

# **What Will Be, Will Be**

*Series: Jacob Have I Loved*

**By David H. Roper**

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Today we conclude our study in the life of Jacob. In our last study together we looked at his return to Bethel. It was there he determined for himself and for his household that he would serve the Lord. But even though the issue of Jacob's ambivalence toward the Lord was settled at Bethel, his life was far from easy from that point on; it was one tragedy after another. When he came to Bethel, Deborah, the loyal, faithful servant of his mother Rebekah, died and was buried under an oak tree near Bethel. He traveled from Bethel toward Bethlehem and his wife Rachel died in childbirth and was buried just a few miles from Bethlehem. Then Reuben, his firstborn, lost the honor of his station by committing an act of incest. The family traveled to the southern part of the land of Canaan where Jacob settled with Isaac his father, and it was not long before Joseph, his favorite son, was sold into slavery by his own brothers to some Midianite traders, who took him to Egypt. As far as Jacob was concerned, his son was lost to him. Meanwhile Isaac his father had died, and, as a crowning blow, his family had to go down to Egypt because of the severity of the famine that gripped the land of Canaan.

It was a very trying and difficult time for Jacob, and yet, throughout, Jacob describes his experience as one in which the Lord shepherded him. He describes the Lord as the Stone of Israel. We need to be reminded that having made Christ the center of our life does not necessarily mean that things will go easily--they may continue to be difficult. But there was in Jacob's life a sense of stability, quietness, poise, and confidence, because God was his Shepherd, God was his Stone--the fixed point in his life.

After being in Egypt some fifteen to seventeen years, as he is on his deathbed, Jacob gathers his family around him and passes on to them these last words recorded in Genesis 49. There are several things to note about this passage. First, there are both natural and supernatural elements here. There are certain predictions he makes about his sons, many of them based upon his observation of these men. By this time the youngest was close to fifty years old, so he had a long time to observe them. He has noted certain tendencies in their lives, certain outstanding characteristics, and he points to these --characteristics which in and of themselves are neutral, but which can be either destructive or constructive depending upon the use to which they are put.

But there is also something of the supernatural about this account, for Jacob sees far beyond the immediate experiences of his sons, on into the history of the tribes descended from them. These twelve sons were the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, and many of the tendencies Jacob points to here in these men were perpetuated in the tribes. Jacob predicts that certain things will be true of these families. This is why the book of Hebrews looks back on this event and says Jacob did this by faith.

The structure of this passage is very simple. The first six men mentioned are all the sons of Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, and Issachar. The next four, Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali, are sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, the handmaids of Jacob's wives. The last two, Joseph and Benjamin, are the sons of Rachel, the wife he loved.

There are also a number of symbols used in this passage. Judah is described as a lion (verse 9), Issachar as a donkey (verse 14), Dan as a serpent (verse 17), Naphtali as a dove (verse 21), and Benjamin as a wolf (verse 27). We shall see a great deal of meaning in these symbols. And as we go through this "last will and testament" and look at the characteristics of each of these men, you will find yourself here someplace, because in this passage

Jacob gathers up many, if not all, of the characteristics of God's people. These are tendencies and attributes which in themselves are neutral, but which can be used either for good or evil.

Let us look at the first, represented by Reuben, verses 3 through 7:

**"Reuben, you are my first-born;  
My might and the beginning of my strength,  
Preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power.  
Uncontrolled as water, you shall not have preeminence,  
Because you went up to your father's bed;  
Then you defiled it--he went up to my couch."**

Reuben was the firstborn and, like all fathers, Jacob had great hopes for this young man. He had great potential, but he dissipated it. He was a strong man, a virile man, a man of tremendous drives and passions--sexual drives, drives to achieve--God-given drives--but he dissipated them. He lost his preeminence, lost his authority in Israel, because he never learned to let God control his drives. He is described here as one who went up to his father's couch. And here, some forty-five or fifty years after the event, it is as though Jacob still can hardly believe that Reuben did what he did. He lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine. First Jacob exposes Reuben to himself; then he turns as though to expose him to his brethren--"He went up to my couch!" It would appear that this was not a singular incident but a pattern in Reuben's life. He had drives and passions which never were submitted to the Lordship of his God. He was like a mountain stream, an uncontrolled torrent. The Hebrew word in verse 4 which is translated "uncontrolled" means "wild" and "reckless". These were drives given him by God, and which only God could control, but he never brought them under the direction of his Lord.

