



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 46



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

ISAAC BLESSES JACOB AGAIN

Gen 28:1 "And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.² Arise, go to Padanaram, 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.³ And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;⁴ And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.⁵ And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.⁶ When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;⁷ And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram;⁸ And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father;⁹ Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife." (Genesis 28:1-9)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

After Rebekah spoke with Isaac, he called Jacob, blessed him, and solemnly charged him not to take a wife from the daughters of Canaan – something his father Abraham had made clear was previously required for him also (Gen 24). Expressing the same desire as his mother, Isaac told him to go to the house of his mother, taking a wife from the daughters of Laban, Rebekah's brother. He then conferred a particular blessing upon Isaac, asking the Lord to bless him, make him

fruitful, and multiply him, in order that he might become a multitude of people. He also asked that the blessing of Abraham be upon him in order that he might inherit the land in which he was currently a stranger. He then sent him away to Laban, the brother of his mother. Esau heard what Isaac said to Jacob, giving him a charge that he should not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, and observed that Jacob obeyed him. Apparently seeking to emulate Jacob, he took a wife from the daughters of Ishmael, **Abraham's son**.

INTRODUCTION TO OBEDIENCE

The book of Genesis introduces us to the concept and characteristics of **obedience**. The first use of the word "obey," or any of its derivatives, is in regard to Abraham.

➡ **SPOKEN TO ABRAHAM.** "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; **BECAUSE** thou hast **obeyed** My voice" (Gen 22:18).

➡ **SPOKEN TO ISAAC.** "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of

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heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; BECAUSE that Abraham **obeyed** My voice, and kept my charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." (Gen 26:4-5)

The English meaning of the word "obey" is: 1: TO FOLLOW THE COMMANDS OR GUIDANCE OF, 2: TO CONFORM TO OR COMPLY WITH (OBEY AN ORDER): TO BEHAVE." MERRIAM-WEBSTER

"VERB 1. SUBMIT TO THE AUTHORITY OF. 2. CARRY OUT (AN ORDER). 3 BEHAVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH (A PRINCIPLE OR LAW)." OXFORD

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "OBEY"

GENESIS THRU MALACHI: "To hear intelligently (often with implication of **attention**, **obedience** . . . **call (gather) together**, carefully, certainly, **consent**, consider, be content . . . **discern**, **give ear** . . . indeed, **listen** . . . obedient, obey, **perceive** . . . **regard** . . . **understand** . . ." STRONG'S

MATTHEW THRU REVELATION: "1) to listen, to harken 1a) of one who on the knock at the door comes to listen who it is, (the duty of a porter) 2) to harken to a command 2a) to obey, be obedient to, submit to." THAYER

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN OBEDIENCE?

Obedience involves a number of things, as confirmed by the meaning of the word.

- ➔ **INTELLIGENT HEARING.** Obedience is constrained by heart-intelligence, or rationale, as opposed to emotion or debilitating fear.
- ➔ **ATTENTION.** The person who obeys has fastened his attention on what the Lord is saying. All other voices are deliberately put into the background.
- ➔ **PUTTING TOGETHER.** The person who obeys has made some associations between what the Lord has said and themselves. They have comprehended what they have heard in relation to themselves.
- ➔ **CONSENTING.** Obedience involves consenting to, or agreeing with, what has been said.
- ➔ **DISCERNING.** The person who obeys necessarily discerns, or understands, what has been said. In other words, he knows what to do.
- ➔ **LISTENING.** Listening involves extended focus. The attention is not drawn away from the one who is speaking. For example, Saul of Tarsus listened to what Jesus was saying, then asked what he should do. A person who does not listen will never ask what should be done.
- ➔ **REGARDING.** The obedient person places a value on what has been said. It is not despised or easily forgotten.
- ➔ **DOING WHAT IS COMMANDED.** A person who is obedient does what he is told to do. If he is told to dip seven times in the River Jordan, his obedience involves doing precisely what was commanded (2 Kgs 5:10-14).
- ➔ **BEING GUIDED.** Self-will is replaced by doing the will of the one being obeyed, with no thought given to innovation or alternative ways of doing what is commanded.
- ➔ **CONFORMING CONDUCT.** The person who obeys brings their outward life into conformity with their inward persuasion. For those in Christ, this

is described as "*walking*" in "*newness of life*" Rom 6:4). Prior to Christ, those who believed conducted their lives in strict harmony with their faith, even though they did not have the "*newness of life*" that is realized in Christ Jesus.

- ➔ **COMPLIANCE.** Compliance is the conformation or conformity that is realized between the will and ways of the people being brought into harmony with the revealed will of God.
- ➔ **SUBMISSION.** This is not the kind of submission that is achieved by the coercion or force of an enemy. This is willing submission in which one shapes his life around what God has made known or commanded.

All of this was lived out prior to the giving of the Law, before Jesus put away sin, and before men were born again. The potency of faith was confirmed in the lives of holy men and women who did what they were commanded to do, without question, hesitation, or doubting.

It is unconscionable for those professing to be in Christ to be fundamentally disobedient and unbelieving. Those who have invented convenient theologies to justify the existence of wayward Christians cannot be excused. Saying things like, "We are all sinners, but the difference is that Christians are forgiven," is simply out of order. Those who have created recovery programs and systems of accountability in order to get professing Christians to have better control of their lives have only made their unbelief and misapprehension of the truth known. Their positions are a practical denial of the effectiveness of faith (1 John 5:4-5), the empowerment of the Holy Spirit Rom 8:13-14), the efficient teaching of the grace of God (Tit 2:11-12), and the fact of regeneration (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:10).

God is greatly to be praised for the records of men and women of faith that have been given through the Holy Spirit.

ISAAC CALLED JACOB AND BLESSED HIM

Gen 28:1a ***"And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him . . ."***

Having heard and comprehended Rebekah's lament concerning the wives of Esau, Jacob immediately sets out to buttress what she had said. **Their mutual faith in God, and the persuasion of the truth of His promises, united them together in this matter.**

CALLED JACOB

"And Isaac called Jacob . . ."

In Scripture, people were generally summoned by means of a **"call."**

- ➔ Pharaoh **"called Abraham"** (Gen 12:18).
- ➔ Abimelech **"called Abraham"** (Gen 20:9)
- ➔ The angel of the Lord **"called unto Abraham"** (Gen 22:11).
- ➔ The Lord **"called unto Abraham out of heaven"** (Gen 22:15).
- ➔ Abimelech **"called Isaac"** (Gen 26:9).
- ➔ Isaac **"called Esau"** (Gen 27:1).
- ➔ Rebekah **"called Jacob"** (Gen 27:42).
- ➔ Jacob **called his twelve sons** (Gen 49:1).
- ➔ God **called Moses** (Ex 3:4; 19:13).
- ➔ Moses **called Bezaleel and Aholiab** to the work of building the tabernacle (Ex 36:2).
- ➔ The Lord **called Samuel** (1 Sam 3:8).
- ➔ Jesus **called His disciples to Himself** (Matt 15:32; Mk 8:1).
- ➔ The promise of the Holy Spirit is given to **"as many as the Lord our God shall call"** (Acts 2:39).

- ➔ **"The twelve"** called the multitude of disciples to themselves (Acts 6:2).
- ➔ Joseph **called** for his father Jacob (Acts 7:14).
- ➔ The Holy Spirit **called** Barnabas and Saul to a special work (Acts 13:2).
- ➔ The Lord **called** Paul and company to go into Macedonia (Acts 16:10).
- ➔ Paul **called** the chief Jews in Rome together (Acts 28:17).
- ➔ Paul was **called** to be an apostle (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:15).
- ➔ Those in Christ Jesus are referred to as **"the called"** (Rom 1:6; 8:28).
- ➔ Believers are to consider their **"calling"** (1 Cor 1:26; Eph 4:4; 2 Pet 1:10).
- ➔ Believers are **called** to be saints (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2).
- ➔ Believers have been **called** into the grace of Christ (Gal 1:6).
- ➔ Believers are **called** unto liberty (Gal 5:1).
- ➔ God **calls** people by the Gospel (2 Thess 2:14).

