

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. *Amen*



*By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. (Heb 11:21)*

It is a spiritual delight to examine those privileged souls whose lives reflect certain characteristics shared with that of Christ. It is, as well, a comfort to see those types of Christ who fall far short of that perfect Ensign of Christ but who are nevertheless granted mercy and grace by God in Christ. If we look closely, we will discover that they all have fallen short in so many ways of the glory of Christ – some, such as David, in significant ways and others, such as Abraham, to lesser degrees. The truth that remains behind the veil among all of these lesser types is that God's grace is sufficient to bridge any gap in man's weakness of character and His Perfect Righteousness as long as man will seek His face in sorrow and repentance.

The focus of our devotion today, Jacob, may not at first appear to be a suitable type for Christ, but Jacob's life does, indeed, exhibit many parallels with that of Christ from which we can learn and be inspired. Perhaps the first and foremost typical quality

of Jacob's nature in Christ is his following in, not only the physical, but more importantly, the spiritual, line of the descent of the Seed of Promise. This is, once again, akin to the Apostolic Succession which we lay claim to in the reformed Anglican Churches – that succession is less measured by whom physical hands were laid upon and more in those true and lovely doctrines taught by the Apostles. Regardless the recognition of one's apostolicity in liturgical form, it means nothing apart from the true Doctrines of Grace and Truth contained in the Gospels, and all of Holy Writ. To prove that point, I call to the bar those apostate men of the Episcopal Church USA who have gone over to such sins of the flesh as are unmentionable in the scope of this devotion, and they have done so in rebellion against the clear counsel of God. To summarize: there is no apostolic succession without the attending `Doctrinal Succession."

How did Jacob succeed to the blessing of the Promise? Though in full accord with the will of God, for His will is immutable, Jacob received the blessing by ruse. He supplanted the birthright son, Esau, who should have received the Promise under the terms of the Law. Esau was not worthy. He cared more for the comforts of the day rather than the future hope available in God, so he literally sold his birthright for a bowl of red porridge. Many today are doing the same. They care little for those blessings made available through Christ and go about getting wealth and pleasure as if there is no tomorrow. But there IS a tomorrow of unending joy or gnawing misery. The choice would seem simply based on advantages alone; however, the Kingdom of Heaven is not gained by calculation, but by love. The name of Jacob (or in Hebrew, ya`aqôb) means `heel-catcher,' or supplanter. Christ came to supplant the dark Prince of the Air (Satan). Satan was cast down to the earth as a result of his rebellion in Heaven. (see Revelations 12) He was here first. He was in the Garden as well, but he misappropriated that which belonged to God. Christ came to reclaim the souls of men who were of faith.

Esau, and his people, persecuted and discomfited Jacob. So did Satan and his minions persecute Christ. Jacob was visited by angels in his vision at Bethel: *10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.* (Gen 28:10-15)

With no pillow for His sweat-laden head other than a stone of the Garden, an angel appeared unto Christ to strengthen Him on the Night preceding His passion: *43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* (Luke 22:43-44) A point quite separate from our focus of typical fact is the point of the Ladder which Jacob saw in his vision. That Ladder was, itself, a Type of Christ providing men and women with a transport and a means of gaining Heaven.

Jacob loved Rachel above all measure. He labored for seven years to gain her

father's permission to marry her, but he was deceived by Laban. Laban gave unto Jacob Leah in the stead of Rachel. So Jacob worked another seven years for the Bride of his Love, Rachel. The people of old Israel were the first to know God and His Counsels, yet they lacked the love and faith to know Christ their rightful spouse. Only a bare few believed in the Promises of God through Abraham and his descendents. These were of the Old Testament Church of the Wilderness. (Acts 7:38) Christ loved His Bride the Church and suffered, like as did Jacob, for the Bride of His Love.

God gave Jacob his real name, ISRAEL, after he had wrestled with the angel. *Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.* (Gen 32:28) God gave Christ His name, Jesus, ere he was born upon earth: "20.....*the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* (Matt 1:20-21)

In all of his faults and shortcomings, Jacob was a type of Christ in miniature. The point most pressing for us to remember is that Jacob was in the line of the Promise.....and so are we all who are sincerely called 'Christian.' Are you called Christian with authentic justification?