Perhaps as you look back on your own life this past year, this has been your experience. You are a person with strong drives, God-given drives. And yet you have prostituted them on yourself, diluted them in some way. The word from Scripture is that to do so is to lose our place of preeminence, to lose our authority and power. Those drives must be brought under the Lordship of Christ. We must be yoked to him; he is the only One who can control them. They must be submitted to him.

In the history of the tribe of Reuben, they never excelled, were never leaders in Israel. Throughout the wilderness wanderings, they had no place of preeminence. Later, during the period of the Judges, when there was an uprising among the Canaanites, Deborah and Barak urged the tribes to send help. But Reuben seemed to be morally paralyzed, unable to move. In the song of Deborah, she reflects upon that fact: "Among the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart." But there was no action. Reuben could not respond; he was paralyzed, both as an individual and as a tribe.

If this has been your experience, take those passions and drives and submit them to Christ's Lordship, and he will use them. They will become a force for good, for righteousness, instead of being a destructive force in your life and in the lives of others.

The second two sons are linked together. Simeon and Levi were brothers in the flesh; they were also brothers in spirit. They were men of kindred spirit:

**"Simeon and Levi are brothers;  
Their swords are implements of violence.  
Let my soul not enter into their council;  
Let not my glory be united with their assembly;  
Because in their anger they slew men,  
And in their self-will they lamed oxen.  
Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;  
And their wrath, for it is cruel.  
I will disperse them in Jacob,**

**And scatter them in Israel.**

These two men were linked together because of their massacre of the Shechemites. You remember the story -- Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite violated their sister, Dinah. And in retaliation they massacred the inhabitants of that village--men, women, and children. Simeon and Levi both had a strong sense of justice. They knew what was right, and they had a desire to set things right. But it is obvious, both from this passage and the actual incident, that they did so out of self-will. They were personally piqued. They went far beyond the mere desire to set things right; they wanted to vindicate themselves. They not only massacred the men, women, and children, but along with it committed a wanton, useless act of violence--they hamstrung the animals as well, which indicates that they were completely out of hand. They were trying to set something right, but they counted on their own anger and wrath to accomplish the task.

Now, there is a justifiable sense of moral outrage. There are things which ought to outrage any of us. They had the right to be outraged when their sister Dinah was violated. But they acted in their own anger, their own personal self-will. They took vengeance on the Shechemites themselves, and the result was a terrible act of destruction which haunted the house of Jacob for generations. Paul says to us in Romans, "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God [Let God deal with his enemies.]; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"

I am sure that many of you have been wronged this past year. People have done things, against you and against others, at which you can be justifiably outraged. But do not take vengeance into your own hands. Do not try to set things right yourself. James tells us clearly that "the anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God." And when we go out on our own to set things right, we always destroy. We act out of self-will, and we go beyond what God ever intended. The result is destruction. Paul said to Timothy that "men everywhere ought to lift up holy hands in prayer, without wrath." Let God settle accounts. He will do it fairly. He is the only One who can do it well.

"Vengeance is mine, I will repay." Simeon and Levi did not heed that word. They took the sword into their own hands, and the result was destruction for their family, their tribe. They were dispersed throughout the nation of Israel. Simeon was absorbed very early into Judah, the Southern Kingdom, and lost their existence as a tribe. The Levites were scattered throughout Israel as priests, and ceased to exist as a tribe with an inheritance in the land. All this because Simeon and Levi took things into their own hands.

The next son is Judah, verses 8 through 12:

**"Judah, your brothers shall praise you;**

[This is a play on the word, Judah, which means "praise". He was the fourth to be born, and Leah said, "This time I will praise the Lord." Therefore she called him Judah.]

**Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies;**

**Your father's sons shall bow down to you.**

**Judah is a lion's whelp;**

**From the prey, my son, you have gone up.**

**He couches, he lies down as a lion,**

**And as a lion, who dares rouse him up?**

**The scepter shall not depart from Judah,**

**Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,**

**Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.**

**He ties his foal to the vine,**

**And his donkey's colt to the choice vine;**

**He washes his garments in wine,**

**And his robes in the blood of grapes.**

**His eyes are dull from wine,**

**And his teeth white from milk."**

Judah was the tribe from which came all the kings from David on. It was the royal tribe. Judah was selected for leadership in Israel. From this tribe, Jacob said, "Shiloh" would come. We know that is a Messianic reference, but we do not know exactly what it means. There is a suggestion as to its meaning in the margin of the New American Standard Version, but no one really knows for sure, because the term does not occur anywhere else in Scripture. There is a geographical place with a similar name, but the spelling is not the same. Most scholars think it means "the One who gives peace". Whatever it means, it is a clear reference to Messiah. Messiah would come through the tribe of Judah, no question about it. All the ancient Jews knew that was the case.

This prediction stands midway in a long line of predictions regarding the coming of Messiah, beginning in the opening chapters of Genesis with the promise that through the seed of the woman would come a man who would crush the head of the serpent. The first promise was that Messiah, the Savior of all humanity, would be a man. He would not be an angel, he would not be a spaceman from somewhere in outer space (Eric Von Daniken and his *Chariots of the Gods* notwithstanding); he would be a man born on this planet. He would share our humanity. Later the promise was given to Shem, one of the sons of Noah, that Messiah would be a Shemite, a Semite. In that one prediction, two-thirds of the population of the world was set aside. He would not be a Japhethite --an Aryan, an Anglo-Saxon; he would not be a descendant of Ham--an Egyptian or African; he would be a Shemite. Later still the prediction is given that he would be a descendant of Abraham. And then the promise is repeated to Isaac, which means he would not be an Arab. Then it passed to Jacob--he would not be an Edomite; he would be an Israelite. Then, within Israel, he would be a descendant of the tribe of Judah. And in 1 Samuel we are told that Messiah would be of the family of David.

So when, at the right time, Jesus was born of a virgin in Bethlehem, his parents were a couple who were of the house of David, of the tribe of Judah, who were descendants of Israel, Isaac, and Abraham, who were Semites. And he was a man. This prediction of Jacob's stands midway in these other predictions. Shiloh was the Messiah who was to come, and he would come through the tribe of Judah. Judah would rule.

And throughout the Old Testament, where descriptions are given of the various kings of Israel and predictions are given of the coming King of Israel, the statement is made repeatedly that all kings are to govern according to the pattern of Messiah's reign. He is the ideal King, and this was the example the rulers were to heed.

God has called some of you this coming year to a place of leadership. You, like Judah, have a position of prominence and preeminence in God's household. But the pattern he has established is the pattern of Jesus the King. You are to lead after the gracious standard of Jesus himself--with love, as a servant, as the other kings of Israel were to lead. Your leadership is to consummate in the bringing forth of the rule of Jesus Christ in every life. This is the standard of leadership set before us--not to lord it over people but to serve them, to love them, and to lead them toward the truth, as Messiah would do.

The fifth son is Zebulun, verse 13:

**"Zebulun shall dwell at the seashore;  
And he shall be a haven for ships,  
And his flank shall be toward Sidon."**

Zebulun evidently was a merchant, and was the first to have contact with the Sidonians, the Phoenicians, who dwelt along the seashore. These were the traders of the ancient world, whose ships sailed all around the Mediterranean, perhaps as far as northern Europe, and who may have sailed around Africa at this time. Zebulun was the gateway to the world for the nation of Israel. This must have begun with this young man Zebulun, whose tribe carried on the tradition. As traders, they had contact with the world, as perhaps none of the other tribes of Israel had. They lived virtually as Jacob said--"his flank upon Sidon".

