

# Touchstones of God's Economy

## Genesis (3)

The book of Genesis can be divided into three sections, each beginning with a person. The first section begins with God and concerns God's creation (chs. 1—2). The second section begins with Satan disguised as the serpent and covers the fall of humankind through Satan's corruption (chs. 3—11). The third section begins with Jehovah and concerns His calling of fallen man (chs. 12—50). The previous two installments of "Touchstones" covered the first two sections. In this installment we come to the third section.

Without light from the Lord, we will surely miss the intrinsic significance of the record in the book of Genesis. The Holy Spirit inspired the writer of Genesis to write a brief account in chapter 1 of the creation of the universe and of man in order to reveal the purpose of God in creation, which is both high and glorious. God created the heavens and the earth, and then man, that He might obtain a group of people who are like Him, having His image and ruling for Him with His dominion so that He might have rest (1:26—2:3). In chapter 2, through the account of a garden and the creation of the woman out of man, God carries out His purpose through life as the procedure. Then in chapters 3 through 11 the tragic process of man's fall is revealed, where man fell not just once but again and again. With each step of the fall God came in to reveal His way of salvation. Eventually, however, man fell to the point of being incurable. At Babel in Genesis 11, man fell to the uttermost, causing God to forsake the created race of Adam. Yet God would not abandon His purpose concerning man. He went to one man, Abraham, in order to call him out of the race of Adam so that He might still have a way to fulfill His original purpose in creating humanity. The remainder of the book of Genesis gives a comprehensive account of God's calling as seen in the history of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

In Genesis 12 God came in to call Abraham so that He might have a new beginning with fallen humanity. Verses 1 and 2 say,

Now Jehovah said to Abram, Go from your land / And from your relatives / And from your father's house / To the land that I will show you; / And I will make of you a great nation, / And I will bless you / And make your name great; / And you shall be a blessing.

These verses mark a new beginning for God in His purpose with humanity. However, in reading the book of Genesis we may be more impressed with the beginning in 1:1 than with the beginning here in 12:1. Nevertheless, concerning the fulfillment of God's purpose the beginning here is much higher than the beginning in God's creation. Every believer is not only a person created by God but even more someone who is called by Him (Heb. 3:1; Eph. 4:1). God's calling affords Him a new beginning with fallen humankind. Genesis 12:3 says, "I will bless those who bless you, / And him who curses you I will curse; / And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." This verse clearly refers not just to Abraham individually but to the descendants of Abraham, indicating the race that would come forth from Abraham. From Genesis 12:1 until the end of the Bible Abraham and his earthly and spiritual descendants are God's focus. The Old Testament speaks of the earthly descendants of Abraham in the flesh, but the New Testament speaks of the spiritual and heavenly descendants of Abraham (Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:7). God's calling of Abraham was a transfer from the race of Adam to the race of Abraham. God gave up the Adamic race and began anew with the Abrahamic race.

However, not all the physical descendants of Abraham were qualified to be part of the race of Abraham: neither Abraham's son Ishmael and his descendants nor Isaac's son Esau and his descendants were part of the called race (Gen. 17:18-19; 25:23; Mal. 1:2-3; Rom. 9:13). Only Isaac, who was promised by God, and Jacob, who was chosen by God, and their descendants became the called race of God. Concerning the birth of Isaac, Jehovah said to Abraham, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son" (Gen. 18:10). This indicates that the transfer of race in God's calling is actually the transfer of life. Since Isaac typifies Christ, it is a transfer from the life of Adam to the life of Christ, from the fallen life of the old creation to the stronger and better life of the new creation—the uncreated life of God (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; 2 Cor. 5:17). The history of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph portrays the process of this transfer of life.<sup>1</sup>

In the records of these four persons there are prefigurations of the experiences of the New Testament believers. For example, Abraham's believing God and being justified

by Him became a great prefigure of justification by faith for the New Testament believers (Rom. 4:3, 23-25). Isaac's birth to be the seed of Abraham, having the sonship, became a prefigure of the believers becoming sons of God (Gal. 3:26, 29). Jacob's being chosen before he was even born is a prefigure of God's selection of the New Testament believers before the foundation of the world (Rom. 9:1-13). Joseph's suffering rejection by his brothers and his mistreatment in Egypt eventually turning out for good, not just for himself but for the salvation of his entire family, mirrors the experience of the New Testament believers in their enduring of trials and tribulations in their present life and being glorified in the coming kingdom (8:18, 28-30).

