we have to remember, when his friends called him Esau, that was the ancient language that they used in their streets and in their everyday language, so it was like calling him "hairy," H-A-I-R-Y.

So interesting culture, very much like the culture I used to live--my last church in Canada, we lived--our church and our city, Lethbridge, was right next to the largest Indian reserve in Canada, the Blackfoot Natives, and they had that same culture. And so they would name their children, still, after different experiences that were taking place just before, during, or right after the birth of a child, and so there's a number of very unique names. I can't remember them all, but the one that sticks out to me was a young man. His name was Stacey Crying Head, and so, for us, that was a little bit humorous. We thought, "Wow, 'Crying Head,'" but it turns out that, you know, he cried a lot more than the average baby after he was born, and so they called him "Stacey Crying Head," and so on.

So this is not unusual. It even happens in cultures today, and so, back then, it wasn't as unusual as it might be for us today. Verse 26, it says, "Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel, and so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when he bore them." And so, there they are, the two twins, the two boys. Esau is only a few moments, only a few minutes older than Jacob,

but, just like today, you know, he's the firstborn. He's the older brother now, and we're going to see how that plays out. Verse 27, it says, "So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a mild man of dwelling in his tents."

And so even though they were brothers, and even twin brothers, obviously, as we read the description, they're not identical twins. They're maternal twins but--and they are very much different as they came out of the womb, and they continued to be much different. "Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field." He was more what you might think of as your man's man. He was the athlete. He was the all-star, MVP, quarterback of the local football team. You know, he was that type of personality, and mesomorph, you know, body type, almost for certain, and such. "Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in the tents."

You know, when I first used to read this in years past and this last quarterly study, and the scholar that was kind of contributing to that, you know, helped me out a little bit in the fact that "mild" there, translated into the English from the Hebrew word "tam," actually is not the "mild" that you and I think of. And so "mild" is actually the same word that is translated "perfect," in regards to Noah, and "blameless," in regards to Job. And so, when God describes Job, He used that same word, "tam," a Hebrew word, and so when it says he was a mild man, he was a complete man, he was perfect, he was blameless.

God is actually--and the Bible here is describing the character of Jacob. Jacob is the one that gave his heart to the Lord when he was probably seven years old and said, "Daddy, I want to be baptized, I want to be baptized," and he could hardly wait for that day. Whereas Esau maybe, you know, that his baptism probably took place too--and they didn't baptize back then, but I'm putting our contemporary culture today and religious experience and such, and Esau, you know, he revealed himself not to be spiritually inclined. He wasn't all that interested in the things of God as much as Jacob was. And so, because of that, Jacob's character grew much closer to God and much more like God than that of Esau.

You know, that's not to say that Jacob was pale-skinned and soft and physically weak. No, in fact, the later chapters reveal that he wasn't that at all. In fact, the later chapters reveal that he could probably hold his own in the field as a hunter pretty well. You know, he could probably give his brother a run for his money if he wanted to. He just wasn't as interested in spending all of his time hunting as his brother was. He was entrusted in taking responsibility for the estate and learning how the accounts work and how do you take care of the servants in such a way that it helps them to be able to feel valued and welcomed? And he was learning how to be a responsible manager. He was looking for the things that Esau wasn't. Esau just wanted to play. He wanted to play football all day, and Jacob wasn't interested in only playing football. Oh, he could play. He could throw the pigskin around pretty good too, and, again, I'm putting a contemporary culture, you know, but Jacob was interested in responsibility, as well.

And so that's why he's described as a "mild" man, and so my picture of Jacob has changed quite a bit in regards to the real man of history. He's not one that liked to hang out at the library all the time as I used to kind of understand. No, it means that he was interested in taking responsibility and learning and maturing as a successor in this great promise that he and his brother had been told while their parents had brought them as little boys up on their knees and told them the stories of their grandfather Abraham and their grandmother Sarah and these miraculous encounters that they had with the Lord Himself and how they had brought them to this Promised Land and why they even live in this part of the world.

And so Jacob took all that to heart. Esau didn't. And, of course, when we look later on in Jacob's life, we find that he was very much a man's man in regards to physical things. He became a very successful shepherd. After he had to escape for his life up to his Uncle Laban in the north around Haran, we find that he made a successful shepherd, very much like David.

