

## Further Insights from the Life of Jacob

The sovereign grace of God in the life of Jacob was first shown in Gen 25:23 when the Lord explains to Rebekah that the romping unborn twins signified: "... Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; .. The older shall serve the younger."" Because this text appears at the beginning of the Jacob episode, because of the continual strivings between Jacob and Esau, and because of God's fulfillment of his promise in and through Jacob, we conclude that Gen 25:23 defines the entire Jacob episode. It is the divine word that controls every event in the life of this last member of the patriarchal triad.

This verse is included in Paul's confirmation of Jacob's individual election: "And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad--in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls--she was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."" Rom 9:10-13. The Lord God, in order to bring about his commitment to Abraham of a seed through whom the divine promise of cosmic redemption would be fulfilled – "through Isaac shall your offspring be named", 21:12 – ensures the supernatural character of this process by choosing Jacob prior to the birth of two brothers.

We witness the efficacy of this divine election when Jacob makes a vow to God at Bethel [he is the only patriarch to do so] saying, "Jehovah shall be my God," Gen 28:21; when he displays great determination and strenuous effort to secure the divine favor and blessing, ""I will not let you go unless you bless me."" 32:26; and as he continually shows a greater spiritual appreciation of the promise than Esau.

The principle is that the elect of God will have side-by-side with their corruption, an element of truth and vital spirituality, with the latter moving from strength to strength and the former displaying gradually weakening traces of the old nature. The old is never entirely done away with in this life, hence the Lord God continued to discipline this patriarch even in his old age. But why, some may ask, does the old nature never return to its ruling position? The answer is that God's purpose in election always continues, Rom 9:11. In other words, God supernaturally ensures that his saving grace reigns in righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom 5:21.

How then should God's elect live? We are to be all the more diligent to make our calling and election sure by supplementing our faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness brotherly affection and brotherly affection, with love. If these qualities are in you, you will never fail, 2 Pe 1:10, 5-7. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.