

Annotations on Key Verses from the Book of Genesis: (Part Two — Chapters 26 through 50)

compiled and composed by Ed Marks

Gen. 26:12-13: “Isaac sowed in that land and gained in the same year a hundredfold. And Jehovah blessed him, and the man became rich and continued to grow richer until he became very rich.”

The life of Isaac is a picture of how the New Testament believers should enjoy and become rich with the riches of God’s grace. The grace of God is God Himself in Christ with His unsearchable riches for our enjoyment. We have received redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of our offenses, according to the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7). Eventually, God will “display in the ages to come the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (2:7). We need to continually receive the unsearchable riches of Christ as grace upon grace for our continual enjoyment (John 1:16; Eph. 3:8). This is to enjoy being blessed by God the Father with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ (1:3). The normal Christian life is a life of becoming rich with the grace of Christ and continuing to grow richer with grace until we become very rich with grace. This is what it means to be “rich toward God” (Luke 12:21). Then we can increasingly become good stewards of the varied grace of God to be faithful to the stewardship of God’s grace that has been committed to us for dispensing this grace into others (1 Pet. 4:10; Eph. 3:2). The words of grace proceeding out of our mouth from the overflow of the rich grace within us will give grace to those who hear (Luke 4:22; Eph. 4:29).

In order to become rich toward God with the riches of His grace, we need to take care of the condition of our heart so that we can bring forth fruit “a hundredfold” (Luke 8:8). According to the parable of the sower in Matthew 13 and Luke 8, our heart is likened to four different types of soil in which Christ as the seed of life can grow: the hardened soil by the wayside, the soil with hidden rocks, the thorny soil, and the soil that is the good

earth (vv. 4-15). The soil beside the way signifies the heart that is hardened by the traffic of the world. The soil with hidden rocks signifies the heart that is occupied with things such as hidden sins and ambitions, self-seeking, and self-pity, which hinder the seed of life from taking root. The soil with thorns signifies the heart that is filled with the anxieties of the world and occupied with the deceitfulness of riches. The soil that is the good earth signifies the noble and good heart that offers up every bit of its room for Christ as the seed of life to grow in. Such a heart that is the good earth brings forth fruit a hundredfold. In order to bring forth fruit in such a multiplied way, we need to “walk worthily of the Lord to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and growing by the full knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10). To bear fruit from the growth of Christ in our heart is to live Christ, grow Christ, express Christ, and propagate Christ in every respect. To grow by the full knowledge of God is for Christ to continually grow in us by our ever-increasing knowing of Him in a personal and affectionate way in our spirit (Phil. 3:10). It is in this way that we, like Isaac, bring forth fruit a hundredfold and that we are blessed by God to become rich and grow richer until we become very rich with the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Gen. 27:36: “Esau said, Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold now he has taken away my blessing.”

Regarding Esau Hebrews 12:15 and 16 tell us,

Looking carefully lest anyone fall away from the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and through this many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one meal gave up his own birthright.

Esau's birthright as the firstborn son of Isaac was the double portion of the land, the priesthood, and the kingship. Because of Esau's profaneness in giving up his birthright, the double portion of the land was given to Joseph (1 Chron. 5:1-2), the priesthood was passed to Levi (Deut. 33:8-10), and the kingship was assigned to Judah (Gen. 49:10; 1 Chron. 5:2).

We Christians, born of God, are the firstfruits of His creatures (James 1:18) that He has reaped in His creation. In that sense we are the firstborn sons of God. Hence, the church, composed of us, is called the church of the firstborn (Heb. 11:23). As the firstborn sons of God, we have the birthright. This includes the inheritance of the earth (Heb. 2:5-6), the priesthood (Rev. 20:6), and the kingship (Rev. 20:4), which will be the main blessings in the coming kingdom and which the profane, world-loving-and-seeking Christians will lose at the Lord's coming back. Eventually, this birthright will be a reward given to the overcoming Christians in the millennial kingdom. Any worldly enjoyment, even one meal, could cause us to forfeit this birthright of ours. After such a serious warning, if the Hebrew believers had still preferred to indulge in "one meal" of their old religion, they would have missed the full enjoyment of Christ and would have lost the kingdom rest with all its blessings.

Esau was not the only one who lost his birthright (Gen. 25:29-34); Reuben was another who lost the blessing of the birthright (Gen. 49:3-4; 1 Chron. 5:1). Esau lost it because of his lust in eating. Reuben lost it because of the defilement of his lust. Both cases should be warnings to us. The word *lest there be any fornicator* in this verse might have been written with Reuben as the background.

Actually, what we are privileged to enjoy in Christ is the foretaste of the blessings in the coming kingdom. The proper enjoyment of this foretaste will usher us into the full taste of the kingdom blessings. If we do not enjoy Christ today as our good land...how can we enter into His rest in the kingdom and inherit the earth with Him? If we do not exercise our priesthood today to contact Him and prayerfully minister to Him, how can we fulfill our priestly duty in the kingdom? If we do not exercise our spirit with the God-given authority to rule our self, our flesh, our entire being, and the enemy with all his power of darkness today, how can we be Christ's co-kings and rule the nations with Him in His kingdom (Rev. 2:26-27)? Our enjoyment of Christ and the practice of the priesthood and kingship today are the preparation and qualification for our participating in Christ's kingdom tomorrow! (Recovery Version, Heb. 12:16, note 1)

Gen. 28:12: "He dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."

God has a dream, and His dream must be our dream, the dream that Jacob dreamed. When God was incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ, He revealed who the ladder was in Jacob's dream by saying to Nathanael, "You shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man" (John 1:51).

Christ as the Son of Man, in His humanity, is the ladder that brings heaven (God) to earth (man) and joins earth and heaven as one (cf. John 14:6). Our regenerated spirit, which is God's dwelling place today (Eph. 2:22), is the base on earth where Christ as the heavenly ladder has been set up (2 Tim. 4:22). Hence, whenever we turn to our spirit, we experience Christ as the ladder bringing God to us and us to God...Where this ladder is, there are an open heaven, the transformed man, the anointing upon this man, and the building up of the house of God with this man. The issue of Christ as the heavenly ladder is Bethel, the church, the Body of Christ, and the consummation of this ladder is the New Jerusalem. (Recovery Version, Gen. 28:12, note 2)

After Jacob awoke from his dream, he took the stone that he was using for a pillow and raised it up as a pillar. Then he poured oil upon this pillar and declared that the place of his dream was the house of God and the gate of heaven (Gen. 28:11, 17-19, 22). Thus, he named the place Bethel, meaning "house of God" (v. 19). The stone signifies Christ as the living stone (1 Pet. 2:4), the One upon whom we rest and in whom we trust for our experience. Such an experienced Christ constituted into us for our enjoyment is our pillow, our rest (Matt. 11:28). This Christ needs to be raised up to become a pillar anointed with the oil of the Spirit for the house of God. The stone also signifies transformed people, who have been constituted with Christ as the living stone to become living stones for God's building. As living stones for God's building (1 Pet. 2:5), we need to become pillars who are built into God (Rev. 3:12), and we need to be anointed and saturated with the Spirit for our transformation and the constitution of the house of God.