DEFINITION OF "CALL"

GENESIS THRU MALACHI (Hebrew)

" . . . to summon, invite, call for, call and commission, appoint, call and endow 1a6) . . . to be called . . . be summoned . . . be called out, be chosen." STRONG'S

MATTHEW THRU REVELATION (Greek)

"1) to call . . . to invite 2) to call i.e. to name, by name 2a) to give a name to 2a1) to receive the name of, receive as a name 2a2) to give some name to one, call his name 2b) to be called i.e. to bear a name or title (among men) 2c) to salute one by name . . . 1) called, invited (to a banquet) 1a) invited (by God in the proclamation of the Gospel) to obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom through Christ 1b) called to (the discharge of) some office 1b1) divinely selected and appointed." THAYER

ENGLISH

" . . . to make a request or demand . . . to elicit a response . . . to summon." MERRIAM-WEBSTER

In Scripture, early on, we are exposed to the concept of calling – summoning, inviting, or drawing attention to. **This involves an appeal that requires thought. Inquiry, and submission.** A thoughtful procedure, as compared coercion, arrest, etc.

To be sure, the Lord can, and does, apprehend people, giving them no choice other than to give heed to what He says – as when He forced Nebuchadnezzar into the field (Dan 4:33), or apprehended Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:4; Phil 3:12). **However, when it comes to giving revelation, directions, and other messages, men are "called" – apprized that God wants their attention in order to bring them into His will.**

This is quite different from an appeal to mere emotion, or drawing attention to something that is compelling, yet is not understood. Those in Christ are expected to be sensitive to the calling of the Lord, so that they can hear the **"still small voice"** (1 Kgs 19:12) that summons them into deeper involvement with the Lord. **There are few things that are more damaging to the human spirit than a lack of spiritual sensitivity and alertness.**

Therefore Isaac summons Jacob to inform and bless him. And, in keeping with what we are intended to learn about calling, Jacob willingly comes.

AND BLESSED HIM

" . . . and blessed him . . ." Other version s read, **"greeted him with a blessing,"** NAB **"gave him a blessing,"** CEV and **"greeted him."** GNB

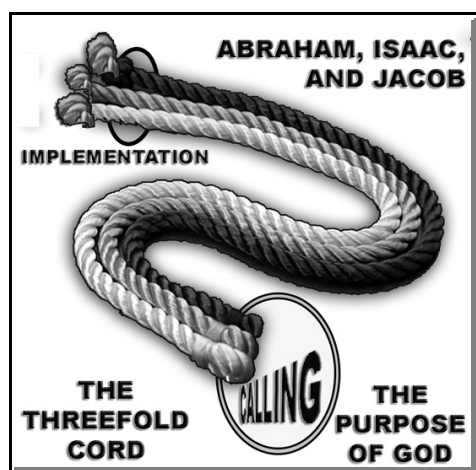
This is now the third time that Isaac has blessed Jacob:

- ➔ **"And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him."** (Gen 27:23)

➡ *"And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed." (Gen 27:27)*

➡ *"And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan." (Gen 28:1).*

I gather there was an enlargement of the blessing each time, and not a mere repetition of what had already been said.



This blessing was not independent of the promised blessing of Abraham. Rather, it was the conferment of the Abrahamic blessing upon Jacob, even as it had been conferred upon Isaac. This is what constituted these three *"the fathers,"* and was the driving reason for God said of Himself: *"I am the God of thy father, the God of*

Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex 3:6). And again, *"I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"* (Acts 7:32).

The *"blessing"* conferred by Isaac upon Jacob had particular reference to the promises God had made to Abraham. This regarded:

- ➡ The land of Canaan (Ex 3:6,15,16; 4:5; Deut 1:8; 6:10; 9:5; 30:20).
- ➡ The privilege of being the people of God (Deut 29:13),
- ➡ The raising up of the Savior (Acts 3:13).

This all had to do with the coming Redeemer. No portion of it was left to chance, or to the decisions of men.

Notice the specifics that were made known about the coming Savior.

- ➡ In Abraham's Seed all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12:3; 22:18).
- ➡ In Isaac's Seed all nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen 26:4).
- ➡ In Jacob's Seed all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 28:14).
- ➡ Jesus' genealogy is declared to have been from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants (Matt 1:1-16).
- ➡ He would come from the lineage of Jesse (Is 11:1).

- ➡ He would be a descendant of David (Jer 23:5; 33:15).
- ➡ He would be given the throne of David (Jer 33:17; Lk 1:32)
- ➡ He would come from the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10).
- ➡ A Son and Child promised to Israel (Is 9:6-7)
- ➡ He would be born in the promised land – Bethlehem of Judea (Micah 5:2).
- ➡ His ministry would be in Canaan (Is 9:1-2; Matt 4:14-16).
- ➡ The Redeemer, or Deliverer, would come out of Zion (the highest hill in Jerusalem) and turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Is 59:20; Rom 11:26).
- ➡ He would be identified with Jerusalem, the principle city in the land of promise (Jer 33:16; Zech 9:9; 13:1; Lk 2:38).
- ➡ In the days of the Savior, Judah would be saved (Jer 23:6).

All of these prophecies postulate the nation of Israel being located in Canaan, and the land being sanctified unto the Lord. This is the significance of the promise of Canaan being made to Abraham (Gen 12:7; 15:7; 24:7). Isaac (Gen 26:3), and Jacob (Gen 28:13; 35:12). It is embedded in the promises concerning *"land"* (Ex 6:4,8; 12:25; 13:5,11; 32:13; 33:1; Lev 14:34; 20:24; 23:12; 25:2; Duet 6:10, etc).

ISAAC CHARGED JACOB

"^{1b} . . . and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan."

When God calls a people to Himself, and reveals His intentions to them, it has a life-altering impact on those who believe Him. This has been

seen in some detail in the accounts given to this to this point in:

- ➡ **NOAH.** As soon as God called Noah (Gen 6:8-9,13-14), his occupation changed. The focus of his life changed. The involvements of his family were amended. He

commenced a project that took one hundred and twenty years to finish, and did not stop until it was completed.

- ➡ **ABRAHAM.** When Abraham was called by God, his life was completely changed. At over seventy years of

age he left his homeland, commenced a pilgrimage to Canaan, and once located there, never left. His entire life was built around the revelations given to him. His view of his family changed. He received promises that he believed, and they changed how he viewed where he lived and how he lived.

➔ **ISAAC.** Isaac's involvement in the call and purpose of God determined where he lived, how he lived, and who he married.

None of these men were champions of free will, or the independent planning of their lives. They thought and acted within the context of what they knew about God and his will. Any error in judgment was not owing to rebellion or a compelling interest in self. Rather, it was the lack of revelation that had been given to them. **In all of this God was confirming that what He starts must be completed by Him.** It also verified that *"way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer 10:23). **It is a sin of unspeakable magnitude for people living in our time to live without a due regard for what God has said.**

Since the invasion of the church by those championing psychology, an emphasis has been placed on personal rights, and fulfilling ones own purposes. Anyone who interferes with such an approach to life is considered to be intruding where they have no rights. God, however, does not operate on this imaginary principle. When God commands, there is a penalty to be paid for disobedience. He does not recognize the right of any person to reject or spurn what He says.

As sparse as revelation was during the times of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they had picked up on this Divine trait, and adhered to it closely. In fact, God once said of Abraham, *"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him"* (Gen 18:19).

The truth of this is seen in our text. Concerning marriage, Isaac is operating by the same principle employed by his father Abraham (Gen 14). He does not suggest how Isaac should approach marriage, or ask him to

illustrations of salvation by grace.

