

Sunday School Lesson



By Bessie Wilton

INTRODUCTION

Coming from Haran to Canaan, Jacob was between two dangers. Behind him was his angry brother from whom he had fled twenty years before. God's warning prevented violence by the father-in-law. Now Jacob must meet the brother.

Jacob had a strong encouragement when he came back to Canaan to meet his brother. God had promised to be with him. To add to that assurance, "the angels of God met him."

Just seeing them must have given Jacob confidence. However, he did not imagine that God's help would take the place of his own effort. Carefully he made plans to win Esau's favor.

THE LESSON

"As Jacob went on his way, some angels met him. When he saw them, he said, 'This is God's camp'; so he named the place Mahanaim. Jacob sent messengers ahead of his brother Esau in the country of Edom. He instructed them to say: 'I, Jacob, your obedient servant, report to my master Esau that I have been staying with Laban and that I have delayed my return until now. I own cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and am sending you word, sir, in the hope of gaining your favor.' (Genesis 32:3-5)

The message made it clear that Jacob now had substantial property. He was not coming as a beggar. All he asked from Esau was grace: he hoped Esau would regard him with favor.

The response was alarming. The messengers reported that Esau was coming to meet his brother. Jacob thought that Esau was still angry enough to kill him, and was bringing a force strong enough to be sure Jacob's men could not protect him. Jacob was frightened, but not out of his wits. Quickly he planned to pacify Esau if he could; if not, to lessen the damage Esau would do.

First, Jacob made two groups of his people and livestock. If Esau found one group and destroyed it, he might think there was no more.

Second, Jacob prayed earnestly that God would deliver him.

Third, Jacob prepared a substantial gift of livestock for his brother. He sent servants to deliver the animals in a number of separate droves.

When the gifts were on their way, Jacob sent his family across the Jabbok leaving him all alone. That night came the mysterious encounter that has become famous. The record says simply, "There wrestled a man with him. We are not told how the wrestling began, but the meaning becomes clear in Jacob's words, 'I will not let except thou bless me.' In deadly peril, Jacob desperately needed the blessing of God. That was what the struggle was all about. At last the angel gave a blessing and a new name. No longer would this be Jacob, heel-catcher, tripper, cheat. He now was Israel. The name often is interpreted as 'Prince of God' because of the word 'Prince' in the King James version, the name may also be translated 'God's contender.'"

Perhaps Esau and his forces were some distance away when Jacob first saw them. To Jacob's credit he took his place at the head of the line. Esau's anger was against him personally. If indeed Esau was bent on killing, he would have the opportunity to kill Jacob before anyone else. All this does not mean that Jacob had no faith in God's promise and the angels' blessing. But, as many of us do in a crisis, he prepared for the worst even while he hoped for the best.

What a relief! Esau came running, but he came with a hug, not a sword. Neither man could be proud of the way he had felt and acted in the past. For twenty years both had lived with shame mingled with resentment. Now at the sight of each other, resentment melted, emotions overflowed, and they wept.

We may think that Jacob had an advantage that we do not have. From time to time God communicated with him directly and unmistakably.

On the other hand, we have an advantage that Jacob did not have. We have the Bible, God's Word in writing. If we make good use of it, we shall avoid most of Jacob's mistakes and problems. Taught by God's Word, we shall never imagine that getting rich is more important than doing right.

Marks Of A False Prophet

Part II

By J. M. Little

The third mark of a false prophet I call your attention to is that he is a stranger to repentance, or he preaches that repentance is not for us today. "I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3-5). Now, how in the world could a preacher stand before his congregation and tell his folks that repentance is not for us today? He is called of the Devil. A great preacher I heard over the radio from Kentucky was preaching that repentance is not for us today. A man can be wrong on some doctrine and be saved, but he cannot be wrong on repentance and be saved! You cannot be wrong on how God saves a sinner and be saved! Now you can go on making fun all you want to, God is keeping a book on all your mocking the truth. And the very time and place you turned the truth down, you'll remember it in boxcar letters. Every soul who turns the truth down can take you back to the very place where they turned the truth down. And every soul who made the decision: "I must get to Christ," can take you back to the very place their mind was made up to follow on to know the Lord.