The dream of God is to have the church as the house of the living God with Christ as its centrality and universality (1 Tim. 3:15), and consummately the New Jerusalem as the mutual abode of God and man. God dwells in man, taking man as His dwelling place (His tabernacle, Rev. 21:3), and man dwells in God, taking God as his dwelling place (his temple, v. 22). This manifestation of God to man and the mutual abode of God and man are realized by our loving the Lord. "He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21). "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him" (v. 23). As true believers in Christ, we have the Lord living within us, but we may not be enjoying His manifestation, His living and actual

indwelling person and up-to-date presence. Although we are in Christ and Christ is in us, we still need to experience this mutual indwelling by abiding in Christ to have Christ abide in us through our loving Him (John 15:5; 21:15-17). The way to love Him is to abide in His word so that His words may abide in us (15:7). If we abide in His word in love for Him, we are truly His disciples, and we shall know Him as the truth, and the truth will set us free (8:31-32).

Gen. 29:25: “In the morning there she was, Leah! And he [Jacob] said to Laban, What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?”

Jacob was a crafty supplanter, but Laban was more subtle than Jacob. This was sovereignly arranged by God. Everything Laban did to cheat and to “squeeze” Jacob (Gen. 31:7, 40-42), plus the competition, envy, and wrestling between Jacob’s wives in their bearing children (29:31—30:24), were sovereignly used by God to deal with Jacob’s natural disposition so that God could transform him. Jacob’s history shows that God sovereignly arranges each aspect of the environment of His chosen ones so that He may carry out His work of transformation in them (Rom. 8:28-30). (Recovery Version, Gen. 29:25, note 1)

Even while he was still in his mother’s womb Jacob was striving to be the firstborn. His desire to be first corresponded with God’s intention that he be the one who would receive the birthright. However, like his grandfather Abraham, Jacob exercised his natural ability and his natural strength to fulfill God’s intention and satisfy his desire. Although God had chosen him to be the first, God sovereignly caused Jacob to be born the second so that he might learn that his natural man was altogether unworthy and had to be cut off. Since Jacob’s natural man was not qualified, he needed to be transformed.

The record of Jacob’s life occupies more than half of the book of Genesis. This long record shows us that the purpose of God in His selecting, predestinating, and calling is to transform sinners into royal sons of God who bear God’s image to express Him and exercise God’s dominion to represent Him (cf. 1:26). God destined Jacob to live a struggling life all his days. Furthermore, God sovereignly arranged every circumstance, situation, and person in Jacob’s life and caused them all to work together for Jacob’s good, so that He could transform Jacob, a supplanter and a heel holder, into Israel, a prince of God. In particular, God used Jacob’s family, including his father, his mother, his brother, his uncle, and his wives and children, to deal with Jacob for his transformation. God’s dealing with Jacob is a full picture of the Holy Spirit’s discipline and His transforming work in the New Testament believers. (Recovery Version, Gen. 25:26, note 1)

Gen. 30:27: “Laban said to him, If you please, I have divined that Jehovah has blessed me on account of you.”

Jacob had been chosen by God, and he was under God’s blessing. There was no need for him to play tricks in order to become rich. Since Jacob was under God’s blessing, God granted him His blessing. Apparently, Jacob gained these riches through the success of his trickery; actually, they were given to him by God’s sovereign, blessing hand. In principle, it is the same with us today. We are God’s chosen ones and are under His blessing. There is no need for us to strive or to play tricks in order to get God’s blessing. God will grant us the blessing we need. Nevertheless, after being saved, we all have struggled and played tricks to get the blessing. In many cases it seemed that the blessing did come through our struggling and trickery. Actually, the blessing came through God’s sovereignty. It is the same with everything related to us. We should not think that any blessing has come through our successful endeavors. Rather, we must realize that every blessing, whether spiritual or material, has come through God’s sovereignty...

God blessed Laban because of Jacob (30:27, 30). Through His blessing, God preserved Jacob from Laban’s squeeze (31:7-12, 16, 42). We must bow down, worship God, and learn the lesson not to care for how much we are squeezed by others. As God’s chosen people, we are under His blessing. Although others may squeeze us, we do not need to play tricks on them. The more tricks we play, the more squeezing we shall suffer. But whether or not we play tricks, the blessing will be ours because we are destined for it.

Jacob began to play tricks in his mother’s womb, and he did not stop until he was transformed. Only when we come to the last few chapters of Genesis do we see that Jacob had ceased playing tricks. After Jacob had been transformed into a prince of God, he no longer played any tricks. In like manner, only after we have been fully dealt with and transformed will we stop playing tricks. (Lee, *Genesis* 923-924)

Gen. 31:52: “This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you and that you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm.”

The pillar set up here by Jacob was a witness, a testimony. The thought of a pillar as a testimony is seen also in the two pillars (two is the number for a witness, a testimony—Matt. 18:16; Luke 10:1) set up by Solomon in front of the temple (1 Kings 7:21), and in the church, the house of God, as the pillar that upholds the truth by testifying, manifesting, the truth (1 Tim. 3:15-16). The three pillars set up by Jacob in chs. 31 and 35 were three landmarks of

Jacob's life. (The pillar set up in 28:18 was in response to a dream and was not part of Jacob's spiritual experience; hence, it is not considered a landmark in his life...). The first pillar, set up at Galeed (vv. 45, 47), was a testimony of God's sovereign care for him in the first stage of his experience. The second pillar, set up at Bethel (35:14), was a testimony of God's building, God's house, in the second stage. The third pillar, set up on Rachel's grave on the way to Bethlehem (35:20), was a testimony of the death of Jacob's natural choice for the bringing forth of Christ, typified by Benjamin, in the third stage of his experience. (Recovery Version, Gen. 31:52, note 1)

We all need three pillars, three types of testimonies...Our Christian life must have three sections: the section of God's care, the section of God's house, and the section of the expression of Christ. In the church meetings, the younger ones, those who are newly saved, should testify of God's care. This is a wonderful testimony to hear from babes. But we also need some testimonies regarding God's house and the expression of Christ. If we have these three kinds of testimonies, it will be an indication that in the church we have the pillar of God's care, the pillar of God's house, and the pillar of the expression of Christ.

