

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2004**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB**

Message Twelve

The God of Jacob

(2)

**The Discipline of the Holy Spirit
in God's Dealing with Our Natural Constitution**

Scripture Reading: Gen. 25:22-26a; 31:38-41; 32:22-32; 47:9; 48:15-16a

I. Jacob was chosen before his birth; therefore, in Jacob we see God's selection—Gen. 25:22-23; Rom. 9:11:

- A. Like Jacob, we were chosen before we were born, even before the foundation of the world—Eph. 1:4; 2 Thes. 2:13; John 15:16a.
- B. God's selection depends not on what we are but on God's sovereign mercy—Rom. 9:11-13, 16.
- C. As those who have been chosen by God, we should trust in His selection, cast ourselves upon Him, and believe that He will bring us to the point where we are pleasing to Him—Eph. 1:4-5; Phil. 2:13; Heb. 13:20-21:
 - 1. Our God is a confident God; He will surely reach His goal—1 Thes. 5:23-24.
 - 2. God knows what He is doing; He is full of wisdom, grace, and patience; and He will finish His work in us—Phil. 1:6; 1 Cor. 1:8.
 - 3. Our hope lies in God's trustworthiness, and our usefulness depends on God's will—Eph. 1:12; Jude 24-25.

II. Jacob's life is a life that represents God's dealings, and the God of Jacob is the God of dealings—Gen. 31:38-41:

- A. The title *the God of Jacob* implies how the Holy Spirit disciplined Jacob, dealt with his natural life, constituted Christ into him, and bore the fruit of the Spirit in him—Gal. 5:22-23; Heb. 12:11.
- B. If we would know the God of Jacob, we need to allow the Spirit to perform His work in us, dealing with our natural life and constituting Christ into us.

III. Jacob's history is a picture of the discipline of the Holy Spirit—Gen. 47:9; 48:15-16a; Heb. 12:9-11:

- A. From the time we were saved, the Holy Spirit has been doing two things in us—destroying the old element and constituting us with a new element—2 Cor. 4:16.
- B. The discipline of the Holy Spirit refers to what the Holy Spirit is doing in our outward environment, to His arranging of all people, things, and happenings, through which we are being disciplined—Rom. 8:28:

1. The Holy Spirit continually works in us and disciplines us because of the presence of our natural life—1 Cor. 2:14; John 12:25.
 2. Through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, God completely tears down our old creation so that the element of the new creation may be built up in us.
 3. God arranges the outward environment, but the Holy Spirit translates this arrangement into something inward and applies it to us; this conversion of outward events into inward experience is the discipline of the Holy Spirit.
 4. As our natural life is dealt with through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, Christ is constituted into us—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17a.
- C. The discipline and constitution of the Holy Spirit are one work; we are constituted through the discipline of the Holy Spirit—Heb. 12:9-11; Eph. 3:17a.

IV. Jacob's life shows us that God has to deal with our natural constitution, that He must break our natural life by touching it in a drastic way—Gen. 32:22-32:

- A. God not only disciplined Jacob but also dealt with his being and his natural life—1 Cor. 2:14.
- B. The natural constitution is the expression of the living out of the old man which has to do with human ability, skills, schemes, wisdom, and cleverness:
1. All of these things are derived from the natural life and do not spring from the resurrection life of God—John 12:25; 11:25; Phil. 3:10-11.
 2. The dealing with our natural constitution is so that all our natural ability may pass through the death of the cross and be resurrected, thereby becoming acceptable and useful to God—2 Cor. 1:9; 4:14.
 3. Regarding the matter of the natural constitution, the best representative character in the Bible is Jacob—Gen. 25:22-26a:
 - a. The reason Jacob was crafty was that he was strong in his natural constitution.
 - b. Jacob used his own strength to gain what God wanted to give him—vv. 29-33.
 - c. Through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, Jacob was delivered from being natural and became a resurrected man—Heb. 11:21.
- C. The Lord wrestled with Jacob in order to expose to Jacob how natural he was and how great his natural strength was—Gen. 32:24.
- D. After Jacob was broken by God, outwardly he was the same as before, but inwardly his natural life had been dealt with—33:1-4:
1. It was not his outward living that was touched by the Lord; it was his inward, natural strength that was touched by Him—32:32b.
 2. When the Lord touches us at a certain crucial spot, we are lame and can no longer be the same in our inward being—v. 25:
 - a. Lameness is a sign that our natural life has been dealt with by God.
 - b. To be lame means to no longer live by oneself, trust in oneself, or believe in oneself—Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 1:9.
- E. God deals with our natural life through the discipline of the Holy Spirit so that Christ may be wrought into us, constituted into us, and formed in us for the corporate expression of the Triune God—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:16-21.