Here, Isaac gives a commandment to Jacob, for that is the meaning of the word *"charged"*: **"CHARGE: TO COMMAND, CHARGE, GIVE ORDERS, LAY CHARGE, GIVE CHARGE TO, ORDER."** ^{STRONG'S}

THOU SHALT NOT

" . . . and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan." Other versions read, *"Do not marry a Canaanite woman,"* ^{NIV} *"You are not to choose a wife from the Hitti women,"* ^{CJB} *"Take not a wife of the stock of Chanaan,"* ^{DOUAY} *"You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan,"* ^{NAU} *"Don't marry one of these Canaanite girls,"* ^{LIVING} and *"Don't marry a Canaanite."* ^{GNB}

I want to again stress that this was a commandment – a commandment that was driven by the persuasion of the promises of God, and an acute awareness of the necessity of confirming to those promises.

At least two things are seen in this prohibition. **First**, Jacob was not to take a wife from the people who then occupied Canaan. In this case, *"Canaanite"* would mean someone from the land of Canaan.

However, there is a deeper matter to be seen here. Some versions reflect this by reading, *"the stock of Canaan,"* or *"the daughters of Canaan."* **In this case, women that were among the offspring of Canaan, son of Noah's son Ham, are meant.** Remember, Canaan was cursed, while Shem was selected as the godly seed. As it is written, *"And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."* (Gen 9:25-26).

The Abrahamic seed could not mingle with these people, even though, for a season, they lived in the same land with them.

We see from this that the presence of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not remove the curse from the

Until the Lord Jesus Christ was born, the Messianic lineage was enclosed in flesh and blood – Abraham and his seed.

ISAAC CHARGED HIM

" . . . and charged him . . ." Other versions read, *"commanded him,"* ^{NIV} *"directed him,"* ^{ESV} *"gave him this order,"* ^{NJB} *"instructed him,"* ^{TNK} *"gave charge to him,"* ^{ABP} *"gave him a command,"* ^{ERV} *"told him,"* ^{GNB} and *"ordered him."* ^{MESSAGE}

Although Jacob was at least seventy years old, Isaac did not think of him as having charge of his own life. He had been called into the purpose of God, and had no right to plan his life independent of that calling.

consider various alternatives. He knew that this regarded the promise of God concerning the *"seed"* of Abraham – beginning with Isaac (Gen 21:12), his seed after him (Gen 17:19), and culminating in the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal 3:16).

Until the Lord Jesus Christ was born, the Messianic lineage was enclosed in flesh and blood – Abraham and his seed. There could be no mixture with the heathen. In the two notable exceptions to this rule (Rahab and Ruth, Matt 1:5), the women chose to follow the God of the Hebrews, being special

Canaanites. The heathen did not become acceptable because of their presence and acquaintance.

When God called Israel out of Egypt, He gave very careful instructions concerning the matter of marriage: *"And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son"* (Deut 7:2-3). The reason for the prohibition is clear: *"For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly"* (Deut 7:4).

Later in the history of Israel, the Lord indicted Judah for intermarrying with the heathen: *"Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god"* (Mal 2:11).

The Application to Those in Christ

The devastating impact of the modern church disobeying this injunction is evident. Professing believers marrying unbelievers has played a large role in the massive falling away that has taken place in professing Christendom.

God has spoken with equal clarity concerning the marriage of His people. They are not to be *"unequally yoked"* with unbelievers. As it is written, *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you"* (2 Cor 6:14-17).

Paul also dealt with this subject when touching upon a widow marrying

again. *"The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord"* (1 Cor 7:39).

The devastating impact of the modern church disobeying this injunction is evident. Professing believers marrying unbelievers has played a large role in the massive falling away that has taken place in professing Christendom. The infiltration of the ways of the world into the church is largely owing to unequal marriages.

Believing parents should commence commanding their children concerning marriage while they are relatively young. This is an aspect of rearing children that must not be neglected. It is part of *"the faith of Abraham"* in which we walk (Rom 4:16).

TAKE THEE A WIFE

"² Arise, go to Padanaram, 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."

AT THIS POINT, THE SEED ARE FEW

At this juncture in human history, the relation of Abraham were few. This, of course, was owing to the rejection of all of the offspring of Abraham's other children: Ishmael, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah (Gen 17:18-19; 21:12-14; 25:2,6).

Sixty years later, when Jacob was one hundred and thirty years old (Gen 47:6), he went down into Egypt with all

of his seed – seventy souls in total (Ex 1:5). At the point of this text, Isaac only had two sons, and one of them – Esau – has been *"rejected."* The number of legitimate offspring (related to Abraham), therefore, were few at this time. So far as we know, Abraham only had one living brother – Nahor, for Haran had already died (Gen 11:28).

However, even though the qualified daughters were extremely few, the requirement for marriage was not lessened. This only meant that more determination and diligence had to be applied to finding a wife.

In Our Time

Likewise, In our time the fact that there may not be many available believers from which to choose husbands and wives does not reduce the requirement to marry *"only in the Lord,"* avoiding all unequal yokes. Just as surely as Isaac found a wife, so will Jacob – and so will every person seeking to marry in the Lord.

GO TO THE HOUSE OF BETHUEL

Thirty years after Isaac had obtained his wife, he now sends his son Jacob to the same place and house, to find an appropriate wife. **We will find that God had been preparing that environment for the occasion, so that the trip will not be in vain.**

Bethuel's house was still located in Padanaram, just as it was when Abraham's servant obtained Rebekah for Isaac (Gen 25:20).

TAKE A WIFE FROM THENCE

Other versions read, *"take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother."*

Rebekah was the daughter of Bethuel, but now, thirty years later, Jacob will obtain a wife from the next generation, Laban, Rebekah's brother. The wife has to be taken from Abraham's immediate relatives, and apparently these were the only ones that were qualified.

Notice that neither Isaac nor Jacob made any attempt to make a choice from some other family. **The faithful do not consider or attempt to substitute their will for that of God.**

A Particular Trait of Those in Christ

As they live by *"the faith of Abraham"* (Rom 4:16), and walk *"in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham"* (Rom 4:12), **this is a particular trait of those who are in Christ Jesus.** Jesus pointed this out when He said, *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me"* (John 10:27). It is not that this is what they **ought** to do. It is rather their manner – a manner that has been shaped by their regeneration. It is part of knowing the Lord (Jer 31:34; John 17:3; Heb 8:11). It is the result of walking *"in newness of life"* (Rom 6:4), reigning in life (Rom 5:17), and being sanctified by the Spirit *"unto obedience"* (1 Pet 1:2). **I do not like to hear people affirm that "Christians" are prone to seek their own will, recoil at the thought of Divine direction, and have an inveterate tendency to disobey God.** These are traits of *"the flesh"* and

of unbelief, not of someone that has been *"born again"* (John 3:3,7), been *"delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's Son"* (Col 1:13), *"quickened"* from death in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-3), living by faith (Heb 10:38), and in whom *"old things have passed away,"* and *"all things become new"* (2 Cor 5:17).

WHAT WE HAVE IN THESE TEXTS

In these texts that reveal the responses of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to God, we have a very practical picture of the response of faith to God. **Faith always obeys. When God directs, faith always follows. Faith is never recalcitrant, disobedient, or wayward.**

These are things to be kept in mind, and carefully reviewed when we examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith (2 Cor 13:5).

GOD ALMIGHTY BLESS THEE

"³ And God Almighty bless thee and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people."

GOD ALMIGHTY BLESS THEE

"And God Almighty bless thee ..."

This is now the fourth time a direct reference is made to Isaac blessing Jacob (Gen 27:23,27; 28:1,3). It is mentioned indirectly seven times (Gen 27:7,10,19, 25,33,41; 28:6).

Other versions read, *"the Ruler of all,"* ^{BBE} *"El Shaddai,"* ^{CJB/NJB} *"God All Sufficient,"* ^{GENEVA} *"My God,"* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *"the Sovereign God,"* ^{NET} *"God All-Powerful,"* ^{CEV/ERV} *"the Strong God."* ^{MESSAGE}

The term *"Almighty"* comes from a word that means **"ALMIGHTY, MOST POWERFUL."** ^{STRONG'S} It is used forty-eight times from Genesis thru Malachi, and nine times from Matthew thru Revelation. **It is never applied to any created being, whether man, angel,**

The word "Almighty" is never applied to any created being, whether man, angel, arch-angel, cherubim, seraphim, living creature, principality, or power.

arch-angel, cherubim, seraphim, living creature, principality, or power.