That decision didn't save them, but the grace of God in them enabled them to long after Christ until they were brought by the Holy Spirit to know Him as their Lord and their Savior. How can you turn away from a message telling how God saves a poor soul hungering after Christ and you claim to be saved. My friend, you are in a most tragical and blinded state. And you will receive a hotter place in Hell than the blind souls you lead because you hindered their entering into the Kingdom. May the God of all mercy have mercy on your poor, blinded soul.

I may pick up a book or message by some preacher who lived hundreds of years ago, after reading it just a little I recognize he was a true servant of the Lord, telling how God saves lost sinners. "That's how the Lord saves me," is my reply. How could I turn away from that message that is true to the Word of God? I cannot. And for the life of me I can't understand how you can turn away from these messages or the messages of my late pastor. You don't know the Christ we are setting forth. You couldn't turn away from them if you knew my Lord. You don't know, nor have you ever dreamed, of the preciousness of Christ. I asked a very elderly woman a while back if she knew the Lord. She was surprised at the question. She never was challenged before. But she doesn't know what it means to be a lost sinner. What a tragical state to be in! Deceived and on the road to Hell in the evening time of life. You young people, what about you? Do you want to know the Lord? Do you? I talked to a young woman there in a home, the more I talked to her the redder her face became.

And since that time she has been running deeper and deeper in the world trying to drown out all guilt complex. Don't you go on in your condition. The way you are going means Hell!

The fourth mark of a false prophet I call your attention to is the preacher who preaches like all his members are saved and he will not question their salvation. He does that because he has no assurance of his own salvation. When I was teaching the Bible class years ago I wouldn't question the salvation of others because I had no assurance of my own salvation. A false prophet will get angry with a true prophet who calls his members in question about their salvation. You don't want your members disturbed. If you admit they are lost, you are going to have to admit you are lost, too. The gospel preached under the power of the Holy Spirit makes men take sides quickly. And right here in this state men are taking sides quickly, almost everyone against the truth, especially in the ministry. Well, if you are saved, as you say you are, why are you getting angry with the messages? Why do you do this to the members of your church if you are saved? The way of grace is set forth in every one of the late pastor's messages. But you have said that you don't understand them and you are not going to have this doctrine in your church. You've made your decision and your decision is final. When God withdraws His servants from you, you are

reprobated. There are five classes of preachers: 1) pastor-called, 2) evangelist-called, 3) family-called, 4) altar-called, and 5) God-called. I never heard the truth preached until I heard my late pastor, L. R. Shelton, preach. The Devil has far more preachers out there in these last days than the Lord. Just before the Flood the true ministers of God had dropped to just one. And that was Noah. Have you ever thought about it like that? We are living in the last days just before the Coming of the Lord and the number of true prophets has dwindled to just a few. Are you one of them? I am. My late pastor used to preach that 95% of our church members, including preachers, are lost. When Bishop Bennett came to see me some time ago, I called that statement to his attention and he replied, "One hundred percent of them are lost." And I'll repeat something I've said before: "When a man turns the truth down, it's for one of two reasons - the love of money or the love of lust." Two preachers here turned the truth down, in one case it was the love of money. Now you think on that. Do you know the Lord. Do you? You can't fight the truth if you know my Blessed Lord. Your state is most tragical!

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Church News

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

The Ecumenical (all denominational) worship service on the Aids Crisis will be held Thursday, Nov. 12, at First Presbyterian Church. The church is located on West Trade and Poplar Streets. For more information call Pam Wild at 375-3543.

EBENEZER

On Sunday, November 15, the Ebenezer Baptist Church will honor all senior citizens of the city. The program will be at 4 p.m. Several churches will participate along with several rest homes. Come and expect a miracle and bring a senior citizen. If transportation is needed call 332-9257.



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