

Doug Batchelor: Good morning, friends. We want to welcome everybody to the Study Hour here for the Sabbath School lesson. We're so glad that you've joined us. Always to welcome those who are watching online, or social network somewhere, are watching on AFTV, and Hope Channel, 3ABN, and others, and we're just so glad that you're tuning in. We know we have a number of our members of the Granite Bay Hilltop Church that are around the world. And Karen and I recently returned from Ireland; and time permitting, we'll give you a little report on that later, but we have people there every week that tune in and study with us. They don't do it in the morning because the program airs in the afternoon for them because of the time difference. So, we're glad that you're here.

As always, we have a special offer, and we have an offer today dealing with a very important subject talking about the "Surrender of Self." This is a book written by Joe Cruz. And if there's only one you're going to read, this is something we all deal with every day is surrendering ourselves to Jesus. If you'd like a free copy, you can simply call 866-788-3966. That's 866-Study-More, and you can ask for Offer number 182. You can also get it in the US. You can text SH087. You text SH087 to 40544, and you can read this online. And if you're outside North America, just go to the website, and that's study.aftv.org, and again then request the lesson or click on the lesson, SH087.

We're continuing in our study dealing with the book of Genesis. And in just a moment, we're going to get to that, going to be talking about Joseph, the master of dreams, and fascinating, one of my favorite subjects in the Bible. But before we have our prayer, we're going to have some music and then come back together.

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Doug: Amen. Thank you so much, young men. "Be Still My Soul," a beautiful song. But we're going to have prayer, and then we'll go into our study for today. Loving Lord, we are so thankful for your Word and the lessons we learn about salvation and life. We pray right now in a special way. As we study this important subject, you'll be with us, be with our presenter, and give him the Holy Spirit that we might receive. We thank You and ask this in Jesus' name, amen. Very happy our teacher today is Pastor Shawn Brummund on this subject from study of Genesis about Joseph.

Shawn Brummund: Well, thank you for that, Pastor Doug. It is a honor to be able to come back and continue to look at the life of one of the most important figures of history, and that is a gentleman by the name of Jacob. And so I'm just excited to be able to get back re-immersed into the Bible and into the book of Genesis. We're going to take our minds and our hearts back more than a couple of thousand years, several thousand years, and we're going to continue to look the way that God was leading in the life of this individual. And so, one of the two things that-- and we're looking at four chapters again.

So, we just keep going along at a really fast clip, because we're looking at chapters 32, 33, 34, and 35. And so I hope that if you haven't read them ahead of time that you will read them after our lesson here today, because we're not going to be able to cover all four in any kind of detail. We're going to spend most of our time in chapter 32, because that's really the centerpiece chapter and centerpiece experience that Jacob had, and it's very relevant, as we're going to look at it prophetically and how it applies to our day and age and our very soon future, as well.

There's two things that continue to cry out in a very powerful way as we continue to make our way through the life of Jacob, and that is the potential-- we are learning the potential long-standing, long-lasting negative consequences that sin can bring in our lives. And we see that in living color in the life of Jacob.

The other thing that really stands out, though, at the same time, that I hope you're also picking up is the potential long lasting positive consequences of seeking God's grace in sincere repentance. And we also see that very clearly in the life of Jacob, as well. And today, again, we're going to look at that in the fullest living color of all.

And so going back to the time when Jacob was transitioning from his 20-year exile up in Haran, the Paddan Aram, which is also referred to as that region in the city of Haran, and making his way back to the Promised Land, back to the land of which he was raised from a little boy until-- and into his first decade as an adult. And we find that it was during those first several years that he spent in exile, that he realized, you know, "Wait a minute. This whole grand plan that my mother and I had kind of schemed together is really just all turning to dust." He hadn't heard from his-- word from his mother, as they had planned.

Some of you recall that when his mother sent him up to find a wife and to let his older brother Esau cool down for the deception and the very sinful act that Jacob had committed against his father and against his brother, we find that his brother, if you remember, his mother said, "Now go up, and shortly after you leave, once your brother's, you know, temper calms down and the temperature, you know, lowers low enough, I'll send word for you, and you can come back again."

Well, there were one year, two years, three years, four years, ten years, fifteen years, still no word from his mother. And so he realized, as those years went by, that his plan was really turning into dust. One of the most fascinating text in this particular section that we're looking at is actually in the last chapter of this week's lesson study, which is Genesis chapter 35 and verse 8. In Genesis chapter 35, and verse 8, we find that there is a woman by the name of Deborah.

Now, this is not the prophetess Deborah that most of us are more familiar with, but this was the handmaid of Rebekah. When Rebekah was sent down as the new wife for her new husband to be, Isaac, she was sent down with a handmaid, a nursemaid, and her name was Deborah. And so naturally, she would have been with Rebekah when Jacob went north to find a wife and to be in exile for his safety for a time, that Rebekah-- I mean Deborah eventually found herself joining in with the household of Jacob, even before Jacob had returned to the Promised Land. And so while they were making their travels through the Promised Land.