➡ **APPLIED TO GOD THE FATHER.** *"And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty"* (2 Cor 6:18).

➡ **APPLIED TO THE GLORIFIED CHRIST.** *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."* (Rev 1:8)

➡ **APPLIED TO HE THAT SAT UPON THE HEAVENLY THRONE.** *"And the four*

beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (Rev 4:8)

➡ **APPLIED TO THE LORD GOD.** *"Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to thee Thy great power, and hast reigned."* (Rev 11:17)

➡ **APPLIED TO THE LORD GOD.** *"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy*

works, **Lord God Almighty**; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints." (Rev 15:3)

➔ APPLIED TO THE LORD GOD. "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, **Lord God Almighty**, true and righteous are Thy judgments." (Rev 16:7)

➔ APPLIED TO GOD. "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of **God Almighty**." (Rev 16:14)

➔ APPLIED TO THE GOD OF WRATH. "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of **Almighty God**." (Rev 19:15)

➔ APPLIED TO THE LORD GOD. "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Rev 21:22)

NEW COVENANT EXPRESSIONS OF THIS TITLE

As is characteristic of New Covenant writings, references to God are more extensive, attended by some refreshing implications. This is owing to the fact that all those who are in Christ Jesus "know the Lord," from the least to the greatest (Heb 8:11). For that reason, **statements made about God can be more extensive than they were during the time of "the fathers."** Here are some notable examples.

➔ THE REAL OF POSSIBILITIES. "... with God **all things are possible**" (Matt 19:26).

➔ THE WORK WITHIN. "Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me **mightily**" (Col 1:29).

➔ PERCEPTION OF THE POWER. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what

is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is **the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come**" (Eph 1:18-21).

➔ DIVINE ABILITY. "Now unto him that is **able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us**" (Eph 3:20).

These descriptions also postulate a more thorough involvement in the will of the Lord that takes place in salvation.

MAKE THEE FRUITFUL

"... and make thee fruitful..."

Other versions read, "giving you fruit,"
BBE "make thee to increase," GENEVA
"fertile,"^{GWN} "give you many children,"
NLT and "give you man, many children."
MESSAGE

land, when they would be required to drive out the inhabitants and possess the land (Ex 23:29-30).

➔ The time when Israel would experience the lifting of the veil from their hearts (2 Cor 3:15).

➔ When "all Israel" would be saved (Rom 11:26).

➔ When the knowledge of the Lord would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14).

➔ The time of a global awakening likened to "life from the dead" (Rom 11:15).

The Uniqueness of the New Covenant

The blessing of the multiplication of physical posterity was given to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – **but such a promise is never associated with the New Covenant!**

In Christ, a different kind of fruitfulness takes place. John the Baptist spoke of the axe being laid to the root the "trees" of the Israelites if they did not bring forth "good fruit" (Matt 3:10). He was not referring to fleshly posterity. Jesus said, "Every tree

Now, under the New Covenant, "fruit" is after the order of the Spirit, not the flesh. This is a trait that characterizes all of Christ's "children"

This is speaking of fleshly posterity, and is a blessing common to all of the fathers – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 17:6; 28:3; 35:11), as well as to Adam (Gen 1:28), and Noah (Gen 9:1,7). The promise was also given to Israel under the Old Covenant (Lev 26:9).

This kind of blessing foresaw several things:

➔ The time when the nation would multiply in Egypt (Ex 1:7).

➔ The occupation of the promised

that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matt 7:19). On the evening of His betrayal Jesus gave His disciples some extensive teaching about fruit-bearing (John 15:1-8,16). He was not speaking about an increase of fleshly progeny!

Now, under the New Covenant, "fruit" is after the order of the Spirit, not the flesh (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9). This is a trait that characterizes all of Christ's "children" (Heb 2:13), also referred to as:

➔ "The **children of God**" (Matt 5:9; Rom 8:16,21; Gal 3:26; 1 John

3:10; 5:2).

- ➔ *"The sons of God"* (Rom 8:14, 19; Phil 2:15; 1 John 3:1,2).
- ➔ Those who are *"begotten of God"* (1 John 5:18).
- ➔ Those who are *"begotten again"* (1 Pet 1:23).
- ➔ *"The household of God"* (Eph 2:19).
- ➔ Christ's *"house"* (Heb 3:6).
- ➔ *"The whole family in heaven and*

Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah" (Gen 25:2), and Isaac's son Esau (Gen 36:15ff), these were not technically the *"people"* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **That term, as used in this text, refers to the *"people"* to whom the Law was given, and among whom Jesus the Savior was born (Rom 9:4-5).**

Up to this text, the significant people of the world, as God counts significance, came from Seth (Gen 4:25; 5:3; Lk 3:38), Shem (Gen 9:26,27; Lk 3:36), Abraham (Gen 17:9), Isaac (Gen 17:19), and, now, Jacob (Gen 18:4). This reality confirms the

12).

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW COVENANT

These days media minister and those promoting "Jewish Roots," are teaching the people that the promises made under the Old Covenant are applicable to those who are in Christ Jesus—i.e. Deuteronomy 28:1-14. **These false teachers conveniently overlook the revealed stipulation for realizing those promises:**

➔ *"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth."* (Deut 28:1)

➔ *"And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them: And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them."* (Deut 28:13-14)

Of course, this was the nature of the Old Covenant, which was a bilateral covenant wholly dependent upon the flawless and interrupted obedience of the people. A single failure voided the covenant, just as surely as a single sin cost Adam and Eve their right to the tree of life.

In a covenant like that given to Israel, all of the promises, without a single exception, had to do with life in this world. In fact, with the single exception of all of the families of the earth being blessed by Abraham's *"seed"* (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14), that was the nature of all of the blessings promised to him – *"land"* (Gen 12:7; 15:7,18; 24:7; ; 26:3), and the multiplication of *"seed"* (Gen 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4,24; 28:14).

While it is true that the salvation God impacts directly upon human conduct, it is not contained therein. When what takes place outwardly becomes the emphasis, ones theology will become skewed and ineffective.

earth" (Eph 3:15).

None of these suggest salvational identity with God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son is through fleshly ties. That is precisely why, unlike Israel, we do not serve God through a system of *"carnal ordinances"* (Col 2:20; Heb 9:10). **While it is true that the salvation God impacts directly upon human conduct, it is not contained therein.** When what takes place outwardly becomes the emphasis, ones theology will become skewed and ineffective.

MULTIPLY THEE THAT THOU MAYEST BE A MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE
" and multiply thee that thou mayest be a multitude of people."

The point of this multiplication was the increase of the same kind of people, not simply an abundance of fundamentally different people. Although a differing kind of people came from Abraham's sons, Ishmael (Gen 16:16), Zimran, Jokshan, Medan,

fact of Divine choice or selection.

An emphasis was placed upon fleshly generation up to the birth of Jesus. At that point, the genealogy of the people of God ceased to be according to the flesh. Matthew's genealogy concludes with the words, *"And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ"* (Matt 1:16). Luke traces the genealogy from Jesus back to Adam, beginning with the words *"And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli"* (Luke 3:23).

The people now became a spiritual people, begotten of God (1 John 5:18), born of God (1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1.4.18), and a *"new creation"* (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:10) – *"born again"* (1 Pet 1:23), or *"born of the Spirit"* (John 3:6,8). **They are the spiritual children of Jesus, being given to Him by the Father Himself** (Heb 2:13; John 10:29; 17:6-

The New Covenant, of which Jesus is the exclusive Mediator, is of another order. Its blessings are of a different kind.