**H**owever, the purpose of the record in Genesis is not merely to portray the experiences of these four persons as individuals. It is very significant that the records of these four overlap, indicating that they constitute the complete experiences of one person in God's calling. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are one corporate person in God's calling. Moreover, in the subsequent books of the Bible God is often referred to as "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (cf. Exo. 3:6; 1 Kings 18:36; Matt. 22:32; Acts 3:13). Although God is the God of millions of people, He chose to refer to Himself as the God of only three persons. Since God is one, this indicates that these three are one corporate person. However, the fact that He is the God of three also reveals that He is the Triune God—the Father, the Son and the Spirit (Exo. 3:15; Matt. 28:19). Hence, the experiences of these three men portray different aspects of one person's complete experience of the Triune God. The three aspects of their experience correspond to the three of the Godhead. The record concerning Joseph, which almost entirely overlaps with that of Jacob, is to be considered part of the experience of Jacob, that is, the reigning aspect of Jacob.

Through the record of the experiences of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we may perceive that the trinity of the Godhead is not for our doctrinal understanding of systematic theology but for the dispensing of the Triune God in our experience of God's complete salvation in His calling of us. The experience of Abraham signifies our experience of God the Father in His calling us, justifying us, and equipping us to live by faith and to live in fellowship with Him. The experience of Isaac signifies our experience of God the Son in His redeeming us and blessing us with the inheritance of all His riches, with a life of the enjoyment of His abundance, and with a life in peace. The experience of Jacob with Joseph signifies our experience of God the Father in His loving and choosing us and of God the Spirit in His working all things together for our good as His lovers, in transforming us, and in causing us to mature in the divine life, to reign in life, and to satisfy people with God the Son as

the divine life supply. The full revelation of God's calling, therefore, is seen in the combined experiences of these four men: in Abraham living by faith and in fellowship with God; in Isaac in inheriting, enjoying, and resting; and in Jacob (with Joseph) in being selected, transformed, and matured in his reigning.

### Abraham—Living by Faith and in Fellowship with God

God first appeared to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldeans and called him to leave his land and his relatives to come into the land that God would show him (Acts 7:2-3). Abraham, however, was slow in accepting God's calling. It was actually Terah, his father, who moved his family from Ur to Haran following the death of his son, Abraham's brother. This indicates that Abraham was unwilling to respond to God's calling absolutely. Abraham settled down in Haran until his father died. Then God appeared to Abraham and called him a second time. His repeated appearing to Abraham was a strong attraction to him, motivating and strengthening him to accept God's calling. It is the same with New Testament believers (Matt. 4:20, 22; 9:9; Heb. 12:1-2; 2 Pet. 1:3).

Following God's appearing to him in Haran, Abraham took Sarah and his nephew Lot and all their possessions and entered the land of Canaan, arriving at Shechem (Gen. 12:5-6). There Jehovah appeared to him again, promising to give him a seed and the land of Canaan (v. 7). Abraham's immediate response was to build an altar. From Shechem, Abraham journeyed onward and southward until he came to a mountain east of Bethel. This time Genesis records that he pitched his tent, built another altar, and called upon the name of Jehovah (v. 8). These actions, which Abraham did in responding to God's appearing to him, are most significant, especially in view of the situation that he left in Ur of the Chaldeans in Genesis 11. Indeed, Abraham's building of the altar may be considered an anti-testimony to the building of the tower of Babel.

