

The Conflict of the Ages #7 and #8

By Lloyd Anderson

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Beginning with the first part of this month of September, we have started a new series of studies in our broadcasting moments together, and these studies have centered around Genesis chapter 3 and verse fifteen. This is that great key verse of the Bible, Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee," that is between the devil and the woman, "between thy seed and her seed. And it shall bruise thy head and thou shall bruise his heel." Now this is the tremendous fountain basic verse of the word of God that gives us not only the fact that the devil himself would be overcome at the cross, when Christ gave His life for you and me, but that the devil himself would bring about the death of Christ on the cross. He would bruise the heel of Christ. And this, of course, is a figurative expression, speaking to us about the ultimacy of the cross. Genesis, chapter 3 and verse fifteen. Now, in this series of studies, as we have repeatedly shared with you, we're trying to show you how the devil has moved in, to try to keep the purposes of God through Jesus Christ from working themselves out. You remember in our first two studies, we noticed that Christ was promised in Genesis 3:15 to come into the world, and the devil moved in and tried to thwart and disannul the purposes of God. Then you'll remember he caused sin to come into the Garden of Eden. He caused Cain to kill Abel, which would have been the godly line through which Christ came. And God raised up Seth as the progenitor of another line through which Christ would come.

Then you remember, he moved in to the days of Noah, and the monstrous race before the flood, and the sin and convulsion of that hour, and God sent a flood to wipe out the members of the

human race, except Noah and the members of his family. Then you'll remember the devil moves into the family of Abraham, because it was through Abraham that Christ ultimately was to come, you see. And so he tries to sow discord and chaos in the home of Abraham, in the birth of Ishmael on the one hand, and Isaac on the other. Isaac was the promised seed, and from him would come the promised seed Christ. Then you remember, he moves into the home of Jacob, as we closed our last broadcasting moment together, from Genesis, chapter 27, if you have your Bibles with you for just a moment. Now, before we go any further, let me share with you just a word and then we'll come to the text. Uh, in 1972, that is, in the summer of '72, probably sometime in July and August, I personally will be leading a tour to the Holy Land, and I'm very anxious to have you with us. We're going to Gwenda, Greece and Rome, Italy. We're going to go into Egypt. We're going to see many of the tremendous things of the Middle East, and then, of course, we're going to be all over Israel. We're going to walk where Jesus walked and see what He saw. And it'll be a tremendous time. And I hope you can be with us. And if you'd like more material on the tour that I propose to lead to the Holy Land sometime during July or August of 1972, we'd like to have you write into us and inquire about some of the details of going to the Holy Land. I've been there six times. I think I know about that part of the world. And I can be of great help to you as you go with us to the Holy Land at that time.

Now we come very quickly again to Genesis, chapter 27. And in the 27th chapter of the Book of Genesis, we find that the devil now is busy in the household of Jacob. You remember Jacob was the son of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham. And through Isaac and Jacob, the promised Christ ultimately was going to come. But the devil is doing his best to thwart the purpose of God in the coming of Jesus Christ through the household of Jacob. And in our last broadcasting moment

together, we saw how that Jacob falls out with his brother Esau, and the devil moves upon Esau to kill his brother Jacob. Well, if that would ever be done, then of course you'd have a disannulling and a thwarting of the purposes of God through Jacob, because Christ was to come through Jacob. Now in this whole picture in Genesis, chapter 27, notice verse 41 if you have your Bibles for just a moment, Genesis chapter 27, "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing where with his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, 'the days of mourning for my father are at hand. Then, while I slay my brother Jacob.' And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebecca, and she sent and called Jacob, her younger son, and said unto him, "Behold thy brother, Esau, as touching thee doth comfort himself, proposing to kill thee. Now, therefore, my son obey my voice. Arise and flee thou to Laban, my brother to Haren. Until thy brother's anger, that is Esau's anger, turn away from thee Jacob and he forget that which now has done to him. And then I will send and fetch thee from thence. Why should I be deprived also of you in one day?"

