

# **THE LIFE OF JACOB**

**By Titus Chu**

## **MESSAGE ONE: THE DIVINE ROMANCE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The life of Jacob has three stages.

#### **The First Stage**

Jacob grew up as a typical “second-generation” believer, knowing many spiritual things objectively. He followed his father Isaac, but he did not have a God who was real to him.

#### **The Second Stage**

After Jacob left home he began to have real experiences of the Lord. He came to know the Lord personally and subjectively. His life became romantic.

#### **The Third Stage**

Jacob became one with the romantic God in His operation. He became a blessing to the entire earth.

### **I. THE MEANING OF GOD AND THE MEANING OF THE UNIVERSE**

We must realize that God is a romantic God. The meaning of the universe is that we would enjoy this romantic God. If God in your experience is merely a logical God, a righteous God, or a God who takes care of all your needs, then you know that something is wrong with your Christian life. Your life was predestinated to be a romantic life. Your experience of Christ must be a romantic experience.

In the beginning of the Bible there was God, who created the universe. At the end of the Bible there is a couple, Christ and His Bride. Thus the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation is a divine romance. A “romance” implies a continual transaction - a cycle of action and reaction. In a romance, each action brings in a reaction, which brings in a further action, which brings in a further reaction. This process continues throughout the romance.

When a brother gets married, he becomes very romantic. His wife becomes the meaning of his life and his existence. At the wedding he may feel, “I am at the peak of my romance.” But this peak is only in the realm of sensation. The romantic process will continue throughout the couple’s life. After 35 years of marriage and having children, there’s no longer the same sensation as there was in the initial stage. However, after 35 years the romance has much more substance. The sensations may have disappeared, but the marriage has become more realistic. The brother then feels, “I cannot live without her.” There is a speechless commitment between the couple. The brother would say, “I am committed to my wife, and she is committed to me. Our romance is no longer in the realm of sensation, but it is full of substance. The purpose of my life is for her to get the most comfort, the most benefit, and the most happiness.”

The first half of the book of Genesis covers many things, but the entire second half of Genesis covers one person, Jacob. This shows that Jacob was very important and precious in God’s eyes. Jacob’s entire life was a romantic process. From the beginning of Jacob’s life, when he was first chosen by God, until the end of his life, when his name was changed to Israel, Jacob’s life was romantic. But if Jacob had never realized that his existence was for God, and that this God is a romantic God, he would never have had such a romantic life. If there is no person to enjoy a divine romance with God, then He has lost the meaning of His existence. Without this divine romance the universe itself has no meaning. God is the initiator and the generator of the divine romance. He created the universe as the wonderful setting for this romance.

### **A. Jehovah and Elohim**

God has two names for the divine romance: Jehovah and Elohim. The name “Jehovah” implies “He who is and who was and who is coming” (Rev. 1:4, 8). Our God who is generating the divine romance is Jehovah, the one who is, who was, and who is coming. That means there is no romance on earth that can be as lasting as this one. The name “Elohim” means “mighty, faithful One.” Our God who is the focus of this romance is Elohim, who guards and keeps the romance in His faithfulness and in His might.

Suppose an immature young boy likes a young girl, and they begin to date. This young boy is not mighty, nor faithful. He will change his mind when he sees another girl who is more appealing. That’s why dating so often doesn’t end up in marriage. The ones who are dating find out that they are not mighty - they have no ability to keep their relationship. They are not faithful - after a short time they wonder what they saw in the other person. We often treat God this way. We say at a church meeting, “Lord, I give my life to You,” but after the meeting we forget Him. First we behold the Lord, and then we go watch a movie. When we say, “Lord, I give You my life,” the Lord knows better. He would say, “I love you, but I don’t trust what you’re saying. You don’t even trust yourself.” Our love is temporary, fickle, and constantly changing, because we are neither Jehovah nor Elohim.

The divine romance, however, is real and trustworthy, because it is generated by a God who is both Jehovah and Elohim. “Jehovah” means that His very person is beyond and outside of time. Therefore His love is everlasting. With Jehovah there is no such thing as past, present, and future. The love from such a One can never cease or change. God would say to us, “You may not be trustworthy, but I am Jehovah. I am eternal. With Me there is no limitation of space or time. When I love you, it is with the very nature of eternity.” But this alone is not adequate. Our God is also “Elohim,” the mighty and faithful One. He is strong in His romance.

When He pursues, He really pursues. When He gives Himself to us, He really gives Himself. He guards and protects our romance with His might and according to His faithfulness. This is the reason our romance with God is so special and marvelous. The never-changing One (Jehovah) loves us, and the mighty One (Elohim) is faithful in His love.