**A**braham built an altar for the worship of God. To build an altar signifies offering all that we are and all that we have to God for His purpose. Then Abraham pitched his tent for his living. Isaac and Jacob followed Abraham also to live in a tent (26:25; 35:21). By dwelling in tents, they declared that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth, those who were seeking a better country and "the city which has the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God" (Heb. 11:9-10, 13-16). The altar signifies living by faith, because to live by faith is to live the life of the altar. By building an altar, Abraham declared that he depended on God and that he was for God. Without God, Abraham could not exist. Without God, he had no life or living; his life, tendencies, and actions depended completely on God; he belonged to

God, and he was for God. This is consecration, and it is the result of a person meeting God. The tent is the expression of living by faith and issues from consecration to God. Living as a sojourner is in contrast to living in a city, where people take root in the world, put everything on the earth, and neither rely on God nor live for God. Abraham did not have a tent at Shechem, only an altar. But when he came to Bethel, he pitched his tent. The name Bethel means “house of God.” This indicates that in order to be maintained, the life of the altar needs the life of the tent, and the life of the tent needs the church, the reality of the house of God.

After this, Abraham had several experiences that tested him, which portray the experience of the trial of living by faith. The first trial was famine, which led him to leave the land of Canaan and go to Egypt, a place that signifies the world under Satan’s rule. In spite of this failure and the failure of saying that Sarah was his sister, he experienced God’s sovereign care. God not only blessed Abraham and spared his wife but also brought Abraham back to the beginning, to Bethel, the place of the tent and the altar, and He recovered his calling on the name of the Lord (Gen. 12:9—13:4). The second trial was the striving between him and Lot, between his herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. This was another test arranged for him under God’s sovereignty. Through his earlier experience in Egypt, Abraham learned the lesson of not striving for himself or choosing for himself but of trusting in God’s care. He learned that the God who called him also took care of him and that everything was in His sovereign hand. Thus, he allowed Lot to choose the portion of the land that he wanted (13:5-18). After Abraham gained this victory in the second trial, a third trial came. This indicates that the life of a called one is a life of trials, and that we grow through trials. The third trial was the captivity of Lot, his brother. This time, Abraham had a great victory. Although he was an ordinary man, he won the victory over five kings (14:1-24). When the king of Sodom wanted to give him possessions, he replied, “I have lifted up my hand to Jehovah, God the Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you say, I have made Abram rich” (vv. 22-23). Abraham truly knew that God was everything in his life and that God was his unique trust.

In chapter 15 of Genesis, Abraham entered another stage in his experience. He came to know grace for the fulfillment of God’s purpose:

*The experiences of these three men portray different aspects of one person’s complete experience of the Triune God. The three aspects of their experience correspond to the three of the Godhead.*

After these things the word of Jehovah came to Abram in a vision, saying, Do not be afraid, Abram; I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward...And He brought him outside and said, Look now toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them. And He said to him, So shall your seed be. And he believed Jehovah, and He accounted it to him as righteousness. (vv. 1, 5-6)

Prior to this, Abraham experienced God as the One who protected him and blessed him in material things to maintain his existence outwardly. Beginning with this chapter God showed Abraham that he needed God’s grace inwardly for the fulfillment of His purpose, which is to have a people to express Him with His image, to represent Him with His dominion, and to possess the earth for His kingdom, as revealed in 1:26 through 28. Through the birth of Isaac, Abraham came to know grace for the fulfillment of God’s purpose, which is an important advance from knowing God’s care in his living by faith.

Around the birth of Isaac there were a number of events that indicate that for the accomplishment of His purpose God will not accept anything of humanity. God’s purpose can be accomplished only by God. In Genesis 15:3 Abraham suggested that his servant Eliezer would be his heir. Eliezer was Abraham’s possession that he had acquired in Damascus, but he was rejected by God (v. 4). In

chapter 16 Abraham’s wife Sarah proposed that he have a son by her maid Hagar (vv. 1-2). The son whom he begot, Ishmael, was also rejected by God (cf. 17:17-19). Moreover, in chapter 17 God confirmed His covenant to Abraham with circumcision, the cutting off of the flesh of the foreskin. In spiritual meaning, circumcision is to put off the flesh, to put off the self and the old man, through the crucifixion of Christ (Col. 2:11, 13). Abraham exercised his flesh to produce Ishmael. Now God asked him to cut off his flesh, to terminate his natural strength, so that He could come in and bring forth Isaac by His grace. The circumcision in the Old Testament is the equivalent of baptism in the New Testament (v. 12). The real circumcision is “of the heart, in spirit, not in letter” (Rom. 2:29), that is, an inward circumcision, a cutting off of all that we can do in ourselves. It is very meaningful that God also changed Abraham’s name at this time. He said to him, “Your name shall no longer be called Abram, / But your name shall be Abraham; / For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations” (Gen. 17:5). A change of name signifies a change of person. In spiritual experience the real changing of a name is the change from “I” to Christ and from “I” to the grace of God (Gal. 2:20;