"And Rebekah said to Isaac, 'I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these, which are of the daughters of the land, what shall-good my life be unto me.'" Now, as I've said here, you have Jacob's peril. Centuries ago, an Arab once wrote "Passion is a tyrant which slays those whom it governs." Passions, such as envy, is like a fire which once thoroughly kindled can scarcely ever be quenched. It is like a swollen torrent which cannot be restrained within its banks. It is so devastating that it should be killed in the thought, it should be slain before it's ever born. Envy was the source of all the evil that developed in Isaac's home. Isaac was the son of Abraham. It was born on the mind of Jacob when he coveted the birthright. It was developed by the will of Rebecca, his mother, who

induced Jacob to steal the blessing. It bloomed with Isaac, who bestowed the blessing on Esau, in spite of the fact that his general conduct showed that any spiritual inheritance would be unsafe with Esau, and absolutely unappreciated. It ripened in the heart of Esau, who too late realized the value of the sacred privilege of birthright. He resented being rejected, and he resolved to have a blessing, any blessing, and he resisted the thought of repentance, and he wanted a life of revenge against his brother. And so Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing. They both received a blessing which was temporal in character.

Jacob's began with the dew of heaven, you remember, and Esau stretched the fatness of the earth. Only one could have the spiritual gift, the promise of the land, and the coming seed Christ. Through only one of these boys could that line of Christ follow through. Later on, on the eve of Jacob's departure, this Abrahamic blessing was voluntarily confirmed with holy solemnity and without haste. No doubt this stilled Jacob's fear, and that the first blessing so fraudulently received might prove a curse unto him. But beginning with verse 41, Jacob has to run from Esau for his life. Je-Esau doth comfort himself, we read in verse 41 of Genesis, chapter 27, because he proposes to kill thee Jacob. And so envious was Esau of Jacob's blessing, so covetous of the kiss that sealed Jacob in Isaac's affection, that he had real pleasure contemplating and anticipating revenge against his brother Jacob. And so Jacob was told to arise and flee away, lest he be killed. And so Esau's rage could not be concealed in the ready ear of Rebecca, their mother heard of the danger that faced Jacob. And for a third time, she commanded Jacob. Her love was not based on principle, but on natural affection, and sending him away, that is Jacob, for a short while so that he wouldn't be killed by his brother Esau seemed to be the logical thing.

And Rebecca had prepared unsuccessfully, but now successfully, for special emergencies when she sent Jacob into exile. And so Jacob, blessed with plenty, fled in poverty, taking with him only the staff that he carried, in Genesis 32 and verse 10. And he took some oil for his wounds, according to Genesis 28:18. He had divine authority, but he fled to a life of servitude. And on his way to Haran, the land of Haran, Jacob faced a crisis in his life. He stood lonely and afraid on the threshold of independence, and before him was unfamiliar territory and ground. He camped at a place called Bethel, you remember. It was a bleak and a wasteland, with huge slabs of bare rock carelessly strewn about. Very few of them upright. And I've been there, I've been in that land, and I know what it looks like. And my friend, it's just exactly as I've said to you a moment ago. And then you have that here, Abraham has the presence of the Lord. And you have the ladder, you remember, how that the ladder was revealed and on that ladder were angels going up and down. The angels of God ascending and descending. And this poor man, Jacob, laid his head on a rock and he went to sleep, and the sense of loneliness wove themselves into a dream as he slept. And the area in his dream became densely populated with angels that was sent forth to minister to him. And this seems to be the first time that Jacob really heard the voice of God.

He was assured of God's presence and protection and provision and preservation. And Jacob responded to this love with a vow to give God's worship, service, and his tithes. And during the next 20 to 40 years, God, as always, fulfilled His promise, even though Jacob did not always keep his vow. And during these years, deception returned to Jacob with a force and accuracy of a boomerang. His own future father in law, Laban, deceived him in the matter of wages, and wives, and wares, and cattle, and envy continued to dog Jacob's footsteps. His wives were envious of his affection, his brother in law begrudged him his success, and his father in law,

Laban coveted his material increase. And so God leads Jacob away and he comes to Laban, and Jacob has God's direction. But he followed it in the wrong way, as we see in the Book of Genesis in chapters 27 and 28. Jacob had God's direction, but he didn't really go with the way God wanted him to go. He'd been defrauded and his obligations to Laban had been met, and he felt that he was not going to be deceived because he wanted to do everything he could to get back what had been taken from him. But you see, the devil now is moving into the household, not only of Abraham, but also Isaac. And Esau is embittered against his brother Jacob. And Jacob has to flee for his life. And the devil sees to it that all of this is done. And the result is that Jacob, running for his life, sees a vision of the Lord and God speaks to him, and he has a difficult time even with his father in law, Laban.