God's ultimate goal is the expression of Christ. This will cost our natural choice, our natural desire, and our natural life...The pillar erected upon Rachel's grave is on the way to Bethlehem. Thus, this pillar is on the way to Christ, and it directs people to Christ. (Lee, *Genesis* 1176-1177)

Gen. 32:30: "Jacob called the name of that place Peniel, for, he said, I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been preserved."

Peniel means "the face of God." It was when Jacob saw God face to face that he began to be transformed by God into Israel, a prince of God. The Scriptures reveal that we must seek God's face and behold God face to face in order to be transformed into the image of Christ, the firstborn Son of God. The serving supply of the priest in the tabernacle was the bread of the Presence, literally meaning "face-bread" (Exo. 25:30). God's presence, God's face, is our energizing supply, by which we serve Him in our spirit in the gospel of His Son (Rom. 1:9). The priest was to bless God's people with the face and countenance of God by saying, "Jehovah make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; Jehovah lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace" (Num. 6:25-26). Jehovah had such an intimate relationship with Moses that He spoke to him "face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion" (Exo. 33:11). In order to be God's companions, his partners in the divine enterprise of His eternal economy, we must be those with whom God speaks face to face day by day. Moses would not go anywhere without God's presence, God's face. Therefore God promised him, "My presence

[face] shall go with you, and I will give you rest" (v. 14). In David's fellowship with the Lord, he said, "When You say, Seek My face, / To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek" (Psa. 27:8). The Lord's call to us all is to seek His face, and our heart should respond to His call by saying that we will be the ones who seek His face at all times and in all things. "Seek Jehovah and His strength; / Seek His face continually" (105:4). The apostle Paul said that it is by beholding the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6; cf. 3:18) that we are transformed from one degree of glory to another degree into the image of the resurrected and glorified Christ. Paul was one who did everything in the face of Christ, the presence of Christ, the person of Christ (2:10). In the next age we will see our Lord face to face in a full way (1 Cor. 13:12). Eventually, our ultimate blessing in the New Jerusalem will be to see God's face (Rev. 22:4). At that time we will be fully like Him "because we will see Him even as He is" (1 John 3:2).

Gen. 33:4: "Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept."

All Jacob's fears were products of his own worrying, and all he had done in exercising his natural skill and ability to save himself was in vain. God had protected Jacob from Laban by appearing to Laban in a dream (31:24), and He had aroused Esau's brotherly love toward Jacob. These were God's marvelous acts to care for His chosen one. Thus, Jacob, who had God's promises and was on the way to reach God's goal, did not need to fear what was behind him or what was ahead of him. Instead of trusting in his own striving, he should have rested in God and in His all-sufficient care (cf. Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:7). (Recovery Version, Gen. 33:4, note 1)

By loving the Lord, you have the assurance that you are one of the chosen ones. As chosen ones, the Lord's promise, His goal, and His destination are for you. The Lord has charged us all to advance toward the goal, to go on to our Father's land where we can enjoy the riches of the Lord for His eternal purpose. So we simply need to enjoy peace in Him. Do not be bothered by any Labans or Esaus. Whatever happens, simply rest in Him...You do not need to do anything, for actually there is no real trouble either in front of you or behind you. Apparently, there is a great deal of difficulty; actually, because you are God's chosen ones under His all-sufficient care, there is no difficulty at all. You are God's chosen ones assured with His promise and charged with His goal...As long as we are on the way to reach God's goal and as long as we have His promise as chosen ones, everything is all right. (Lee, *Genesis* 956).

Gen. 34:30 and 35:1: "Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, You have brought trouble upon me by making me odious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites

and the Perizzites; and I am few in number, and they will gather themselves together against me and strike me; and I will be destroyed, I and my house...And God said to Jacob, Rise up, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."

At Bethel Jacob had made a vow to God, promising that if God would preserve him and care for him, the stone which he set up for a pillar would be the house of God (28:20-22). Here, God reminded Jacob to fulfill his part of that vow (cf. 31:13). On his return from Paddan-aram, Jacob came to Shechem in the land of Canaan, and he settled there (33:18-20). However, this was short of God's goal. God's purpose, according to His heart's desire is to have Bethel, His house on earth. Thus, it was necessary for Jacob to go on from Shechem to Bethel. All the unfortunate events in ch. 34 were sovereignly used by God to make it impossible for Jacob to remain in Shechem and to prepare Jacob to receive God's charge to go up to Bethel. Jacob's passing through Shechem and going up to Bethel signifies our passing through the individual Christian life and going up to the corporate church life for the building up of God's eternal dwelling place, which is the church today and the New Jerusalem in eternity.

Bethel is a great seed in the Bible, a seed of the house of God. When Israel, the transformed Jacob, was multiplied into the house of Israel, in God's eyes the house of Israel was the house of God...Eventually, the tabernacle and later the temple were built as symbols of the house of Israel as God's dwelling place on the earth in the Old Testament time. In the beginning of the New Testament the Lord Jesus came through incarnation to be the reality of the tabernacle and the temple (John 1:14; 2:18-21). Then, in Matt. 16:18 the Lord prophesied that He would build the church as the habitation, the temple, of God (Eph. 2:22; 1 Cor. 3:16-17) on Himself as the rock and with His believers as stones (1 Cor. 3:11; 1 Pet. 2:5). This is Bethel, the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15). Ultimately, this Bethel will be enlarged to consummate in the New Jerusalem, the eternal tabernacle of God, in which God Himself and the Lamb will be the temple (Rev. 21:3, 22). (Recovery Version, Gen. 35:1, note 1).

Gen. 36:1: "Now these are the generations of Esau (that is, Edom)."

In order to consider the history of the generations of Esau with their country of Edom, we need to consider the book of Obadiah. Verses 10 through 14 speak of the evils of Edom, who was violent against his brother Jacob (v. 10). The nation of Edom was always violent against Israel. Edom also did evil by standing on the side when strangers took his brother's substance captive and when foreigners entered into his brother's gates and cast lots over

Jerusalem, and Edom was like one of them (v. 11). Edom looked to the day of his brother's misfortune, rejoiced concerning the children of Israel in their destruction, and boasted in their distress (v. 12). Edom also entered the gate of Israel, looked on Israel's affliction, and sent forth his hands on their substance in their calamity (v. 13). Edom stood at the crossroads to cut off those of Israel who escaped and delivered them to their enemy in their distress (v. 14). As a result of these evils against Israel, Edom fell under God's judgment and dealing (vv. 1-9).