---

1 Cor. 15:10). Only Christ as God's grace, not "I," can bring forth the multitude needed to fulfill God's purpose. Hence, the seed needed for the fulfillment of God's purpose could not be anything that Abraham possessed, that is, Eliezer, or anything he had produced out of himself, that is, Ishmael, or anything that he could do in himself. Only that which God worked into Abraham could bring forth from Abraham the required seed. Abraham came to learn that God is absolute in the matter of His grace.

**I**n Genesis 18 Abraham entered into the final stage of his experience of God: living in fellowship with God. Verse 1 says, "Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day." The oaks of Mamre were in Hebron. Abraham moved his tent there after separating from Lot (13:18). *Hebron* means "fellowship, communion, or friendship." In this chapter Jehovah visited Abraham and communed with him in his tent over a meal. Eventually, He revealed to His friend what He was about to do at Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham interceded in a glorious way. Thus, in Hebron Abraham's tent became a place where he had fellowship with God. In Abraham's tent God had a place on earth where He could communicate and fellowship with humanity. Abraham's tent with the altar prefigured the tabernacle with the altar built by the children of Israel after the exodus from Egypt (Exo. 40). The tabernacle was God's testimony, the place where He and His people could dwell and fellowship together. It points to the ultimate tabernacle of God, the New Jerusalem, which will be the testimony and expression of God in eternity and the eternal dwelling place of God and His called ones (Rev. 21:2-3, 22).

It seems that in this final stage of his life, Abraham's experience reached the peak. He had been called by God, justified by God, and lived by faith in God. Now he lived in fellowship with God and willingly obeyed God when required to go to the land of Moriah to offer up his son (Gen. 22). Moreover, he depended absolutely on God, not on himself, to find a wife for his son Isaac (ch. 24). However, the record in Genesis 25 reveals that Abraham had not yet reached maturity. In this chapter, after Sarah died, Abraham remarried and brought forth six sons by the energy of his flesh (23:2; 25:1-2). This indicates he did not attain to maturity in his spiritual life. Furthermore, Abraham did not bless anyone at the end of his days, in contrast to Isaac and Jacob (27:27-29; 48:13-20; 49:1-28; Heb. 7:7). Hence, as far as the experience of life is concerned, Abraham cannot stand as a complete person. He needs Isaac and Jacob to complete him.

### Isaac—Inheriting Grace, Enjoying, and Resting

Genesis 25:5 says, "Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac." In Genesis the records of Abraham and Isaac overlap

(12:1—25:18; 21:1—35:29). Abraham's life reveals that if we would enjoy God's grace and have the full enjoyment of God's riches, we must suffer loss and have our natural life circumcised, that is, cut off. Isaac's life reveals that our sufferings to terminate our natural life are for the enjoyment of God's grace. Throughout his entire life Isaac did nothing but enjoy God's rich blessing, which points to grace in the New Testament (25:11; 26:24). Isaac was born in grace, grew up in grace, and was made an heir of grace (21:1-3, 8; 25:5). In the New Testament all the believers are heirs of grace, destined to enjoy God's absolute and unconditional grace (Eph. 1:3, 6-8; 2:7). Genesis 25:11 says, "After the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac his son." The blessing of the Old Testament corresponds to grace in the New Testament. God's free gift to us is His blessing. When God's free gift in Christ is wrought into us to be the life element within us, it becomes grace (Rom. 5:2).

**I**saac inherited grace, and he rested and enjoyed throughout his life. For example, he married Rebekah without doing anything, neither praying nor looking to God, but simply inheriting (Gen. 24:63-67). He sowed in the land and in the same year gained a hundredfold (26:12). He dug wells and found springing water (v. 19). When the shepherds of Gerar strove with his servants, he did not fight but simply moved away and dug elsewhere. Wherever he dug, there was water; God apportioned him a spacious land that would satisfy him (vv. 15-22). When Isaac grew old, both of his sons went to prepare tasty meals that he loved (27:1-31). Isaac's entire life was full of rest and enjoyment. His experiences typify the called ones inheriting everything in Christ, without any need of toil or struggle.

