

**The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.**  
**The Tree of Life for week ending 07/14/02.**

**“A great sign appeared in heaven...”**

**Part 3**

**A Profile of Jacob**

We are continuing our study on the third sign found in heaven as recorded for us in **Revelation 12:1**, which reveals why Satan promotes anti-Semitism and hatred toward the Jews.

**Rev 12:1** *And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman [Israel] clothed with the sun [Jacob, Gen 37:9-10], and the moon under her feet.*

Three important signs were given to the Jews:

1. The sign of circumcision, a sign that Abraham would perpetuate the Jewish race, **Gen 17:11**.
2. The sign of the virgin birth, pointing to the hypostatic union and the relationship that Jesus Christ would have with His Father, **Isa 7:14**.
3. The sign of Israel becoming a nation, manifested by the ten plagues.

Isaac's blessing of Jacob is related to this sign, **Heb 11:20**, *“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.”* The phrase “by faith” is translated from the Greek noun “*pistei*,” which literally means “*through the instrument of doctrine.*” The Greek noun “*pistis*,” translated “faith,” has three different meanings:

1. That which causes trust and faith; translated “faithfulness,” “reliability,” “proof,” and “pledge.”
2. “Faith” in the active sense of believing; translated “faith,” “trust,” and “confidence.”
3. That which is believed, or the body of faith and belief; translated “doctrine.”

The corrected translation of **Heb 11:20** reads: *“By means of doctrine resident in the soul, even concerning things destined to be [the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant], Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau.”* Isaac blessed Jacob as a part of the covenant, and he blessed Esau outside the covenant. He gave Esau all he could give an unbelieving son, but he could **not** give him the spiritual heritage. In **Gen 27:36**, Esau blamed Jacob for stealing his birthright and his blessing, but Esau is the one who allowed it to happen. And while Isaac had been deceived by two people that he thought loved him (his wife and son), it did not change his decision. Spiritual growth and maximum doctrine resident in the soul gave him the objectivity and courage to stick with a major command decision.

**Psa 119:165** *“Great peace have they which love thy doctrine: and nothing shall offend them.”*

**1Co 2:15** *“But he who is spiritual discerns [appraises] all things, yet he himself is discerned by no man.”*

Your real spiritual “status quo” is known only to you and the Lord! You are not subject to investigation by other believers, not even your pastor; this is the privacy of the priesthood, as in **1Co 11:28, 2Co 13:5; Gal 6:4**. You do not have the right to examine other believers because you do not have the power to look into their souls and examine their motivation. We are not to examine the fruit of others, **1Co 2:15**. For the mature believer, no one knows his innermost thoughts. No one else knew why Isaac allowed the deception to prevail, but God did. We cannot scrutinize, appraise, or judge a spiritual man. We do not even know ourselves as well as we think we do, **Psa 19:12**, “*Who can understand his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults*”; **1Co 4:4**, “*For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.*”

In evaluating other Christians, we have a tendency to believe evil if we dislike them, and refuse to believe anything evil if we like them; in either case, it is none of our business. We must remember that we never have all the facts; in fact, this is why pastors should not council. We must all learn how to live our own lives as unto the Lord and let others live theirs, **1Pe 4:15**, “*By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a **troublesome meddler** [one who violates the privacy of others].*” Privacy is violated by gossiping, maligning, and judging.

Isaac had the moral courage to stand by a right decision no matter how great the pressure or ridicule. Isaac the failure emerges as Isaac the supergrace hero, the spiritual champion with noble courage, a man of doctrine. The wimp is gone and the man emerges because doctrine became more real to Isaac than anything else in life. In **Gen 27:21-33**, Isaac recognized that the Lord would not have allowed him to give the blessing to Jacob unless it was the Lord’s will.