Verses 17-21 portray the issue of Jehovah's dealing: Jehovah will save the house of Jacob and sanctify them (v. 17a); the house of Jacob will overcome Edom (v. 18) and will possess Edom's possessions (vv. 17b, 19-20); and saviors will come up on Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be Jehovah's (v. 21). All the aforementioned items were fulfilled at the time of the Maccabees, and they will be much more fulfilled in glory at the time of restoration for the kingdom of God (Matt. 19:28; Rev. 11:15). The Maccabees, taking Mount Zion as their ground to judge Edom, gained a victory over Antiochus Epiphanes in about 165 B.C. (Dan. 8:9-14 and notes; Zech. 9:11-17 and notes). The victory of the Maccabees was a type of the victory Israel will gain immediately before the age of restoration.

The Minor Prophets, including Obadiah, reveal that the nations used by God to chastise sinful Israel do things in excess. Therefore, God will come in to judge the nations. This judgment will issue in Israel's gaining the victory and enlarging their territory for the kingdom of God on earth, especially for God's kingdom in the time of restoration. (Recovery Version, Obad. 17, note 1)

Gen. 37:1: "Jacob dwelt in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan."

At this point Jacob was a transformed person, but he was not yet mature. To be transformed is to be metabolically changed in our natural life (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18); to be mature is to be filled with the divine life that changes us. We may be changed in our natural life (transformed) yet not be filled with the divine life (mature). The last stage of transformation is maturity. Jacob's transformation began at the time God touched him [Gen. 32:25], and it continued until the end of ch. 36, when the process of transformation was relatively complete...Genesis 37:1—43:14 is a record of the process of Jacob's maturity.

Genesis shows a complete picture of how human beings can be remade and transformed to express God in His image and represent God with His dominion. This book ends as it begins—with God's image and dominion. The last fourteen chapters indicate that after Jacob had become Israel, he bore the image of God and, through

Joseph, exercised the dominion of God. For God's expression and dominion there is the need of maturity. Only a mature life can bear God's image and exercise His dominion. (Recovery Version, Gen. 37:1, note 1)

In the last fourteen chapters of Genesis the biographies of Jacob and Joseph are blended, indicating that according to spiritual experience, Jacob and Joseph are one person... Joseph is a type of Christ as the One who is altogether perfect, having no defects (Luke 23:4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22). As such, Joseph represents the reigning aspect of the mature Israel, the constitution of Christ in Jacob's mature nature. As a mature saint constituted of Christ, the perfect One, Jacob reigned through Joseph [Gen. 41:39-44]. (Recovery Version, Gen. 37:2, note 1)

Joseph, a "master of dreams" (v. 19), dreamed that according to God's view, His people are sheaves of wheat full of life and heavenly bodies full of light; the reigning aspect of the mature life never condemns God's people but shepherds and appreciates them (vv. 5-11).

Gen. 38:26: "Judah took note of them and said, She is more righteous than I."

Genesis 38 speaks of Judah indulging in lust in contrast to Joseph, who overcame his lust (39:7-12). Furthermore, Judah broke his covenant with Tamar, his daughter-in-law, regarding the birthright, and she deceived him, taking advantage of his lust. Thus, Judah committed incest with her and begot Pharez and Zarah (38:6-30). How evil this was! Despite this evil, Pharez became a part of the line of those in Christ's genealogy to bring Him forth (Matt. 1:3). In this sense, Tamar was more righteous than the covenant-breaking Judah. What a mercy this was!

At the time of delivery, one boy Zarah, tried to come out first, but he did not succeed. He put out his hand, and the midwife marked it with a scarlet thread, indicating that he would be the firstborn. However, Pharez preceded him to be the firstborn. Thus, the first became the last, and the last became the first. The midwife was surprised. This is a good illustration of how to gain the birthright. Pharez inherited the birthright. Man did not choose him, but God sent him. This proves that it is not up to man's endeavoring; it is up to God's choice. The mother's story tells us one side: that we should be anxious for the birthright, trying our best to obtain it; the son's story tells us the other side: that although we may strive to obtain the birthright, it is actually a matter of God's choice, not our efforts (see Rom. 9:11).

I remember a story concerning D. L. Moody. One day a student at his Bible institute said to him, "Mr. Moody, by reading the New Testament I have learned that all the saved ones are the chosen ones, predestinated by God

before the foundation of the world. Now I have a problem. If I preach the gospel and convince people to believe, I may do something wrong and persuade someone whom God has not chosen. What shall I do?" Moody replied, "My son, just go ahead to do your best. As people enter the door, they will see written on the outside, 'Whosoever will may come.' But once they have entered the door, they will look back and see written on the inside, 'Chosen before the foundation of the world.'" Tamar's story means, "Whosoever will may come." Tamar willed and Tamar came. But her son's story means, "Chosen before the foundation of the world." Perhaps you are today's Tamar, striving and laboring to obtain the birthright. But once you gain it, you will look back and see that you were chosen before the foundation of the world. The birthright does not depend on us; it depends on His choice. (Lee, *Matthew* 30-31)

Gen. 39:2: "Jehovah was with Joseph, and he became a prosperous man."

A life such as Joseph's always has the presence of the Lord (39:2-5, 21-23). Wherever the presence of the Lord is, there is authority. If you have the presence of the Lord, the authority of the Lord will be with you. For example, in captivity Daniel had the Lord's presence; therefore, the Lord's authority was with him. Even a child in a family may have the Lord's presence and therefore be the genuine authority in that family. In the case of Joseph, Potiphar, an officer in Pharaoh's palace, was in control of things. Eventually, however, Potiphar was under Joseph's control because Joseph had the Lord's presence. Also consider Joseph's experience in prison. Although there was a ruler over the prison, eventually this ruler was not the actual ruler. Instead, Joseph, a prisoner who had the presence of God, became the ruler. Both in Potiphar's house and in the prison Joseph became king.

Wherever the constitution of Christ goes with the presence of God, there will be the reigning part. In the coming kingdom it will be this part that will be the co-kings with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens. Thus, the reigning aspect of the mature life is a life that always enjoys the presence of the Lord. The authority in this universe is the Lord Himself. Wherever His presence is, there is authority, the ruling power. As long as we have the Lord's presence, we have authority, even if we are in prison. Although we may be prisoners, we shall eventually become rulers. We shall rule wherever we are. This indicates that we are the reigning aspect of the mature life...

In the presence of the Lord, Joseph was prospered by Him (39:2-3, 23). Where the presence of the Lord is, there is not only the Lord's authority, but also prosperity brought about by the Lord's sovereignty. While Joseph

was undergoing ill-treatment, he enjoyed the prosperity that came to him under the Lord's sovereignty...