Now, David made it very clear, as we read his more detailed account of his shepherding experience that, being a shepherd, you couldn't be a weak man. You couldn't be a coward either because, to be a successful shepherd, you need to take on wolves, you need to look straight in the face of a bear. There's

times when lions came in and tried to take out your livestock, and so, just like David said, you know, "I've learned, you know, how to use a stone and a sling very well, and even then, when that stone hit the head of the bear, not always did the bear get knocked right out, and so I had to risk my life and go in there with a knife and grab by its beard and slit its throat as fast as I could."

Now, friends, I don't know about you, but even a half-knocked out bear is not one that I'm excited about approaching. But Jacob did that, didn't he? So he was no coward. Jacob was--he was no pushover. He was no coward, and not only that, but then, when we find that Jacob goes up north and he's praying and looking for his distant relatives, his sister's brother Laban, his Uncle Laban, and so on. He sees his cousin Rebekah--not Rebekah, but Rachel approaching, and some of the local shepherds there at the well already confirmed that, and he's just so pumped and so excited about that, he takes this large, heavy stone that's covering the well's mouth. And before that, the shepherd said to Jacob, "Listen, we don't move that till all the shepherds get here with all the livestock, and then they move it, and plural is "they." You know, several men get together, and they move that stone.

Well, Jacob just gets over there, and he's so pumped, he just picks up that stone, moves it over and takes it off, and, you know, so Jacob was not a weak man. He was a very strong man. He was not afraid of physical things.

All right, well, let's continue on, verse 29. Verse 29, it says, "Now Jacob cooked a stew, and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary." Well, you and I have been weary, haven't we? Have you been weary from working hard, long day? Maybe you had some troubles that kind of put you back, and you didn't get home from work, much later than you had anticipated and normally do? This is not unusual. "Esau said to Jacob, 'Please feed me that same red stew, for I am weary.'"

Well, as it turns out, verse 34, it tells us that that was lentil stew, and some of you have cooked with red lentils. My wife had made a treat, but we don't eat it as often as we used to, but one of our favorite meals that Denise, my wife, used to make for the kids--they really loved it--was lentil wraps. And so Denise would take some red lentils and mix that with some different flavors and such, and then we would wrap it in a burrito wrap, and so our family's acquainted with that, and some of you are acquainted with red lentils, and so Jacob is cooking a red lentil stew, and Esau comes into the tent, and he says, "Look it, I'm about to die."

Actually, no, let's back up. Yeah, verse 30, it says, "And Esau said to Jacob, 'Please feed me some of that red stew, for I am weary.' Therefore his name shall be called Edom," and there we find that, from that point forward, he did go by Edom, and his descendants are called Edomites--or were called. They no longer exist. "But Jacob said, 'Sell me your birthright as of this day.' And Esau said, 'Look, I am about to die. What is this--so what is my birthright to me?'"

Now, friends, this is what you call major hyperbole. Have you ever missed a meal? Have you ever missed a couple of meals? Sometimes, you're out in the field. Maybe you're working out in the yard, or if you have a field, you're working out in the field in your acreage or your farm or whether you're at the office, and you're just under a crunch, and you're trying to meet a deadline, and you find yourselves, all of a sudden, one hour, three hours, five hours, six hours, eight or ten hours have gone by. You haven't had a proper meal yet, why? Because you've got bigger priorities right now. There's a deadline that you need to meet, or maybe there's something that needs to be cinched up out in the yard or whatever it is, and so you and I have all been there, haven't you? Haven't we?

We know what it's like to miss a couple of meals and be really extra-hungry. You know, my kids always tease me because, soon as I start to get hungry, I still use that old term that our mothers rebuke us for, you know, "I'm starving. Oh, I can't wait to eat. I'm starving." And they say, "Daddy, you're not starving. You always say that." Yeah, I'm not starving. That's true. I'm not starving. I don't know what it's like to really, literally starve, but it's just a term that we use to say, "I'm really, really, really hungry," like, way above average, but you didn't see me selling my wife for it and saying, "Listen, you know, I'm willing to give one of my kids for a meal right now."



So, you know, I can wait. I can use self-control, right? I didn't get so desperate if somebody came up to me and said, "Listen, if you give me one of your daughters, then--you know, sell me one of your daughters, then I'll feed you right now." You know, I would say--they wouldn't even try because they knew they wouldn't get anywhere, would they? You know, we have better self-control than that. Well, Esau didn't have that self-control, and even more importantly, as it says in verse 34, at the end, "Thus Esau despised his birthright."