### Jacob—Being Transformed, Maturing, and Reigning

From the point of view of faith, the record of Abraham's life surpasses that of Isaac, and without doubt both Abraham's and Isaac's lives surpass that of Jacob, who, it seems, could only connive to obtain what he wanted instead of trusting in God's promise. However, when Jacob's life is viewed from the perspective of God's purpose in calling humanity, the reverse is true. We have seen that the experiences of these three are the complete experience of a person called by God. Abraham did not obtain maturity in life and thus did not bless at the end of his life. Isaac blessed but for selfish reasons, and his blessing was in blindness. Nevertheless, God still honored what he did. We may say that Isaac was a person who fully enjoyed God's grace; nevertheless, his being remained unchanged at the end of his life. He still needed a "tasty meal" before he could bless. How different is the end of Jacob's life from those of his forefathers! He blessed Pharaoh, indicating that he was greater than the king of Egypt, spontaneously and without the thought of

recompense (47:7-10). He blessed in a way that was full of insight, skillfully guiding his hands, when blessing the sons of Joseph (48:9-20). He spoke a great prophecy concerning all his sons (49:1-28) that would require the whole of the Old Testament and, ultimately, the book of Revelation for its fulfillment. It is true that Jacob was born a “heel holder,” or supplanter, as his name indicates. But his very being was changed, and he became Israel, a man fully mature in the experience of life, able to bless all persons. Moreover, in Joseph he reigned over all matters for the supply of the entire world. In order to fulfill God’s calling, we not only need the experiences of Abraham and Isaac but also those of Jacob.

In his natural constitution Jacob was selfish, crafty, skillful, striving, and capable. He represents us all in our natural being, which is our corrupted fallen nature. The first experience God led him through was to deal with his corrupt nature. This began even before he was born. Even though God chose him, in His sovereignty He arranged for him to be born not first but second. This caused Jacob to strive against his brother Esau even in the womb and then during his childhood. His craftiness in obtaining the blessing of the firstborn from his father caused his brother to hate him and want to kill him. This forced him to leave his parents, whom he loved, and flee to his uncle Laban. There, God dealt with him over a period of twenty years through the deception of his employer-uncle and the rivalry of his wives, Leah and Rachel, with their maidservants.

However, after more than thirty-five years of dealings under God’s hand, Jacob was still a strong person. When he was returning to the land of Canaan, preparing to meet his brother once more, he was met by a man at the ford of the Jabbok, with whom he wrestled all night and prevailed. Eventually, the man touched the socket of Jacob’s hip, dislocating it. The man with whom Jacob wrestled was God, who said to him, “Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed” (32:28). *Israel* means “one who struggles with God.” The changing of Jacob’s name meant that eventually God would transform Jacob. Here, Jacob’s experience advanced from being dealt with to being broken. From that time on, Jacob could no longer walk as a whole person; instead, he limped (v. 31). This signifies that Jacob’s natural life, his natural strength, was touched. This was the beginning of his transformation. After this, he still might live in a natural way, as indicated by his building a house for himself and booths for his livestock in Succoth

(33:17-20). But his natural life, his inward natural strength, had been dealt with by the Lord. This indicates that God’s way in His economy is not to change man’s outward behavior in the way of religion but to touch man’s inward life in order to change his inward being.

From Succoth, Jacob moved to Shechem. There he experienced a further dealing through the defilement of his daughter, Dinah, and the violent reaction of his sons Simeon and Levi, which troubled him greatly (ch. 34). After this, 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” (35:1). At Bethel many years before, when fleeing from Esau, Jacob made a vow to God, promising that if God would preserve him and care for him, the stone that he set up for a pillar would be the house of God. Now God reminded him to fulfill his part of that vow. Bethel, not Shechem, was God’s goal. All the events at Shechem made it impossible for Jacob to remain there and prepared him to receive God’s charge to go up to Bethel. When

