

# Call upon the Lord – Jacob Part Four

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehring 2/11/2017

We have seen that Jacob underhandedly obtained the **birthright** and the **blessing** that God intended for him to have all along. In today's sermon we will be searching out those places in the Scriptures where God directly intervened in Jacob's life in order to bring him to full **conversion**, and a place in the first resurrection, and the Kingdom of God.

What we want to look at how a remarkable change came about in Jacob's life? As a young man, Jacob was in charge of his own destiny – he made things happen – he was the master of his own fate. He was not yielded or subservient to God. But then he had to skedaddle out of town in fear of his life.

Then all of a sudden, God interjected Himself – He imposed Himself into Jacob's life. God appeared to him in a certain place – Bethel – and identified Himself in this way:

Genesis 28:13 ... I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac.

Jacob was impressed and said, "Since you are the One who will be with me, and who will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and sustain me, and clothes to wear, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then you are the LORD my God, I'll tithe on all that you give me."

That was a **good start** to having a relationship with God, but it was a little bit like a protestant conversion – it was not deep, and it was not heartfelt. Godly **conversion** is believing God, following God, trusting God, and believing what God says. Only God is able to bring about a true conversion in a person – and that is what He did with Jacob.

God began to actively bring about Jacob's conversion. Jacob was anything but converted as a young man who set out to bless himself – "feathering his own nest." God was working with Jacob way before he was aware of God's involvement.

It turned out – back in the Worldwide Church of God – that we had a lot of "church goers" who really enjoyed the social aspects of fellowship... But how many of them were truly converted Christians? Not many – evidenced by how many fell away into the apostasy! And of the Churches of God today, How many are truly converted Christians who practice Christianity and Godliness? We'll look for it in Jacob's life. There are vital lessons in Jacob's life for those of us in God's Church today.

You are a sinner. I'm a sinner. Jacob was a sinner, too.

1John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jacob **practiced** sin as a way of life. He prospered himself at the expense of others. Jacob sought to get ahead – that's okay – but he didn't care who he ran over to get what he wanted – he practiced sin – he prospered himself while in violation of Godly principles. That is not conversion.

A converted person does not practice sin as a way of life. A converted person will fall/sin occasionally – until we come to the perfection of Christ – Yes!

1Cor 15:34 Awake to righteousness, and **sin not**; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

A converted Christian does not habitually practice sin. He has changed direction completely in the way he views his life. He has determined to turn away from sin entirely.

"Once we are children of God, we do not make a practice of sin. How could we? God is within us as converted people making us who we are. It is not in our nature as begotten children of God to practice and live in sinful conduct." (1 John 3:9)

1John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye **sin not** [as a way of life]. **And if any man does sin**, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

We repent and get straight right away and continue to be determined to overcome and avoid sin – with God's help.

Paul says to go about it like this: Change and be converted:

Ephesians 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former sinful conduct of the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts [desires];

Ephesians 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; [That's a godly attitude].

Ephesians 4:24 And that ye put on the new [converted] man, made after God's righteousness and true holiness.

Ephesians 4:25 ... Followed by a long list of "don't dos."

We need to understand that God is personally involved in each of our lives. We are not simply one in a crowd.

Back to Jacob – and how God is bringing about his conversion. So we see in Genesis 29:4 that Jacob leaves Canaan and crosses the Jordan River and heads north and east to **Haran** – the traditional homeland of Abraham – Ur of the Chaldees. Jacob comes to Uncle Laban's place seeking a wife and a future.

Genesis 29:9 And while he yet spake with them, **Rachel** came with her father's sheep: for she kept them.

Genesis 29:10 And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's [Rebecca's] brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

Genesis 29:11 And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.

Things are getting off to a very nice start. Jacob finds and bonds with his sweetheart right away.

Jacob is welcomed as **family**.

Genesis 29:14 And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.

Genesis 29:15 And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall **thy wages** be?

Genesis 29:16 And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.

Genesis 29:17 Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favored.

Genesis 29:18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee **seven years for Rachel** thy younger daughter.

So, Jacob works for Laban – doing a real good job for seven years and Laban pulls a switcheroo on Jacob's wedding night.

Genesis 29:20 And Jacob served **seven years** for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.

Genesis 29:21 And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her.

Genesis 29:22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.

Genesis 29:23 And it came to pass in the evening, that he took **Leah** his daughter, and brought her to [Jacob]; and he went in unto her.

Genesis 29:25 And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?

Jacob wakes up in the morning light – with **Leah!!!** Not Rachel.

