

LESSONS FROM THE LIVES OF JACOB AND ESAU

We have seen Isaac presented, in four chapters in Genesis, in a fourfold manner as a type of Christ: (1) in his birth; (2) in his sacrifice on mount Moriah; (3) in his coming alive again from the mount; (4) and in the selection of his bride. In sharp contrast, after his marriage to Rebekah, only three verses of Scripture are used to describe the nearly twenty years from his marriage to the time of Rebekah's pregnancy. In this period of time Isaac is no longer seen as a type of Christ, but simply as a believer who has been saved by God's grace

We then find Rebekah pregnant in answer to Isaac's prayer, but everything is not normal in her pregnancy: *the children struggled together within her*. She was perplexed about this and inquired of the Lord: *And the Lord said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."* (Genesis 25:23).

★ Rebekah undoubtedly shared the answer to her inquiry of the Lord with Isaac. Together they must have pondered just what these words, *two manner of people and the elder shall serve the younger*, could mean. *So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb.²⁵ And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.²⁶ Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's*

heel; so his name was called Jacob Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. (Genesis 25:24-26).

Therefore the struggle that had caused Rebekah's inquiry of the Lord was openly manifested at their births, when Jacob's *hand took hold on Esau's heel*.

★ This struggle, which began in the womb, has continued long after the deaths of Esau and Jacob. To anyone who has *ears to hear and eyes to see*, the struggle between Esau and Jacob is evident in the affairs of the Middle East. It plays out daily on television, in our newspapers and other media sources: which report constant wars and acts of terrorism. These are a constant reminder to those with spiritual perception that *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish* (Galatians 5:17).

★ When man tries to evaluate the Middle East situation, he has a tendency to say, the Jews are the source of the problem. He sees them as interlopers, who, by a 1947 United Nations mandate, took the land from the Arabs. It is imperative for man, with his natural mind, to think this way. Otherwise he would have to recognize the existence of the God of the Bible; the covenant relationship between God and Abraham; the same covenant confirmed to Isaac; and again confirmed to Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. If he allows that the Jews have a legitimate claim to the land of Israel (**which name**

was changed to Palestine by the Romans, after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.), then he must allow for the authority of the Scriptures. This is something mankind, as a whole, is not willing to do.

★ After the births of Esau and Jacob the next event recorded in the Bible is the sale of Esau's birthright, which occurred when Jacob and Esau were adults, not boys as is supposed by many Sunday School publishing houses:

So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. 28 And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Esau Sells His Birthright ²⁹ Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. ³⁰ And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. ³¹ But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." ³² And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" ³³ Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright. (Genesis 25:27-34)

This description of Esau and Jacob and the details of the sale of the birthright tells us a great deal about the spiritual character of each of them.

The Scriptures tell us Esau was a *cunning hunter*, which means he was skillful in catching his prey by sneakiness and he was a man of the field. This suggests he was a man of the world. Therefore Esau is a representative of the flesh. Equally the Scriptures describe *Jacob as a plain man, dwelling in tents*. The term *plain man* implies the wrong image to most of us. The literal meaning of the Hebrew conveys the idea that a *plain man* was one who was pious. This means Jacob had some interests in spiritual things, which is not necessarily evident in the Scripture's account of his life. Even so Jacob is representative of the spiritual man and this agrees with his position of being second-born

★ Esau was called Edom because of the incident in which he sold his birthright, and Adam was called Adam because God formed him of the red earth.

Esau and Jacob clearly fit the Biblical description of that which is first and that which is second. As we learn more of Jacob, we may have a tendency to want to reject him as a type of the spiritual man because Jacob leaned so heavily upon the flesh, but we must not submit to this tendency. To *rightly divide the Word of Truth*, we must take what God says as opposed to what we think, because *man looks on the outward, but God looks on the heart*. The view of Jacob as a spiritual man is by God's grace, through the imputed righteousness of Christ.

As we continue with our view of Jacob, we find he was *a plain man dwelling in tents*. The Bible places a good deal of importance upon Abraham, Isaac and Jacob dwelling in tents:

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

★ Tent-dwelling is seen to be a declaration of faith on the part of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is a declaration of their faith in the promise of eternal life. They believed they would live in the presence of God forever. Therefore the tent is representative of the fact that they saw this earth as a temporary dwelling place and, indeed, it is.

In the life of Jacob, as in the lives of Abraham and Isaac, we shall see, once again, that the spiritual man does not always behave spiritually. Jacob was overwhelmed by a fleshly nature, but he also had a spiritual nature. Consequently there was a constant battle between the flesh and the Spirit in his life, just as there is in the life of every believer in Jesus Christ.