**Gen 27:34-37** *When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father!” And he said, “Your brother came deceitfully, and has taken away your blessing.” Then he said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted [deceived] me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.” And he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” But Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Behold, I have made him your master, and all his relatives I have given to him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?”*

Isaac is old and blind, but he is also spiritual, and his spiritual eyes are now opened to the fact that God has overruled and Esau was not God’s choice. He had already been told years ago that Esau would serve Jacob, **Gen 25:23**, “*And the Lord said to her [Rebekah], ‘Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples shall be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger.’*” Isaac did give a measure of blessing to Esau, but it was not the covenant blessing that guaranteed fantastic prosperity, and power and authority over the family, and Esau bore such a grudge that he made plans to kill his brother Jacob, **Gen 27:38-41**.

In **Heb 11:21** we see a “chiseler” and deceiver who made it to spiritual maturity and visible heroship in one lifetime: “***By faith*** Jacob, as he was dying...” We need to see

a profile of Jacob and learn some of his background, in order to fully understand that third sign in heaven, which Satan despises because it glorifies the grace of God.

Satan hates to see the grace of God glorified, because it reveals that God is not unfair or unjust, and that He would do anything and everything for those whom He has created. In the angelic conflict, Satan attempts to present a case that God is unfair and unjust and a God who is neither merciful nor gracious. In this dispensation of grace, the Church-age, God demonstrates the fallacy of the satanic lie through people who are graced-out to the maximum, people like us. Think of how could God use a man like the Apostle Paul, the man we read about in **Act 8:3**, "*But Saul began destroying the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.*" He was a genius in the natural realm and he became the greatest Bible teacher in the early church, yet he said in **1Co 1:17**, "*For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, that the cross of Christ should not be made void.*" He could have used "clever speech" being a genius, but God would not allow him to use the strength of his flesh. It was said about him in **2Co 10:10**, "*For they say, 'His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive, and his speech contemptible.'*" When God can reach out to someone like Paul and with all his weaknesses use him in the angelic conflict, it is devastating to Satan. Therefore, we need to look at the man who represents the "*great sign in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun.*"

1. Jacob was the son of Isaac and the twin brother of Esau, and he was also an ancestor of Jesus. He was nicknamed Jacob because, at the birth of the twins, "his hand **took hold** of Esau's heel," **Gen 25:26**, "*And afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.*" According to the accounts in *Genesis*, Jacob continued to "take hold" of the possessions of others, such as his brother's birthright, **Gen 25:29-34**, his father's blessing, **Gen 27:1-29**, and his father-in-law's flocks and herds, **Gen 30:25-43**, **31:1**. His name means supplanter or swindler. Webster's dictionary's definition of "supplant" is to "overthrow by force or treachery or deception." He was named "one who overthrows." From his birth he seems to have had an ingrained trait to outdo his brother or anyone else in his path. Jacob had a nasty habit of deception, and his family trend and family traits made him a good liar.
2. Jacob tried to take Esau's birthright for a mere bowl of beans, **Gen 25:31**. He waited for an opportunity and then seized it. In **Gen 25:24-27**, we read, "*When her days [Rebekah, Isaac's wife] to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. And afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them. When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents.*" The word "peaceful," which is the Greek adjective "*tam*," means pious, gentle, or dear. However, we read in the next verse, **Gen 25:28**, "*Now Isaac loved Esau, because he had a taste for game [hunting (Esau was tough and athletic)]; but Rebekah loved Jacob.*" Right away we notice problems of comparison and favoritism. A very unfortunate fact is that the children were loved on the basis of how they pleased their parents or whether they possessed the same interest as their parents. The mother loved Jacob because he was