- ➔ God puts His laws into the mind of the people (Heb 8:8a).
- ➔ God writes His laws upon the minds of the people (Heb 8:8b).
- ➔ God will be the God of the people by choice and preference (Heb 8:8c).
- ➔ The people will be God's in a unique way (Heb 8:8d; 1 Pet 2:9).
- ➔ There will be no need to teach the constituents of the covenant to know God, for they will all know Him (Heb 8:11).
- ➔ God would be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and remember their sins no more (Heb 8:12). This is contrasted with the Lord's continual remembrance of Israel's sins (Ex 32:9; Num 14:22,23; Deut 9:13; Neh 9:26; Judges 2:12,13; 3:7; Psa 78:11,18,41,56; 106:13,21; Jer 31:32; Hosea 2:13; Heb 8:9).
- ➔ The people would be cleansed from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).
- ➔ The people would be *"justified from all things"* (Acts 13:39).
- ➔ Righteousness would be imputed to

This is sufficient to confirm the superiority of the New Covenant, which is a "better covenant which was established upon better promises." It is a superior covenant that has promises of a differing nature than those given to those before Christ.

- the people, and sin would not be imputed to them (Rom 4:8,22-24).
- ➔ The people would receive eternal life (John 3:15; 20:28; 1 John 5:13).
- ➔ The people would be reconciled unto God (Rom 5:10; Col 1:21).
- ➔ The people would be given a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek 36:26).
- ➔ The people have access to God (Rom 5:2; Eph 2:13).
- ➔ The people are washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor 6:11).
- ➔ The conscience is purged from dead works (Heb 9:14).
- ➔ The people have peace with God (Rom 5:1).
- ➔ The people are being brought to God, as compared with being brought to a land (1 Pet 3:18).
- ➔ The people have the promise of

glorification and ever being with the Lord (Rom 8:29-30; 1 Thee 4:17).

- ➔ The people are made *"partakers of Christ"* (Heb 3:14), and *"partakers of the Divine nature"* (2 Pet 1:4).
- ➔ The people receive *"the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:38; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; 1 Thess 4:8; 1 John 3:24).
- ➔ Christ dwells within the people (Eph 3:16-17).
- ➔ The Father and the Son make their abode in the people (John 14:23).
- ➔ The people have the promise of immortality (1 Cor 15:53,54).

This is sufficient to confirm the superiority of the New Covenant, which is a "better covenant which was established upon better promises" (Heb 8:6). It is a superior covenant that has promises of a differing nature than those given to those before Christ. It does not blend with the Old Covenant.

GIVE THEE THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM

"⁴ And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham."

THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM

"And give thee the blessing of Abraham . . ." Other versions read, "the blessing given to Abraham," NIV "the blessing which he gave Abraham," CJB "the blessings he promised to

Abraham," NLT and "the mighty blessings promised to Abraham." LIVING

What was *"the blessing of Abraham?"*

- ➔ *"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee,*

and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen 12:1-3)

- ➔ *"And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he*

believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness. And He said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it." (Gen 15:5-7)

➡ *"And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."* (Gen 17:6-8)

➡ *"That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."* (Gen 22:18)

➡ In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

➡ Thy seed shall be as numerous as the stars of heaven.

➡ I will make thee exceeding fruitful.

➡ I will make nations of thee.

➡ Kings shall come out of thee.

➡ I will establish My covenant between Me and thee, and thy seed.

➡ I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed.

➡ I will give unto thee and thy seed the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession.

➡ In blessing I will bless thee.

➡ In multiplying I will multiply thee.

➡ Thy seed shall be as the sand on the sea shore.

➡ Thy seed shall possess the gate of

being passed along to another. In the case of Isaac and Jacob, the blessing was owing to Abraham. The posterity of Jacob, the twelve tribes, were blessed because of their fathers – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In our case, of course, we are blessed because of Jesus Christ, the single **"Man"** whom God has established as the sole means by which men can be blessed. This is the nature of God's salvation.

THAT THOU MAYEST INHERIT THE LAND

" . . . to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger . . ."

Again, the *"land,"* or real estate, is emphasized, recalling that it had not yet been given to Abraham and his seed as a present possession. In fact, both Isaac and Jacob, together with father Abraham, were *"strangers"* in the land that had been given to them. **That is, they had no permanent dwelling there, and owned no area in which to live.**

The letter to the Hebrews makes a point of their status as *"strangers."* *"Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and **CONFESSED that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.** For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country" (Heb 11:12-14).*

WHICH GOD GAVE TO ABRAHAM

" . . . which God gave unto Abraham."

Actually, the land was given to Abraham **by promise:** *"unto thy seed WILL I GIVE this land . . . For all the land which thou seest, to thee WILL I*

While these promises were vastly inferior to the ones that are now received in Christ Jesus, they introduced men to the reality of a blessing being given to one person being passed along to another.

Briefly summarized, these are the various components of the blessing given to Abraham.

➡ I will make of thee a great nation.

➡ I will bless thee and make thy name great.

➡ Thou shalt be a blessing.

➡ I will bless them that bless thee.

➡ I will curse them that curse thee.

his enemies.

➡ In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.

The magnitude of *"the blessing of Abraham"* is staggering!

They Were Introductory

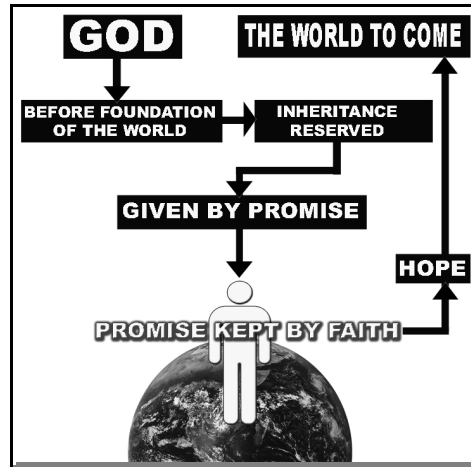
While these promises were vastly inferior to the ones that are now received in Christ Jesus, **they introduced men to the reality of a blessing being given to one person**

GIVE it, and to thy seed for ever . . . I WILL GIVE it unto thee . . . "And He said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, TO GIVE thee this land to inherit it . . . "I WILL GIVE unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan . . . "Unto thy seed WILL I GIVE THIS LAND . . . "for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I WILL GIVE all these countries . . ." (Gen 12:7;13:15,17; 17:8; 24:7; 26:3).

Stephen said of this matter, "Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. **And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child**" (Acts 7:4-5).

If men judge according to appearance, they will conclude that the promises made to the fathers were all in vain. However, such conclusions are wrong, for God cannot lie, and is faithful to His promises – without fail. As it is written, "He is faithful that

promised."



When a person lives by faith, he is driven by hope, not by sight. This is the nature of God's dealings with His people who remain in this world, having a treasure in an earthen vessel (2 Cor 4:7). **The truth of the matter is that what God has, from the foundation of the world, desired to give men, cannot be contained in a perishing world, or experientially owned by someone in a dying body.** The Lord therefore delivers promises of His intention to His people, and calls upon them to live by faith until they come into their inheritance – and

that very faith is "obtained" from Him (2 Pet 1:1).

In our time, the fundamental nature of man's relationship to God has been greatly garbled. This is largely owing to the spirit of covetousness that has gripped the nominal church – and covetousness "is idolatry" (Col 3:5). Polished religious professionals, claiming to be "Christians," are becoming wealthy by their offerings to the Christian world. Their professed ministries appear to blend in well with this present evil world. Three times Jesus said of those who appeared to be satisfied with worldly recognition, "They have their reward" (Matt 6:2,5,16).

This could not be said of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They accepted their status in this world as strangers and pilgrims. Along with other believers they "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb 11:10), and desired "a better country, that is, an heavenly." For this reason, "God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb 11:16). That is the manner of God's dealings with His people, and it continues to this very day.

ISAAC SENT AWAY JACOB

⁵ **And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother."**

ISAAC SENT AWAY JACOB

"And Isaac sent away Jacob . . ." Other versions read, "Isaac sent Jacob on his way," ^{NAB} "Then Isaac sent Jacob off," ^{TNK} and "Isaac sent Jacob away to Mesopotamia." ^{GNB}

Sanctified Conclusions

There is no record that indicates, or even suggests, that God told either Rebekah or Isaac to send Jacob to Laban's house. **This was a sanctified conclusion they drew from the facts**

that they knew – facts that had been revealed by God.