Jacob **met his match** – because Laban was a better **con man** than he was. Jacob's **wages** change. Jacob had to work another seven years to pay his debt for the woman he loved – **Rachel**. Jacob had seven years to think about how it hurt to be out foxed and cheated – as he had done to Isaac and Esau.

**God** was allowing Jacob to learn the bitter lesson that comes from flying by the seat of your pants – outside of truth – honor – principles – virtues, and righteousness. It hurt.

Life goes on for Jacob – and he has ten sons and a daughter.

Genesis 30:22 And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.

Genesis 30:23 And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach:

Genesis 30:24 And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.

Genesis 30:25 And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country.

Genesis 30:26 Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou know **my service** which I have done thee.

Genesis 30:27 And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake.

Jacob had wives, handmaids and children – and yet he lacked any earthly possessions.

Genesis 30:28 And [Laban] said, Appoint me thy **wages**, and I will give it.

Genesis 30:29 And [Jacob] said unto him, Thou know how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me.

Jacob agrees – Laban has gotten rich off Jacob.

Genesis 30:30 For it was **little** which thou [Laban] had before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also?

Genesis 30:31 And he said, What shall I **give thee**? And Jacob said, Thou shalt **not give me** any thing: if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock:

Genesis 30:32 I will pass through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the **speckled and spotted cattle**, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my **hire**. [wages again]

Genesis 30:33 So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me.

“If the new animals are not speckled and spotted – they are not mine – Jacob said.

Genesis 30:34 And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. [It's a deal.]

Genesis 30:35 And [Laban secretly] removed that day the he goats that were **ringstraked** and spotted, and all the she goats that were **speckled** and **spotted**, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown/black among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons.

Genesis 30:36 And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Genesis 30:37 And Jacob took him **rods** of green poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods.

All this peeling of bark on rods of different colored trees did not help the breeding process at all.

You can lay rail-road tracks next to each other and build a **cattle gap** – because the cattle are afraid of breaking a leg in the cracks – and after that you can simply **paint the lines** on the road – and the cows have been programmed not to cross them...

But we will see in a moment that the stacking of those rods before Jacob's cattle had no effect on his breeding program – there was something else taking place. There was no breeding stock to give Jacob new ringstraked, speckled, spotted cattle and black sheep.

But Jacob was not worried one bit - Why? Jacob knew that **God was blessing him** – he no longer believed he had to be corrupt to get ahead. No matter what stunt Laban pulled – he [Jacob] would get ahead. And Jacob prospered greatly **for six years**.

Genesis 30:43 And [Jacob] increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and donkeys.

And that was because God was intervening on Jacob's part continuously. Jacob recognized that, and gave God the thanks – and he amended his ways of prospering himself – and waited on God to prosper him.

Laban went back and forth on the deal – changing Jacob's wages. On some years Laban demanded all the ringstraked cattle – or at a whim demanded all the spotted cattle. Whichever Laban chose – God blessed Jacob with the other.

Genesis 31:4 And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock,

Genesis 31:5 And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me.

Genesis 31:6 And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.

Genesis 31:7 And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me.

Genesis 31:8 If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked.

Genesis 31:9 Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.

Genesis 31:10 And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, **and saw in a dream**, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstraked, speckled, and grisled.

Genesis 31:11 And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I.

Genesis 31:12 And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and spotted: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.

Genesis 31:13 I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointed the pillar, and where thou vowed a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.

Genesis 31:38 This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.

Genesis 31:39 That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.

Genesis 31:40 Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.

Genesis 31:41 Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.

Genesis 31:42 Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now **empty** [broke]. God hath seen mine affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yester-night.

Genesis 31:54 Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount.

Genesis 31:55 And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.

Genesis 32:1 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

Genesis 32:3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

Genesis 32:4 And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; **Thy servant** Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now:

Jacob is demonstrating a Christ like attribute in becoming the **servant**. Jesus became the servant washing His apostles' feet.

Genesis 32:5 And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and men-servants, and women-servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.

Genesis 32:6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

Genesis 32:7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;

But notice how **humble** Jacob has become – we can see it **in his prayer**.

Genesis 32:9 And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

Genesis 32:10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

Genesis 32:11 **Deliver me, I pray thee**, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.

Genesis 32:12 And you said, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

God First made this promise to Abraham – Jacob's grandfather... and then Isaac, his father.

The **Title** from this verse: God brings us to this point if need be.

Psalms 18:6 In my **distress I called upon the LORD**, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even into his ears.

Brethren, have you ever been in a hopeless situation? God is the one who rescues us from distress. Sometimes it seems to us that no matter which way we turn – there is no solution, no help?

Remember: There's a terrible family dispute raging...