like she was. He was gentle and sweet, and he liked to stay at home with mommy in the house. Isaac liked Esau because he was “manly.” Let us see what kind of person Jacob was, **Gen 25:29-34**, “*And when Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; and Esau said to Jacob, ‘Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished.’ Therefore his name was called Edom. But Jacob said, ‘First sell me your birthright.’ And Esau said, ‘Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?’ And Jacob said, ‘First swear to me,’ so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.*” It suddenly occurred to Jacob that this would be a good opportunity of seizing the right to be the spiritual leader of the family. He decided to **take advantage** of his brother’s weakness and rob the blessing from him. This was the motto of Jacob’s life—“**Take advantage!**” Jacob had lived with his parents for 77 years, and he had undoubtedly been told that the Lord had said he would have the birthright. Therefore, he was not only a traitor to his brother and his father, but also toward his God. In **Gen 25:31**, “*But Jacob said, ‘First sell me your birthright.’*” Here we see the deceitfulness and arrogance in Jacob, actually believing that the things of God, such as the birthright, could be bought. Many religious swindlers are still selling things today, and this is evil and against the Word of God. Money cannot buy eternal life, happiness, love, or virtue. Paul said in **2Co 2:17**, “*For we are not like many, peddling the word of God.*”

In **Gen 25:32**, “*And Esau said, ‘Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?’*” Esau was an unbeliever, yet hundreds of thousands of believers today have this very same attitude. They allow their carnal and physical desires to drown out the conviction of the Holy Spirit and obscure the vision of divine blessings for the promise of temporal things. Very few believers even recognize the privilege of gathering together for public worship through the intake of doctrine. For the average believer, there is no thought of the duty he owes to God—no sense of **requirement**. He does not love God with all of his **strength**, as in **Mar 12:30**, **Luk 10:27**, **Deu 6:5**. The average believer gives no consideration to any responsibility or obligation to His Lord and Savior.

Even the communion service is taken very lightly by many believers who do not come and celebrate this great event of the Cross when their local assembly gathers together for that purpose. This was so sacred to the early church that they did it daily, **Act 2:46**. So many of God’s people have sold out—like Esau they have said, “*What use then is the birthright to me?*” As believers we should all pause to remember what the Lord requires from us:

- To be occupied with Him.
- To be governed by His doctrine.
- To love and to serve Him.
- To have all five parts of our soul in complete submission to Him—emotion, self consciousness, volition, mentality, and conscience.
- Accountability for what we hear, **Deu 18:19**.
- Fulfilling any vow (commitment) we have made, **Deu 23:21**.
- To live by these three principles: (1) justice, (2) loving mercy (grace in action), and (3) walking humbly with our God, **Mic 6:8**.

David tells us that only the wicked assume that God will not require anything, **Psa 10:13**. The more doctrine you learn and the more committed you are, the more shall be required of you, **Luk 12:48**.

Many of God's children, although they can never lose their salvation, have sold parts of their birthright away. At the moment of salvation, every believer is given fantastic blessings and assets, and yet they are so involved in the devil's world that they do not have time for their heavenly birthright. They are given an eternal inheritance in **Eph 1:14**, yet they ignore that inheritance. They have been given eternal life, but through negative volition toward doctrine, they have ignored the reality of living in that eternal life in time. They have been reconciled to God, but they ignore the relationship that comes through reconciliation. They have been created a new spiritual species but do not live in the new creation. They have been entered into the Royal Family of God forever but refuse to gather together with the Royal Family of God in time. They have been given equal privilege and equal opportunity to glorify God but have ignored the divine opportunities and privileges. They have been given the universal priesthood of the believer but refuse to function as priests. They have been made royal ambassadors for Christ at the moment of salvation but have sent a message to their King: "I am not interested in representing You in this foreign land!" They are indwelt by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and have ignored Their presence. They have been given the unique availability of divine power but insist on relying on their own disgusting, worthless, pathetic human power. They have been given a portfolio of invisible assets but have sold out to the cosmic system. They have been given the unique predesigned plan of God but insist on relying on their own plans. They have been given a spiritual gift to build up and edify their local assembly, but they are too busy investing in the devil's world. They have been transferred into the kingdom of God and delivered from the kingdom of Satan but have refused to accept that liberty and freedom. They have been given direct access to God but do not have time to approach Him. They have been given escrow blessings but would rather receive cosmic compensation. They have been given divine problem-solving devices but instead rely on human solutions. Therefore, before we think of condemning Esau for selling his birthright, we should look closer at ourselves to stay alert and take care that we do not sell the privileges of our new birth to the cosmic system of Satan.