

## Proclaiming the Gospel

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;  
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (*1 Cor. 1.18*).

Edifying the Body of Christ (*Eph. 4.10-16*)

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The Wise Still Seek Him

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## Fear Not To go down into Egypt!

Are there times when you wonder why some ungodly people seem to live comfortably, prosper in everything they do, and enjoy life while you struggle? Yet, you are serving the Lord Jesus, praying and trying to obey His will? It feels the Lord is putting you through unfair situations while He allows evil ones to prosper?

Jeremiah, a godly man, a true prophet of the Lord, asked questions of God. Let's listen in on Jeremiah's questions (*Jer. 12.1-2*):

Righteous [*art*] thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of [*thy*] judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? [*wherefore*] are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou [*art*] near in their mouth, and far from their reins.

I wonder if Jacob (and his descendants) ever felt like this about Esau. Joshua's address to the Israelites at the close of his life/leadership tells us something; it sheds light on God's dealings with His children as opposed to His dealings with those whose hearts are not right with Him (*Jos 24.4*):

And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

When Jacob and Esau prospered and increased, and the land could no longer support all of them, God gave Mt. Seir to Esau. Esau took immediate possession of his inheritance given to him by the Lord (*Gen. 36.6-8*). The Lord would not even allow Israel to fight with Esau's descendants for their land (*Dt. 2.4, 5*).

Let us look at Esau's heart:

Esau despised his birthright (*Gen. 25.34*).

us to accomplish His will for His glory. It is the way of the cross that refines us, that brings us to perfection that, in turn, brings us to worship Jesus Christ around the throne – as never before (*Rev. 7.9-17*).

Jesus said He will never leave you nor forsake you. He will go with you down into your Egypt where you will be increased – increased in your faith, your knowledge of Him and strengthened to face and overcome the enemy.

**You can trust JESUS to bring you up again.**

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***Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ***

*Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31).*

Esau had hated in his heart and desired to kill Jacob who received a blessing from Isaac after Esau sold him the birthright (Gen. 27.41, 42). Esau acted with spite and rebellion by taking a wife of the Canaanites knowing that it displeased his father Isaac (Gen. 27.41, 42). Esau harbored perpetual hatred in his heart (Eze. 35.5). There is no indication that Esau's heart was ever right with God, nor that he had a desire to change – to repent.

Now – what of Jacob? His name, being from the Hebrew, means “held by the heel, supplanted, or protected.” This is found in Genesis 25.26. Supplant means “...to succeed, replace, step into the shoes of...” Please note that he was protected. God was in charge of all that was going on though it may not have felt like it to Jacob nor did it appear that way to him, I am sure. When Joseph was sold by his brothers, God was saying, in essence, “Fear not to go down into Egypt.” God had a plan for His chosen – a plan that included trials and tribulations – but a plan which would preserve the lives of Jacob and his descendants. Oh, yes, you and I can look back and say, in retrospect, it is obvious God's hand was upon Jacob.

Now, wait just a moment. How many times have you been in the midst of the fiery furnace and been able to say, well one day, I'll understand that this is God's protection of me. No, we in our frailty all too often do not see the hand of God in our lives for looking at how the evil prosper – and, many times using the Name of Jesus in their evil ways.

Let us continue as we look at Jacob's heart.

He desired blessings from God.

He prayed for God's presence, His blessing as he wrestled with the angel of God until his name, his nature was changed – until God blessed him (Gen. 3.24, 25).

Note that he was chosen as the one through whom the lineage of God's people would come. God in Christ Jesus, is through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is a statement of Jacob's heart being right with God.

Jacob, through whom the Messiah would come, went down into Egypt while Esau was allowed to possess his inheritance immediately. Jacob went into the midst of an idolatrous people where his descendants would endure the rigors, toils, struggles, and fires of bondage, and, later – face the tests and hardships of the wilderness. Why? In Egypt he became a mighty nation – a nation that God would use to bring salvation to the world through Jesus Christ (Ps. 105.23, 24). God “...increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.”

You desire to serve God with your whole heart; you seek Him, read His Word, and live for Him – but life is hard. Difficult situations arise – not of

your making. It requires all the strength you have to survive. You pray without feeling God's presence, and, seemingly, without results. **But know** that GOD IS WITH YOU. Read the words that God spake to Jacob (Gen. 46.3-4).

One thing we fail to grasp in this world of instant gratification, in this world of being caught up in the world and the world's ways – calling it spiritual (whatever that means) – is that Abraham received a great promise from God that he never lived to see come to pass. Abraham had such faith and trust in the living God, God Whose only begotten Son is Jesus, that he dared to speak forth the promise though he would not see it come to pass.

Noah dared to obey God though there were no clouds in the sky, no smell of rain, no hint of it and – no knowledge of rain. It had never rained before. He built an ark that outlasted the Titanic. He, being a novice at building sea worthy vessels thousands of years ago, built an ark that was far superior to the Titanic built by those whom the world would acclaim as great designers of sea worthy vessels. Note the difference: God in Christ Jesus was the greatest architect ever – whom Noah served.

All those whose lives were lived for the Lord Jesus Christ of yesteryear as well as today – who look like failures – are the ones who will stand around the throne of God because – no, not because they were “successful,” but because they were **faithful to walk in obedience to the call of Jesus Christ in each moment** – come what may.

When we are going through trials, it does not seem that God is with us. But God told Jacob, “...fear not to go down into Egypt: for I will there make of thee a great nation” (Gen. 46.3). Not only did God have a great purpose in Jacob's going into Egypt, not only would God use that time in Egypt to prepare Jacob's heart and increase him and make him stronger than his enemies; but God would, Himself, go with Jacob down into Egypt. God would go with him and remain with him for the duration of time – and bring him out again “...and I will also surely bring thee up again...” (Verse Four).

Jacob, with a heart for God, chosen of God, went through the tests and hardships of training and purifying while his brother Esau lived a “normal” life in his inheritance. Unfair? No! Esau, whose heart was not right, already had his reward, the only reward he would receive (Mt 6.1-21). Jacob's life furthered the kingdom of God in the earth and laid up treasure for him in heaven.

Remember Peter when he wanted to walk to the Master, to Jesus, on water but began sinking when he, Peter, took his eyes off of Jesus? It is only as we are single of heart in our desires and thoughts and actions that we can follow Jesus on *The Way, the Via Dolorosa*. It is on *The Way* of The Cross of Calvary where all the great saints have trod and experienced the Lord mightily, and yet, have endured much hardship. It is *The Way* of The Cross that brings