Genesis 27:41 And **Esau hated** Jacob [these are twin brothers] because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

When Isaac is dead and gone, Esau plans revenge to even the score by killing Jacob. After all those years, Jacob still feared what Esau would do to him for usurping Esau's birthright.

Genesis 32:22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.

Genesis 32:23 And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

We've come to the point where we began this study of Jacob. You know the story...

Genesis 32:28 And [Jesus] said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but **Isra-el**: for as a **prince** hast thou power with God and with men, and hast **prevailed**.

Genesis 32:30 And Jacob called the name of the place **Peni-el**: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is **preserved**. "I'm going to live - Esau is not going to kill me!"

Genesis 32:24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man [Jesus Christ] with him until the breaking of the day.

Genesis 32:25 And when he saw that He **prevailed** not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

Genesis 32:26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaks. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou **bless me**.

Brethren, let's understand what is happening here. Jacob is asking Jesus to **bless** him – and he won't take “**no**” for an answer. But, didn't Jacob already have the birthright and the blessing? **Yes!**

Remember:

Genesis 27:33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou came, and have blessed him? yea, and **he shall be blessed**.

So what is the point of this blessing (Genesis 32:26) that Jacob is demanding of Jesus? Jacob has become converted – this is 20 years later. Jacob realized that he had obtained the **birthright** and the **blessing** fraudulently – in an illicit and dishonest manner – he had blessed himself. Jacob is seeking to **repudiate** his former conduct and **wait on God** in everything he is doing. He **wants** and **seeks** only God's blessing. He wants the Lord to **ratify** his blessing.

Psalms 62:1 A Psalm of David. Truly my soul **waits** [silently trusts] **upon God**: from Him cometh my salvation.

Psalms 62:2 He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved.

Psalms 62:3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.

Psalms 62:4 They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.

Psalms 62:5 **My soul, wait** [stand still – don't get in the way – follow God's lead – don't bless myself – allow God to prosper me] **thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him**.

Psalms 62:6 He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.

Psalms 62:7 In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.

Psalms 62:8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

Psalms 62:9 Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.

Psalm 62:10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

Psalm 62:11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongs unto God.

Psalm 62:12 Also unto thee, O Lord, belongs mercy: for you render to every man according to his deeds.

You remember the story when Abraham purchased a field and the cave of Machpelah for a burial ground for Sarah... The sons of Heth said – “No charge” – but Abraham was wise enough to pay the full price so that he would not be beholding or dilute the covenant promises. This story is similar:

Genesis 33:1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, **Esau came**, and **with** him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.

Genesis 33:4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

Genesis 33:8 And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord.

Genesis 33:9 And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.

Genesis 33:10 And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou was pleased with me.

Genesis 33:11 Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, **and he took it**.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Paul saw this principle at work in Jacob's life.

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Those people who do not understand these verses would say, “I don't have to do anything – it's all going to work out in a predetermined fashion.” It does not work like that! This principle only works when we are doing all we can to be **moral, virtuous** and **just**. A good analogy is a Salmon swimming upstream. It is difficult and hard and a lot of work – but he achieves his goal and the species is propagated. What happens if he were to quit – and just let things work themselves out? He would be carried downstream to the ocean and perish there. In the same way we must constantly strive toward **our goal** the perfection of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). Then, all things work for good.

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a **perfect** man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

God worked with Jacob for a long time. Finally, Jacob came to the point where he believed and trusted in God. He began to walk in the way of God – trusting God for everything.

There is a difference between God working **with** a person, and God being **in** a converted person by way of His Spirit. Jesus Christ explained this concept to His disciples just prior to their conversion on Pentecost:

John 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; which the world cannot receive, because it sees it not, neither knows it: but ye know it; for it dwells **with** you, and shall be **in** you.

What this is telling us is that for a long time God is intimately involved in a person's life, being instrumental in bringing a person to Himself. Had God not interacted on numerous occasions in

Jacob's life, he would not have come to the point of believing and recognizing that it was none other than God Himself who had been directing his steps all along.

Jacob was indeed as carnal as the day is long, but God had long determined that He would carry out His covenant by way of Abraham, Isaac and then Jacob—even down to our day. Jacob knew "God" by way of Abraham and Isaac, but Jacob **did not yet know God**.

God knew that Jacob would make some bad mistakes, and yet, God knew how to use those mistakes to humble and convert Jacob. God worked with Jacob and began to whittle him down to size. God allowed 20 years of Jacob getting adequate doses of his own medicine – the way he treated Isaac and Esau. And it was a bitter pill. Jacob was a know-it-all with a pride and ego that would not quit.