As Jacob had returned, we find that Deborah is part of their household, and so the most likely surmising, as we try to connect the dots, as the best we can is that, you know, the housemaid or the nursemaid, I should say, Deborah was joined together with Jacob's household after Rebekah had died. And so the most likely scenario is that after Rebekah had died, Deborah had no more purpose or role to play within the household and the camp of Isaac. And so she also knew about, you know, Rebekah's favorite child, Jacob, and his exile, and so she most likely traveled north to Haran, caught up with Jacob, caught up with his household, and was willing to serve and be a part of the household there.

That also, of course, would have been heartbreaking news for Jacob on two counts. Number one, because he lost his mother. He knew he would never see her in this life again. And so, you know, again, the plan that they had surmised backfired in a major way, because they thought they would see each other in just a few months, that indeed, sadly, they never saw each other again. And second of all, this was also very heartbreaking and distressing for him because his mother was the key communicate between Isaac's camp and his family up in Haran. And so that plan that they had surmised, in which the mother would send word to him once it was safe enough for him to return now also evaporated, as well.

You see, Jacob would've left his crafty uncle long before, if it wasn't for his fear of facing his brother Esau. He endured much longer up in Haran under his uncle's oppression because of that fear. And so he was kind of stuck between a rock and a hard place. You know, he knew that there was an intense danger waiting for him down south with his brother, and he also knew that the tensions were rising and becoming very serious between himself and his uncle, as well as his uncle's sons, which would be Jacob's cousins. And there was a lot of animosity that was building between the two. And so this began to tell

Jacob that indeed, you know, that even though he was fearful returning home because of his brother Esau, it was now becoming just as dangerous, if not more dangerous for him to be up north under the oppression of his uncle and his uncle's sons. And so he knew it was time for him to leave.

And so God tells that to him in a dream. He says, "Yes, you need to leave, and you need to leave now." And so chapter 21-- or 31 I should say-- he successfully leaves and arrives near the border of the Promised Land. Now, this was no easy journey. Even though he was free from his uncle's oppression, he was not lighthearted and feeling free. Why was that? Well, because the thoughts on his heart and his mind were still very much that of the sin that was haunting him and his conscience for the last 20 years. He may be free from his uncle's oppression, but his travels were much different.

In fact, there's a very deep quote that I found in a book, one of my favorite books on this topic that commutates the Bible. It's called, "Patriarchs and Prophets," written by author Ellen White, and she writes in page 195 these words. It says, "His sin and the deception of his father was ever before him, and he knew that his long exile was the direct result of that sin, and he pondered over these things day and night, the reproaches of an accusing conscience making his journey very sad." And so it was not a lighthearted journey, by any means. The freedom that he normally would've felt after he was relieved from the oppression of his brother, he was just going from the mouth of one lion into the mouth of another, as far as he was concerned. But also even more importantly and deeply than that, his conscious was torturing him because of the sin that was continuing to haunt him.

Want to open your Bibles-- I invite you to open your Bibles now, as we look at Genesis 32, as we set that stage now for that first chapter of this week's study. Again, this is no small chapter. It's probably the largest chapter in the chapters that describe the life of Jacob. We're going to Genesis chapter 32, and we're going to start with verse 1. Genesis 32 and verse 1, it says, "And so Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." And so we find here that as Jacob was leaving Laban, as they had made their vow in which he would never return back to the territory of Laban, and Laban had agreed that he would never cross that point where they made an oath and enter into the southern territory of Jacob.

We find that Jacob, as he's now going towards what is for him into the mouth of the lion, there is angels that God mercifully brings visibly before the presence of Jacob. And so again, as we go to "Patriarchs and Prophets," you know, there was two camps, and that's why I called it the camp of two angels or a host of two camps. And it's because there was angels in front of him, and there was angels behind him, representing God's protective love, and that He was fulfilling His promise that it would go well with Jacob, when all is said and done.

Now, this is not a new encounter, the first encounter that Jacob had with angels, is it? The first encounter that Jacob had was 20 years earlier when he was running for his life, when he was going north, and that first night that he spent alone in danger and in the desert with everything kind of falling and apart in regards to his life, and God sends a ladder, a visionary ladder between heaven and earth. And what are going up and down the ladders? Well, angels. And so this is the second visible encounter that Jacob has of angels at the very beginning of his exile and now at the very end of it, as well. And they both are fulfilling a very similar purpose.

Verse 2, it goes on and says, "But when Jacob saw them, he called this God's Camp, and he called the name of the place Mahanaim, which means double camp." In verse 3, it says, "And then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom." And so Jacob is wise enough to send a message ahead to his brother, to give his brother a heads up. He doesn't want to surprise his brother by any means, and so he sends a message ahead.