And yet at the same time, God is preparing Abraham to be the father of the ultimate Christ who is to come. But the devil moves in, in all of these little and big ways, to try to disannul God's purposes and the coming of Christ through Abraham, and through Isaac, and through Jacob. And all of these things are constantly taking place. Well, I trust that you will study the scriptures, particularly the Book of Genesis, in order to pick up the highlights that God has given us to reveal how Satan, in the conflict of the ages of righteousness against evil, seeks to thwart, and disannul, and do away with the purposes that God had in the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. And I think if you and I can see this, and understand this, it will open up new vistas of understanding for you and me, such as we have never, never understood before in the purposes of the devil on the one hand, and the purposes of God on the other. Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the Lord Jesus Christ, we thank Thee for all that Thou does mean to us. We realize that the devil is busy now, today, in this moment, doing what he can

to thwart God's purposes through Christ, bringing temptations to us from without and from within, in order to do what he can to get us to fall into sin. Oh God, give us Thy protection and give us Thy grace, that we might be the true servants, that Thou dost want us to be, serving Thee with an upright and a full heart. For we ask it in Jesus' name and for His sake, amen.

[Silence, then papers shuffling]

As you know, beginning with the first part of the month of September into which we have now come, we've been sharing with you the beginning of a series of studies that center around Genesis 3:15. We have entitled our series for want of a better appellation or title, The Conflict of the Ages. How that it's been the purpose of the devil all through human centuries of time to try to thwart, and disannul, and do away with the purposes of God. Now, this he has sought to do and many and devious ways. But the verse around which we're going to anchor this series of studies on the conflict of the ages is found in Genesis three and verse fifteen. And in the third chapter in the fifteenth verse of Genesis, you have the first promise of human redemption in the Bible. You remember sin had come into the human race. Adam and Eve with the members of their family, had been driven out of the Garden of Eden, and God said in Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between thee," that is the devil, "and the woman," that is the woman through whom the promised seed Christ was ultimately to come. "And between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise His heel." Now, this is a tremendous passage, and one that certainly bears recognition as we study the word of God together. We're trying to show you in this series of messages how the devil, representing evil and unrighteousness is always pitted against God, His righteousness, and His Holiness. Now he moves in different ways against the program of God in

order to prevent Christ, the promised seed, from coming into the world and doing His work at the cross.

You remember he got at the human race through causing Adam and Eve to fall into sin. Then he moved into the family of Adam, and he caused Cain to kill Abel, with an attempt to do away with the line from which Christ ultimately was going to come in posterity. Then he moved into the world in the days of Noah. There was violence and great wickedness across the face of the earth until God destroyed the world with a flood, and left only Noah and the members of his own family. Then you remember through Abraham, the promised seed was going to come. And so the devil attacks Abraham and the members of his family and makes it very, very difficult for them. All of it, the devil doing it in order to thwart, and do away with, and disannul the purposes of God in bringing Christ into the world. Then he moves into the life of Jacob. And it's Jacob that we're studying in this present moment, for certainly we must remember that Jacob was having a very, very difficult time. And we see that in Genesis chapter 27, beginning with verse 41. And we move all the way through those chapters to Genesis chapter 31, beginning with verse twenty. And you recall how that in a previous study we shared with you of the idea that in the household of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham. There were born these sons, Jacob and Esau.