★ When **Jacob stole the birthright from Esau**, OR DID HE? It is reasonable to assume, Jacob had some knowledge of his mother's inquiry of the Lord and of the promise, and the elder shall serve the younger. God promised Jacob's grandfather, Abraham, and his father, Isaac, that all of the families of the earth would be blessed through their Seed. From Rebekah's inquiry it was evident that God's promise would be kept through Jacob, but Jacob did not rest in God's promise. Rather he found a fleshly means of extorting the birthright from Esau. OR DID HE?

★ It is this terrible dependence upon the flesh, which is revealed in all of the characters we have viewed that plagues all believers. The identification of the flesh in them is for our benefit. Not so we can feel superior, but that we might learn from them.

★★ The many examples of their dependence upon the flesh shows us how easy it is to surrender to the flesh, rather than to depend upon the Spirit of God through the promises in the Word of God.

★★ One of the marvelous things about the revelation of the flesh within believers like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is that it shows us we are not lost or rejected of God because it is there. It is simply a part of our human nature, which remains active in the believer until he is resurrected and glorified. Since the benefits of believing God and living by faith are so much better than those

problems that arise because of unbelief, it seems silly that we should be so dependent upon the flesh. Yet this dependence is overwhelming evidence of the strength and subtleness of the flesh and of the fact that we are still subject to it.

★ ★ The Jews, like all of us, had to understand their human nature in order to come into a right relationship with the Lord. Even so they were ignorant of God's righteousness; and they sought various methods to establish their own righteousness, apparently not realizing self-righteousness is a stench in God's nostrils.

This prompted Isaiah to write: *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away* (Isaiah 64:6).

The narrative tell us when Esau came from the field he was hungry. This is quite understandable to all of us, for our appetite for food is, over time, very necessary to sustain our lives. There was nothing essentially wrong with Esau's expression of hunger. It was the degree of importance he placed upon satisfying his hunger that is key to understanding him. At that moment, he placed the satisfaction of his appetite above everything else. Our Lord said, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the*

mouth of God (Matthew 4:4). And how many time do we put the satisfaction of our hunger before our love for one another.

As we continue with the account of Esau and Jacob in Scripture, we will find Esau had many characteristics which were naturally attractive, but none of them were pleasing to God.

Esau was a man's man, a hunter, who provided venison for his father and thereby comforted him. Yet in the area in which he could have pleased God, Esau was bankrupt. He lived his life void of faith, apparently not realizing, *without faith it is impossible to please [God]. It is not by works but by faith that we are saved. Though our faith produces good works but our good works does not produce faith.*

★ ★ With our natural minds we perceive no evil in Esau's actions, but Esau's actions were born entirely of his fleshly appetite, which was void of any spiritual perception. On the other hand Jacob seized the opportunity to gain the birthright for himself, but he did it by fleshly means. He may have known the birthright was to be his according to God's promise; but instead of waiting on the Lord to deliver it in due time, Jacob exerted fleshly pressure on Esau, when he said, *Sell me this day your birthright.*

Sometime we stand in Gods way of doing his will, and sometimes we do it in the flesh. But the question is how we know the difference. Most times we

allow ourselves to go through battles that is not ours. And sometimes we stop people who are fighting for God as they are led and are stopped by us all because we are willing to submit. Sometime we continue to ask for his will but answer is are you blind, the answer is before your very eyes. We need a discerning Spirit in our churches today, as we should not waist Gods work.

★ Esau submitted to this pressure for a few beans and bread. This is evidence that he despised his birthright. The birthright represented fellowship with God, because God created Adam in His image for fellowship. So, by right of creation, man had a birthright to fellowship with God, but that right was lost through Adam's sin. Despite the loss of the birthright by Adam, it is restored by faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, giving those who are born-again the right to fellowship with God through Jesus Christ.

It was after the sale of the birthright that Isaac took his family towards Egypt to escape the famine in the land. He heeded the warning of God not to go into Egypt and so they dwelt in Gerar. By this time Esau and Jacob were old enough not to be recognized as the children of Rebekah, because she was presented to Abimelech, the king of Gerar, as the sister of Isaac.

Even so it did not take long for Abimelech to recognize Rebekah to be Isaac's wife and demand that they leave Gerar. It was then that they moved to Beersheba: *And Esau was **forty years old** when he took to wife Judith the*

daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah (Genesis 26:34-35).

