

# **JACOB: A LIFE WITH HEAVENLY PROVISIONS**

**By Titus Chu**

## **MESSAGE ONE: THE MOST ROMANTIC PERSON IN THE BIBLE**

We now come to the life of the most romantic person in the Bible. His identity may be a surprise to us. We might think the most romantic person is Abraham. Certainly he is the most attractive and lovely person in the Bible; everyone seems to appreciate him. However, the most romantic person in the Bible is Jacob. This probably does not match our idea. What do we mean by romantic? Usually we define “romance” as what happens when a young man meets a young woman and they lose their souls to each other. They gaze into each other’s eyes all the time. Then eventually they get married and their “romance” ends. But that is not what we mean by “romantic.” That is too cheap and too simple. A romantic life is filled with all sorts of rich experiences. It is a life filled with excitement, filled with color, filled with difficulty, filled with victories and defeats, filled with capability and incapability. If you want your life to be meaningful, then your life must be romantic.

That means there should be no dullness. Your life must be filled with color all the time. Unfortunately, most of us live a life that is too dull. Our lives do not have enough meaning. If we love the Lord, our life will be very colorful. That means we will have many ups and downs. We will have both prevailing and defeated experiences. We will have many colorful times, both bright and dark. We will have times of joy and times of sorrow. We should all ask ourselves, “What about my life?” It is very possible we would say, “Right now I’m in school. I go to all the meetings. I go to school, I study, then I go home. Then I go to the meeting. Then I go home. This is my life. In the summer, I get a job. When school starts again, I study. Meanwhile, I make all the meetings.” What kind of a dull life is this? This is not romantic! This is not colorful! We should all refuse to live such a life!

Our God is the very creator of the universe. The universe is filled with color. There is a story that the first remark one astronaut made while gazing at the earth from his orbit was, "Beautiful!" If you consider how small the earth is compared to the entire universe, it is almost nothing. But this astronaut called it "beautiful." We should tell the Lord, "Lord, if You are such a colorful God, if You are able to create the universe in such a beautiful way, then surely You can make my life colorful! You must do something with me! You must make my life colorful and romantic!" We should be bold with God. We should even pray, "God, if You don't make my life colorful, then in eternity I am going to hate You for making my life boring!" God enjoys this. He wants us to pray this way. Have you ever told God, "If You don't do such and such, I am going to hate You!"? Or do you always just say, "Lord, have mercy on me, for I am a sinner." God would say, "I know you are a sinner." We often pray, "Sorry, Lord, I goofed again." The Lord would say, "I know. Don't talk about it anymore. I know. Tomorrow you will be defeated again. Why aren't you tired of this already? Can You stop telling Me your sorry, and please tell Me whether you love Me or you hate Me?" When we pray to the Lord in such a genuine way we will realize, "Wow, my relationship with Christ is quite romantic! My Christian life is not dull! My life is colorful and exciting!"

In this respect, whoever is not a second-generation Christian is blessed. It is easy for those who are second-generation to be dull. The children's meetings, junior-high meetings and summer Bible schools only serve one purpose, to make you dull. Those of you who are second-generation, be honest. Eventually your logic is dull. Your thinking is dull. You become just a dull, religious person. You should tell the Lord, "Lord, I only have this one life to live. Compared with eternity, it's almost nothing. These few decades I have on this earth will determine how I treat You in eternity! If You don't let me have a colorful life, I will hate You!" Don't you believe this prayer is more than reasonable? But how many of us have ever prayed this way? "God, if You don't do a certain thing, I will hate You"? We are too dull and religious. Our Christian life must be a romantic life.

