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CHISELER JACOB BECOMES ISRAEL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 104
HEBREWS 11:21

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HEBREWS 11:21 "By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

This study is a study of the man Jacob. We might have called this study "From Con Artist to Super Grace Believer."

Let us get a corrected translation of verses 17-20.

Verse 17

"By means of doctrine resident in the soul, Abraham, when he was being tested, offered as a sacrifice The Isaac; even his only born, he went to offer him. He (super grace Abraham) the one who had received the promises of super grace blessing."

Verse 18

"Toward whom it had been communicated--Quote--In Isaac shall thy seed be designated."

Verse 19

"Having calculated that the God also was able to raise up Isaac out from the dead; for which reason he received him by means of a comparison."

Verse 20

"By means of doctrine resident in the soul, even concerning things destined to be (The fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant), Isaac blesse Jacob and Easu."

Verse 21

Again we begin this verse with the instrumental of Pistis. It is used here as pertaining to doctrine resident in the soul of a super grace believer. Pistis is used in one of three ways. First, that which causes faith and trust, meaning faithfulness or reliability. Second, it is used of faith in the active sence of believing something. Third, that which is believed as doctrine resident in the soul. This third way is the way this is used here.

The word "Jacob" comes from the Hebrew jaaqobh and it means heel-catcher. This bird was the second to be born of twins, but he didn't want to be second. He tried to come out first. This word comes from the Hebrew verb aqab and it means to be a chiseler, a con artist. It means to make a living by deceit. Jacob, therefore, means chiseler, con artist, a supplanter. Later on he will have another name, Israel, from the Hebrew Jisrael and this means "prince of God." This is a story similar to the transformation of Isaac from a self-righteous wimp to a super grace man.

Look At Jacob

1. Jacob was one of twins who was born when his father was 60. About 2001 B.C.
2. His name was prophetic. He was an opportunist, a con artist, a chiseler, one of the outstanding deceivers on record. He used his brother's hunger as an opportunity to purchase his

brother's birthright. This included not only the double portion (Deut. 21:17) but the rulership of the entire family (Gen. 27:29) as well as the title to the family blessing from God (Gen. 27:4) also (Gen. 27-28-29).

3. His impersonation of Esau is one of the neatest tricks anyone ever pulled. His father was almost blind, and he took advantage of that fact and received from Isaac the same blessing that was reserved for the eldest son. Esau was a thorough-going rat. Esau had already sold his double portion birthright to his brother Jacob for a bowl of beans. Jacob had already bought it, but being the chiseler, he imposed his own dishonesty on Esau. Esau would have cheated him out of the birthright he had already sold him, and actually tried all of his life to do this very thing. Jacob, knowing that Esau would do this, just happened to be a little smarter and beat him to the draw. While Esau was out hunting, Jacob and his mother Rebekah cooked up this scheme of putting the goat's hair on Jacobs arms and neck to deceive the almost blind Isaac.
 "Is that really you, my son, Esau? Let me feel your arms."
 And Isaac felt the goat's hair and said, "It really is you, Esau." This impersonation caused him to receive the blessing which he had already purchased from Esau.

4. Esau's antagonism caused Jacob to flee far away to his Uncle Laban's house in Haran. Abraham's family had stopped there many years before and that's where Abraham made his first million. But when they left to go into Canaan, Laban stayed there in Haran. When Jacob realized he was in real trouble with Esau he quickly departed for Uncle Laban's house. Laban tried to cheat Jacob, but Jacob was too much of a con artist to let him get away with much. Everything Jacob did, he did quite well. Esau was an unbeliever and a deceiver, but he wasn't good at it. Esau was mean and tough and that's why Jacob left. He was smarter than Esau but not as tough. Twice he had conned Esau out of his birthright. He first bought it, then he tricked it out of his almost blind father. Esau was getting ready to kill him when he left the country and migrated to Haran. Jacob knew when it was time to move on. Uncle Laban had two daughters, and before very long, Jacob had both of them. Uncle Laban cheated him on the ugly one, Leah. Jacob had made a down payment on Rachel. But on the wedding night, Laban cheated him and swapped off the sore-eyed old maid sister on him. Then later on, in one of the smartest cattle stealing schemes of all time, stripped Laban of almost all the cattle he had. This whole family had great gifts in cheating. In cheating like this, it is the losers who always scream. Laban screamed, "I have been robbed. The umpire's blind." But you see, Uncle Laban made his first mistake when he decided to cheat this chiseler. Jacob took Laban to the cleaners in no uncertain way.