- ➔ God had repeatedly made the point that the land of Canaan was promised to Abraham and his "seed" (Gen 12:7; 13:15; 15:13,18; 17:8; 26:3).
- ➔ Abraham would be "exceeding fruitful" (Gen 17:6).
- ➔ God had promised a multitude of seed to Abraham (Gen 13:16; 15:5; 22:17).
- ➔ A "mighty nation" would come from Abraham (Gen 18:18)

➔ God had promised "nations" would come from Abraham (Gen 17:4-6).

➔ God had revealed that the "seed" of Abraham would be selective, chosen and approved by Him (Gen 17:19; 21:12; 25:23).

Reasoning upon these revelations, Abraham concluded his "seed" could not be the result of the admixture of those who knew God and those who did not. He therefore sent his servant to find a bride for Isaac from among his own people (Gen 24).

Now both Rebekah and Isaac reason in the same manner, sending Jacob to Abraham's brethren to obtain

a wife.

The Need for Godly Reasoning

In the last few decades an era has been introduced in which professing Christians, and their leaders, are not noted for sound reasoning. All manner of erroneous views have been developed and perpetrated concerning God, Christ, salvation, the coming of the Lord, the purpose for living, holiness, etc. The reason for the introduction of these heresies is that most professing “Christians” cannot think correctly. They cannot draw proper conclusions. They have to be taught and coddled like little children who cannot think or reason in an acceptable manner. The reason for this condition can be traced to the pulpits, religious media, religious schools, and religious writings of our time. The general message that is going out to the public simply does not allow for right thinking and proper conclusions.

When one ponders the extremely limited revelation that was given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, together with the staggering plentitude of revelation that has taken place in Jesus Christ, the seriousness of the condition of Christendom becomes apparent.

AND HE WENT TO PADANARAM

“ . . . and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob’s and Esau’s mother.”

The details of this statement reflect the precision of the thoughts that drove the commandment delivered to Jacob.

- ➡ A particular place: **Padanaram**.
- ➡ The dwelling of a particular person: **Laban, the son of Bethuel**.
- ➡ The father of Laban was a particular person: **Bethuel the Syrian**.
- ➡ The identity of Laban was specific: the brother of **Rebekah**.
- ➡ The identity of the sister of Laban was specific: **Rebekah, Jacob’s and**

Esau’s mother.

There is a total absence of generalities. The directions were pointed, specific, and without any ambiguity.

go to the house of Laban, he obeys (Gen 28:7).

There is no record of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob disobeying God, or failing to do what was commanded of

Commencing with Noah, there has been an accent on the obedience of those who were called by God. As regards Abraham, every time God’s word was believed, obedience followed in its wake.

OBEDIENCE IS SEEN

Commencing with Noah, there has been an accent on the obedience of those who were called by God. **As regards Abraham, every time God’s word was believed, obedience followed in its wake.**

- ➡ When Abraham was called to leave Ur of the Chaldees, he obeyed (Heb 11:8).
- ➡ When Abraham was commanded to walk through the land, he obeyed (Gen 13:17; 20:1).
- ➡ When Abraham was commanded to circumcise all of the males in his household, he obeyed (Gen 17:11-27).
- ➡ When Abraham was commanded to cast out Hagar and Ishmael, he obeyed (Gen 21:12-14).
- ➡ When Abraham was commanded to offer Isaac as a burnt offering to God, he immediately set out to obey (Gen 22:1-19).
- ➡ When Isaac was commanded to not go down into Egypt, he obeyed (Gen 26:2-6).
- ➡ When Isaac was commanded to remain in the land, he obeyed ((Gen 26:2-6).
- ➡ Now, when Jacob is commanded to

them. Whenever God addressed them, they listened; and whenever He commanded them, they obeyed.

OBEDIENCE IS THE MANNER OF THE KINGDOM

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, UNTO OBEDIENCE and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” (1 Pet 1:2).

Here is a not-so-popular description of the people of God.

- ➡ They are appropriately called *“elect.”* Their election was *“according to the foreknowledge of God.”*
- ➡ Their election was implemented *“through the sanctification of the Spirit.”*
- ➡ That sanctification culminated in *“obedience”* on their part, and the *“sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”* on God’s part.

I am painfully aware of the fact that such statements impinge upon some cherished theological views, but we are dealing with a *“thus saith the Lord.”* Unless the Lord speaks with a forked tongue, the words mean precisely what they have said. **The reactions men have to them really have no influence upon them at all.** Even after the heavens and earth have

passed away, these words will remain (Matt 24:35).

Obedience is the manner of the Kingdom. It was required before the Law (Gen 17:19), during the time of the Old Covenant (Deut 13:4), and, now, during the administration of the New Covenant (Acts 5:32; Heb 5:9). **Not obeying always puts one under the judgment and curse of the Almighty** (2 Thess 1:8; 1 Pet 4:17). *“Disobedience”* is a mark of those in whom Satan is working (Eph 2:2), and the wrath of God will come upon those so characterized (Eph 5:6; Col 3:6).

All of this is made clear by the example of faithful men that is given in

Scripture, the teaching of Jesus, and the teaching of the apostles. Yet, in spite of such overwhelming confirmation, men have invented doctrines that tend to excuse disobedience, saying it will result in nothing more than the loss of a few rewards. **Such doctrines reveal hearts that are neither honest nor good.** The creators of such teachings have only confirmed Satan is working in them.

All of this is made clear by:

- ➡ The example of faithful men given in Scripture.
- ➡ The teaching of the Law.
- ➡ The testimony of the Prophets.

➡ The teaching of Jesus.

➡ The teaching of the apostles.

Yet, in spite of such overwhelming confirmation, men have invented doctrines that tend to excuse disobedience, saying it will result in nothing more than the loss of a few rewards. **Such doctrines reveal hearts that are neither honest nor good.** The creators of such teachings have only confirmed Satan is working in them.

Let it be clear that any profitable involvement with the God of heaven is always attended by very precise and consistent obedience among those approved by Him.

ESAU SAW AND HEARD

“⁶ When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; ⁷ And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram.”

We know that principalities and powers in heavenly places (Eph 3:9-11), together with holy angels (Heb 1:13-14; 1 Cor 11:10; Dan 12:1), and the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb 12:1-2; Rev 6:9-10), **behold what is taking place upon the earth – particularly as it regards the execution of God’s will.** However, as confirmed by this text, the wicked often take note of the activities of the children of God as well.

- ➡ Jesus spoke of men seeing the good works of His children (Matt 5:16).
- ➡ Unbelieving husbands beholding the chaste manner of their believing wives (1 Pet 3:1).
- ➡ Those who speak evil of the saints beholding their good manner of life (1 Pet 2:12; 3:16).

➡ Mature people beholding the manner in which young believers conduct their lives (1 Tim 4:12).

➡ Satan was aware of how godly Job lived (Job 1:8-10).

➡ Satan knew of Peter, and sought to sift him (Lk 22:31-32).

It is good for us to remember how we are on display to personalities in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. How true it is, *“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself”* (Rom 14:7).

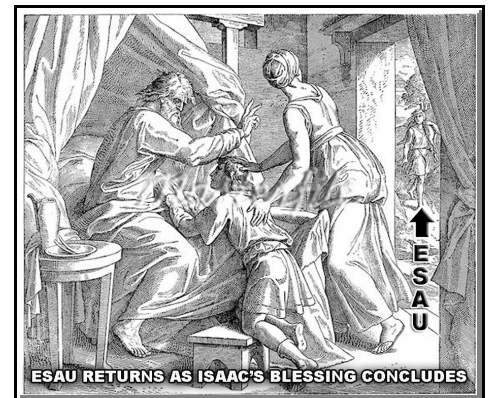
Now we will see that Esau is aware of what has taken place. He will respond in accordance with his depraved nature.