Some people's attitude is that they will not make it in this age. Their life will not satisfy God, so they will just make it up in the next age and spend a thousand years in the outer darkness. But there is nothing romantic about the outer darkness. At most it is interesting for one day, but a thousand years is too much. This is why we must tell the Lord, "If I don't make it in this age, You are responsible! What can I do? I am just a young person. You are God! I just have this one prayer, that You fill my life with romance, a romance with You. My life must be filled with ecstasy, filled with joy, filled with sorrow, filled with victory, and even filled with failure." If a Christian life were overcoming all the time, it would be dull. Suppose every morning you were to rise up and say, "Hallelujah." Suppose you were in spirit all the time. Who would want to live such a life? If that is an overcomer, it is too dull. We should realize, "Lord, I need a little failure. I need some tears of repentance." Both the joy of overcoming and the tears of repentance are precious. Both are very romantic. Sometimes you may go to the Lord in tears and say, "Lord, I'm sorry for what I did. Lord, I'm sorry for my sloppiness." Isn't this romantic? Isn't this much better than always telling the Lord, "Lord, I'm fine. Hallelujah." To always be "fine" is boring. To always feel victorious makes your life common. Our life should not always be "fine." We need all sorts of experiences. There are times we should feel victorious, and say, "Hallelujah!" Then there are times we should feel defeated, and say, "Lord, I'm sorry." This is to live a romantic life with the Lord.

### **JACOB LIVED A LIFE OF ROMANTIC EXPERIENCES**

When a young couple is dating, as they hold each other's hands, they feel that the whole earth belongs to them. This doesn't seem logical, but experientially this is very real. Married couples often

reminisce about the preciousness of their courtship. When children are growing up, the parents often tell their children about that time, and remember its enjoyment. This is a romantic, colorful life. God is the same way. Our God is the greatest lover in the universe. He desires to love and be loved. He desires that all our life would be extremely romantic. This is why He created a role model for us to follow. That role model is Jacob. If you read Jacob's life again and again, you will find out that his whole life is so romantic.

Even before he was born, he was fighting with his twin brother in his mother's womb. Isn't that romantic? Only twins can have this kind of experience. A mother of twins told me that this was her experience also, that her boys fought inside her womb. And when Jacob was delivered he knew how to grab onto his brother's heel. This is romantic. Jacob's life is so meaningful, so full of feeling, so full of color. From the day that he was conceived until the day that he died, his life was filled with romantic experiences. Even his death was romantic. When he was old and ready to die, he worshipped God while leaning on his staff. As he leaned on his staff, he told God, "Thank you. All my life has been so meaningful, so valuable." His death was dignified, royal, even heavenly. From the beginning to the end, Jacob's life was filled with heavenly and romantic experiences.

### **ROMANCE IS NOT SHALLOW**

Our relationship with God is like a marriage. When a marriage relationship is shallow, because it is between two spoiled and self-centered people, it is likely that it will end in divorce. But we can never divorce God. Even if we want to give up on Him, He will refuse to "sign the papers." God would say, "I am responsible. I am the Husband. As long as I don't sign the papers, you are not free to go your own way and do your nonsense." We are in a deep and profound romance with God. Our relationship with Him is not shallow, but filled with deep and heavenly experiences. Such a romance is very different from a worldly romance. A worldly romance is like a popular song: "I

love you. I faint at one glance from your eyes. I can never forget the smell of your hair. I see a poem in your smile.” All of these sentiments are not bad, but they are shallow. Our romance with God is filled with meaning. All of the experiences in our Christian life are profound and meaningful. Our experiences of victory are filled with meaning, and our experiences of defeat are filled with meaning.

We will often have experiences of being very low in our Christian life. We should not think that this won't happen to us. All Christians have low times. Even older and more mature Christians still have low times. The only difference is that when an older Christian is low, only he knows. When a younger Christian is low, everyone knows, and he wants everyone to know. When you are young, everyone knows when you have touched something real, and everyone knows when you get defeated. You don't care if they know, because you are young. But in any case, all of these experiences are meaningful. Your high experiences and low experiences are all meaningful. They are not just something shallow for you to talk about. They will last for eternity. Your high, victorious experiences are for eternity. Your low, defeated experiences are for eternity. Your times of enjoying Christ, which are so satisfying, are for eternity. Your times of dryness, of losing the Lord's presence, are also for eternity. This is to have a romance with God, filled with heavenly experiences. Such a Christian life is rich, profound, and colorful.

