

LOVE STRUCK

Title: *The REAL Big Bang, Pt 29*

Series: Smitten, Pt3

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I. POINT OF INTRIGUE

A. Last week Gina introduced us to “the dreamer.” No NOT Joseph, but Jacob.

JOSEPH HAD TWO DREAMS. He also interpreted Pharaoh’s two dreams and the dreams of the Chief Baker and Chief Cup Bearer. Jacob, not known for having dreams (other than the “stairway to heaven”) ([show photo](#)), but for being a cunning man who stole his brother’s birthright and blessing, also had two dreams. **FYI:** There are 10 dreams recorded in the book of Genesis: Ten is a significant number in Judaism:



- 1) With *ten* unspeakable statements God created the world
- 2) God gave us *Ten* Commandments with which to govern the world

- 3) God sent *ten* plagues to punish Pharaoh for his mistreatment of the Hebrews
- 4) God asks us to give a tenth of all that we have to Him
- 5) The Passover Lamb was selected on the tenth day of the first month
- 6) The Day of Atonement is the tenth day of the seventh month
- 7) The last great ruling kingdom of the world is symbolically pictured with *ten* toes and *ten* horns
- 8) ... and the list goes on.

(Back to Gina's message.) Gina powerfully illustrated how *when* we hear God in our “spiritual gut,” and *obey*, we experience God on a level, in a way, uncommon to our routine walk with the LORD.

B. Often, we focus on the flaws of Jacob, which are many—hey, he's a lot like us. With that said, there is a reason why God selected Jacob to be the father of 12 sons, who would comprise the nation of Israel, and for whom God would name the nation of Israel. Yes, the nation of Israel is named after Jacob, whose name God changed from Jacob to Israel. This distinct honor was not given to Abraham or Isaac, but to Jacob.

C. Qualities for which God selected Jacob.

1. Jacob had a Pit-bull determination to hold on to what God considered important.
2. Unlike his brother, Esau, Jacob refused to take a wife from amongst the unbelieving Canaanites. Yes, and he was 77 years of age when he left home to find a wife.

NOTE: So, for all of you singles wondering, “Where is the right guy/gal?” Be patient! As my wife often says, “There’s a lid for every pot.” **(show photo)**

That sounds somewhat acerbic, but it wasn’t meant that way.



3.



Jacob was a confirmed materialist. He would be what Madonna labeled, “A Material Man.” **(show photo)** Yet, as a materialist he

knew that if he were to be blessed as was his grandfather Abraham, and his father, Isaac, he had to give God the tithe.

Although his vow to God was carnal, that is self-serving, his insight was one of faith in the promises of God. **Hebrews 11:6a**, tells us, *"It is by faith that we please God. And without faith it is impossible to please God."*

WHY IS IT IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD WITHOUT FAITH?

Because it spits in the face of who God is. Has not God said, *"Nothing is too hard for God?"* Has not God said, *"Ask and you shall receive?"* Whether we get what we ask for or not is God's doing, but what He wants from all of His children is that we believe and ask in faith...then TRUST Him to answer in a way that is best.

- 1) Where is it you're not asking? **Ask.**
- 2) Where is it you're not trusting? **Trust!**
- 3) Where is it you're not believing? **Believe!**
- 4) Where is it you're not exercising faith? **Exercise faith!**

IT TAKES COURAGE TO EXERCISE FAITH. e.g.:

Everywhere I go I take a handful of *So Loved* cards, and hand them out to nearly everyone with whom I have a verbal conversation. Sometimes I hand them out to people with whom I don't have a conversation. (That's always interesting.) In nearly every instance I wonder if the person is going to reject the card, show disdain for the card, or accept it? In most cases people are receptive and appreciative. But, there are instances when people are not.

Every time I hand out a card it takes faith. Why am I handing out the card? Because I would like the person to whom I've handed the card to experience the most marvelous Passion Play this side of Heaven, and if they don't know the Lord Jesus, to get saved at the show.

Now, let me be honest. It's not always easy. Why? Because of the unknown. Will the person be receptive or will he or she reject the invitation? No one likes rejection. And, if we get enough rejections, it's easy to give up and quit.

But, I put away the rejections and stand upon **Hebrews 11:1**: Faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen. I hope that when I give a *So Loved* card and invite a person to the Passion Play, I'll see them at one of the performances.

LET ME SHARE ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION: The other day I called a neighbor who was in the hospital. She had a knee replacement and a month or so after the replacement, her body rejected the knee. We chatted for about 20 minutes, while I put together my outfit for Sunday ☺. When the conversation came to a close, I felt the Holy Spirit say, "POTS: Ask Mrs A if you could pray with her." So, I asked. There was ... silence. No "yes," no "no." It was just a second or two, but it seemed like an eternity. What do I do? (Now, Mrs A is not an irreligious woman, but faith and praying with another person, to some, is a personal and private thing, so you never know ... if you know what I mean.)

What do I do? Exercise faith. In the midst of the silence I prayed. The Holy Spirit gave me the words and when I was done, Mrs A said, “That was beautiful. Thank you!” Whew!

Here’s the point: Everything we do for Christ, no matter how big or small requires faith, and faith pleases the LORD. DON’T LET SATAN TELL YOU YOU’RE NOT WORTHY TO SHARE FAITH BECAUSE YOU’RE NOT THE PERFECT CHRISTIAN. It’s his favorite weapon. Jacob was far from a “perfect Christian,” but God honored him because he exercised faith. Be a person of faith!