Now, his brother is already fulfilling that prophecy that God had given to his mother, Rebekah, indeed that both brothers would form into two nations. Now, the fascinating thing is that it's already referring to-- Genesis already referring to the land where Esau and his camp is growing, the country of Edom. And indeed that the nation that Esau eventually became, as his descendants multiplied, and he also, obviously, had been adopting other people's and intermarrying with them, even as he started to, as we

looked at the earlier Genesis record, including Ishmael. And so, but Jacob's nation doesn't-- is on hold for another 400 plus years, isn't it? And so Jacob's nation doesn't take place quite nearly as soon as Esau's but, of course, Jacob's is part of God's most important plan.

In verse 4, it goes on, and he says, "And he commanded them, saying, 'Speak thus to my lord Esau: 'Thus your servant Jacob says, '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 favor in your sight.'" And so, we find here a very strategically word message that Jacob sends before him.

Now, the first thing that we want to pick up here is verse 4, where he says, "Speak to my lord, speak thus to my lord Esau: 'Thus your servant Jacob says--'." And we have to remember that both of the brothers were almost for certain very familiar with the prophecy that God had given to their mother, Rebekah, when the boys were kind of struggling, wrestling within the womb. And God had said that there would be two nations, but He didn't stop there, did He? Said not only will both boys form a nation, but it also says that one will be stronger than the other, and then it says the older, which is Esau, would serve the younger. And so for Esau in his earthly life, this would be a threat for Jacob's return. And so Jacob very strategically says, "That's your servant," Jacob says. And so Jacob is humbling himself before his brother very strategically and needfully.

Now, in verse 5, when he points out all the wealth and which he's acquired during the 20 years that he was in exile, it's not because he's trying to show off to his brother, which sometimes brothers want to do, but in this case he's not showing off. But instead he is sharing with his brother that he has more than enough wealth to provide for himself and for his family.

Why is that important? Well, for the last 20 years, the only heir of the inheritance of the wealth and estate of their dad, Isaac, was that of Esau. And so for 20 years now, Esau had become very acquainted and very familiar, and had been thinking that the entire estate of his dad is his, that his brother was a permanent exile. And so Jacob wants his brother to know, "Listen, I'm not coming back to claim my inheritance." Because legally Jacob had the right to the inheritance of his dad, didn't he? Okay, he had bought the birthright from Esau. Esau had vowed that indeed he had the birthright.

Now, the birthright is that you would have the bulk of the inheritance, and you would be the first one in charge of the estate of the father after he died. So, Jacob had the legal birthright. He also stole the blessing. And so legally, he could've come and showed up and said, "Listen, the inheritance is mine. My dad's estate is mine first. I'm in charge." But Jacob wants him to know that, "Listen, I'm not interested in the material wealth and which our dad has, but I have enough for myself. Verse 6, it goes on and says, "Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother, Esau, and he's also coming to meet you."

Okay, that sounds good so far. And, oh, by the way, he also has 400 men with him. Now, the response tells us that Jacob would interpret that very quickly and understood the gravity of the situation. It says, "So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed." Why was Jacob afraid and distressed? Well, because Esau's not coming alone. Esau's a very capable strong man, you know, experienced man. He could come up on a horse on his own, all, you know, without a problem at all. He doesn't need 400 men to protect him. He may be bringing along a couple of friends for bodyguards. I'm not sure what his status was. His status was that of a king and established in a kingdom, the kingdom and country of Edom, but certainly he doesn't need 400 people.

Now, Jacob knew he wasn't bringing 400 people to protect Esau on the way. He knew that he wasn't bringing those 400 men so that they could-- that Esau was planning a welcome parade for Esau. No, these were 400 armed men, and so when you bring 400 armed men-- Jacob also knew Esau didn't need 400 men to take out the life of Jacob. But if Esau was planning to take out the life of the entire camp of Jacob, he would bring 400 men. So, this, the gravity of the situation here should not be underestimated. This is a major, major crisis not only for Jacob, but for the entire camp.

You know, it reminds me, Denise and I were backpacking many years ago in beautiful British Columbia up in Canada. We were backpacking along this river, and we had little Rachel. Rachel was only about, I don't know, six years old, and we were taking her on her first backpacking trip. And so we were several miles from the parking lot and from our van, and so on, and from safety, and it was just the sun was just starting to set. It was kind of almost half dark out at the time, and we'd arrived at the campground, and we're the only ones there. And so at first we thought, "Well, this is kind of nice. We've got complete peace, the nature, the river, the mountains."

Denise started to fire up the gas and was boiling the water to be able to start dinner and such, and I was just starting to set up the tents. And all of a sudden, this young couple ran into the camp and-- [breathing heavy] And we said, "What's wrong?" And they had--their eyes were about this big. And so their eyes were wide open. We said, "Well, what's wrong, what's wrong?" They said, "Well, there's a big grizzly bear that's been following us down the pathway, upriver, and it's coming this way, and we're heading back to the car and getting out of here as soon as we can." And so they kind of looked around. Their conscience didn't know what to do. Should he abandon his family and keep running, or what should we do? Well, I looked, and I had a bear spray in my holster. And so he looked at my bear spray, and he says, "Oh, I see you have a bear spray. Great. You're protected. See you later." And they disappeared.