### **ROMANCE SHOULD HAVE A CONSUMMATION**

The romantic life of Jacob had a consummation. All of his experiences were not for the sake of experience alone. Jacob, with his life of heavenly experiences, eventually entered into the divine, ultimate consummation. We need to remember that God has a purpose. We can see from the Bible that God desires to consummate all of His work in creation into one entity, the Bride of Christ, which is also one unique testimony, the New Jerusalem. This is the final consummation. This means that none

of the romantic experiences we have in the Christian life are just for the sake of having experiences. None of our prevailing or defeated experiences are just for themselves. All of our experiences together are for the divine, ultimate consummation.

A consummation usually means that everything has been put together and formed into one entity. For example, a final exam is usually a consummation, requiring you to know all of the content of that class. That test is the consummation. I know a young man who did not study while in college. He was not a good student. Then he went to law school and graduated as one of the top students in his class. The process he went through may not have been so good, but eventually his consummation was outstanding. He graduated magna cum laud.

But I have also seen people who did well from kindergarten through high school but did not have a good consummation. From this example, you can see that it is not the process that counts but the consummation. In our Christian life, all of our experiences lead us to a divine and heavenly consummation. This consummation is according to God's purpose.

If your Christian life has no consummation, it is like getting A's and B's in school but ultimately flunking out. Some brothers have good and positive experiences all their life, in all their endeavors, but there is no consummation. God is very interesting. He is so romantic with us and desires that we be romantic with Him, but He has a consummation in view. The reason we are enjoying the Lord at this very moment is for that consummation. The school we go to is for that consummation. We have church meetings because we need a consummation. Eventually all of our experiences - whether victorious or defeated, whether high or low, whether blossoming or withering - are put together for a consummation.

In our Christian life, something must come out in the end that is the divine, ultimate consummation. This consummation matches identically what is on God's heart. As we have said, Jacob is the most romantic person in the Bible. Jacob had a romantic life

filled with heavenly experiences. He was not filled with doctrines. There is nothing experiential in doctrines. What marked Jacob's life were heavenly experiences. He could say, "I am a man of experience. My failures are experiences; my good days are experiences. I have had nothing but experiences all my life. Everything I have gone through is related to God Himself. All of these experiences together are unto the divine, ultimate consummation."

### **HEAVENLY PROVISIONS FOR A ROMANTIC LIFE**

The title of this message is "A Life with Heavenly Provisions." Provisions play the most crucial role if you want your life to be romantic. For example, some countries have a culture that causes the people to be romantic. In my travels I have found that French people are romantic. I would be glad to return to France over and over. When you drive around France, and stop in any small town to eat in a restaurant, there is something there that is attractive.

The French culture, as a provision, makes the French people very romantic. How romantic you can be is decided by what provisions you have. This is true also in the spiritual realm. For us to have heavenly experiences resulting in a consummation, God has provided us some romantic items to give us a romantic life.

### **THE FIRST PROVISION: WE HAVE A SPIRIT**

Consider the setting of the universe. Isn't the universe in itself romantic? And within the universe there is a tiny little place called earth. We may think that the earth is big, but compared to the whole universe the earth could almost disappear. Compared to all the galaxies and solar systems the earth is almost nothing. Yet this earth is so beautiful. Furthermore, we are here on this earth. The Bible tells us that the heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and within man there is a spirit. Surprisingly,

the spirit within man is the center of the whole universe. God wants us to live a romantic life, and our spirit is the source of all the romance. Our romantic Christian life begins with our spirit. The universe is for the earth, the earth is for man, and man has a spirit which can contain God Himself. God is Spirit, and our spirit is for God. This is God's first provision to us. God, who is Spirit, has given us a spirit, and this spirit is very romantic.