You see, Esau didn't really have all that much value in knowing that he would have to have responsibility of the entire estate. He didn't want to be a manager. He didn't want to have to watch the accounts. He didn't want to have to deal with these pesky servants and all their little problems that they keep coming to him about. He didn't want to deal with all that. He knew that was coming down the pipe. He knew that was his position. He wasn't interested. He wanted to go out and play and hunt deer, and so, because of that, "he despised his birthright," and so he was willing to sell it for just a measly meal. Hungry or not, tired or not, you and I both know that he had no excuse.

Verse 33, "Then Jacob said, 'Swear to me as of this day.' So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils, and then he ate and arose, and went his way and thus--" and this is the key, friends. That last statement in verse 34, "Thus Esau despised his birthright." He didn't have any value for it. Now, later on, in history, it tells us that he was more than interested in the wealth, and that's what happens to us when we don't have the Lord in our hearts. We're interested in the material things, but we're not so interested in responsibility and the spiritual things, but not so with Jacob. Not so with Jacob.

All right, so let's continue on. We're going to by--verse 26 and 27, we didn't actually look at because we're doing it at such a fast clip. We just don't have time to look at it all, and we won't have time to look at it all here today, but this is a key kind of foundation of the life of Jacob, and so we looked at it--just a little bit more detail--26, we find that the whole family has to take a diversion like Abraham's family encamped when they went south down to one of the foreign king's lands.

In this case, we find him in Gerar of the Philistines. Abimelech the king, is there. We find that Isaac buckles under pressure and makes the same moral mistake as his dad, Abraham, had done a couple of times during his excursions, and he's not so honest with the king, and like always or most of the time, at least, when we find ourselves starting to twist the truth, we find ourselves getting in some kind of negative consequences as a result of that, and so this is no exception.

We find, just like Isaac's dad, Isaac finds himself in trouble, and to his shame, we find that this foreign Philistine king that should know less than Isaac, concerning honesty and morality, actually is rebuking the great patriarch, is rebuking the father of Israel. And we find here that this man of God, this prophet of God, is being rebuked by the king, and the king is saying, "Listen, what have you done? You know, why were you not honest with us? What if this--one of the people might have soon lain with your wife, and you would've brought guilt on us."

And so it turns out that not everybody that's within the church or within the family of Isaac and Israel is necessarily not right with the Lord and may have a higher moral standard than we might have right now. God is working upon the hearts of everybody, isn't he? Just because their names aren't on the books of some church doesn't mean that they're not in a, you know, a real relationship with God, and they just haven't learned about the reality and truth of church and God's plan for them in the church and in the Bible and so on.

Well, they find themselves back in Beersheba, the kind of the south end of the land of Canaan and such, and several years have gone by. About 40 years have gone by, and then verse--or chapter 27, we find here that Jacob were to--we don't read it during the lesson study, but many of us have read it. If you haven't, I recommend that you do. It's a sad chapter, a tragic chapter because we find that Jacob lives up to his name. His name was not "hairy" when he was born. His name was "supplanter" or "deceiver," and he lives up to that name, sadly. Even though his heart's in the right place, he's going in the right

direction, his choices overall are in the right place in concern to his faith and prayer life and worship of God and such, we find that, even then, he buckles under pressure, and his mom is no help to him.

In fact, his mom is kind of playing Eve's role. She kind of comes along and says, "Listen, I got this grand plan. I just overheard your dad, Isaac. He's just told your older brother, Esau, that he's about to give him his blessing," and Isaac is so old now, right now, that he's lost his eyesight. He can't see, and so the mother comes up with this grand plan and says, "Okay, listen, he sent Esau to go out and kill some game and to feed Isaac before the blessing is given to him. We're going to pretend that you're Esau, and so I'm going to get some--go get a couple of the choice goats. I'm going to make up some delicious, savory food for your dad. You're going to go in there. We're going to--"

And then Jacob said, "Well, first of all, I don't want to get caught, you know, and I'm going to get up--you know, it's going to turn out worse than better, and so, you know, I've got smooth skin. I'm not hairy like my brother," and so the mother said, "Well, we're going to get some of that same goat that we're going to kill and make food out of, and we're going to take some of that skin, and we're going to tie it to your forearm."