In the Lord's presence, Joseph was favored with the Lord's blessing wherever he was. The Lord's blessing always accompanies prosperity under His sovereignty. When Joseph enjoyed prosperity, he and those who were involved with him were blessed (39:4-5, 22-23). (Lee, *Genesis* 1429-1430)

Gen. 40:8: "They said to him, We have had a dream, and there is no one to interpret it. And Joseph said to them, Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell it to me."

During his imprisonment...Joseph had the faith and the boldness to interpret the dreams of his two companions in prison even though his dreams were not yet fulfilled (40:8-19)...

I have been engaged in the ministry of the Word for years. I saw certain visions in the early years and I interpreted what I saw. But even many years later the things that I saw and interpreted had not actually happened. When some latecomers needed my help, I wondered what to do. I wondered if I should say something like this: "I had some dreams many years ago, and I was given the interpretation of these dreams. But even until now my dreams have not been fulfilled. Therefore, I don't have the heart, the assurance, or the boldness to interpret your dreams for you. You should go talk to someone else." Joseph was not like this. Although his dreams had not yet been fulfilled, he still had the boldness and the assurance to interpret dreams for others. I can testify that I have done the same thing. I have encouraged others to go on according to the vision they saw, even though my visions had not been fulfilled. Certainly I was right in doing this. All the old-time dreamers must suffer something for the sake of the latecomers.

Andrew Murray once said a word like this: The good minister of the Word should always minister more than what he has experienced. This means that we should speak more according to the vision than according to the fulfillment of the vision. Even if our vision has not been fulfilled, we should still speak of it to others. The time will come when our vision will be fulfilled. Joseph's dreams were eventually fulfilled through his interpretation of the dream of the cupbearer. (Lee, *Genesis* 1437-1439)

Joseph was released from prison indirectly through his speaking by faith in interpreting the cupbearer's dream (41:9-13), and he was ushered to the throne directly through his speaking boldly in interpreting Pharaoh's dreams (vv. 14-46); both release and authority came to him through his speaking. We should not speak according to our feelings but according to the heavenly vision; we are

visionaries, seers, of God's eternal economy, so we should speak according to the absoluteness of the truth of His economy (Acts 26:16-19).

Gen. 41:42: "Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen, and put a gold chain around his neck."

In his receiving glory and gifts in his enthronement, Joseph typifies Christ, who received glory (Heb. 2:9) and gifts (Psa. 68:18; Acts 2:33) in His ascension. The ring, the garments, and the gold chain portray the gifts that Christ received in His ascension to the heavens, which gifts He has passed on to the church. The signet ring signifies the Holy Spirit as a seal within and upon Christ's believers (Acts 2:33; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; cf. Luke 15:22). The garments signify Christ as our objective righteousness for our justification before God (1 Cor. 1:30; cf. Psa. 45:9, 13; Luke 15:22) and as our subjective righteousness lived out of us that we may be qualified to participate in the marriage of the Lamb (Psa. 45:14 and note 1; Rev. 19:7-9 and note 8²). The golden chain signifies the beauty of the Holy Spirit given for obedience expressed in submission (cf. Acts 5:32). A chained neck signifies a will that has been conquered and subdued to obey God's commandment (cf. S. S. 1:10; Prov. 1:8-9). According to the sequence of spiritual experience, we first receive the sealing Spirit for salvation; then we receive the garment of righteousness and begin to live Christ (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:20-21a). In order for us to live Christ, our neck must be chained, our will must be subdued, by the Holy Spirit. (Recovery Version, Gen. 41:42, note 1)

Gen. 42:3: "Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt."

The account of the relationship between Joseph and his brothers in chs. 42—45 is a detailed portrait of the relationship between Christ and the nation of Israel: (1) Just as Joseph's brothers were forced to turn to him for food [42:1-5; 43:1-15], the children of Israel will be forced to turn to Christ to preserve their existence (Zech. 12:10; Rom. 11:26). (2) Just as Joseph's brothers were ignorant of him [Gen. 42:8, 28; 43:32-34; 44:14-34], so the people of Israel are ignorant of who Christ is today. (3) Just as Joseph tested and disciplined his brothers after they were forced to turn to him [42:15-24; 44:1-13], so Christ will test and discipline Israel when they are in the process of turning to Him (Zech. 13:8-9). (4) While Joseph was disciplining his brothers, he loved them and cared for them in a secret way [Gen. 42:25; 43:16, 25-34]; similarly, at the end time Christ will secretly show His love toward Israel and will provide for their needs (cf. Rom. 7:2-8). (5) Just as Joseph eventually acknowledged his ignorant brothers [Gen. 45:1-4, 14-16], Christ will

acknowledge the ignorant nation of Israel (Rom. 11:26). (6) Just as Joseph's brothers eventually recognized him [Gen. 45:15], the Israelites will eventually recognize Christ (Zech. 12:10). (7) Just as Joseph revealed himself in his exaltation and glory to his brothers [Gen. 45:1, 8, 13], Christ will reveal Himself in His exaltation and glory to the remnant of Israel (Micah 5:3-4; Matt. 24:30). (8) Joseph's brothers participated in the enjoyment of his reign, and Joseph took special care of them as God's testimony on earth [Gen. 45:16-24; 47:11-12; 50:21]; likewise, in the millennium Israel will participate in the enjoyment of Christ's reign, and Christ will care in a special way for Israel as God's testimony among the nations (Isa. 2:2-3; 61:6; Zech. 8:23; 14:16-19). (Recovery Version, Gen. 42:3, note 1)

Gen. 43:30-31: "Joseph hurried—for his inward parts burned for his brother—and sought a place to weep. So he entered into his chamber and wept there. Then he washed his face and came out, and he controlled himself and said, Serve the meal."

The record of Joseph's life is a revelation of the rulership of the Spirit, for the rulership of the Spirit is the reigning aspect of a mature saint. The rulership of the Spirit (a life of reigning in life, being under the restriction and limitation of the divine life in the reality of God's kingdom), is higher than any other aspect of the Spirit (Rom. 5:17, 21; 14:17-18; cf. 2 Cor. 3:17-18; 2 Tim. 4:22; Rev. 4:1-3). Although he was full of human feelings and sentiments toward his brothers, Joseph kept himself with all his feelings under the rulership of the Spirit; he dealt with his brothers soberly, wisely, and with discernment, disciplining them according to their need in order to perfect them and build them up so that they might be a collective people living together as God's testimony on earth (Gen. 42:9, 24; 43:30-31; 45:1-2, 24). Joseph denied himself and placed himself absolutely under God's sovereign leading, conducting himself wholly for the interest of God and His people. His living under God's restriction, a portrait of the human living of Christ, manifested the maturity and perfection of the divine life and brought in God's kingdom (John 5:19, 30; 7:16, 18; 14:10; Matt. 8:9-10). In Joseph's dealings with his brothers, we see that he lived a calm life, a sober life, and a discerning life—a self-denying life as the practice of the kingdom life (2 Chron. 1:10; Isa. 30:15; Phil. 1:9; 1 Tim. 5:1-2). His sentiments, feelings, considerations, and preferences were absolutely under the rulership and control of the Spirit (Prov. 16:32). The golden chain around Joseph's neck signifies the beauty of the Holy Spirit in our obedience expressed in our willing submission to the Lord; Joseph's reigning life shows that in order for us to live Christ, our neck must be chained, our will must be conquered and subdued, by the Holy Spirit (Gen. 41:42; S. S. 1:10). Joseph's realization that it was God who sent him to

Egypt, even though his brothers intended evil against him (Gen. 45:5, 7; 50:19-21; cf. 41:51-52), is the reality of Paul's word in Romans 8:28-29.