So, I'm looking around, and I, you know-- from that point forward, you know, your heartbeat, you know, your heart rate goes a lot higher at that point. And your blood is rushing a lot bigger. And, you know, the senses, all your senses are just keenly all of a sudden awake in ways that they weren't just a few minutes before. And so we're scrambling to be able to get the food together and so on.

Well, firstly, the bear did what all bears normally do is that when he came into the camp, he saw us, and we saw him, and then he diverted, went through the most uninviting thick brush, breaking branches and everything, just to avoid us and go around us and keep going down the path and such.

But when you sense that danger, you know, until you can image the heart rate of the entire camp just immediately rising, and all their senses rising, and they realize, "Our lives are all in serious danger at this point There are 400 armed men coming with a very angry, vengeful, unbelieving, ungodly brother. And so that's the gravity of this situation that we find here.

Well, poor Jacob, you know, when he hears the news, he knows that he can't go back because he just vowed to his uncle that he would never cross Mount Gilead and go back to the land of Haran. So, he can't retreat. And he certainly doesn't want to go forward into the lion's mouth, and so he's just, he's stuck between a rock and a hard place, and he is afraid. He's deeply distressed, as we read in verse 7. "And he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks, and the herds of the camels into two companies. And he said, 'If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which was left will escape.'"

And so he's being as strategic as he can. He's saying, "Listen, we're going to split up into two camps, so at least if one is attacked, the other has a good chance of escaping, and we'll at least spare half of our lives." Verse 9, it says, "Then Jacob said, 'O God of my father Abraham--'" So, Jacob finds himself on his knees very quickly. This is a sincere man of God. "O God of my father Abraham and the God of my father Isaac--"

Now, this brings up another point that helps us explain a little bit of confusion that sometimes comes in Daniel. You know, because Belshazzar is referred to-- Nebuchadnezzar is referred to as the father of Belshazzar, and history tells us, as you look at the history books, Belshazzar was actually the grandson of King Nebuchadnezzar. And yet, we find in Daniel he's referred to as the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar is referred to as his father. Well, that's because in Bible times, they didn't use the word grandfather like we do today.

You know, so my dad is the granddad, as he likes to be called, of my daughters. So, he's still their dad, isn't he? He's a dad, but he is the granddad. And then, you know, if my daughters have children before my dad

dies, then he'll be the great grandad, won't he? But you still-- you're still the dad. And especially in ancient times, in some cultures, I believe, even today, you know, the dad-- as long as the oldest living father is living, he's still the last word. He's still in charge of all the other families, even if he has a son that's fully grown. They have full grown children, and their children have children. The oldest surviving grandfather is still the last word and the final authority. And this was no exception back in the days of Bible times, as well.

And so that's why we find here that Jacob's referring to his grandfather Abraham just simply as my father. "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who has said to me, 'Return to your country, to your family, and I will deal well with you.'" So, he's reviewing with God the promises, you know, because they're very distressed. "I'm 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. 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 a multitude.'"

And so he's kind of reviewing this God and said, "God, we, you know-- You struck this covenant with us, and this agreement, and now that agreement is in serious danger. My life is in danger. My wives' lives are in danger. My children are in danger. If we're all wiped out, which all evidence on the surface appears to be so, is going to happen in the next day or two, you know, Your covenant and promises are not going to be able to come true." The verse that really stuck out to me in this particular prayer is verse 10. In verse 10, it says, "I am not worthy of the least of the mercies, of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant."

Friend, are you there? Are you at that point? You know, it reminds me again. I had to stop and take stock of my own heart and say, you know, "Am I in that spot, that same spot that Jacob is in? Do I fully understand that I am not worthy of the mercies that God extends to me?" That God has extended mercies and truths that are far beyond my worth. As far as not because I'm not priceless in the eyes of God, as a child and as a human being, but rather I'm talking about worthy in meaning in my character, in the Shawn that I am. Am I worthy of all the blessings and the mercies that God has extended to me, the truths that He has extended to me? No, I'm not worthy. But thank God that God doesn't say, "Listen, until you count yourself worthy, until you're good enough to receive My mercies in your strength, I don't want to have anything to do with you."

No, God is merciful to sinners that are truly repentant and want to walk with Jesus by faith. And so I take stock in that, but it also a good place-- time for us to take stock of our own hearts and say, "Am I in that same place?" Do I count myself not worthy of the least of the mercies and all the truth which God has given to me? Nevertheless, God, I claim Your promise that You forgive me for my sins, for He is just and faithful to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness when we confess and repent from our sins.