Now, you might say to yourself as I did the first time, I thought, "Why, wait a minute, you know, goat fur? You know, skins could just, kind of, tie to the forearm? That's going to do it?" Well, you have to remember, and some of us have had that sad experience or might be going through it right now is that, as our parents age and as you and I age, not only does our eyesight go, but our mind starts to go in a real way as well, and so, you know, we're not capable of being able to comprehend in our later years, not always, but quite often, more often than not, we're not capable of being able to comprehend the things that are around us and what's going on.

And so our cognitive abilities start to diminish, and so the assumption here then would be very realistically that Isaac has not only lost his eyesight, but he has lost his cognitive abilities to a large degree as well, and so he's not able to put two and two together quite as well. As you read the chapter, there's some confusion. He does start to catch on somewhat, but, you know, the evidence still seems to weigh towards it being Esau, and he gives Jacob the blessing. Jacob succeeds. The plan, the grand plan has succeeded. Everything is going as planned, right?

Well, it appeared that way. He certainly did receive the blessing, and him and his mother must've been praising God and thanking Him and just having a little happy dance of some kind, but it didn't last long because, as soon as poor Esau came in, of course, he was no happy camper. They forgot to think it all the way through, you know, which, quite often, when we do, and we start making sinful choices and lay out sinful plans, it's very difficult for us to be able to connect all the dots.

And this is no exception because, as the dots are being connected now and as history is playing out, we find that they didn't connect the last dots, and that's the fact that Esau was not going to be a happy camper about this, and Esau is not a mild man. He's not a perfect or blameless man. This guy is one that can fly off the handle a lot easier than Jacob can, and that's exactly what he did. After he got off the-- over the trauma with his dad and this very dramatic experience and scene that we read there, we find then that he started to whisper not only in his heart but, obviously, to others in the camp that he had planned to now kill Jacob. He was going to take revenge on Jacob. "No younger brother of mine is going to go ahead and steal that blessing. How dare you."

And so he starts getting ready for the weapons that he used to kill deer with. Now he's ready to kill his brother with, and so Jacob's not interested in sticking around to know if he'll win or not and neither is the mom, and so Rebekah says, "Listen, you've got to get out of here, and you need to flee for your life. Go up to my brother Laban, up in the north, in Haran, and you just stay there. It's a long distance, several days, maybe weeks to be able to get there at least by foot," and so on, and so he just, kind of, grabbed whatever he could. He just had a little knapsack of some kind, and he basically had to run out the house with just the-- almost with the shirt on his back.

And the mother, you know, she didn't realize what a price she's going to pay because she said, "Listen, go up there for a few days. Let your brother cool down. Once the temperature lowers enough, and I know that it's safe, I'll send for you, and you can come back and join our family, and we can be happily ever after."

But that's not how it worked out, did it? No, it was 20--no, it was, what, 20, 40-- how many years was it again? It was--no, for 20 years, it was 20 years before Jacob came back. Rebekah's already dead. Rebekah didn't know it, but she would never see her son again, her favorite son. So that "few days" ended up a lot longer. Now, she was going to send for him. Did she ever send for him? Bible record's silent on it. And so what that tells us is that Esau didn't cool down nearly as fast as she thought he would and she saw that her son was still in danger, five, ten years later. She still didn't send for him, and then, finally, she died.

Well, then we pick it up in chapter 28. Chapter 28, and verse 10, is where the lesson study picks it up, and it says, "Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and toward Haran," and so now he's a fugitive, running for his life. "So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones and put it in place at his head, and he lay down in this place to sleep."

Now, I always used to picture this--used to wonder, "Boy, I think I'd just rather sleep on my arm or something than a hard rock. You know, my ear would be sore, and I would be having-- I wouldn't even be able to sleep. But it turns out that the ancients, back in biblical time, they actually traveled with, kind of, a leather, kind of, shaped handy little wedge that was--had some light padding in it, and they would put that over rocks, and so the rock would take up the bulk to be able to hold your head up parallel with your shoulders.

But it wasn't just a rock only, and so Jacob surely, in his knapsack, had one of these leather devices that was able to give him some relief from the hardness of the rock. But it's pointing this out, number one, because that rock is used as a pillar and testimony to God's visit to him that night, and so it becomes more than just a sleeping rock.

