

Learning to Trust God

Lesson 13

For whatsoever is born of
God overcometh the
world: and this is the
victory that overcometh
the world, even our faith.
(1 John 5:4)

As the angels ministered
unto Jacob, so certainly
will they minister unto all
of the Lord's humble,
contrite ones. . . .

(TMK 328)

The Time of Jacob's Trouble

Jacob's night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau (Genesis 32:24-30), represents the experience of God's people in the time of trouble. (GC 616)

The assaults of Satan are fierce and determined, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord's eye is upon His people, and His ear listens to their cries. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but the Refiner will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire.

- ~ Just as Jacob was returning to his native country, so will the people of God be on the verge of the heavenly country.
- ~ Just as he was filled with terror that Esau was coming to kill him, so God's people will be facing a death sentence.
- ~ Jacob's company was unarmed and defenseless. His only hope was in the mercy of God and his only defense prayer.

~ Jacob left nothing undone to atone for his wrong to Esau, and so should we do all we can to place ourselves in a proper light with others, to disarm prejudice, and to avert danger to liberty of conscience.

- ~ Jacob was filled with self-reproach (guilt).
- ~ He confessed his sin, acknowledged the mercy of God, and pleaded the covenant God made with his fathers and the promises made to himself.

- ~ Jacob had power with the Angel and prevailed (Hosea 12:4).
- ~ It was through humiliation, repentance, and self-surrender that he prevailed with the Majesty of heaven.

- ~ Satan had accused Jacob before the angels of God and claimed the right to destroy him.
- ~ He moved Esau to march against him.
- ~ During the night of wrestling, he endeavored to force a sense of guilt on Jacob to get him to break his hold on God.

Satan will do the same with us:

- ~ He will stir up the wicked to destroy God's people.
- ~ He will urge his accusations against the people of God.
- ~ He attempts to terrify them that their cases are hopeless and to destroy their faith and to turn from God.

~ While they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out.

Jacob's history is also an assurance that God will not cast off those who have been deceived and tempted and betrayed into sin, but who have returned unto Him with true repentance. While Satan seeks to destroy this class, God will send His angels to comfort and protect them in the time of peril.

The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger--a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time.

God's love for His children during the period of their severest trial is as strong and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace of fire; their earthliness must be consumed, that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected.

Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His victory is an evidence of the power of importunate prayer. All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded.

We should now acquaint ourselves with God by proving His promises. Angels record every prayer that is earnest and sincere. We should rather dispense with selfish gratifications than neglect communion with God.

(GC 617-622)

And just so we do not think that
we have to try harder by our
own works in persisting
in prayer . . .

This spirit of persistence was inspired by Him who wrestled with the patriarch. It was He who gave him the victory, and He changed his name from Jacob to Israel, saying, "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Genesis 32:28.