Well, the following verses tell us that, again, Jacob is being very strategic. Why? Because now he sends presents ahead of him. First, he sent the messenger. The messenger comes back without any message response, but just the news that he's got 400 armed men with him. And now Jacob very strategically sends droves of herds. And so he sends like 5-- or 200 sheep and several rams with one of his servants, and the servant goes ahead, and he says, "Now go ahead. And when you run into Esau, and he runs into you, and he says, 'What's all this about?' you could say, 'This is a gift from your servant, your brother, Jacob. He wants you to have this.'"

And then, you know, Esau says, "Oh, wow, this is quite a surprise." And then he goes another hour or two down the trail, and he comes to another small herd. And again, it's a couple hundred, you know, goats in this case and a number of rams. And so, you know, with this, this is another gift from your servant, and that happens five times. And so he sends five droves of gifts, of substantial livestock, ahead. Now, friends, I don't know about you, but gifts have a very effective way of softening the heart. Have you

noticed that? You know, if you've wronged somebody, you know, some of the best strategic ways that we can reconcile with that person is not only to confess our sins or wrongs and so on, but to give a gift.

And so here we find this strategic, strategic actions that Jacob is taking. Notice how he prays? But he's also doing some very strategic actions at the same time, isn't he? And this is important for us to bring up. In fact, I want to read a quote from that book called, "Patriarchs and Prophets," again. And because this is a point I just don't want to overlook. I think it's important for us to be able to understand, and it says this. It says, "He did all in his power to atone for the wrong to his brother and to avert the threatened danger. And then in humiliation and repentance, he pleaded for divine protection."

And so what is Ellen White pointing out here? Well, the book here is pointing out that indeed Jacob didn't just say-- he found himself on his knees, to be sure. But he also found himself on his feet and using some very strategic, very important actions that he was using in cooperation and in partnership with God.

And so this is revealing something that the Bible has riddled all over it when you look at the different Bible stories, you know. And when David went out to fight Goliath, he didn't go out with a little toy. Sometimes the Sunday School lessons or the Sabbath School lessons, you know, will tell us that, you know, there is-- you know, he had this little sling, and he had a little pebble in there, you know, and he used to play with that and try to hit the squirrels or something. No, he used to take out bears and lions with--you know, Roman soldiers used this as a deadly weapon in warfare to kill men.

And so when David went out with that sling, first of all, he was extremely experienced with it, and that's how he sold to King Saul in even getting out there, because he said, "Listen, I've taken on lions and bears already, you know, and if I can--God helps me to take on lions and bears, I can take out this Philistine, as well." And so when David went out there, he meant business, and he had a deadly weapon, and he knew how to use that deadly weapon very well. And so Jacob went out there with faith.

I mean, David went out there with faith in God, yes? Did he pray before? Yes. But did he do everything within his power to work in cooperation with God? Yes. You see, God has called us to work in cooperation with Him. You know, there's some Christians and some Seventh-day Adventists as well, over the years, have come to the misunderstanding that because that old, old saying that so many of us have heard is not found in the Bible, it's not true. And that is God helps those who help themselves. That is an absolute, undeniable Bible truth. Now, is there a Bible verse that uses those words? No. Is it a Bible truth? Yes. You can find it in the life of Jacob here. Jacob was praying, but he's also doing everything within his human power, using his hands and his actions and his mind to be able to avert the situation, to be able to alleviate it, to de-escalate the situation. And David, same thing.

He went up there with faith in God, and God had to intervene, in a way, because the helmet that protected the forehead of Goliath, you know, had to kind of ride up on his forehead, so that the deadly weapon was able to meet its target. And it told us that that rock--by the way, the rock was about as big as your fist. So, you have a rock that's as big as a small fist, and it's going 100 plus miles an hour, and it hits your forehead, the Bible rightly says that it sunk into the forehead of Goliath. It didn't just kind of ping and bounce off like some of the, you know, some of the different illustrations in different children's books show us. No, it sunk in and stayed there. And so then Goliath, of course, tumbled over.

So, we find this Bible truth illustrated over and over, and Ellen White is pointing that out, as she commentates this particular scene of Jacob. Another scene that she also commentates and the sketches of the life of Paul is found-- it's called--the book is called, "Sketches from the Life of Paul," pages 267, and it says this: "At these words, hope revived."

Now what words were that? Well, Paul was on the ship, and he was on his way to see Caesar, and they come into a sea storm, and the sea storm is so serious that even the most experienced sailors and the captain themselves knew that this was it. It's all evidence showed them that they were going to go under. Most of them, if not all of them, were going to perish. Well, God gives the dream to Paul and says, "Listen, I've decided that you need to stand before Caesar. I'm going to spare your life, and you can tell

the crew that not one person will perish. You'll lose the ship, but no one will perish."