**THE SECOND PROVISION:  
CHRIST IS OUR "FATHER"**

The second provision God has given us can be seen in the way that Jacob was formed. Jacob had an unusual father, Isaac, and an unusual mother, Rebecca. Without these parents Jacob could never have had such a heavenly, experiential, romantic life. Outwardly his father Isaac did not seem like a great person. We need to realize, however, that Jacob's father typifies Christ.

Outwardly, Christ is always ill-treated. Today people use the Lord's name as a joke or to release their anger. If I were God I would write a law in the heavens saying, "Whosoever mentions My name in vain will be struck by lightning." Then everyone would be afraid of God. If someone were to use your name in a negative way, you would react and defend yourself.

Can you believe that the Lord is constantly blasphemed, yet He never gets mad? When He was on the earth, the Lord had reason to be offended many times, yet He didn't do a thing. Rather He just let every one take advantage of Him. This is still true today. People are living on the earth that He created. People receive the sun and the rain that He provides. People live off the harvest that He allows to grow. Yet these same people blaspheme His name, and He doesn't do a thing. In this way the Lord Jesus is like Isaac.

This is true not only of the unbelievers. Consider how much we Christians take advantage of God. It is just as if the Lord were dating us. When a young man is interested in a young woman,

and he calls to invite her out for dinner, she usually says that she is busy even if she has nothing to do. After much coaxing perhaps she says 'yes.' Then the young man thinks, "What a favor she's done for me. She's promised to have dinner with me." The Lord is often dating us in the same way. He calls us again and again, and maybe after a day or two we finally say, "Oh, Lord Jesus." Then the Lord is so happy. But most of the time we forget about Him. We are busy with our hobbies, our studies, our work. We often treat the Lord very unfairly. We remember Him only when we need Him. We take advantage of the Lord, but He stands there saying nothing. This is like Isaac.

Whenever Isaac's enemies came, he just moved away. He did not fight or react. Some people came and took his well. It seems that everyone could take advantage of Isaac. In this way he typifies Christ. Have you ever seen Christ in such a way? Christ of all people is the most meek and gentle. Outwardly He even seems weak. Everyone takes advantage of Him. People use His name in vain. They blaspheme Him. They even use His name to curse others. And yet the Lord does not respond.

Think about how many times we have taken advantage of the Lord. The Lord has asked us so often to spend time with Him, and we promised Him we would, but we didn't do it. He is constantly asking us to turn to Him, even just to call on His name a few times. But we always have excuses. "I'm too tired in the morning when I wake up." "I'm too busy preparing for class." Out of a hundred times that the Lord comes to us, if we promise once to come to Him we think we are an overcomer. Then we have a testimony to give in the meetings.

Often a brother may testify in a meeting, "I really touched the Lord in my morning watch!" That implies that all the other times he didn't have morning watch. Yet all the saints are impressed by his testimony. This probably means that all the saints don't have a regular morning watch either. Shouldn't the Lord strike such a church with lightning? What kind of a church is this? But the Lord is like Isaac. He doesn't react in anger. He still loves us. He still wants to court us.

God provides us with the most romantic Christ for our heavenly experiences. Our Christ is like Isaac. You can irritate Him, neglect Him, do wrong by Him, offend Him, even get mad at Him. Have you ever told the Lord, “Lord, I hate You!”? We don’t tell strangers on the street that we hate them. We only say these words to someone we really love. When siblings fight, sometimes they say, “I hate you.” My response when my children say this to me is, “That’s right. That’s because you love me.” When you tell the Lord that you hate Him, you realize something very alive is happening. Even when you misbehave, when you are not fair to the Lord at all, the Lord is so patient and forgiving. You can even “roast” the Lord but He still loves you. Because He is the resurrected one, He can go through all this. His love doesn’t change for us. In this way He is like Isaac, the father of Jacob. We must remember that Christ is our “father” in the same way. He may seem weak outwardly. He will allow us to ignore Him, mistreat Him, or take advantage of Him. He will not react or condemn us. He is meek and tender, and will continue to love us. This is the second provision for us to live a romantic life.