Some of you may be called to live with your flank upon Sidon, i.e., called to have contact with the world in an

unusual way. We are all called to have dealings with the world-to be in the world but not of it; but some of you are called to live in the midst of the world and to be the doorway through which life reaches out to that world. Inherent in this very call is the warning implied here. If your flank is toward Sidon and you are in contact with Phoenicia, there is always the possibility that the atmosphere of the world will invade your own life. As Phillips translates Romans 12,

**"Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within..."**

If you are called to live in the world, and to have this sort of proximity to men and women in the world, then know that God can sanctify you through truth; he can rebuild you from within; he can give you the strength necessary to stand in the midst of this situation, and to overcome the darkness rather than to allow the darkness to overcome the light. You may be like Zebulun, with that unique sort of ministry. If so, you need to give heed to this warning.

Then a word to Issachar, verses 14 and 15:

**"Issachar is a strong donkey,  
Lying down between the sheepfolds.  
When he saw that a resting place was good  
And that the land was pleasant,  
He bowed his shoulder to bear burdens,  
And became a slave at forced labor."**

Issachar is described, literally, as a "bony donkey"-not a fat donkey, and not a pet donkey, but a beast of burden. He was a servant. He must have carried on that function among his brethren; he labored to serve them. He was strong and capable, an adequate man, and therefore he took the place of a strong donkey in Israel. But evidently, when he settled in the land, he found a place that was to his liking, and he chose a life of ease rather than servanthood. "The result," Jacob says, "is that you will be forced into slavery yourself." That is always the choice: it is either to serve, or to be mastered. If God has given you strength, use it on behalf of your brethren. Use it not to please yourself and build for yourself, but to serve. Because to choose to do otherwise is to become enslaved by our desire for ease. It is to become complacent.

That is why Paul says, "We who are strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ...For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached thee [i.e., the Father] fell on me." He was the sinbearer, the burden bearer; our sins were laid on him. He served. And likewise, we are to serve. If God has given you strength, use it on behalf of other men and women, boys and girls, within the Body of Christ; serve.

Then, in verses 16 and 17, he says to Dan,

**"Dan shall judge his people,  
As one of the tribes of Israel.  
Dan shall be a serpent in the way,  
A horned snake in the path,  
That bites the horse's heels,  
So that his rider falls backward."**

Dan was evidently a very shrewd and analytical person, intellectually gifted, able to discern between right and wrong. He was a judge in Israel as a young man. This was his experience, and Jacob says this will be the experience of his tribe. And some of the great judges in Israel came from Dan. Samson was one. But there is a danger inherent in the critical ability to see subtle moral differences and to make distinctions on the basis of right and wrong. It is that we may become critical ourselves, and then our judgment becomes destructive rather than constructive.

Scripture says that we are to carry on a ministry of judgment in one another's lives. If we see a brother sinning, then we are to go to that brother, and we are to restore him, constructively. It does not say to go to a brother who annoys you, but to one who is acting contrary to Scripture. On the basis of the judgment of the Word of God, you go, and in a positive, constructive spirit, you bring to bear that judgment on the individual's life. But there is a judgment which is sin, and Jesus said of it, "Judge not, that you be not judged." This is the critical, condemning kind of judgment we bring down on people because they annoy us. We are personally piqued. And it has, as its result, a destructive influence.

Dan, unfortunately, was a destructive judge. He was treacherous, like a serpent who bit at the heels of a horse so that horse and rider fell backward. We do not know exactly what incident provoked this statement, but there must have been something in Dan's life which indicated a treacherous, critical spirit, and which diluted his influence in Israel. We are to be on the alert against that.

Verse 19:

**"As for Gad, raiders shall raid him,  
But he shall raid at their heels."**

Of the six Hebrew words used in this verse, four are based on the name, Gad, which means "raider". Gad's life was one of continual crisis and conflict: "Raiders shall raid him." This proved to be true in the history of the tribe. They were on the eastern flank of the nation of Israel, across the Jordan. Every nation which invaded from the east came through Gad. Their life was one of continual conflict, there was one battle after another. And yet this passage says that though there is continual conflict, there is also continuing conquest: "He shall raid at their heels." He will be the victor.

Some of you may have been called to just that sort of life--a life of conflict. God certainly has the right to call us to such a life. We have no right to expect that our lives will always be easy. Some people are called to crisis and difficult circumstances, and that is as much a calling as one to ease and prosperity.