Gen. 44:34—45:1: "How shall I [Judah] go up to my father if the boy [Benjamin] is not with me? I fear to see the evil that would come on my father. Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who attended him; and he cried out, Have everyone go out from me. So there was no one standing with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers."

When Joseph's brothers sold him, they hated him and did not care for their father or youngest brother. Rather, they acted according to their hatred. But the way Judah spoke to Joseph indicated that he cared about his father and his youngest brother. This touched Joseph very deeply and convinced him that his brothers had learned their lesson. Thus, immediately after this, Joseph acknowledged them. Prior to this time, the brothers were still learning the lessons. The lessons were not completed until at least one among them had improved and had learned to care for his father and youngest brother. Until that time, Joseph exercised great patience in testing his brothers...

The result of the way Joseph revealed himself to his brothers was excellent and blameless. At the time Joseph revealed himself to them, the atmosphere was very good. In that atmosphere it was easy for him to forgive them. Actually, however, within Joseph there was not the thought of forgiving them. He fully understood that it was the sovereign God, not his brothers, who had brought him to Egypt. Because his dealing with his brothers was full of patience, wisdom, and self-control, the result was so excellent that he did not even need to forgive them. Realizing that God had sovereignly sent him to Egypt to fulfill His purpose, he spontaneously received his brothers. He embraced them and took them in.

When we are under the control of life in patience and in wisdom, we shall be like Joseph. We shall not blame or condemn anyone. There will not even be the need to forgive others because we shall not blame them. We shall be willing to accept everyone and we shall have a broad heart to embrace all the weaker ones, even those who have seriously offended us. However, instead of feeling that we have been offended, we shall realize that everything that has happened to us was according to God's sovereignty. Everything under God's sovereignty is for our good, for the fulfillment of His purpose, and for the edification of others. Because Joseph was sold by his brothers, good came to them. Through all their dealings with Joseph, the brothers were educated and edified. Therefore, the issue of the whole matter was excellent. Joseph not only carried out God's eternal purpose but also built up his brothers. (Lee, *Genesis* 1504, 1508-1509).

Gen. 46:1-2: “So Israel set out with all that he had and came to Beer-sheba and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night.”

While Jacob was on his way to see Joseph in Egypt, he offered sacrifices to God

so that he might have true fellowship with God. Using New Testament terms, Jacob offered for God’s satisfaction the Christ he had experienced in many aspects. This is the worship God desires to receive from us. But this worship is related to our growth in life. When we are matured, we shall frequently worship God in this way. God did not ask Jacob to go to Beersheba and offer sacrifices. Jacob went there of his own accord to offer Christ for God’s satisfaction. (Lee, *Genesis* 1207)

The next verse says that God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night.

Notice that this verse does not speak of a vision but of visions. During that night in Beersheba, God appeared to Jacob at least twice and spoke to him...Here we see the kind of fellowship a saint mature in life has with God. There is no praying, praising, giving of thanks, or seeking. Instead, there is the offering of Christ to God for God’s satisfaction. In this kind of worship, Jacob had fellowship with God, and God appeared to him. This surely was another manifestation of Jacob’s maturity (Lee, *Genesis* 1207).

The section [in Genesis] from chapter thirty-seven to the end of Jacob’s old age...was the period of the maturing of Jacob, the brightest period in Jacob’s entire life. Proverbs 4:18 says, “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Jacob shone brighter day by day until his death. During this period of almost forty years, Jacob did not do much, yet before God he was transformed fully into a man of grace and love.

We can see from the Bible that a Christian need not regress and decline in his old age. The three top apostles in the New Testament all shone brightly at the time of their death. When Peter wrote his second Epistle, it was close to the time of his departure from his tabernacle. But he still reminded and exhorted the brothers while he was yet in his tabernacle. In particular, he said that he was an eyewitness of the Lord’s glory and power. There was absolutely no waning of the brightness of Peter’s shining. As for Paul, he said, “For I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is at hand...Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day” (2 Tim. 4:6-8). We can see from these

sentences that the hope he had toward the Lord was brightly shining. With the apostle John, who wrote his Gospel, his Epistles, and the book of Revelation during his old age, the shining is most apparent. The Gospel he wrote says, “In the beginning was the Word.” The first Epistle he wrote says, “That which was from the beginning...the Word of life.” Revelation also says, “The things which you have seen...and the things which are about to take place after these things.” John wrote “from the beginning” all the way to “forever and ever.” There was no decline at all in the life of the aged John. Therefore, our old age need not be days of deterioration. The history of Solomon’s old age (1 King 11:1-8) should not be the history of our old age. God shows us that our old age should be days of fullness. Even though David sinned, his ending was better than his beginning; he ended by preparing for the building of the temple. Although Peter denied the Lord three times, in the end he was for the Lord. Although Mark once withdrew from the work because of difficulty (Acts 13:13; 15:37-38), he still wrote the Gospel according to Mark, and eventually he was profitable to Paul for the ministry (2 Tim. 4:11). The histories of these men show us that they all did very well in the last stretch of their journey.

Let us come back to Jacob. In the beginning he was crafty and deceitful to the uttermost, yet in the end he was transformed into a lovely person, a useful person in God’s hand...The shining in Jacob’s later years comes almost as a surprise to us...Jacob’s later years were shining and fruitful. God was able to accomplish in him in his later years all that was absent in his early years” (Nee 155-156).

Gen. 47:7: “Joseph brought in Jacob his father and set him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.”

