

Nobody is Perfect But We Can Be Transformed

This week's *Torah* portion is *Parashat Tol'dot* (תולדות) which means: *corollary, consequence, outcome, and offspring*. The KJV and most English Bibles translate *Tol'dot* as *generations*, the CJB translates it as *history* and the TLV translates it as *genealogies*. I am an engineer and a mathematician and I enjoy the meanings: *consequence, outcome* and *corollary*. In Math, only *theorems* have *corollaries*. *Theorems* are the *principles, rules, postulates, premise, thesis, and assumptions* in which we base *all of mathematics*. This *Tol'dot* word must be very significant! The *Book of Mattityahu* (*Matthew*) begins the recanting of the *Good News* by stating that: "*The book of the genealogy (Greek, genesis, and in Hebrew, bereshit) of Yeshua ha-Mashiach, Ben-David, Ben-Avraham*" (*Matt. 1:1*) Wow! Almost the identical beginning to this week's reading: "*Now these are the genealogies (tol'dot) of Isaac, Ben-Avraham*" (*Gen. 25:19*). *Genealogy*, is not that important a word to America these days, that is, unless you are Jewish! Obviously the ethnicity, lineage, and culture of *Isaac and Messiah Yeshua* count!

I also find it interesting to note that Scripture starts a genealogy for a man who is already 40 years old and still not married? His father, *Abraham*, had to send his faithful servant *Eliezer* up to Northern Syria to find him a bride from his family with a dozen camels full of gold and silver and gifts. *Isaac* is 40, and he has never been married. *Abraham* is getting old, and *Sarah*, his wife, is dead already. *Isaac* is getting married for the first time in his life, with a young virgin who is most probably in her early 20s.

When one meditates on this *Potion*, one begins to understand the problems that this family of *Isaac* and *Rebekah* had with each other and with their twin children *Esau* and *Jacob*. These kids grew up in a family with *Isaac* as a very *passive father* and *Rebekah* a very *determined mother* who was younger than her old husband by 22 years. *Isaac* is portrayed in the book of *Genesis* as a passive older man who is only interested in good food and being left alone by his wife and children. We also observe the sibling rivalry between their sons, *Esau* and *Jacob*. These twins, born to *Rebekah*, start their lives already before they come out of their mother's womb in a battle. This same battle is one of the root causes of the problems in the Middle East, lasting until this very day.

When we read the Bible we observe that most of the families starting in the biblical narrative have scandals and problems in their families. This brings to mind the following question: What family in the Bible didn't have issues in their family? Most if not all families in the Biblical narrative had at least some problems in the family. The first family in the Bible, *Adam* and *Eve*, started their everyday life outside the Garden of Eden with the murder of their son *Abel* by his brother *Cain*. There is bloodshed in the *first* family in the Bible yet both father and mother were handcrafted personally by *The Almighty*, the Creator of the world. This is a quite a sobering reality: *Nobody is perfect but we can be transformed!*

The Greek word translated *be transformed* in: "*I urge you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice—holy, acceptable to God—which is your spiritual service. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect (Ro. 12:1-2)*" is *metamorphosis*. This word is used to explain a biological process by which an animal physically develops after birth or hatching, involving a conspicuous and relatively abrupt change in the animal's body structure through cell growth and differentiation (e.g., butterflies). The apostle Paul indicates that we are to experience *a relatively abrupt change* by renewing our mind (*a change of mind and heart*, if you wish). I believe a great place to experience such a change is in the House of God, *Beth-El*. There are untold stories of people having experi-

ences that are life changing in all sorts of settings and circumstances, but there are not many opportunities for the rest of us to have such experiences outside of the confines of a good congregation, like I pray ours is. Such is the case with our father **Jacob** in today's *Torah* reading from *Genesis 28*. A *sneak peak* into the future, from next week's Parashat: **Jacob** on the way to obedience, just north of Jerusalem, stops at a place where he encounters *Yah Adonai*. The place is called *Beth-El* the *House of El*.

Jacob has this encounter with *Yah Adonai* as a result of taking the birthright and blessing from his brother **Esau** through deceitful chicanery (so he got there because of his sinful life). **Esau** was so indignant, he let it be known that there was a contract on **Jacob's** life: He was going to kill him. So **Jacob** did what anybody would do under those circumstances – he fled. He *decided to follow his parent's guidance* and go to his mom's relatives, to Laban in Syria: *"¹So Isaac called for Jacob, blessed him, commanded him and said to him, 'Don't take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. ²Get up, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take for yourself a wife from there, from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. ³Now may El Shaddai (The Almighty) bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you so that you will become an assembly of peoples. ⁴And may he give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you that you may take possession of the land of your sojourn, which God gave to Abraham' (Gen. 28:1-4)"*

Up to now, **Jacob** has not lived a life that could be considered a *patriarch's life*. He is not his father's favorite (he is his mother's favorite), he was not able to wrestle **Esau** and become the first born. He can cook (something women are known for) but he is not hairy nor a man of the field (not great in the things of a man, such as hunting game and being skilled at the things of a man), and like many a second born, he is competing and losing in front of his parents. His mom is the stunningly beautiful **Rebekah** and she knows vividly the promise *Yah Adonai* has made over **Jacob**. He does not have a great name (from the root meaning heel) and he is probably sick of all that **Esau** does and gets away with from a worldly perspective. So here he is at the beginning of *Genesis 28* receiving a blessing from **Isaac** and instructions (that is, a command) to go far away to find a wife not from the daughters of Canaan: *"⁵Then Isaac sent Jacob away and he went toward Paddan-aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau. ⁶Now Esau saw that Isaac blessed Jacob when he sent him to Paddan-aram to take for himself a wife from there, when he blessed him and commanded him saying, 'Don't take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.' ⁷Jacob listened to his father Isaac and to his mother and went toward Paddan-aram. ⁸Then Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were contemptible in his father Isaac's eyes. ⁹So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, Nebaioth's sister for his wife, besides his other wives (Gen.28:5-9)"* I can imagine the thoughts inside **Jacob** as he processes all that has happened up to this point and how it is either fight **Esau** and others to death or leave it all and go (*lech lecha*) to another country, away from everything he loves and cares for. He obeyed (*grudgingly?*) or maybe he just *complied* with **Isaac** since the verse indicates that he was *sent away* and not that he left on his own volition.

So what about you today, are you ready to encounter *The Almighty* God of *Beth-El* and be *transformed* (*experience a relatively abrupt change*) forever? It is not just for **Jacob**, it is for you! This is the *House of God* (*Beth-El*) and He is not a respecter of persons. He stands and will even descend down to our space (this is what **Yeshua** has done) in order to fulfill His promises to us, among them *life and life more abundant*. You may be the greatest deceiver, and be deserving of death, but **Yeshua** has given you an inheritance that includes living with Him forever as a *Child of the King*. It is time to experience a *transformation by renewing our minds* so that *"you may discern what is the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect."* Leave different than you came and go forth to live how you were meant to live – as an *overcomer for Him*. It is available today so *don't leave KS without it*. Let us pray...