And, number two, it's pointing out that he's destitute. You know, he doesn't have much to his name at this point. Verse 12, it says, "Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and the top reached to heaven, and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, 'I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac, and the land which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be of the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, and the north and the south, and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"

And so the same promise, the same covenant that God had made with Jacob's grandfather Abraham is now repeated prophetically to this grandson named Jacob. Jacob is discouraged. He's disappointed. He's full of shame. He's certainly afraid of his brother at this point. He's afraid for his life. Jacob is not in a good place, is he? And he's not the first one. He won't be the last one of the most faithful patriarchs and characters and prophets of God--have made some horrible mistakes and choices at times, but the good news is that God forgives, and He knows the sincere ones that repent and turn from their sin and learn from their mistakes, and this is no exception.

Jacob has a long road of learning and repenting ahead of him. It's a 20-year diversion from the plan that he and his mother understood, and so it's no small diversion. It's a long, hard lesson that he's going to be learning, but God is still fulfilling some very special things in the meantime. God calls--or Jacob calls it Bethel, which means "Gate of God," after he has this dream. And God gives His assurance, and He makes that--Jacob renews and restores or maybe even establishes a covenant with his God in a measure that he had never experienced before. And so we find that he responds, even as God says, "I will be with you wherever you go," and in response, he says, "If that's the case, Lord, then I will follow You, and You will be my God all through the years that are ahead of me in Haran, and I will continue to make sure that I return a tithe to You."

Well, that's chapter 28, and then we come into chapter 29, and chapter 30 is the lesson study looked at, and, of course, we're going to run out of time far before that, and I'm just looking up at the--okay, we changed our monitor a little bit but--all right, so we're just winding down here, chapter 29 and chapter 30, we look at the bulk of that as well.

Jacob meets his wife, Rachel. We talked about that, at the well, how he moved that stone, and then we find that he has to work 14 years for his two wives: two sisters, Rachel, the one that he wanted in the first place, but then he was deceived by his uncle. Can you believe it? A family member deceived Jacob. Now, did Jacob deceive one of his family members? Yes, he did. Now Jacob's getting a little bit taste of his own medicine. Some of us know what that tastes like, doesn't it? You know, it's much harder to take the medicine that we're giving out to others, and sometimes the only way that we can learn is to be able to taste some of that medicine ourselves. You know, I'm not one to purport karma by any means. Karma comes from--I'm not an expert on it at all, but Buddhism, Hinduism, and so on, the Eastern religions and such, but there is a divine law of God that is also found in the Bible that is very similar to that, and we can find it in Proverbs 11:27. "Whoever seeks finds favor--whoever seeks good finds favor," it says, "but evil comes to those who search-- to the one who searches for it."

And so, when we search out evil and we make evil plans, it's basically saying, "Evil comes to you." If you search out good plans, as a general rule of life, good things come to you. Now, that can be broken in an evil and broken world, and the Bible also addresses that as well. Proverbs 26:27, says, "Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and whoever rolls a stone, it will roll back on them."

And so never make plans that are evil against other people, whether it's for revenge or any other reason, why? Because, most of the time, there is a general rule that God oversees. It's not a indifferent kind of impersonal karma as our Eastern religionists might tell us, but, certainly, it is something that's very real that God oversees, and He seeks revenge, and He says, "'Behold, revenge is Mine,' saith the Lord."

And God seeks revenge, and so don't think that you can go unpunished if you're seeking evil towards other people for any reason--any reason. And so we'll leave that as our closing thought as God continues to teach us as we look at the life of Jacob. Of course, I wish I had another half hour to be able to go through, but that's not unusual.

You know, in our local Bible studies and Sabbath school classes, that happens on a regular basis. We're no exception. And so keep studying. Keep reading the chapters that we weren't able to cover if you haven't read through. We're going to look back at the remaining chapters on Jacob next week as we come together. Until then, God bless you. Nice to have you.

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Heather Shurtliff: You can do nothing without God, and sometimes He lets you get to that place where you realize there's nothing left, and you're just wondering if you even want to live because it hurts, and life is dark. When He lets you get to that place, then that's when He can break through to you and let you know He's there, and then He can work with you to bring beauty out of ashes and hope out of darkness.