The last stage of transformation is maturity, and the strongest sign of Jacob’s maturity was his blessing people all the time. Blessing is the overflow of life that comes out of our maturity in life. We must continue to grow in life and pass through the process of transformation until we arrive at the maturity in life (Heb. 6:1). We need to realize, however, that

our preoccupations frustrate the growth in life. Due to these preoccupations, there is not much room in our being for the divine life. But when Jacob heard the news about Joseph in Egypt, he had been emptied of every preoccupation. Nothing was occupying his inner being. Rachel had died, his twelve sons had gone away, and Jacob had been utterly emptied out. He was so empty that when the good news came, he was not excited by it. In fact, his heart was even rather cold (45:26, Heb.). When the news came regarding Joseph, Jacob had not only been transformed; he was completely filled with the divine life. He had become mature.

Jacob's history must also become our biography. We must believe that everything in our daily life is under God's sovereign hand. Everything that happened to Jacob was for his transformation and maturity. In order to be transformed, Jacob had to be pressed into situations that gave him no choice except to undergo a change. Like Jacob, after we have been changed, God will sovereignly use persons, things, and events to empty us of everything that has filled us and to take away every preoccupation so that we can have an increased capacity to be filled with God. (Lee, *Genesis* 1201-1202)

The first thing Jacob did after arriving in Egypt was to bless Pharaoh (47:7, 10). Although Pharaoh was the highest person on earth, he was under Jacob's blessing hand. According to Hebrews 7:7, "the lesser is blessed by the greater." Thus, the fact that Jacob blessed Pharaoh was a proof that he was greater than Pharaoh...

Blessing is the overflow of life, the overflow of God through someone's maturity in life. In order to bless others, we must be filled to the brim with life so that life overflows to them. Having such an overflow of life, Jacob blessed Pharaoh and the two sons of Joseph (48:8-20)...

In Numbers 6:23-27 we see a pattern of blessing...This pattern reveals that the proper blessing is to bring people into the presence of God, into the light of His face, and into the shining of His countenance that they may participate in His grace and may have peace...[Second Corinthians 13:14 reveals that] the proper blessing is to bring people into the presence of God and to bring God into them as grace, love, and fellowship that they may enjoy the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Hence, blessing is a matter of enjoying the Triune God...

Jacob's supplanting hands eventually became blessing hands (25:26; 47:7, 10; 48:14-16). In chapter twenty-five we see that Jacob began supplanting even when he was in his mother's womb. How skillful he was in supplanting! But in chapters forty-seven and forty-eight we see that these two supplanting hands have become blessing hands, bringing people into God's presence and ministering God into people so that they may enjoy Him. Would you have believed that Jacob's supplanting hands could become the blessing hands of a mature person? Here we see the growth and maturity in life. A supplanter, a heel-holder, became the greatest person on earth at the time. He was able to bless Pharaoh because he had become greater than Pharaoh. He became this kind of person by the way of life. We need the growth in life and the maturity in life so that we may be filled with Christ to become those who are able to bless others (Lee, *Genesis* 1211, 1216-1218, 1222).

Gen. 48:15-16: "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, / The God who has shepherded

me all my life to this day, / The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil."

Jacob's threefold mentioning of God in vv. 15-16 is a reference to the Triune God. The God before whom Abraham and Isaac walked is the Father; the God who shepherded Jacob his whole life is the Spirit; and the Angel who redeemed him from all evil is the Son. This is the Triune God in Jacob's experience. (Recovery Version, Gen. 48:15, note 1)

The title "the God of Jacob" implies how the Holy Spirit disciplined Jacob, how He dealt with Jacob's natural life, how He constituted Christ into Jacob, and how He bore the fruit of the Spirit in Jacob. If we want to know the God of Jacob, we have to know the constitution by the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. If we want to know the God of Jacob, we need to allow the Spirit to perform His work in us, to deal with our natural life, to constitute Christ into our inward being, and to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in us so that we can become the vessels of God's testimony.

God deals with our natural life for the purpose of ushering us into the carving work of the Spirit, the processing by the Spirit, and the constituting of the Spirit. What is the meaning of constitution? The constitution referred to here is a vertical and horizontal interweaving of knitwork. The constitution of the Spirit means that the Spirit constitutes Christ into our being to the point that we and Christ become one. Therefore, the constitution of the Spirit is one step more advanced than Christ being our life. Christ being our life is the foundation; the Spirit constituting Christ into our being is maturity. Christ being our life is Christ within us living for us. The constitution of the Spirit is the constituting of Christ into us to the extent that Christ's character becomes our character. God's goal in dealing with our natural life is that we would have the constitution of the Spirit. The knowledge of the God of Isaac is a knowledge of the God who has given Christ to us for our enjoyment. The knowledge of the God of Jacob is the knowledge of the Spirit who is constituting Christ into our being. This condition is like the weaving and constituting of an embroidery work...

This is what the history of Jacob shows. Jacob not only knew that God is the beginning of everything and the strength behind everything; he also acquired a new character. God worked on him and constituted Christ's character into him so that Christ's character became his character. In his later years, Jacob was entirely changed because Christ's character was constituted into him. (Nee 171-173)

Gen. 49:28: "All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them when he blessed them; he blessed them, each one according to his blessing."

Genesis 49:1-28 is an abstract of the entire Bible and a summary of the history of God's people, as seen in the twelve sons of Jacob, the nation of Israel, and the church. It is also a portrait of the personal history of every believer. Jacob's first four sons—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah—were sinners, indicating that the history of God's people begins with sinners. However, two of these sinners, Levi and Judah, were transformed to become priests and kings. Out of the kingship with Judah a kingly salvation was produced, which was preached as the gospel in the Gentile world by Zebulun and which issued in the church life with Issachar. But the apostasy came in through Dan, followed by the recovery with Gad, which issued in the sufficiency of the riches of Christ with Asher and in the resurrection with Naphtali. Finally, the history of God's people concludes with Joseph and Benjamin, who typify Christ as the One who is altogether victorious and perfect, without defect. According to Jacob's prophecy and Moses' word, Joseph brought in God's boundless, universal blessing (vv. 22-26; Deut. 33:13-16), and Benjamin, God's eternal dwelling place (Deut. 33:12). Thus, the conclusion of Gen. 49 corresponds with the conclusion of the entire Bible—the universal blessing in the new heaven and the new earth, in which is God's eternal dwelling, the New Jerusalem, as the issue and goal of God's universal blessing (cf. Eph. 1:3; 2:22). (Recovery Version, Gen. 49:27, note 2).