5. After about 20 years, Jacob returned to Canaan and one of the first things he did was to bump into brother Esau. Jacob saw Esau's army coming. The first thing Jacob did was to set aside a softening-up present for Esau, a big flock of fat cattle.

Then behind that, he put his handmaidens, then Leah and then Rachel and last little Joseph. If the present didn't soften him up and he disregarded his family, then Jacob would have time to come up with some other plan to get free. Keep in mind that Esau was a Gentile, and an unbeliever. Jacob was a believer and a Jew.

6. On his return journey to Canaan, Jacob, who had become a strong wrestler, stopped off on the east side of the Jordan at the brook, Jabbok. The wrestling ring was called "The Face Of God" and his wrestling partner was none other than Jesus Christ. Jacob was not only whipped, but was beaten up badly and as a result, limped for the rest of his life. This wrestling match did something to Jacob.
 - a. He learned that Christ could out wrestle him any day in the year. Christ gave him a body slam that left a mark on him for life.
 - b. This was the first time in his life that he couldn't think his way out or fight his way out. Jacob woke up to the fact that he was just an ordinary member of the human race.
 - c. He rebounded and got back in fellowship and went out all the way for doctrine and finally reached super grace.

God tested Jacob in the loss of his favorite wife, Rachel. He also lost (or thought he did) his favorite son Joseph. Then his old father Isaac died. These shocking losses turned him in a new way to God and he became a mighty man of doctrine and faith. In 1871 B.C. he was restored to his son Joseph in Goshen and he was presented to Pharaoh. All of a sudden Jacob began to see the other side of the super grace life and he moved all the way into super grace living. For 17 years he lived in Goshen.

Now turn back to Hebrews 11:21.

It says "When he was a-dying." Back when the King James Version was translated, they had the alpha prefix and this was an intensive way of expressing a truth. This is the present, active, participle of apothnesko. This is referring to dying grace. We will translate, "While in the process of dying." This is a descriptive present and it describes what happened to him down in Goshen as he was getting ready to cross the golden drawbridge of dying grace. This is a temporal participle so we translate this "While he was in the process of dying."

Next we have "He blessed" and this is the aorist, active, indicative of eulogeo. This is a constantive aorist, and takes in all that he said which we have recorded in Genesis 49, plus the crossed-hand incident in Genesis 48:13-21.

Summary of The Crossed-Hand Incident

1. When Joseph approached his old father with his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (Jacob was dying and was no longer Jacob but had become Israel and was a super grace believer), Joseph put Manasseh in line to get the blessing from Jacob's right hand, being the oldest son, and put Ephraim under his left hand to receive the blessing of the youngest son. Joseph shoved Manasseh under the right hand of Jacob and Ephraim under the left hand.

But you see, Jacob had experienced this very same thing in his own life with Esau (the elder shall serve the younger). So the aged Jacob crossed his hands over and gave the major blessing to the younger Ephraim and the lesser blessing to the older Manasseh. This is a picture of the grace of God. Jesus, our Elder Brother, was judged for us and took the curse and we got the major blessing from God, namely, salvation. Principle of 2 Cor. 5:21.

2. The word for both is hekostos and it means each of the sons of Joseph. God does not bless the line of birth and privilege but God blesses the line of regeneration. God blesses man by means of grace. No national line is ever the line of blessing, but rather the spiritual line is the line of blessing.
3. Look how it has gone through the ages--
 Seth over Cain
 Abraham over Haran
 Isaac over Ishmael This is a principle of Christ.
 Jacob over Esau
 Ephraim over Manasseh
 This dying super grace man had enough doctrine in his mind to cross his hands over and give the blessing to the younger. It was a grace decision.

Next we have the word "worshipped" and this is an aorist, active, indicative of proskuneo. Pros means face to face with, and kuneo means to kiss. It doesn't mean to literally kiss but to come face to face with Bible Doctrine. Here it means the communication of Bible Doctrine. This is a culminative aorist and it means the entire prophecy of Genesis 49. What a wonderful way to die. This old man, just about gone, and he gave the whole prophetic history of Israel and it is in Genesis 49.