WHEN ESAU SAW

“When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence . . .”

The text suggests that Esau was close-at-hand, so that he at least saw what had just taken place. The other alternative is that someone told him what had taken place. However, the

language suggests his personal knowledge of what had just taken



place. He **saw** that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and then sent him away to obtain a wife.

AND THAT AS HE BLESSED HIM

“ . . . and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan . . .”

Esau also saw that **as** Isaac had blessed Jacob, he gave him a charge **NOT** to take a wife from the daughters of Canaan – which is precisely what Esau had already done.

This suggests that although Esau was raised in the same household as Jacob, he had not paid much attention to the faith of his father and mother, or the manner in which they had lived and made their choices. Now. However, because he is seeking some personal advantage, he pays attention to what is going on in the household. It is not that Esau had any personal interest in the God of Isaac and Jacob, he was only

seeking his own selfish interests.

AND THAT JACOB OBEYED HIS FATHER AND MOTHER

" . . . And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram."

Esau also took note of the obedience of Jacob, how that he *"obeyed his father and his mother, and*

was gone to Padanaram." Precisely how this impacted upon the thinking of Esau is not the subject of extensive commentary by the Holy Spirit. **However, enough will be said to confirm the sharp distinction between the character of Esau, and that of Jacob, his twin brother.** Esau will clearly be seen as a type of the flesh, while, in this case, Jacob depicted the nature of those who believe God.

ESAU TAKES ANOTHER WIFE

" 8 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; 9 Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife."

SEEING THE DAUGHTERS OF CANAAN PLEASD NOT ISAAC HIS FATHER

"And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father . . ."

daughters of Canaan (Gen 26:34-35). However, being a *"profane person,"* or *"godless person,"* ^{NASB} Esau did not note things unless he saw they impacted directly upon him. When he first chose to marry heathen women, he was apparently oblivious to the grief it caused his parents. Now, however, circumstances had changed, and he was no longer the heir.

The Nature of the Flesh

Because of its preference for self, *"the flesh,"* the chief expression of

his dwelling in what would later be called *"Edom"* (Gen 32:3; 36:8).

So it is with all who are dominated by *"the flesh"* or nature that can be traced back to Adam. As it is written, *"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit"* (Rom 8:5). **Their disinterest in the things of God is a matter of preference.** Like the foolish virgins, they have no prevailing interest in preparing appropriately for the coming of the Lord. They only obtain interest when they see that He is at hand, and they are not prepared.

Because of the nature of the flesh, it is said of those who live under its domination, *"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God"* (Rom 8:8). **They do not make proper choices because they "cannot" do so.** They are under the dominion of *"the law of sin and death,"* and can by no means break loose from it (Rom 8:2).

THEN WENT ESAU UNTO ISHMAEL

" . . . Then went Esau unto Ishmael . . ."

I suppose that Esau felt he was doing something that would please his father – going to Ishmael. He did not live in Canaan, and his daughters could certainly not be described as *"daughters of Canaan."* In addition to that, Ishmael was one of Abraham's sons – his fact, the first one that he had, like Esau was the first son born to Rebekah. Surely his

So far as practicality is concerned, the "carnal mind" does not take note of Divine warning signals, or spiritual advantages that may be announced.

Esau obviously deduced this from Isaac's statement, *"Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan"* (Gen 28:1). It is also stated in verse six that Esau especially noted that *"AS"* Isaac *"had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan"* (Gen 28:6). I gather from this that he perceived this with special and painstaking clarity, **even though he should have understood this thirty years earlier, when he married two of the**

which is *"the carnal mind,"* is set in opposition to God. Thus it is written, *"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"* (Rom 8:7). **So far as practicality is concerned, the "carnal mind" does not take note of Divine warning signals, or spiritual advantages that may be announced.** For example, Isaac and Jacob thought of Canaan as the promised land, given to them and their seed. However, this is not at all the way Esau viewed it. His mind would not let him do so, but drove him to make

daughters would be acceptable to Isaac, for Ishmael was his half-brother. **I am not sure that Esau was seeking to obtain the favor of Isaac by going to Ishmael, but I certainly do see this as a possibility.**

The Manner of the Flesh

If a person accepts the premise that Esau is a type of the flesh (Heb 12:14-17), while Ishmael, with his mother Hagar is a type of the Law (Gal 4:24-25), **we have here an excellent picture of religious flesh gravitating to a system of law.** The more a religious person is dominated by the carnal; mind, the more of a preference for law and regimentation is entertained. It may be approaching the Word of God from the viewpoint of Law, or adopting systems of regimentation that men have created. **This is because those who think after the flesh are convinced that sin can be managed, and control of aberrant behavior is accomplished by routine.**

HE TOOK MAHALATH AS HIS WIFE

" . . . and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife."

Having gone to the offspring of Ishmael (for Ishmael had died earlier at the age of one hundred and thirty-seven (Gen 25:17). If our estimate of Isaac's age at this time (130-137) is correct, Ishmael would have died at least thirteen years earlier, for he was circumcised at the age thirteen prior to Isaac's birth (Gen 17:25).

Therefore, the phrase *"Then went Esau unto Ishmael,"* means that he went to Ishmael's progeny. **Here again, the progenitor stands for his progeny** – all who came from him. In the case of the elect – like Abraham and Isaac – the progeny were appointed: Isaac over Ishmael, and Jacob over Esau.

IN SALVATION

When it comes to salvation, this same rule is applied. Jesus is counted with all His seed. Those who are with him, and reckoned as belonging to him. This kind of reasoning is reflected in the

statement, *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"* (Gal 3:29).

The Woman Esau Took As His Wife

As soon as men begin to think of the things of God naturally, or after the flesh, they are instantly wrong.

The woman Esau took to be his wife was *"Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son."* She was also called *"Bashermath"* (Gen 36:3), and eventually gave birth to Ruel (Gen 36:10), whose sons were dukes, or chiefs (Gen 36:17). It is also written that Ruel was *"Esau's Son"* (Gen 36:17). ***"Nebajoth," Mahalath's brother, was the firstborn son of Ishmael*** (Gen 25:13).

The Mindset of the Flesh

In going to Ishmael's household to obtain a wife, Esau probably thought he would be pleasing his father. Even though it would have been a vain thought, he might even have entertained the motion that this would move Isaac to change his mind about the blessing.

In matters pertaining to God, it is not that the flesh simply does not think correctly. Rather, it is that it **cannot** think correctly. They that are in the flesh *"cannot I please God"* (Rom 8:8). This is because *"the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"* (Rom 8:7). The unmitigated declaration of the Holy Spirit is, *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die"* (Rom 8:13) – and that is just as sure as the solemn warning received by Adam: *"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"* (Gen 2:17).

As soon as men begin to think of the things of God naturally, or after the flesh, they are instantly wrong. If they come up with a carnal explanation of

"evangelism," they are wrong. If they conceive, what they consider to be, an excellent way to control human behavior, **they are wrong.** If they create a new and seemingLY effective way to

produce preachers and church leaders, **they are wrong.** If they publish a manual concerning marriage and raising children, **they are wrong.** If they construct a special way of considering the coming of the Lord, piecing together Scripture, and sprinkling it with human wisdom, **they are wrong.** Therefore, detecting what is *"of the flesh"* greatly assists us in determining what is true.

Such efforts can no more please God that Esau taking *"unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife"* (Gen 28:9), could have please Isaac.

To this very day, there remain people like Esau who imagine they can be pleasing by doing something that looks religious – like Esau taking a wife from a son of Abraham, yet was one who had been rejected. Perhaps they can seek to obtain something that is located close to what God accepts – like Edom being relatively close to Canaan. However, all such efforts are vain, and will in no wise be accepted by God. Whoever lives according to the flesh is not in any way acceptable to God.