Joseph is a sign of God's universal blessing, and Benjamin is the sign of God's eternal dwelling. The New Testament, especially the Epistles, speaks of the matters of blessing and dwelling. The universal blessing of the Triune God was with Joseph as the one who was separate from his brothers in the principle of a Nazarite (Gen. 49:22-26; Num. 6:1-8, 22-26). Joseph as a fruitful bough by a fountain with branches running over the wall typifies Christ as the branch (Isa. 11:1) for the branching out of God through His believers as His branches, with God as the source of their fruitfulness, to spread over every restriction and limitation (Gen. 49:22; Phil. 1:20; Acts 4:31). As the one universally blessed by his father, Joseph typifies Christ, the appointed Heir of all things, and His believers, Christ's partners, who participate in His inheritance and who are blessed by the Father with every spiritual blessing (Heb. 1:2, 9, 14; 3:14; Eph. 1:3). The blessings bestowed on Joseph encompass all time, from ancient times to eternity (Gen. 49:26; Deut. 33:15), and all space, from heaven to earth, including the deep under the earth (Gen. 49:25; Deut. 33:13-14, 16); time and space equal the universe. Joseph overcame his sufferings because he was strengthened by God, the Mighty One of Jacob and the All-sufficient One, and because he saw that everything was arranged by God to be a blessing to him (Gen. 49:24-25; 45:5; 50:20; 1 Cor. 3:21-22; Rom. 8:28; Eph. 5:20).

The dwelling place of the Triune God was with Benjamin to ultimately consummate in the New Jerusalem as the mutual dwelling of God and His redeemed for eternity; this is the greatest blessing to God's people (Deut. 33:12, cf. v. 16; Exo. 3:2-6, 14-15; Mark 12:26; Rev. 21:5). Moses' blessing of Benjamin says that he will dwell securely beside Jehovah and that Jehovah will dwell between Benjamin's shoulders; Jerusalem with God's temple, God's dwelling place, was located in the territory of Benjamin (Deut. 33:12; Judg. 1:21). All the blessings issue in God's dwelling; this is God's good will, the desire of His heart (cf. Heb. 11:21; Prov. 4:18; Psa. 90:1; John 15:4; 14:23; Isa. 66:1-2).

The universal blessing on Joseph consummates in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth, in which everything will be new as a blessing to Christ and His believers (Gen. 49:25-26; Deut. 33:13-16; Rev. 21:5). Only God is new; anything that is kept away from God is old, but anything that comes back to God is new (2 Cor. 5:17). To be renewed means to come back to God and have something of God put into us, so that we are mingled with God and one with God for the Body life (4:16; Rom. 12:1-2). The secret of receiving God as our blessing of newness is to bring everything to God and let Him get into everything. The universal blessing on Joseph means that blessing is everywhere. Another secret of enjoying the Lord as our universal blessing and our newness of life is to praise Him. Our praises turn everything of the curse of the fall into a blessing (cf. Eph. 5:20; 1 Thes. 5:16-18).

Gen. 49:29—50:1: "Bury me with my fathers...There they buried Abraham...there they buried Isaac...And when Jacob had finished charging his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed and expired, and he was gathered to his people. Then Joseph fell upon his father's face and wept over him and kissed him."

What kinds of experiences should we Christians seek? We need a vision before God like Abraham had, we need a life like Isaac had, and we need the discipline of the Holy Spirit like Jacob had. These are the three specific experiences that we should pursue. We should never think that one of them is good enough. We must have all three experiences before we can become valuable in the eyes of the Lord. We must have a vision that sees what God is after. We must have a vision that sees that everything is of Him and that He is the Father. At the same time, we must know the life of Christ and know that His grace is our strength. If we live by the flesh, we will not reach God's goal. His work, not ours, will make us His vessel. After we have seen the life of Christ, we may still be ignorant of our flesh. Consequently, it is easy for us to replace the life of Christ with our natural strength and take the grace of the Lord to glorify ourselves and use it as our boast and our

pride. This is why we need the discipline, like that which Jacob experienced.

When we have the vision, we see what God is doing. When we have the life, the overcoming life, we can praise and have confidence to overcome. But there is still another aspect; God has to deal with us. If we know the God of Isaac, we will have the confidence to say, "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14). "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35). However, we still need to know the God of Jacob. God's dealings with Jacob tell us that it is still possible for us to fail. We cannot guarantee our trustworthiness. If the Lord does not protect us, we can become weak and fallen at any time. In Isaac we know Christ. In Jacob we know ourselves. Because we know Christ, we have confidence, and because we know ourselves, we lose our own confidence. When these two combine together, we will fully live Christ.

Some people have seen that God is the Father, that He is everything, and that everything is of Him. Yet they still try to deal with themselves, suppress themselves, and restrict themselves by their own effort. While they are doing these things, there is nothing within them to positively support them. As a result, they go through much suffering only to find that they have not yet attained. This is not the spiritual way. Other people have seen that Christ is life. They have received Christ and the overcoming life. But they forget that their natural life still exists. They have not seen that their natural life needs to be dealt with just as their sins needed to be dealt with. As a result, they mistakenly

regard things that pertain to the natural life as manifestations of the overcoming life. Again, this is not the spiritual way. It is not enough just to realize that Christ is the overcoming life. We must also see the natural life.

In order for us to be God's people, to be His vessel, to maintain His testimony, and to reach His goal, we have to know God as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. All three experiences are necessary. Having just one or two is not enough. The day will come when God opens our eyes to see the vision of His demands. The day will come when God opens our eyes to see His work in Christ and that Christ is our life. The day will come when God opens our eyes to see that He has to touch our natural life and break its strength. If we see these three things, we will go forward... We have to know the meaning of God being the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. We must have these three experiences before we can go on in a proper way. (Nee 97-99) [AFC](#)

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Footnotes from the Recovery Version of the Bible

"And Joseph **died**, being one hundred ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt" (Gen. 50:26).

died: In the beginning of this book God created man in His image that man might express Him and gave man His dominion that man might represent Him (1:26). After the experiences of so many called ones, this book concludes with a life that, in Jacob on the one hand, expressed God in His image and, in Joseph on the other hand, represented God with His dominion... How excellent and wonderful this is! However, what is portrayed in Genesis is still a shadow in the age of typology. At Joseph's time the reality had not come. Hence, in the conclusion of this book Joseph died expecting the age of fulfillment, in which he would share in the reality.

"And Joseph **died**, and all his brothers, and all that generation" (Exo. 1:6).

The book of Genesis concludes with a dead man in a coffin in Egypt (Gen. 50:26). This indicates that God's chosen people were in a situation of death in Egypt. Although they were in death, they were very living and active (cf. v. 7). While they were making a living in Egypt and were enjoying the pleasures of Egypt, they were usurped and enslaved by Pharaoh to serve him with harshness (vv. 10-14; 2:23; 5:6-18). Thus they were detained from fulfilling the purpose for which God had created and chosen them. The situation of the children of Israel in Egypt under Pharaoh's tyranny is a full picture of the life of fallen mankind in the world under the usurping and enslaving hand of Satan and his evil power of darkness.