★ The Hittites were an idolatrous people. This was undoubtedly the reason Esau's interest in Judith and Bashemath were *a grief of mind* to his parents. His interest in these women provide us with a greater profile of the character of Esau: he was not concerned with his birthright, which typified fellowship with God, nor with the false beliefs of his wives. He was *of the earth, earthy* and put no stock in anything of a genuine spiritual nature. **This evoked God to say, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated* (Romans 9:13).** ★

Isaac was one hundred years old when Esau married Judith and Bashemath. Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau and Esau's wives lived together in Beersheeba for thirty-seven years after Esau's marriages to the Hittites. Then, when Isaac was one hundred and thirty-seven years old, he called Esau to his side: *Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. ³ Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. ⁴ And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."* (Genesis 27:2-4).

Previously we suggested Rebekah must have told Isaac what the Lord had revealed to her, when she inquired of the Lord. It would be strange if she had

not. Despite the probability of this, it appears this made little difference to Isaac. He loved Esau and he intended to bless him, instead of Jacob. The source of his intentions was certainly not the prophecy of God but his love for Esau and the venison he provided. It was this insignificant fleshly pleasure which motivated him to rebel against the prophecy of God in the interests of Esau.

Isaac told Esau to hunt for venison and prepare it the way he liked it. Then he promised to bless Esau before his death. These instructions and promised blessing are akin to Abraham's cry, *O that Ishmael might live before thee!* This is the cry of the flesh, which desires its will above God's will. Isaac repeated Abraham's sin, rather than learning from it. Even so Rebekah overheard Isaac's conversation with Esau. She ran and told Jacob of his father's plan, rather than resting in the fact that God had promised, *the elder shall serve the younger*. She should have realized that God always keeps His promises. He cannot lie.

★ The thought of the promise did not cross Rebekah's mind: she had a plan of her own. She told Jacob to fetch two kids of the goats and dress them and bring them to her. Rebekah cooked the kids in a manner which simulated the venison which Isaac so dearly loved. Rebekah told Jacob to put on Esau's clothing because, at Isaac's advanced age, he was nearly blind. Even so Jacob

was afraid of being caught, but Rebekah met Jacob's fears with cunning detail. She told Jacob to put skins upon the nape of his neck and upon his hands and arms to simulate the hairiness of his brother.

★ READ (Genesis 27:18-30)

Any thoughts Jacob had of effecting his mother's scheme without having to blatantly lie were soon dispelled. **First**, he answered his father, *I am Esau your firstborn*. **Second**, in response to how he had found it so quickly, Jacob had to involve God in his duplicity and said, *because the Lord your God brought it to me*.

★ Many people gravely misunderstand what it means to use the name of the Lord in vain. Church members are appalled at the use of the Lord's name as a swear word, and rightly so. But these same people think nothing of attaching the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to acts as notorious as that of Jacob's, or worse. ★ In this category there are vast numbers of professing Christians who claim they can do all of the miracles our Lord did. Even so the hospitals and cemeteries remain full, and I have yet to see one of them walking on water. It seems as though the most preposterous lies are told for the glory of God, and no one in these groups seems to be the least bit upset with all of the lies.

There is no such thing as a little compromise respecting the truth of the Word of God. Have you ever thought about the fact that it is an impossibility to

tell one lie? I don't think it can be done. One lie leads to another lie in order to give the first lie some kind of credibility. The worst kind of lies are those which affect man's relationship with God. These are the lies of the false prophets, who speak with feigned words.

Of course all people have lied, or will lie in one capacity or another at sometime in their lives. Jacob lied by claiming to be Esau. Then, to be convincing, Jacob wore Esau's clothes and put skins on his hands and the nape of his neck. He presented his father with a kid of the goats, instead of venison. Then he said he had found the venison quickly because the Lord God had brought it to him. When Jacob was confronted with whether he really was Esau (because Isaac recognized his voice), Jacob reaffirmed his first lie and said, *I am*, to the query, *Art thou my very son, Esau?*

In the deception of Isaac a great spiritual truth is revealed. Isaac recognized Jacob's voice, but what he heard did not convince him he was Jacob. Rather he sought to confirm what he heard by what he felt and smelled. If Isaac had trusted what he heard, rather than what he felt, he would not have been deceived. In the Bible we are told, *Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*. Consequently in our relationship with the Lord, the Word of God is the final authority and must not fall to our natural feelings.

Further the deception of Isaac was aided by his rebellion against the Word of God. God had told Rebekah, *The elder shall serve the younger*. Yet Isaac pronounced the blessing upon the elder, over the younger, not knowing that he was actually blessing the younger, but his intent was to bless Esau. By Isaac's intent, the *blessing of Esau* placed him in direct violation to the revealed will of God. At that point in time, Isaac's love for Esau took precedence over his relationship with God. Perhaps this is the reason our Lord said, *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple* (Luke 14:26).