And so Paul shared the good news, and it says that, "At these words, hope revived among all those in the ship." Passengers and crew roused from their apathy and put forth all possible exertion to save their lives. There was much yet to be done. Every effort within their power must be put forth to avert destruction, for God helps those who help themselves. And I did a word search in Ellen White's writings, and it turns out she uses that term several times in her different writings and books. Why? Because she understood that that is a rock solid Bible truth. You know, another way that she put it, she said, "When you get on your knees, pray your prayers like your life depends upon it. Whatever the issue is, pray like your life depends upon it. But as soon as you get off your knees and on you're on your feet, work at accomplishing that prayer's request like your life depends upon it." Why? Because she understood that God helps those who help themselves.

We are in a partnership with God, aren't we? "Come unto Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you. My yoke--" A yoke was the instrument that connected two oxen together. And so Jesus says, "Listen, we're walking together, a yoke that is on both of our necks." Now, fortunately, he's the much stronger ox. But God is still telling us that we also need to pull the plow. Jesus is telling us that we work in partnership with him, and so God calls us to give our best.

You know, Jacob could've said, you know, "Listen, I'm on my knees, I'm praying, I'm putting all my faith in You. You said You would protect me, and therefore I'm going to go over and make lemonade, going to put my feet up, and I know You're going to work it all out." No, that's not what he does, does he? No, he does everything within his power to use his brain and his hands to be able to work in partnership with God in alleviating the heart of Esau.

Now, God also did His part. "Patriarchs and Prophets" also said in the same time that Jacob was wrestling with God that night, as he was pleading for God to forgive him for his sin, pleaded for him to be able to have the assurance that God completely accepts him and reconciles with him, and that they will have a very close relationship for the rest of their life, God sends a dream to Esau that same night.

So, is God doing His part, as well? Sure He is, but so is Jacob. And so God sends a dream ahead to Esau, and in that dream God shows Esau kind of a collage of different events over the 20 years in which Jacob was suffering, as an exile from his brother and from his family, never to see his mother again. He's seeing a scene, and God shows Esau this scene of Jacob as he's grieving and weeping over the news that his mother was dead, and he would never see her in this earthly life again. Was that softening the heart of Esau? Sure it was. Were the droves, the gifts that were, were they softening the hearts of Esau? All of it was working together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

And so that's not a lesson, theological lesson, but I think that we need to stop and really make sure that we understand, and perhaps today is the day that God will help to clarify that for you. Verse 22, we pick it up again. In verse 22, it says, "And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them and sent them over the brook, and he sent over what he had."

And so he's tried to give as much safety buffer as he can between Esau and his men and his family. "And then Jacob was left alone; and with Him until the breaking of day." And the Bible tells us that that wrestling was started-- again, as you go to "Patriarchs and Prophets," page 197, it tells us that Jacob was left alone. He was pleading with God on his knees. And in that prayer of petition before God, he feels the strong hand that is suddenly on his shoulder from behind. He never saw it coming, and immediately he thought that it was an enemy.

Immediately, he thought it was a robber or a murderer of some kind that was trying to take his life. And so he immediately goes into combat mode and begins to try to wrestle himself free. And so he wrestles. We don't know how long. We're guessing that, you know, the evidence must be that he prayed most of the night, because it says that they wrestled until the breaking of dawn. I don't know if you've been in a wrestling match, but I don't think that any man could wrestle with all his might for several hours, 8, 9

hours. And so I'm guessing that it was just an hour or two before dawn that the Lord Himself showed up, as we're going to find out that that man was Jesus Himself, and puts His hand on the shoulder.

And so during most of that wrestling match, Jacob doesn't understand that this is the Lord Himself. He thinks it's an assailant. He thinks it's somebody that's attacking him. But then when the Lord Himself takes His finger and touches the hip of--one of the side hips of the hip joints of Jacob, immediately, the muscle shrinks, and he's in intense pain. He's immediately crippled from that point forward, just by touching with His finger, and Jacob immediately put two and two together and realized, "Wait a minute. No normal mortal man can do that. That was a supernatural miracle. I'm not wrestling with a man. I'm wrestling with some kind of heavenly being."

And then as the time went by, he started to come to the recognition, "Wait a minute, this is the Lord Himself." And he realized that metaphorically, this literal wrestling match that was taking place was symbolizing the wrestling match in his heart that had been taking place for 20 years and now was culminating this evening. At this juncture in his life, as he was wrestling with the Lord, and so once he realized it was the Lord with weeping-- Hosea chapter 12, verses 3 and 4, as the lesson study points out, is a very helpful passage, because it tells us that it was an Angel with a capital A. And whatever the translators in the New King James Version, at least, understood that the context compels us to accept that this was not a heavenly angel in the created angel sense, but it is the Archangel, the one that's in charge of the angels, Jesus Himself, and that it tells us also that Jacob wept.

