

In this lesson he is making preparation to meet Esau, not by armed resistance, for he cannot do that, but by generous presents and then by earnest prayer. The lesson is the story of that wondrous prayer.

It was a turning point in Jacob's life. He had been more or less tricky. To be worthy of the name he hears and the place he was to fill as the head of a great people, God's people, he must be changed, and that long night of struggle with God in prayer, left him a changed man, a better man.

And then as God gave him favor in the eyes of Laban who had pursued him, so now God gave him favor in the sight of Esau. The latter, though Jacob was at his mercy, generously forgave his brother, yea, even offered to help him, and when that was not needed, he went his way.

The story of the prayer has some lessons for us. We should not say our prayers and go away from them feeling that our duty is done. We should ask God for what we want with the earnestness and persistence that Jacob did. God delights to have us ask in that way.

Then in that strange way in which God crippled him, and made him lame ever after, he had a constant reminder of that strange night, and this would always keep him humble and dependent upon God.

Another lesson we learn is that though God will forgive sin when we ask Him, yet that sin may make our lives very sad. He took advantage of his brother and deceived his father. His having to run away from home for fear of his brother and his dread when he was coming back was a sore punishment for the former, and in the way his own sons deceived him about Joseph he suffered for the latter.

5th April.

DISCORD IN JACOB'S FAMILY.

Les. Gen. 37: 1-17

Col. Text, Gen. 45: 24.

Mem. vs. 3, 4.

Catechism Q. 96.

About eleven years have passed away since Jacob came back from Haran. He is now about 109 years old. His father Isaac, who was old and blind half a century before, when Jacob deceived him with the kid skin on his wrists, is still living, an old man of 168 years.

When Jacob first came back he lived for some years at Shechem, in the middle of Palestine. Look it up in the map. He dug a deep well, which is still there, 3500 years old. His sons got into trouble with some of the natives, and Jacob started southward, some sixty miles, to Hebron, where he had lived when a boy, and where his father still lived.

On the way, Rachel died, and a place called Rachel's tomb is still shown, near Bethlehem.

At the time of this lesson they were living in Hebron. The ten brothers were shepherds

and herded their flocks. Joseph, a boy of 17 years, was his father's favorite, and was no doubt, great company to his old blind grandfather Isaac. Little Benjamin was still the prattler of the family, only two or three years old.

Some of the elder brothers were not good men, but they tried to keep their evil deeds hidden from their father. Joseph however who was sometimes with them, and knew of their conduct, told his father about it, and they hated him for it.

Jacob showed his partiality for Joseph too plainly for Joseph's good. He gave him a fine coat, and Joseph was very proud of it, but it only made his brothers dislike him the more, and they could not speak in the usual greeting, "Salaam," "Peace" to you.

Then Joseph had two remarkable dreams, and the people of those days believed much in dreams. He dreamed that he and his brothers were binding sheaves in the field, and the sheaves of the brothers bowed down to his sheaf. Again he dreamed that the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to him.

These dreams had in them much of truth, as after years showed. Joseph should have kept them to himself, but he was no doubt somewhat proud of the honor his father had shown him in giving him the coat, and he very foolishly told the dreams to his brothers, which made them hate him yet the more.

There is one thing in Joseph's conduct at this time that some of the boys may think rather mean, and that was in telling his father about his brothers. There are times when it is wrong and mean to be a tell-tale, and I hope the young readers of the RECORD will be above such meanness. There are times when it is right to tell of wrong doing. No one has any right to cover up wrong doing on the part of others. If he does so he is a sharer in their guilt. For their own sake, that they may be stopped in it, and for the sake of others, he should not hide it.

Those who do wrong will be very much displeased at one who tells upon them, but if one does right he can never expect to have the favor of those who love wrong. Above all things seek to win the favor of God.

The only way to escape having our evil deeds reported is not to do them. Above all remember that whether men know them or not God knows them without anybody telling Him. We cannot hide them from Him. Thou God seeest me.

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