

Chapter Thirteen ***ISAAC & JACOB***

Hebrews 11: 20, 21 *"By FAITH, Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. By FAITH, Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff."*

I have brought these two together as they teach us the same principle.

The story of Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau is found in Genesis 27 while that of Jacob blessing the sons of Joseph is in Genesis 48.

There is little to commend Jacob, the deceiver and thief. It was the decision of Esau to sell his birthright for a bowl of soup but it was the scheming of Jacob, encouraged by his mother, that stole the blessing one expects to be given to the first-born. I'm sure he did not understand the Biblical principle God was going to teach through his deceit. I call it the principle of the **second-born**. Half a century later, Jacob is involved again as he blesses the two sons of Joseph. Joseph leads his two sons toward his blind father, making sure that the older boy, Manasseh is in front of Jacob's right hand, the hand of primary blessing, The other son, Ephraim, is on Jacob's left. The old man however, though outwardly blind, has an inner light directing him to cross his arms and to pronounce the greater blessing on the second born. For some reason, God is directing the old man to do such an unheard-of thing. Joseph protests but to no avail. Jacob will obey the inner directive. I repeat that there is nothing to indicate that he understands why he should cross his arms; this is declared to be "by faith .."

What is the principle of the second born ?

Let us consider those the Bible records as such.

Cain was the elder, Abel the younger. God honoured the latter above the former.

Esau was the elder, Jacob the younger. God said, "Esau I have hated but Jacob I have loved" !

Manasseh was the elder, Ephraim the younger. Ephraim is blessed the greater.

Adam was the first created, Jesus came as the *second Adam*., the second born.

"For by one man came death, so by one man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor 15:21).

Even in the Old Testament days, God foreshadows the day when His second 'Adam' will come to counter the death that has come upon all men because of the disobedience of the first Adam. He, 'the son of promise' will conquer death by his obedience to the directive will of God. He will be the progenitor of a new race of people, those "born twice", once by water (the natural birth) and also by the Spirit (new birth). It has been truly said that *if you are born once, you will die twice (ie; natural and eternal death); if you are born twice, you will die but once.*

The blessings of God are pronounced upon the children of the second born.

Here then is the principle of the **new birth** without which 'it is impossible to see the kingdom of God', leave alone to enter it. Adam, the first man, is the progenitor of those 'born of the flesh'. Jesus, the second man is the progenitor of those, 'born of the Spirit'. (John 3:6)

For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding Word of God. (1 Peter 1:23)

In an earlier chapter we saw that greatness in the kingdom of Heaven is accredited to those who are as 'the younger' (Luke 22:26). So in the actions of both Isaac and Jacob in blessing the second born, God is again presenting the principle later taught by Jesus. Their actions of 'faith' were designed to show us the kind of persons we should be as 'twice-born'.

Let us look further at the attributes of the second-born or the younger. The younger son has no claim on the inheritance from his earthly father. His is the position of little fame and honour. He is the 'hand-me-down' child receiving the clothes and toys discarded by his brother. At school he may be known as *so-and-so's brother*, without an identity of his own. His achievements are measured in comparison to the elder son. As the prodigal son, he can leave home with all his earthly possession in a bag slung over his shoulder, while his older brother stays to look after his inheritance, the farm. The younger son is not interested in the status quo and does not work politically to maintain his possessions. He is a **rebel** as far as the systems of this world are concerned. I remember when the Living Bible was being produced. Each book of the Bible was published separately, each with a characteristic title. The Gospel of Mark, concerning Jesus as the servant, was titled, *Jesus - Rebel With a Cause*. His mother proclaimed prophetically, that He would *scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts, put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalt those of low degree. He would fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty.* (Magnificat - Luke 1:52, 53). That is a declaration of war for the systems of this world! He has come to establish His kingdom, and He calls His people, the twice-born, not to be satisfied with the society of this world but to live a counter-culture Christianity.

As I consider other Biblical characters who were noted for being the younger or the least or the last, I am drawn to the shepherd boy, David. He was the youngest of eight sons of Jesse (1 Samuel 16). Who could have foreseen such a future for him when the prophet Samuel came to anoint him to be king over Israel? The only experience he had had was tending sheep, but he had not been wasting his time! He had practised with the sling, doing his work faithfully, protecting his father's sheep from a lion and a bear.

Though he was last in the hand-me-down line he never showed resentment but learned to accept his position and to wait his turn. The Lord chose him to be king because He knew his heart. To Samuel, God had said, "*Man looketh on the outward appearance but I look at the heart.*" David had learned to trust in God, even when the circumstances seemed like giants before him. He never fastened his gaze on the problems but kept his eyes on the Lord. His confidence was in the Lord and in the sling he had proved, not in the Saul's armour which he had not proved. What have you proved? God's word? His name? They will stand the test.

When David entered Saul's palace, he would not force God's timetable. He had learned **to wait!** Do not rush ahead of God; you will only walk in your own shadow! Though there were opportunities when it seemed that God was presenting the throne before him, David still would wait, saying, "*I will not lay my hand against the Lord's elect.*" There was to be no politicking with him. That is the way of the world - it is not the way of the people of the Kingdom. And God knew David's heart!

Summary

To the writer of Hebrews 11, the patriarchs Isaac and Jacob were led by God to pronounce blessings on the second born. This was even through the deceit of Jacob. The Biblical principles that the Lord would teach us are:

- 1. Blessed is the man or woman who has been born twice.**
- 2. Our blessings are through the second-born Adam who has redeemed us from the curse of the first-born Adam.**
- 3. Children of the second-born are to be counter-culture Christians, loving not the systems of this world and displaying 'younger' characteristics..**