D. Let’s pray.

II. LOVE STRUCK – GENESIS 29

A. Here’s the narrative. Jacob was 77 years old when he stole his brother, Esau’s, birthright and fled for his life. **(show photo)**



Under the guidance of his father and mother, he fled to the land of his grandfather’s

brother, Nahor. When he gets there he meets his wife to be. Let's pick up the narrative.

Genesis 29:1- 27 (selected)

Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples. ² There he saw a well in the open country ... with a large stone over the mouth of the well.

⁴ Jacob asked the shepherds, "My brothers, where are you from?"

"We're from Haran," they replied.

⁵ He said to them, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?" [Nahor was Abraham's brother.] ... "and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."

⁹ While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherd.

¹⁰ When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of his uncle Laban, and Laban's sheep, he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle's sheep. ¹¹ Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud.

NOTE! There's nothing shy about Jacob. And does he know how to lay it on. First, he rolls the stone away—this guy's Captain America at the age of 77. Hey, there's hope for me. LOL! Then he kisses her and gives her a sob story. (Every line has an origin.)

¹³ As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he hurried to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his home, and there Jacob told him all these things. ¹⁴ Then Laban said to him, "You are my own flesh and blood."

(Fast forward to v16)

¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷ Leah had weak^[a] eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful.

NOW, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS MEANT BY "WEAK EYES," BUT WHATEVER IT IS ... IT AIN'T GOOD! As Pastor Paul Ascitto put it, "I think Leah got hit with the ugly stick and Rachel the magical wand."

¹⁸ Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."

¹⁹ Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." ²⁰ So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

WHAT'S THE TITLE OF THIS SERMON? "Love Struck." Guys ... remember when you could talk to your wife to be for hours...into the wee hours of the morning...and it seemed like but a few minutes. **(show photo, p9)**

And, then you could get up and go to work. What happened? Now it's, "*Honey, I've got to get up early; we'll talk tomorrow.*" Or, the wife says, "*Not tonight,*

Sweetheart, my toe hurts."



²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her."

²² So Laban brought together all the people

of the place and gave a feast.

IS THIS WHERE THE WEDDING RECEPTION FINDS ITS ROOTS?

I will never forget the first wedding reception I went to while attending college in the south. After the Church wedding, there were light finger foods in the church fellowship hall. That was the feast. I'm thinking "How cheap!" Now, I'm thinking, "How smart!" They can put a down payment on a house with what they saved on the wedding reception. LOL!

²³ But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. ²⁴ And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant. [Leah's maid and Jacob's concubine]

²⁵ When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn’t I? Why have you deceived me?”

²⁶ Laban replied, “It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. ²⁷ Finish this daughter’s bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work.”

PERSONALLY, I believe Jacob knew who it was he made love to that evening.

- 1) He’s not dumb.
- 2) He knew the custom and he knew Leah. She was not a stranger to him. Was he going to kick her out of his bed and embarrass her and her father?
- 3) Plus more wives meant more sons and daughters, and more sons and daughters meant a larger dynasty. Remember Jacob is a “material man.”
- 4) And, lastly, how do we not know that Jacob felt this is what he deserved? After all,
 - a. Did he not pressure his brother into selling him the birthright?
 - b. Did he not deceive his father and steal his brother’s blessing?
 - c. Is he reaping what he has sown? **[Let’s keep reading.]**

²⁸ And Jacob ... finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. ²⁹ Laban gave his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her attendant. [Rachel's maid and Jacob's concubine] ³⁰ Jacob made love to Rachel also, and his love for Rachel was greater than his love for Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

B. J. Oswald Sanders says,

"It is instructive to notice the discipline to which God subjected Jacob, in order to make him a worthy instrument. The method was to put him with a man more hard, more grasping, more crooked than himself, for Laban was his equal in duplicity. God permitted Jacob to see in another all that was most hateful in himself – a method God still employs [today]. All those years Jacob spent in swindling and being swindled. [Yet] in the battle of wits the supplanter was supplanted. But it was this grueling discipline which eventually led to Jacob's transformation."

C. Here's the reality: seldom do we learn from our successes. But we will, if willing, always learn from our failures.

You've heard the expression, *"God's not done with me yet."* It's true! It took 97 years for God to change Jacob's name (supplanter) was changed to Israel (may God prevail).

D. Are you discouraged by life's setbacks?

Don't be! Believe that God will use every setback, every failure for His glory...if you'll give them to Him in faith.

1. Stand upon *Romans 8:28*.

2. Give thanks in and for all things. *1 Thessalonians 5:18*

... and God will do what He loves doing, what He specializes in doing—the miraculous.

And the Church said, "Amen!"

III. INVITATION

Where do we begin in becoming the person God want us to be?

Admit— your sins have separated you from God. (*Psa 14:1-3; Rom 3: 23*);

Believe – that God did something about your sins through Jesus Christ. (The final Pascal Lamb/Messiah.) (*Lev 17:10; Heb 9: 19-22*);

Commit – yourself to His righteous by confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior. (*Isa 53:5; Col 1:22*);

Do it today! (*Isa 49:8; 2 Cor 6:2*).

Father in Heaven, I'm sorry for the things I've done that are wrong: I am a sinner; forgive me. Thank You for loving me and sending your Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty for my sin. Holy Spirit, come into my heart;

Jesus be my Lord and Savior. I give You my life.
Amen!

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