That changed when Jacob feared for his life dreading Esau's retaliation in response to his loss of both the birthright and the blessing. We saw what a changed man Jacob was near the end of his life when he met Pharaoh in Egypt. Jacob ultimately became a man that God could use exceedingly. He's the father of the nations of Israel today.

In the same way that God worked in Jacob's life, God is working **in our lives** today. It does not yet appear what we will be, but it will be so much more than we could ever imagine.

1Corinthians 2:9 ... Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

Even though God promised Jacob that his children would number more than the dust of the earth, and that he would spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in Jacob and in his children would all the families of the earth be blessed.

And God promised to be with Jacob and to protect him on every side no matter where he traveled, and bring him back home again into that land; saying, I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to you of. (Genesis 28:14-15)

Jacob still had a hard time believing it, but one thing Jacob did do was—he **gave God the credit** for every blessing – and that made all the difference. Brethren, these things are written and preserved for our admonition (1Corinthians 10:6).

Let's ask ourselves this question: Do we not only give God the **thanks** for all that He has given us, do we also give Him the **full credit** for everything that has taken place in our lives to bring us to where we are today?

When we see those godly interventions in Jacob's life, we may more readily recognize God's involvement in our own lives, and give Him the **praise** and **credit** He alone deserves.

Brethren, let's understand: Jacob's story has not ended:

Jeremiah 30:4 And these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah. [This is directed to us - today]

Jeremiah 30:5 For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. [Are people starting to get worried – yet?]

Jeremiah 30:6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? [We have not yet come to this point – but God says it is coming when every man will be in torment and anguish]

When we stop and realize that everything that we see all around us is about to come to a screeching halt- we will better appreciate that this is not God's Society – but Satan's world in which we live.

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of **Jacob's trouble**; but he shall be saved out of it.

God does not say “**Israel’s trouble**” but **Jacob’s trouble** – emphasizing that the trouble will come on the **unconverted** – not the converted Israel of God – the Church brethren (Galatians 6:16).

The absolute worst time of fear, destruction of mankind, death and mayhem the world has ever experienced – think of the torture and death camps of WWII – they will pale into insignificance – compared to the time of Jacob's trouble.

Mark 13:20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, **no flesh should be saved alive:** but for the elect's sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days. [A few comparatively – will be saved out of Jacob’s Trouble.]

Jeremiah 30:10 Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and **Jacob shall return**, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.

There will be a remnant after the great Tribulation going into the millennium.

Jeremiah 30:11 For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I **not make a full end** of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

We have rejected our God by despising His law and rebelling against His sovereignty. We are self-satisfied - thinking that we achieved this greatness all by ourselves - without God. The trouble is that we won't repent and turn to God. It is God who says that **we have passed** the point of no return.

Jeremiah 30:12 For thus says the LORD, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous.

Jeremiah 30:13 There is no one to plead thy cause, that thou may be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines.

God demands that we rely on Him alone – not all our lovers - not trading partners, or those allies who agree to stand with us in time of war.

Jeremiah 30:14 All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased.

Jeremiah 30:15 Why criest thou for thine affliction? Thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee.

The time of **Jacob’s Trouble** is coming soon. What kind of plans are you making for the future? In a God-fearing society, people should be able to make long-range ambitious plans that extend for many generations into the future. People start out today to build portfolios - and 401 retirement plans that will be wiped out with a stroke of stock market downturn.

Who can own a farm today with crops, fruit trees, a creek or well, animals and storage facilities? A large percentage – a great majority of our people – lack a strategy for future development, and subsequently neglect to make long-range plans?

Revelation 13:17 And that **no man might buy or sell**, save he that had the **mark** of the beast,

Too many people have no hope of a bright future and are living their unpromising lives from day to day - just trying to keep their head above water. Why are so many things going wrong? What is the cause of the hopelessness that grips so many lives?

When our country was young there was hope in the air. Fleeing the bondage of religious persecution and cruel feudal serfdom, our ancestors came to this rich land seeking **freedom of faith** and ownership of property.

This bountiful territory provided the opportunity for the seemingly endless fulfillment of dreams for those pioneers who possessed the courage to beat back the wilderness and bring it under civilized development.

In the same way that the children of Jacob (Israel) received God's greatest blessings the world has ever seen, **because of** our flat-out rejection of God and His ways, we are about to become the recipients of the greatest trouble and tribulation the world has ever witnessed.

It is Jacob's Trouble. There is a way to escape – and we saw it earlier...

Psalm 18:6 In my **distress I called upon the LORD**, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even into his ears.

End: Called Upon the Lord