### **THE THIRD PROVISION: CHRIST IS A WELL OF LIVING WATER**

The first provision God has given us is the human spirit. God, who is Spirit, gave us a human spirit. The second provision God has given us is a very good father, Christ. Christ, as typified by Isaac, can be treated unfairly, yet He never murmurs or gets upset. Now we come to the third provision: a well called Beer-lahai-roi (Gen. 25:11). This is where Isaac dwelt and where Jacob was born. Beer-lahai-roi means “the well of the living One who upholds me.” This is Christ as a well of living water for us to enjoy.

Sometimes in our experience we realize that we have offended the Lord. Eventually we go to Him and ask for forgiveness. Perhaps we pray, “Lord, forgive me. I’m sinful. I have told You that I love You, but that’s not so real. Many times I am not fair

to You, Lord. I've offended You. Please forgive me." We might pray this way until tears come out. Although our prayer is genuine, we may be abiding in our self-pity and in our weakness. Even when we are so much in the Lord's presence, we still have self-love. When we repent, "Lord, have mercy on me! I am so terrible!" we enjoy it because the sensation feels good. This is not wrong. If we want our Christian life to be romantic we do need this kind of prayer. Sometimes we can abide in our "sorrow" for quite a while because it's enjoyable. The feeling is real. In our experience, however, we should not stop there. As we begin to behold the Lord, He should become a well of living water to us. This means that there is a fountain of joy, a spring of living water, coming out of our spirit and flooding our whole person. We begin our prayer by repenting, but we end it overflowing with joyfulness.

One day, when I was young, I was preaching the gospel to a man whose heart was very hard. He refused to repent. Another young brother and I were speaking to him; we tried and tried but he wouldn't believe. Eventually we said, "Why don't you just try to pray? If the Lord is real, you will touch Him. If He is not real, then when you pray nothing will happen, and you can just forget about Him." So he prayed. All of a sudden he started to laugh. He touched the Lord! Then he told us, "I am so happy!" This is because when we behold the Lord, He becomes a well to us. He becomes a spring of joy that overcomes all of our limitations.

First, Christ is like Isaac. That means we can ill-treat Him, and He will take it. Actually we are actually ill-treating Him all the time. When we come to a college training like this one we feel that we are doing the Lord a little favor. How many of us have the sense that when we come to such a training we should pray, "Lord, it is only by Your mercy that I am here"? Yet at the same time, it doesn't matter how much we ill-treat Him. It doesn't matter what we have done to Him, or how terrible our condition is. The moment we turn to the Lord and begin to behold Him, we find out that He is a well. He is a fountain. A fountain of life comes into us and flows through us. We have to say, "Lord, thank You! I didn't realize that my life could be this romantic."

No person can treat us better than Christ Himself. Even our own parents would not allow us to treat them badly all the time and still take care of us when we need it. But Christ is the most romantic person. What marks His romantic character is that we can do whatever we want to Him, and He will take it. Then as soon as we turn to Him to behold Him, He will become a well of living water, a life supply that upholds us and fills us with joy. Praise the Lord!

### **PRAYER**

“Lord, thank You that even when I ignore You or mistreat You, You will not let me go. I desire that whenever You call me I would quickly turn to You. Lord, I want to behold You. Every time I behold You I enjoy the well of living water. The living water becomes a supply to meet all my needs. This living water washes me, quenches my thirst, and nourishes my spirit. Then I can be a person with a healthy living in Your presence. Thank You, Lord, for Your provisions to me, that I could live a romantic Christian life. I love You, Lord!”

Message given during  
the 1998 college training

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