My wife Carolyn has a good friend in Dallas with whom she has been corresponding for years. Grace was her roommate in college. She became a Christian while in college, and her life has been a story of conflict and crisis and problems. Her husband died of cancer in his early thirties. Her children have been sick one after another. In the last letter we received she said she was on her way out to the car when she slipped, struck her head, and fractured her skull. One thing after another seems to occur in her life. I cannot help but ask, "Why, God? Why should she be the recipient of all those experiences?" But the Word tells us that some are called to that sort of life-continual conflict, constant crisis.

And yet, with that conflict there is commensurate strength. In Grace's letters she talks about the faithfulness of God in her life. And I see stability there. I see this principle borne out: that with demand, there is supply. We have no reason to expect that God will lead us into an easy year. It may be a year of trouble, of trial. And yet you, like Gad, will raid at the heels of your enemy.

Then there is Asher, in verse 20:

**"As for Asher, his food shall be rich [or, fat], And he shall yield royal dainties."**

Asher had everything going his way. His lot was affluence. The tribe of Asher was always very wealthy. Moses describes Asher as having his foot dipped in oil-a picture of resources and affluence. That was Asher's experience. It was out of the tribe of Asher that the food for the kings was supplied. God likewise may call you this year to a life of ease and affluence and wealth. Paul's word to you is found in 1 Timothy 6:

**Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited [because wealth can make you proud] or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be**

**generous and ready to share..."**

That was Asher's lot. He was called to be fat, but he yielded royal dainties. He gave up the fat of his life and his land for others, to supply the needs of the royal family in Jerusalem. Then Naphtali, verse 21:

**"Naphtali is a doe let loose,  
He gives beautiful words."**

I wish there were more on the character of this young man than we have here in this statement. He must have been a very artistic young man. He gave beautiful words, was sensitive, intelligent, able to communicate. Yet there is something in this description of him as "a doe let loose" which gives us a bit of insight into his character. Like some people who are artistic and sensitive in spirit, this young man was erratic, like a young doe which is released after it has been imprisoned-flighty, easily frightened or upset, emotionally disturbed at times, bothered by trivial things, skittish-that was Naphtali's experience. The word of Scripture for the Naphtali's is found in 1 Peter 5:10:

**And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, and strengthen you.**

Use that gift, and know that God is going to bring into your own spirit emotional stability. He is going to settle you and strengthen you and establish you.

Joseph, verses 22 through 26:

**"Joseph is a fruitful bough,  
A fruitful bough by a spring;  
Its branches run over a wall.  
The archers bitterly attacked him,  
And shot at him and harassed him;  
But his bow remained firm,  
And his arms were agile,  
From the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob.  
"Joseph is a fruitful bough,  
(From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),  
From the God of your father who helps you,  
And by the Almighty who blesses you  
With blessings of heaven above,  
Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,  
Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.  
The blessings of your father  
Have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors  
Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills;  
May they be on the head of Joseph,  
And on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers."**

It comes as no secret, I am sure, that Joseph's lot was blessing. He was blessed in everything he did. He was Jacob's favorite son, and Jacob bestowed upon him every honor. He was given the choice portions of the land--actually two portions, one for Ephraim and one for Manasseh, his two sons, It was only for Joseph that Jacob bought a parcel of land near Shechem and gave it to him. Joseph had every advantage, every blessing, everything went his way. As you know, he rose to be second only to the Pharaoh of Egypt. And Jacob wants Joseph to remember where it all comes from, because that is what is essential. "Joseph," he says, "remember that it comes from 'the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (from [the name of] the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), from the God of your father who helps you.' Joseph, don't ever forget the source of your blessing. Don't feel guilty about it, don't feel that it is wrong to be blessed, don't feel that the sky is going to cave in tomorrow because you've been blessed today. Remember that there is a God who blesses; that is his prerogative."

And you, like Paul, can learn to abound as well as to be abased. You can do all things through the One who strengthens you. Sometimes prosperity is more difficult to handle than adversity. You need to remember, when God blesses you-and he may bless you immeasurably this coming year in material as well as spiritual things-if he does so, give thanks to him. Remember where it comes from.