In light of the commandment to honor your father and mother, obviously, our Lord was not advocating a genuine hatred of father, mother, sisters, and brothers. Rather the Lord was drawing a comparison between heavenly and earthly relationships. It is a matter of loyalty. Our relationship to the Lord and to His Word must take precedence over all earthly, or fleshly relationships. By comparison our love for God ought to make all other relationships appear to be hatred.

Isaac failed the test of the disciple on that occasion, on that day. Yet this is the same Isaac who went to the mount with his father Abraham and willingly allowed himself to be bound to the wood upon the altar. Isaac's desire to bless

Esau in opposition to the Word of God portrays the believer who is dependent upon the flesh. Yet Isaac's submission to Abraham, as a willing sacrifice, portrayed the Lord Jesus Christ. How perplexing the life of a believer can be. At one moment the believer can show marvelous faith in God, and the next moment he can be disgraced in the degradation of the flesh.

When Esau came in from the field, he prepared the venison he had taken in the hunt and went unto his father and said to him, *Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.* Isaac asked who it was that stood before him and he answered, *I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau.* Then *Isaac trembled very exceedingly and said, Who?* because the realization of what he had attempted to do must have overflowed him with waves of guilt and shame. He had sought to bless Esau, because he was his favorite son, but had inadvertently blessed Jacob, which was the will of the Lord according to the prophecy spoken to Rebekah. After those initial moments of guilt and shame, Isaac quickly responded to the will of the Lord and said to Esau, *I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him, and he shall be blessed.* Then Esau lamented with a bitter cry when he realized that his blessing was lost.

There are many Esaus in this world who shall lament one day for their rejection of the truth of the Word of God. They have lived their lives for themselves and have given little, if any thought to the truth of the Word of

God. They have the attitude that if there is a heaven to gain, it shall be their's because they are good people; and if there is an inheritance, it shall be their's because of their natural births. The Esaus of this world are more concerned for their appetites, which are displayed in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, than they are for their souls. Thus the birthright and the blessing remain lost to the Esaus of this world because they will not receive them by faith.

This perplexes those who view mankind according to *a way which seemeth right unto a*

man. Esau appears to have been more righteous than Jacob. He looked after his father in his old age, endeavoring to please him with the venison he so dearly loved, but we must not be deceived: ... *for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart*. Esau must be viewed through the eyes of God, and this view is not at all like man's view:

Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place

of repentance, though he sought it [the blessing] carefully with tears.
(Hebrews 12:15-17)

Contrary to common belief Biblical repentance is not sorrow, though Godly sorrow can produce repentance. Biblical repentance is a change of mind, usually towards God. Esau was sorry he lost his inheritance and this produced many tears, but he never changed his mind. His tears reflected self-pity, not repentance; so he remained adamant in his belief that the blessing should have been his because of his birth and because of his life. Esau was not willing to recognize the total insufficiency of his birth, nor of his efforts to gain the blessing by providing venison for his father: to sway him from the pre-known will of God. Thus he can be compared to those Jews who said to John the Baptist and to the Lord, *We be Abraham's seed*. Indeed they were Abraham's seed after the flesh, but not after the Spirit.

Throughout the history of Israel, there have been those Jews who expected all of the spiritual blessings promised to Abraham to be their's simply because they were of the natural lineage of Abraham. They failed to recognize God made promises to Abraham which were to be fulfilled in his natural lineage and others in his spiritual lineage.

The words of Esau's threat to kill Jacob were told to Rebekah (Genesis 27:42).

Once

again, she devised a plan. She spoke to Isaac and proposed the idea of sending Jacob to the city of Haran to obtain a wife of her kindred. Her plan would serve two purposes: it would protect Jacob, and it would provide him with a suitable wife of their kin, not like the wives of Esau, who had been a grief of mind to both Rebekah and Isaac. Isaac agreed with the plan, apparently, not knowing of the death threat to Jacob; and as Abraham had done so many years before, he desired to obtain a wife for his son of their kin in Haran. Rebekah's second plan reveals she had completely lost sight of the fact that *God is not a man, that he should lie; neither a son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* (Numbers 23:19)

When a believer is in the flesh, for the most part, he does not consider the things of the Spirit. She did not consider the promise given her in her pregnancy. Rather she trusted in her own ability to protect her beloved son. This tendency to trust the flesh rather than the Spirit is the principle which we have seen repeated throughout the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is the principle of the believer trying to protect God's interest by fleshly means. The believer's responsibility is to trust the Lord, rather than to react in the flesh. Thus Rebekah's scheme to send Jacob to Haran was born of the flesh:

Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; and tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me? (Genesis 27:42b-46)

Rebekah urged Jacob to go to Haran to preserve his life, and she convinced Isaac that her

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interest in having Jacob go to Haran was for the purpose of obtaining a wife. Unaware of the duplicity, and with proper motivation *Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother* (Genesis 28:1-2).