I do not believe the above postulate is acceptable in the nominal church. It simply is making too many alliances with the world, and, in so doing, is forging an unequal yoke. Should they continue in this practice they must know that God not only rejects what they are doing, but will not in any sense accept them. This is made clear in Second Corinthians 6:17. **Acceptance by God requires separation.**

CONCLUSION

Commencing with the twelfth chapter of Genesis, we are being exposed to the particular working out of God's eternal purpose. In the first eleven chapters we have been acquainted with the nature of God, which is more fully revealed in the development and execution of His eternal purpose. Some of the preparations include the following.

- ➡ The preparation of an orderly and governed environment in which God would begin developing His purpose.
- ➡ Setting certain divisions in motion that would be essential for the fulfillment of His purpose: separating light from darkness, and upper from lower.
- ➡ Establishing that sin was in no way acceptable, by driving Adam and Eve from the Garden.
- ➡ Hope was established following the devastating fall in the Garden. A promise was spoken that brought anticipation, when all expectation had been dashed to the ground.
- ➡ Establishing that one can stand for the many – the progenitor for all of the progeny. This was seen in Adam and the impact of what he did upon the human race.
- ➡ Establishing the priority of grace, which Noah found in the eyes of the Lord.
- ➡ Confirmation of the necessity of

purging by the judgment of the flood, and the elimination of Cain's generation.

- ➡ The unacceptability of projects conceived and carried out by men, by terminating the building efforts in the plain of Shinar.
- ➡ That God speaks to men, informing and directing them. This is seen in Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- ➡ That any involvement with God is preceded by Him initiating a call, as in the calling of Abraham.
- ➡ That God can prohibit men from doing certain things, as demonstrated in Pharaoh and Abimelech.
- ➡ That God does not fulfill His purpose through people who are naturally capable. This was seen in the choosing of an impotent man and a barren woman to commence the building of a nation through whom the Messiah would come.
- ➡ Establishing the priority of believing, as seen in the imputation of righteousness to Abraham because he believed.
- ➡ Confirming Divine discrimination is used in fulfilling God's purpose: Abraham chosen over Haran and Nahor; Isaac over Ishmael; and Jacob over Esau.

➡ That God directs and leads those He calls: –i.e. Noah building the arch; Abraham going to Canaan; the handling of Hagar and Ishmael; finding a wife for Isaac, etc.

➡ That there is Divine enablement that surpasses human wisdom and ability:– i.e. Noah building the ark; Abraham and 318 servants defeating four kings and their armies; the protection of Abraham and Sarah.

➡ That all things are possible with God, as confirmed in the saving of Noah and his household, and the births of Isaac and Jacob.

Over and above all of these things, we bare beginning to see the emergence of a hitherto secret purpose. A nation is beginning to develop that could not possibly have been developed naturally.

To this point in the book of Genesis, God is developing a people who are God-conscious; doing so through calling, direction, and promises. He is confirming that the person who believes God will obey Him – regardless of the demands placed upon him. God's purpose will be carried out among a people who are willing in the day of His power. That purpose will be implemented as He communicates His will chosen people. This, and much more, was lived out in the lives of the patriarchs, and is written for our learning.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 11/30/12. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The forty-seventh lesson will cover verses 10 through 22 of chapter twenty-eight: "JACOB DREAMS A DREAM." Jacob leaves Beersheba and journeyed toward Haran. He tarried all night in a certain place, and there had the well-known dream of a ladder set up on earth, and reaching into heaven. After being exposed to the heavenly manner of government, Jacob awakens, confesses he has been in the house of God and the gate of heaven. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

PARTICIPATING BROTHERS AND SISTERS

A DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES DURING OUR GATHERINGS

"Openings and Introductions" = 7-10 minute exposition of truth to promote spiritual focus; "Lead Singing" – AM Songs selected by Leader, PM Songs Lead in favorites by the brethren; "Calling" = 7-10 minute exposition of truth designed to provoke disciplined thought; "Sermon" = 45 minute exposition of the things of God as revealed in Scripture; "Exhortation" = 5-8 minute challenge to act upon the truth we have heard; "Table Meditation" = 8-12 minute exposition of matters relating to Christ's role in salvation; "Lead Scripture shower" = Leading of the quoting/reading of Scripture without comment; "Lead prayer session" = Presentation of three matters for prayer that are taken from the Word of God; "Lead Intercessory Prayer" = A time of focused prayers for personal needs; "Closing Scripture/Benediction" – Closing of the AM Gathering

SPEAKING/LEADING/MINISTERING IN THE ASSEMBLY

The Word of Truth Fellowship, Joplin, MO

DURING OCTOBER, 2012

1. *Blakely, Benjamin* (Lead Scripture Shower).
2. *Blakely, Given O.* (PM Sermon, PM Table Meditation).
3. *Blakely, Jonathan* (AM Opening Word, AM Table Meditation, PM Sermon).
4. *Blakely, June* (Lead PM Prayer Session, Lead AM Singing, Teach AM Class).
5. *Blakely, Mattie* (AM Calling, Lead PM Singing).
6. *Blakely, Michael* (Teach AM Class, AM Exhortation, PM Exhortation, PM Sermon).
7. *Blakely, Michele* (Play Piano, Lead Scripture Shower).
8. *Blakely, Paul* (Lead Scripture Shower).
9. *Cobb, Matthew* (AM Table Meditation, AM Sermon, PM Introduction).
10. *Cobb, Nicole* (Lead Scripture Shower).
11. *Cobb, Robert* (AM Calling, AM Exhortation, Teach AM Class, Lead PM Singing, PM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation).
12. *Dill, Sarah* (Read AM Sermon Text)
13. *Hutchcraft, Aaron* (AM Exhortation, AM Sermon, PM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation).
14. *Hutchcraft, Barbara* (Lead PM Singing, PM Introduction).
15. *Hutchcraft, Debbie* (Lead AM Singing).
16. *Hutchcraft, Gene* (Lead PM Intercessory Prayer, AM Table

- Meditation, PM Exhortation, PM Sermon).
17. *Hutchcraft, Judah* (Closing Scripture/Benediction, Play piano During Lord's Supper, Read PM Sermon Text; Piano Solo for PM Sermon, Read PM Sermon Text).
 18. *Hutchcraft, Silas* (Read AM Sermon Text).
 19. *Parker, Melissa* (AM Opening Word, Lead PM Singing).
 20. *Parker, Tony* (AM Sermon, AM Table Meditation).
 21. *Sims, Annie* (Read AM Sermon Text, Closing Scripture/Benediction).
 22. *Sims, Baylie* (AM Opening Word, Read PM Sermon Text, PM Introduction).
 23. *Sims Girls – Annie, Hannah, Rachel* (Read AM Sermon Text).
 24. *Sims, Hannah* (Closing Scripture/Benediction).
 25. *Sims, Ricky* (AM Sermon, AM Calling, AM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation).
 26. *Sims, Tasha* (Lead AM Singing, PM Introduction).
 27. *Williams, Jeremy* (AM Opening Word, AM Calling).
 28. *Williams, Logan* (Play AM/PM Lord's Table Interlude, Closing Scripture/Benediction, Read PM Sermon Text).
 29. *Williams, Nichole* (Lead AM Singing).
 30. *Preparing Lord's Supper* (Various sisters).

Participation in the assembly is a significant part of the gathering. It is a God-ordained means of edifying the brethren. It also is an appointed means through which personal growth and maturity take place. As it contributes to the unity of the brethren, the entire assembly is strengthened and enabled to do things that can not ordinarily be accomplished by one or only a few of the brethren. Personal involvement also opens the door for the Holy Spirit to work through multiple brethren to produce a broader range of both knowledge and experience. Participation also assists us in working together in the development of perception, aptitude, and a wholesome appreciation for one another. We learn better to express ourselves when we contribute to the edifying of the brethren. Such expression also enhances our own perception of the truth. When we exercise our various gifts, we become better in thinking, speaking, and comprehending. Younger brethren grow up into Christ more readily, and learn to contribute to the edification of the brethren. Those who do not occupy a public or influential station in life can be a profitable contributor, and perhaps even a leader, among the people of God, who are the premier people in the world. We encourage every member of our assembly to verbally contribute in our gatherings, doing so in harmony with their ability and understanding.