Now, Jacob was the individual through whom the promised seed Christ was to come. It was through his line, you see from Abraham, through Isaac, through Jacob. And the devil does everything he can to try to kill and do away with Jacob, because it was through the line of Jacob that Christ, as I said, was ultimately to make His appearance. And so God moves against the devil, but the devil moves against Jacob. And the result is that Esau, first of all, because of

Jacob's lapse and because of Jacob's lack of spirituality, Esau is determined to kill his own brother. Now there you have the devil moving against the line from which Christ would come. Then when you come to chapter 31 of the Book of Genesis, you begin to see, beginning with verse 20, that this man, Jacob, is confronted by Laban. And this is an interesting confrontation between Laban, who became his father in law, and Jacob, who wanted the hand of his own daughter. And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian in that he told him not that he fled. And so he fled with all that he had, and he rose up and passed over the river and set his face toward the Mount Gilead. And it was Total Laban, that is Jacob's father in law, on the third day that Jacob was fled, and he took his brethren with him and pursued after him seven days journey, and they overtook him on the Mount Gilead. And God came to Laban, the Syrian, in a dream by night, and said unto him, "Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob, either good or bad."

Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the Mount, and Laban, with his brethren, pitched in the Mount of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob "Why hast thou done, that thou has stolen away unawares to me and carried away my daughters as captives taken with a sword. Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly and steal away from me, and didst not tell me that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, and with to bray and with harp, and has not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Thou hast now done foolishly in so doing." And down through the chapter, you find again that Jacob is confronted by someone else, used by the devil at that moment, to do away with Jacob if he possibly can. Now, I'm not trying to whitewash Jacob. I'm not trying to say that Jacob was perfect by any extent or means at all. He wasn't. He was a man who was not beyond chicanery, and little thievery, and a little trickery. But at the same time, we must remember that Jacob was the man through whom Christ, the promised

seed, was going to come. And so the devil does everything he can do to do away with Jacob, both through Esau saw his brother, and now through Laban, his father in law. And the scripture makes it clear that Laban said to him in chapter 31 of the Book of Genesis, beginning with verse 20, "that it is in the power of my hand," said Laban to Jacob, to do thee hurt." And angry Laban, you see, bent on destruction, pursued and overtook Jacob and his traveling band.

As a medium of Satan, Laban was capable, as Jacob well knew, of permanently separating Jacob from his own family. And when I say permanently, I'm talking about physical death. Jacob's death would profit Laban by the wealth of herd's and the comfort of having his daughters back with him, the pleasure of his children and the rest from labor that would be his as an older man. But notice, Laban says, "But the God of your father spake to me." Now God interfered, and he kept Laban from performing Satan's evil intent upon Jacob. As angry as Laban was, he dared not injure one whom he saw was under the special care and concern of the Lord. Laban was warned by God not to speak from good to evil when he addressed Jacob. He was not to appear friendly and then suddenly terrify him, that's exactly what it means, to speak in peace and then, without warning, become violent. Awed by such a communication from God, Laban was glad to conform. And so Satan could use vengeance no longer to make Jacob fall before temptation, fail to obey God or to falter and return back to Laban. Now, Laban does ask Jacob an interesting question in the book of Genesis 30 in verse 27, "Wherefore hast thou stolen my goods? You see Laban admitted that he had been blessed by God for Jacob's sake. And you remember how long he made Jacob work in order to get his wife? It was tragic, really. Laban was deceptive, too. He didn't do right by Jacob. But this doesn't mean the Jacob should have done wrongly by him.

Now, this man, Laban, had his faith in inanimate objects that could easily be picked up and removed. He was a man of the world. Now these household images known as Teraphim varied in size. And we read about the Teraphim here, when you come to chapter 30 of the Book of Genesis and chapter 31 as well. You see, Jacob and these folk had taken these Teraphim out of Laban's home. Now the name means, does Teraphim, means to inquire. And these little images, for that's what they were, were consulted for advice and guidance in contemplated actions. However, they had a greater significance in that they were related to a man's inheritance, as you see, as you study the word of God, and as you move through it from page to page. Now, Laban accused Jacob of being a deserter in leaving his herdsmen's post, being dishonorable in taking away his daughters, being deceitful in acquiring his herds, and being dishonest in stealing his goods. Now, we read that Jacob talked with Laban. There was a battle of words going on. And although Jacob was confused over the rude search of his tents by Laban, he replied to Laban's accusations with dignity and truth. He proved that he had been a willing, careful, humble and honest shepherd. Although he spoke strongly, he made no demands as he might have had the right to do. And so the two of them get together, and they say, let us make a covenant.