Jacob arrived at Bethel, he built an altar and called the place El-bethel (v. 7). *Bethel* means “house of God,” and *El* means “God”; thus, Jacob called this place “God of the house of God.” 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 of God’s eternal dwelling place, which is the church today and the New Jerusalem in eternity. Furthermore, at Bethel God changed Jacob’s name again to Israel (v. 10), as He had done at Peniel, at the ford of the Jabbok. At Peniel Jacob did not have much experience of this new name, but here Jacob was actually renewed and became a new, transformed person. This kind of change can be experienced only at Bethel, that is, in the proper church life. The church is altogether a new man, and the church life is the life of the transformed Israel (Eph. 2:15; Gal. 6:16).

In Genesis 35 Jacob experienced further dealings in being transformed through the death of Rachel (vv. 16-20) and through his son Reuben’s defilement of Jacob’s concubine (v. 22). By the beginning of chapter 37, he 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), whereas to be mature is to be filled with the divine life that changes us. By the end of Genesis 35, the process of transformation in Jacob was relatively complete. Genesis 37:1—43:14 is a record of the process of maturity. In this stage Jacob experienced

*Jacob was born a “heel holder,”  
or supplanter, as his name indicates.  
But his very being was changed,  
and he became Israel, a man fully  
mature in the experience of life,  
able to bless all persons.*

dealings that caused him to be filled with the transforming life: he was robbed of the treasure of his heart, Joseph; he was stricken with famine and forced to send his sons to Egypt to buy grain; his second son Simeon was detained in Egypt; and then, due to the prolongation of the famine, he was forced to send his youngest son Benjamin to Egypt.

Finally, in Genesis 45 Jacob reached full maturity in life. When his sons returned from Egypt with the news that Joseph was still alive and the ruler over all the land of Egypt, his heart was numb but his spirit revived. On hearing the news, he did not blame anyone regarding the loss of Joseph (vv. 25-28). Nor did he hurry excitedly to Egypt but had fellowship with God by offering sacrifices to Him and receiving God's appearing (46:1-4). Jacob blessed people; he prophesied for God; he worshipped God while leaning on his staff; he was a meek person and full of faith in the promises of God.

In the last fourteen chapters of Genesis there is the record of the life of Joseph. Just as the lives of Abraham and Isaac overlap, and those of Isaac and Jacob, the lives of Jacob and Joseph are even more blended. According to spiritual experience, Jacob and Joseph are one person. Joseph was altogether perfect, having no defects. Therefore, he is not only a type of Christ, who was perfect and without defect, but he also represents the reigning aspect of the mature Israel, the constitution of Christ in Jacob's mature nature. As a mature saint constituted of Christ, Jacob was perfect and reigned through Joseph (41:39-44).

### Conclusion

The book of Genesis ends as it begins—with God's image

and dominion. In the beginning of this book, God created humanity in His image so that humanity might express Him, and He gave humanity His dominion that humanity might represent Him (1:26). This book shows us a complete picture of how human beings can be transformed to express God in His image and represent God with His dominion. After the experiences of so many called ones—of Abraham, who lived a life of faith and in fellowship with God; of Isaac, who inherited the promises, enjoyed, and rested; of Jacob, who was chosen, dealt with, broken, transformed, and eventually filled with life for maturity; and of Joseph, who overcame every environmental hardship and suffering to reign in life—this book concludes with a life that expresses God in His image and represents God with His dominion. However, Genesis portrays only a shadow in the age of typology. Joseph died and was put in a coffin in Egypt (50:26). He and his forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all “died in faith, not receiving the promises but seeing them from afar” (Heb. 11:13). They expected the age of fulfillment, that is, today's New Testament age of reality in which we are, and they depend on us for their perfection so that they might share in this reality (v. 40).

by Jim Batten

### Note

<sup>1</sup>This article draws extensively on the outline and footnotes in the Recovery Version as well as Witness Lee's *Revelations in Genesis: Seeing God's Calling in the Experiences of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*.

### Works Cited

Lee, Witness. Footnotes. Recovery Version of the Bible. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 2003. Print.

## The Constitution of the Spirit as Seen in the Life of Jacob

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 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.

From *The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* by Watchman Nee, p. 171