When we tell the Lord we love Him, He enjoys it and appreciates it. He knows we are not trustworthy in ourselves, so He will substantiate our love by dispensing Himself into us. The Lord says, “You tell Me you love Me today, but you may change tomorrow. When I say I love you, I say it with the element of eternity. My love for you will never change. Before you were born I loved you. I selected you and predestinated you already. I made sure that your life would be in my hands. Now as Jehovah I will come into you and add the element of eternity. Even when you are changing in your emotions, in the deepest part of your being there will be love of eternal value. And I will add Myself to you as Elohim, to be your strength and your faithfulness.”

We must remember this when Satan accuses us and asks, “How can you say you love the Lord?” We should reply to Satan, “The Lord Himself came into me. I have the eternal and unchanging love deep within my spirit. The love within me for the Lord is faithful and strong.” Eventually the Lord who abides in us loves the Lord who is in the heavens. Yet He exercises His love within and through our person. This generates the process of the ongoing divine romance.

## **B. God’s Desire, God’s Will, And God’s Purpose**

This divine romance came into being because the eternal God had a desire. We should not think that God created man by accident. Man was created according to God’s desire. Even though God was all-sufficient and everlasting, without us He was empty and lonely. In the universe there was no other being. Eventually He created the angels, and they worshipped Him. But that didn’t satisfy Him. He wanted a counterpart with His very life and nature who would match Him and identify with Him.

We should not think that we are the only ones who have a need. God Himself has a need. He needs to be comforted, He needs to be satisfied, He needs to be fulfilled. This need of God produced a desire, and God's desire became a will. He made up His mind to create man. He made man in a way that was very different from the angels. Man was not created merely as a spirit. Angels are purely spirit, but we are not. Man was created with substance, and only after that did he become spiritual. God made man from the dust of the earth, and then breathed into man the breath of life, forming the spirit within him. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man has a spirit for the divine romance (Zech. 12:1). Our spirit is now the center of the universe.

When God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18a), He was actually saying that it is not good for God to be alone. When God said, "I will make him a helper as his counterpart" (Gen. 2:18b), He was actually describing His own purpose. First there was a desire within God based upon His need. Then there was a will, a plan, to carry out that desire. God's purpose is His way of accomplishing His will. God carried out His purpose by making man just like Him. Man was made in God's image inwardly, and after His likeness outwardly (Gen. 1:26). That was the beginning of the divine romance. God formed man's body with the dust of the ground, and breathed into him the breath of life (Gen. 2:7), which formed man's spirit. When the spirit and the body came together, man became a living soul. Our soul is our very person. We were created as a three-part being because God had a desire, then a will, and then a purpose. The only reason we were created was to fulfill God's purpose. Furthermore, the purpose of our own existence is to satisfy Him as His counterpart. This is the wonderful divine romance.

### **C. God's Administration, God's Operation, And God's Economy**

The Greek word *oikonomia* can be translated into three words: administration, operation, and economy. God's administration is His government, His operation is His activity, and His economy is His dispensing. God is the governmental administration in this divine romance. This means that God can say to us, "I will make you My lover. I will arrange everything so that you love Me. I am going to pursue you and govern your whole life so that you can't escape." Because He is the administration He will always have a way with us. Even if we have to go to outer darkness in the next age, eventually we will be filled with appreciation and gratitude for His government. The believers who come out of the outer darkness are part of the Bride, which means that they love God when the discipline is over. The holy city New Jerusalem is a city of love, not a city of government, because all of God's administration results in our loving Him. We should realize this about our own lives in this age. Why do we live in the city where we are? Why do we attend the university we are in? It is all part of God's administration so that we can enjoy the most romance.

Regarding God's administration, we are passive. We have no choice, and can't change His government. But God's operation is different. In God's operation there is something positive and active operating within us, causing us to love Him even though we have never seen Him. "Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8). God is not only the administration outside of us, but He is the operation within us. He governs our lives so that we would love Him, and then He operates within us to generate the substance of that love. God's administration forces us to love Him, but His operation within us causes us to love Him genuinely.

God's operation is according to His economy, which is the very dispensing of love. For example, often when we sing an affectionate song to the Lord, we enter into His economy. By His dispensing we get brought into a realm where we can say, "Lord, I love You so much. I can sacrifice everything for You. I can pay any price, because You are so beautiful. You are so lovely." This is God's economy. During this week of the college training we need to experience God's economy more and more. May we all enjoy the dispensing of God's love. May we all enter into the meaning of our lives and the meaning of God's existence. Then we will fulfill the wonderful divine romance.

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