So, Jesus--I mean Jacob was not confident. Jacob was not arrogant in any way when he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me." Because Jesus said, you know, "Listen, let go of Me. The dawn is breaking, and I need to go." And he said, "No, Lord, I will not let go unless You bless me." Tears are running down his face at the same time, because he's been tortured for 20 years, and he's begging for God to give him the full assurance that indeed he has been forgiven.

Was he repentant before this? Yes. But even sometimes when we're repentant, the shameful things that we have chosen in our past sometimes haunts us for more than a couple of years, doesn't it? I know that many of you have experienced that. Some people find themselves 20 years down the road just like Jacob, and you're still trying to find that full assurance from the Lord. You're still, there's a little part of you that still wonders, "Can God really forgive such a shameful sin as that which I've done in the past?" But the good news is that Jacob comes out fully reconciled. He is just and righteous to forgive us our sins and forgive us from all unrighteousness. Verse 25, it talks about the socket of his hip being shrunk, and then verse 26 we pick it up. "And he said to me, 'I will not let You go unless You bless me.' And so He said, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' And so the Lord Himself said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel.'"

When my wife and I were baptized in 1992, we began to read the Bible. We just devoured this book in 1992 in that first year and a half after we're baptized. And so we would read four to five chapters of the Old Testament every single morning before work. And then before night, before we went to sleep, we'd read four to five chapters of the New Testament, starting with Matthew, and make our way all the way through each evening. And within a year and a half, we had read through the New Testament as a whole four times, and we had read through the Old Testament once. Friends, if you have never done that, I want to strongly recommend that you have-- There is no better way to find yourself firmly established in the Word of God than to find yourself consuming the Word of God as a whole. And not only once, but several times. And the first time we came to this, we were just so excited. We're looking at this and saying, "Wow, this is amazing! I've never heard this before. This is where the name Israel and the country Israel gets its name. It's named after Jacob, whose name was changed from Jacob, which means supplanter or deceiver, and it was changed to Israel which means prince with God.

Is this a positive change for Israel? I mean, for Jacob? Yes. What a beautiful name change. Was that representative of the reconciliation and the full peace that Jacob found that night? A level of faith and peace and joy that Jacob had not experienced for over 20 years? Yes. God changes Jacob's name from supplanter to Israel, prince of God, for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.

"And then Jacob said, 'Tell me Your name, I pray.' And He said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' And He blessed him there. So, Jacob called the name of the place Peniel. 'For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.'" Did Jacob fully understand that He was not a created angelic angel, but it was the Archangel, the one that was in charge of all the angels of heaven, the Creator of the angels, Jesus Himself.

Sometimes we get nervous when we see Jesus referred to as an Angel. I said, well, wait a minute, you know. We're not--we're Trinitarians. We believe in the Bible truth that God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and that He is the Creator of angels. He's not an angel. Well, yes. Angel in Greek, angelos, literally means a messenger. In fact, John the Baptist is called an angelos. He's also called an angel. Why? Because he was a messenger of God, one of the greatest prophets of God.

So, anybody that's bringing a message from heaven is an angel. Does that mean that Christ can be an Angel? Yes. A created angel? No. But a heavenly messenger? Yes. And that's why the Bible writers were so comfortable in referring to Jesus as an Angel, capital A, Archangel, the one in charge of the angels, the Creator of the angels, but nevertheless still an Angel. And clearly in verse 30, Jacob reveals that indeed he was not wrestling with a normal angel or a man, but with God Himself. And just as he crossed over Peniel, the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip.

And so we need to close. I was hoping to be able to spend some time looking at the three applications of this time of trouble that Jacob had, because as the lesson study points out in Jeremiah chapter 30, and verses 5 through 7, Jeremiah talks about the Babylonian captivity of Israel being another time of Jacob's trouble or Jacob's time of trouble. And then that is applied prophetically to the time in our future when probation ends for all mankind, and everybody's fate is sealed. God, Jesus Himself, leaves the heavenly sanctuary. He is no longer intercessor, and everybody's fate is sealed for all of eternity. The first plagues start to fall on the lost all around us, and God's people go through a time of trouble in which this world has never seen, and Jesus Himself says, "If it were not for God shortening that day, even the elect would not survive."

It will be the most intense, most difficult chapter for God's people to go through at that point. Well, because there's real physical danger for our lives? Yes. The lost are out to take our lives. Was Esau out to take Jacob's life? Yes. The greatest torture that Jacob went through was not his physical danger. It was going on in here, wasn't it? It was in here, his heart. He wasn't fully convinced that he was fully accepted and reconciled with his Lord, and that's what we'll go through, as well.

We'll be in danger and distressed over the physical dangers, yes, but that will be overcome by a much more intense internal danger. Did I confess every sin that I know that I had in weakness in my life? Have I made myself right and repented of everything that I know in my life God has told me that I need to abandon? And if we haven't, then it's too late, isn't it? And because we know it's too late, if we haven't, we go through this anguish, this wrestling with God, this Jacob's time of trouble internally until we come to a full joy of knowing that His mercies are greater than our sins. And we can lift up our eyes and say, "This is our God. He will save us. This is our God. We have waited for Him." And we can know that we will join Him with the angels in heaven. Amen?