My mom, when she was pregnant with me, was diagnosed with bipolar, and the times when my mom would be struggling, they might be trying her on different medications to help her with the mood swings. I kind of had a savior complex and had, like, a guilt complex that somehow that my family's problems were my own fault, or I'm the one that was supposed to try to help or fix it, which is impossible for any human to do. Only Jesus can do that, but I believe stuffing all of those emotions and for so long, my world just started to crumble around me. I started to have a nervous breakdown. I could not stuff any longer everything that I'd grown up with.

I just slowly but surely just started to withdraw completely, and it got to the extent where I was, like, a prisoner of my own house of my own fears. And if it wasn't for my mom making me come out of the basement and sometimes, you know, making me eat, I would just stay down in my room in the basement, and I remember how awful that darkness was and how terrible it is to live without hope. I can still feel that in my throat and my heart. I remember what that feels like.

I had been still contemplating suicide on and off for several months, and I knew that it was getting worse, and I was going to be successful unless something happened and, you know, just trying to talk to yourself out of it every day. But, still, just, it just always being there, haunting me, and I just went to bed feeling really, really sick and just told myself--in counseling, they'll tell you, you know, it always-- "Don't make any impulsive decisions. It will always be brighter in the morning. You know, just see it through the night."

Sometimes the night are the longest, darkest hours, and I just went to sleep, telling myself that, and when I woke up in the morning, there was no relief. It was worse than it was. It was just like I knew it was waiting for me when I woke up in the morning, and so then I went to class, and as soon as the class was getting going, I asked the teacher if I could go get a drink of water.

And I went into the kitchen, and I started drinking some of the different cleaners, and as I was there, drinking the cleaners, choking on the cleaners, just such an awful place to be in. The chaplain--we have a very kind chaplain--he flipped on the kitchen lights, and he comes in with his bright smile, and he's like, "Heather," he's like, "How are you doing today?" And I'm like, you know, "I'm killing myself."

And I look at his face, and I cannot lie to him. He's such a kind man. I just look at him, and I just started sobbing, and he just--he doesn't make a big deal. He just kindly and sweetly helps pick me up off the floor and walks me to his office, and so he, just, he talked to me. I told him what I drank, and he called the ambulance.

After that hospital stay, you know, everybody was so scared for me because it was not expected at all, but after that, somehow, I knew that suicide, it was not an option anymore, that I had closed that door even though I still had that same pain and fear. And I had no idea how God was going to pick up the pieces, and I still had to be honest with God. I was like, "Okay, God, obviously, You care. Obviously, I know that You spared my life, and I don't have any idea how You're going to help me fix this mess of my life," but it was the beginning of me trusting Him again and just shutting that door to suicide. It's not ever being an option again.

God used Amazing Facts and Pastor Doug in a powerful way to make His love for me, His soon coming for me and that He was calling me to share that with others, real, and it was making it personal, God's love for me, and that was really--that's a seed that I'll never forget. And then I'm so grateful that my family didn't have to go through the pain and the tragedy of me taking my life and that I have the joy of being able to encourage other people that there's always hope.

Amazing Facts just changed my life. I'm so grateful for their ministry, its precious blessing.

Announcer: Amazing Facts changed lives.

Male: I couldn't understand just buying any kind of drugs just to do for myself because it just made sense to invest it in something else, and then I can make all the money back and have weed that I can smoke for free. I was having a lot of fun, at least at first. I was making more money than anybody that I knew.

I've got, you know, pounds and pounds of weed in the closet. I've got a beautiful, fully furnished apartment, a chandelier hanging in my living room. I've got a luxury car, all leather interior. I got the hottest girlfriend. I have every single thing that this world tells me that I need, and that's when I realized how empty I really was.

Eventually, smoking weed didn't do it anymore. I started going to doing a lot of acid, LSD, ecstasy. Of course, other hard drugs came into the picture. I found out that you can't run away from yourself, and no matter where you go, there you are. It was very difficult to reconcile a faith in God and then this lifestyle that I was choosing to lead, and at this point, I had made that choice to lead that lifestyle, but I couldn't reverse it. Even though I wanted to stop or at least slow down, I had no power. I said, "God do whatever it is You've got to do to change me."

I get arrested for DUI. I had been to jail many times before, but I used to think that the reason that I went to jail was because God was sick of me, that God hated me. There I am in jail, and I'm starting to see the fact that God loves me--to know the emptiness of this world, to know that this life really stinks, that there's hope, and the hope that I found can only be seen or known in Christ Jesus.

Announcer: Together, we have spread the gospel much farther than ever before. Thank you for your support.