In these events Rebekah and Isaac present an interesting contrast. They were in agreement with the concept of finding a proper wife for their son. The selection of a proper wife, who was not an idolater, was a spiritually sound idea. Isaac's motivation for sending Jacob to Padan-aram was born out of a spiritual consideration to select a proper bride for his son. Rebekah's motivation was born out of her interest to protect her son from the threat of death. The threat of death was the result of Rebekah's fleshly scheme to deceive Isaac. Even though Isaac and Rebekah were in agreement about a spiritually sound plan, Isaac was operating in the Spirit and Rebekah was operating in the flesh.

This incident teaches us it is possible for two believers to be in agreement with, and actively engaged in, an activity which of itself is spiritual. One believer is governed by faith and the other is governed by the flesh. What makes the one believer's activity of faith and the other believer's activity of the flesh? It is their motivation. The apostle Paul wrote:

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And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. (Philippians 1:14-18)

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It is possible to be engaged in a spiritual activity, such as the preaching of the gospel and the salvation of souls, for the wrong reason. Paul has shown us that there were those who preached the gospel, hoping to add affliction to him in his imprisonment. They certainly were not motivated by the Spirit of God to do this. They had to be motivated by the flesh. Even so Paul rejoiced in the preaching of the gospel, because the gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Motivation, then, is a key factor in whether an activity is of the flesh, or whether it is of the Spirit. Despite this, there is a tendency, especially by church people, to judge a man by the company he keeps. One who associates with whores and drunks is often accused of being a whoremonger and a drunkard. Such associations are not judged to be spiritual associations, no matter the

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activity, or the motivation, because man has a tendency to look on the outward and not on the heart.

This is the reason the religious Jews accused the Lord Jesus of being a whoremonger and a drunkard. All of our Lord's activities were of the Spirit of God, because Jesus said, *I do always those things which the Father showeth me*. It should be apparent, then, that motivation cannot, necessarily, be judged by outward appearance. Our Lord said, *... as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you*. The methods of our Lord should be our methods, despite man, who *looketh on the outward appearance*.

Believers in Jesus Christ should be discerning. They should be engaged in those activities which the Lord called them to do, without concern for what man thinks of them when they do them. The believer also needs to look carefully at the many so-called spiritual activities, which they are called upon by man to do, because these activities may be of the flesh and not of the Spirit.

At the urging of his mother and with the blessing of his father, Jacob departed for Haran to seek a wife. Rebekah perceived the separation to be but a short time, until the anger of Esau could abate; but as we noted earlier, the anger of Esau has not abated unto this present day. The return of Jacob to the land is still not tolerated by the descendants of Esau.

Despite her hopes, Jacob never returned to Beersheba in Rebekah's lifetime. In fact, Jacob never saw his mother again. Fleshly schemes have a way

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of causing us to suffer in the flesh. The Bible says, *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* Rebekah sowed to the flesh, and her fleshly sowing caused her to be separated from her beloved son for the rest of her natural life. Even though the child of God has all of his sins forgiven because of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, this does not necessarily alter the law of sowing and reaping. The consequences of sowing to the flesh can and often do remain throughout the lifetime of the believer.

The law of sowing and reaping is especially evident in the relationship between Jacob and Esau and the nations which they founded (Israel and Edom). Jacob fled from the presence of Esau for fear of his life. He went to Haran, where he married Leah and Rachel and their maids Bilhah and Zilpah. Jacob fathered eleven sons and one daughter during the twenty years that he lived in Haran.

Then Jacob left Haran and began his trek back to Beersheba. As he neared Esau's land, Jacob feared that Esau might still try to kill him. Even though Esau never carried out his death threat against Jacob, the nation which Esau fathered was and still is the continual enemy of the Jews, the children of Jacob (Israel). Jacob's flight from Canaan to Haran, to avoid the death threat, did not change Jacob's character. He was a man of faith, and he was a man of the flesh. There were times when Jacob believed God, and there were times when he trusted his own natural abilities. In the light of this he still represents the redeemed

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man; so that Jacob's life is a spiritual object lesson to all who are believers in Jesus Christ.