If you missed the free offer that we had at the beginning of our lesson study, I want to invite you to take advantage of it even here today. It's entitled, "The Surrender of Self," written by Joe Crews, the Founder of Amazing Facts Ministries, and so please take advantage of this. Even if you saw the free offer before, you haven't written down the phone number or the free offer number, go ahead and do that now. It's a great read. It's entitled--1-866-788-3966, and ask for number, offer number 182. Again, that's 1-866-788-3966, and we'll be happy to send that to you.

If you're in North America or the US Territories, if you're in the US, and you'd like to text that and get a digital download on your phone, go ahead and use the code SH087, and you want to dial that to 40544. You're saying, "I'm not in the United States. I want a digital copy." Then you just simply get on the

Internet and go to the website, which is study.aftv.org/SH087. Until we come together next week, God bless you, and we look forward to seeing you.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the key word on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen. And be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want. And most important to share it with others.

Reuben: You know, we grew up in a neighborhood up in the Midwest that was a pretty bad neighborhood. And when I became a teenager, I started using drugs. I was--I started using meth when I was like I think 16, 15, something like that. I was having some problems in my life I really didn't know how to deal with. The only thing I really knew was violence. So, this night here I was going to inflict violence on myself. I was really high, really depressed, so I took-- you know, I had this 40 caliber. So, I remember I put one in the chamber, and I started to the side of my head like this. And the gun had a hair trigger, you know, and I remember I was tapping it. And a part of me said, "No, I don't want to do this," but there was something very evil present there saying, "Do it."

I just said to myself, I said, "God, if You're real, show Yourself to me." My mother took me to church when I was little kid, and we used to sing, "Jesus Loves Me." And I remember that song. It started playing in my mind, and I almost had like a vision of me as a little kid. You know, and in Sabbath School, we used to bang those sticks together and sing, "Jesus Loves Me," and I heard that in my mind.

So, I said, "Wow." So, I just kind of like put the gun down, and I kind of fell on my bedside there, and I said, "Lord." I just basically just prayed this crazy prayer. I says, you know, I told Him everything that was wrong with me, and I remember one day I was driving around. I kind of felt lost, and I drove by this church, and I seen Tom out there. Tom was just out there watering the flowers, you know.

Tom: So, I caught a vision out of the side of my eye of this big husky guy with tattoos walking up and saying hello. So, I asked him if I could help him, and he told me that he drives by the church on occasion, and every time he goes by, he's thinking that he should stop in.

Reuben: After he showed me around the church, you know, I was like, "Okay, man, it's nice meeting you," and this and that. So, I jumped in my car, and I started heading down the driveway, and the next thing you know, in like my peripheral vision, I see him coming around the corner like Jerry Rice running a football. No, not that fast, but he was taking off after me, and he says, "Hey, hey, hey, hold on, hold on."

Tom: I asked him if he would like to have some Bible studies, and he said, "Yeah."

Reuben: He would come by the house. We'd all start, we'd start hiding the beer cans, and trying to air out the weed smell, and there was a presence that came with Tom that was comforting. You know what I mean? Even though I wasn't taking the Bible studies as serious as I should've, looking back, there was just a presence about him being there in the house that was comforting. I told Tom, I said, "Tom, you know, you can't win everybody."

Tom: I looked at him and I know I said to him, "Believe it or not, I never get anybody." I says, "The Holy Spirit can do that." And I kind of in my heart knew that the Holy Spirit was going to work on Reuben.

Reuben: So then Tom kind of left the picture for a while. And then I think one day at my mother's house, they were watching "The Final Events of Bible Prophecy." So, I watched that, and I remember the scene where they had the hellfire and stuff. You know, they're outside the city, and it showed the hellfire coming down and burning people and stuff, and I remember saying to myself, "That's where I would be right there." After the hellfire scene, I saw the saints and the city and the New Jerusalem, and Jesus recreating the earth. And I said, "I want that to be me and my family."

There was something about the way Doug preached and things that I felt that touched me, because he's kind of like myself. You know, he didn't grow up like that. You know, he done drugs and things. So, I kind

of found these common grounds that I had with him, and I liked how he just kind of like kept it real with his preaching. And then Pastor Ridley came to the church, and I got to know him very well, and we started doing some finishing studies. He wanted to make sure I understand what I was doing and things and baptized me, my wife, my brother.

No matter what you've done, where you come from, where you've been, no matter how bad of a sinner you think you are, the Lord Jesus loves you no matter what you've done.

Doug: Friends, it's because of God's blessing and your support, thousand of others, just like Reuben, have found Jesus and eternal life.