Laban could not condemn Jacob for speaking truthfully, nor could he justify his own evil actions. He neither owned his fault, nor did he ask for forgiveness from Jacob, but he suggested making a covenant between them. Heaps of stones were piled up for a table where food and drink were shared, and later on a sacrifice was made, and the place was called Misbah, which means a watchtower, that is, one standing between the two men when they cannot keep watch on the other. This is a word full of suspicion, and should never be used as a benediction as it is so often done. But we do read that Jacob swear to the covenant with Laban by the fear of his brother

Isaac. Laban appealed to God under different titles, but Jacob called upon the God whom his father loved and feared. Isaac was still living, you see, and he walked cautiously and fearfully, lest he should displease the Lord. Now Jacob is in a bind. Not only was he pursued by Esau, and not only was he pursued by Laban, his father in law, but now he is in a desperate condition, in the book of Genesis, chapter 32. And in versus three to twelve, and it would do you well to read those passages, because there he finds that Esau is still pursuing him. And so in verse three of Genesis, chapter 32, and Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau, his brother to the land of Seer, the country of Edom.

And he commanded them, saying, "Thus, shall you speak unto my lord Esau: thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and have stayed there until now, and I have oxen, and donkeys, and flocks, and manservants, and women servants. And I have sent to tell my Lord that I find grace in thy site." Now, Jacob is desperate because he knows that his brother Esau is out to take his life. You see, Jacob had his birthright. Jacob had the inheritance. And Esau was angry to the point where he was ready to kill Jacob. And here again, we see the hand of the devil in this conflict of the ages, how that the devil uses these various personalities to move against the individual through whom Christ was ultimately to come. This was the family line through Jacob, through which Christ was going to come. And so Jacob is caught in a trap with Esau after him, hard on his heels, trying to take his life. And following the custom of the land, Jacob sent messengers to Esau to indicate his desire to go into the land of Canaan. Esau's superiority was acknowledged as Jacob wanted this courtesy extended to all passing strangers, and Esau was informed that Jacob was neither fugitive, beggar, nor usurper. Esau was still bent upon revenge, and he assembled an army of 400 men, and he advanced toward Jacob, and Jacob was trapped,

and he knew it. Before him was Esau, and the prospect of death, behind him was Laban, his father in law, and certain demoralization. And Jacob was aware that neither deceit nor trickery could get him out of this jam.

And so he relied on his own strength and his own courage, and he had to realize that his entrance into the land of Canaan could not be by his own powers and by his own ability. And so he reaches the end of his own resources, and he begins to pray. There is no mention of prayer or altars while Jacob is on the land of Haren. They are only mentioned upon his departure from Canaan, and now upon his return. Now this was a model prayer in which Jacob expressed self-abasement, gratitude for mercies, need for deliverance from evil, and faith in God's promises to perform His will. And the answer to his prayer came about when God subdued Laban and Esau, and everything turned out all right. But my friend the devil was moving against Jacob, who was in line in the production of Christ as the coming promised seed. Now the conflict is in verse 24 of Genesis, chapter 32, and Jacob was left alone. And now you come to that great episode in the Life of Jacob, in which he wrestles with the angel, all night. He was so stubborn, God had to meet him on his own terms, and since he was determined to enter the land of Canaan as a deceiver by the force of his own carnal, sinful nature, then he must wrest this privilege from God, the rightful owner. And since Jacob insisted upon taking the land as a [unintelligible], he must contest his claim with God, who held the title deed to the land. And so he wrestles with the Angel of the Lord. And the Angel of the Lord touches the hollow of Jacob's thigh.

And in spite of stubborn tenacity hour after hour, Jacob was finally mastered, and he became lame that he might in turn be crowned. He was felled that he might prevail with the Lord. He was

made powerless that he might petition for the blessing of God. Now, this was not a dream, this wrestling match, it was real. And thus, Jacob, the deceiver in Beersheba. The servant in the land of Heron, lived to be the saint in Hebron and the leader in the land of Egypt. You see, the devil in the conflict of the ages was trying to get at Christ by doing away with Jacob, through whom Christ was ultimately to come.

[Shuffling pages and then silence]