Then it says, "Worshipped on the top of his scepter." The word "scepter" is from rabdos and it means his ruling staff. This was his badge of family rulership. Genesis 47:31 and it should be on the top of his scepter. He died about 1854 B.C. at the age of 147 and his dying words were Genesis 49. To worship means to teach doctrine or to hear it taught.

Turn Now To Genesis 49

There are thirteen men involved here. Thirteen tribes for we have two tribes for Joseph.

By Leah Jacob had Reuben--Simeon--Levi--Judah--Issachar--Zebulun--One daughter Dinah.

By Rachel he had Joseph and Benjamin.

By Bilhah he had Dan and Naphtali.

By Zilpah he had Gad and Asher.

What Jacob said is so significant that the Holy Spirit saw to it that it is recorded in Holy Scripture.

In Genesis 47:27-28, we saw how Jacob used doctrine to make his decision.

The Three Looks Of Jacob

1. He looked forward. (Gen. 47:29-31)
2. He looked backward. (Gen. 48:1-7)
3. He looked upward. (Gen. 48:8-22)

In Genesis 48:9-14, we have the crossed hands incident.

In verses 15-16 we have a special blessing for Joseph because of his faithfulness.

In verses 17-19, Joseph's attempt to correct his old father Jacob.

In verses 20-22, the double portion prophecy.

Three Prophetic Passages In Genesis

The prophecy of Salvation--Genesis 3:15

The prophecy of the races--Genesis 9 and 10

The prophecy of Israel--Genesis 49

Look At Genesis 49

Verse 1--The sons are gathered.

Verse 2--They are to hear their future.

First, look at the sons of Leah.

REUBEN

The first born son. His greatness was neutralized by instability and incest. Reuben seduced his father's mistress Bilhah. The failure of this tribe is seen in Dathan and Abiram when they rebelled against Moses. This tribe failed to ever cross the Jordan. Never gave any leadership. Had no patriotism. Never would fight for Israel. No leader, no great person ever came from this tribe. Reuben lost the double portion to Joseph. Lost the priesthood to Levi, and lost the rulership to Judah. Instability neutralizes human ability. He lost spiritual focus.

SIMEON AND

LEVI

Verses
5-7

Cruel and plotters. Full of own self importance. Jacob was actually horrified by these two sons. (Gen. 34:25) It says "They digged down a wall" but a correct translation says, "They hocked the animals."

Simeon did not inherit any portion of the land and became the weakest tribe. (Num. 26:14) Got only a couple of cities (Joshua 19:1-9)

Levi was likewise scattered throughout the land but the dying words of Jacob caused Levi to rebound and God forgave them and made them the priests of Israel. (Num. 18:20-21) Had the greatest voices among all the tribes.

JUDAH

Verses
8-12

Lion of the Tribe Of Judah. (Rev. 5)

Scepter is the sign of rulership.

Shiloh means Messiah.

Prophecy of the Millennium, verses 11 and 12.

This is the first reference in this prophecy of the second coming of Christ.

ZEBULUN This is the tenth son of Jacob and the last by Leah.
Verse 13 (Judges 5:18, 1 Chronicles 12:33)
 Became the commercial background and backbone for Israel.

ISSACHAR The Ninth son of Jacob and the fifth of Leah.
 Would submit to yoke of slavery in order to keep his prosperity. He believed in peace and prosperity at any price.
 Never did fight for freedom.

Sons of Bilhah found in verses 16-18 and 21.

DAN This is the worst tribe of all.
 The anti-christ of Israel will come from this tribe.
 Dan always brought up the rear. (Numbers 10:25)
 First tribe to go into idolatry. (Judges 18:30)
 Last to receive inheritance in the land. (Joshua 19:47)
 1 Chronicles 27:16-22 Mentioned last in list of tribes.
 Revelation 7 doesn't even mention Dan.

The cry of the Jewish remnant given in verse 18.

NAPHTALI Sixth son of Jacob and second son of Bilhah.

GAD AND ASHER Sons by Zilpah

GAD The seventh son. Started out as a loser and ended up as a winner.

ASHER Means prosperity. The other tribe that gave great economic support to Israel.

RACHEL'S TWO SONS

JOSEPH One of the great stabilizing forces of the nation.
Verses
 22-26

BENJAMIN Great military man.

We will pick up with Joseph in our next study.