Finally, in verse 27, there is little Benjamin. He is not only last; he is also least -virtually unknown, undistinguished. And yet he is described here as a wolf:

**"Benjamin is a ravenous wolf;  
In the morning he devours the prey,  
And in the evening he divides the spoil."**

That is a Hebrew idiom which means, "He always wins. He is a victor, a ruler." It is interesting that David picks this up in the 68th Psalm, and in just a few words says, "Benjamin, the smallest, their ruler." Perhaps that is where you find yourself this year. You look back over this list of characteristics and see that you are not particularly wealthy; God has not particularly blessed you materially this past year. You do not feel that you are a very shrewd and analytical person. And perhaps you are not very wise and discerning-yet. And you do not know where you stand in this catalog of characteristics. Then Benjamin is the one who ought to speak to you. He is the least, the one who seems to be most insignificant. But he is like a wolf. He will win. Though he is the least, he is the ruler.

It was little Benjamin who was loyal to David to the end. They sided with Judah when the ten tribes rebelled and went to the north. It was Benjamin that was loyal to Judah, to the house of David. The city of Jerusalem was given to Benjamin. We normally associate it with Judah, but Benjamin was given Jerusalem. Some of the greatest leaders of Israel came out of Benjamin--Ehud, Jonathan, Saul of Tarsus, who became the apostle Paul. God blessed that little tribe immeasurably, though they were insignificant.

I am sure that somewhere in this list you have found yourself. Perhaps you look back over the past year and see that your characteristics have not been put to their intended purpose. They have been misused, prostituted, turned in on yourself, used to please yourself. You look forward to the new year, and you want things to be different. Would you turn with me to 1 Timothy 4, verses 4 and 5.

**For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude [thanksgiving]...**

God created you. He created your characteristics, the attributes of your life, the gifts you have, the way you are. Everything about you comes from God. And everything created by God is good, not to be despised. Perhaps you do not like yourself too well, and you wish things were a bit different.

Look, God is the One who made you that way, and it is good. Not one of us has any right to look at ourself and say it is bad. You cannot call bad what God has called good. And it is to be received with thanksgiving. That is where we begin: "God, thank you that you have made me the way I am, with my strong passions which get out of hand, which I can't bridle--thank you, God; they came from you. Or my lowly estate; or the crises which come into my life. ('God, why did you put me there?' It is always doomsday when you give way to that sort of bitterness. Rather, begin by thanking him.) God, thank you; it is good; it has been created for me." Paul goes on to say in verse 5,

**...for it is sanctified [put to its intended purpose] by means of the word of God and prayer.**

Take that characteristic, whatever it is, that personality trait, and submit it to the Word of God. Find out how God wants you to use it; that is the first step. This is where we have to begin, by putting ourselves under the authority of that Word. "Lord, you show me from the Word how it is to be employed."

But there is a further step. It is sanctified by the word of God and by prayer. Prayer is the attitude of dependence

upon God, and reliance upon his power, which makes possible obedience to what the Word directs. That is the word for this coming year. Wherever you find yourself in this last will and testament, submit yourself to the Word of God, and expect God to begin to change you and bring you into conformity to that Word.

This is not completed immediately; it is a process. The Scriptures tell us clearly that the process will go on until we stand before Jesus Christ. He is committed to perfecting us, but that perfecting will take time. This is why, tucked away in these last words Jacob directs toward his sons, there is this little statement:

**"For Thy salvation I wait, O Lord."**

He said that in conjunction with Dan, because I think he identified most nearly with Dan. He had the same sort of penetrating, scheming mind. Yet he, like Dan, throughout his early life had taken that and used it for his own advantage. So he says to Dan, "You are like a serpent that bites the horse's heels and throws the rider backward. And when you use your gift in that destructive way, I see myself." Then he says, "For Thy salvation I wait, O Lord." God is committed to setting our life in order. He is committed, but we have to wait for his time, his way, and trust him.

Like Jacob, we wait for your salvation, O Lord. How clearly we see ourselves in these characters! With what realism you uncover us, expose us. It is our desire, Father, that you take each characteristic which is ours and put it to its intended purpose. May we be men and women of the Word, understanding the purpose for all of life, and men and women of faith who count upon you to make possible, to bring to pass, all that you have directed us to do in Scripture. We ask in Christ's name, Amen.

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