

## Jacob's Journey to Heaven

We have in the Old Testament a most interesting story of a man's journey from a conniving supplanter to a prince of God. A man who started his walk at the direction of his mother and ended with a personal relationship with God. His name is Jacob. While yet in his mother's womb, the Lord called him and gave instructions to Rebekah, his mother saying, "The elder shall serve the younger." This was unheard of in Jewish times so when it looked as if God was not moving in Rebekah's timing she took it upon herself to help him out a bit almost to the death of her darling son. God makes allowances for our ignorance. Unless, of course, we continue to be stubborn and not learn. Did you know our DNA is that of a manipulator and a conniving supplanter? Did you know that our Adam man, the elder shall serve the younger, the Christ? And of course, you already know the Kingdom of God is within you so let us proceed with our journey with Jacob.

How many of you reading this started on a journey before you actually had any knowledge of God and later saw His hand in your journey? We came to California for reasons that had nothing to do with God. But it was in California I began to change even before I met Christ. And God started giving me a hunger for truth so when I heard the gospel, even though what was being said was not what I believed, I recognized it as truth. Abraham started his journey going along with his father and not because he decided to leave Ur of the Chaldees.

So it was with Jacob. God works in weird ways and as long as I have known Him, His ways elude me and I cannot figure Him out. And yet I obey Him and then find out He has me walking in His ways whether I am conscious of it or not. Or should I say, He blesses my ways as, I, like Jacob have had my own wrestle and change with God so He finally blesses what I do and who I am. In a sense, He and I are one.

So Jacob began to have an encounter with God in his wilderness journey. Jesus said, "Leave your father and mother and old relationships and follow me." Although John the Baptist had followers he never said, "Follow me." We, living in the year 2003 have only seen a Baptist ministry that began in the sixties and has now become old and worn out. The pastors and teachers and prophets could not say "follow me" because they never went anywhere. They built a kingdom in the world and settled down to their own demise for "He that seeks to save his life will lose it." You will notice in the scriptures both Jesus and John the Baptist traveled the same dusty roads. So the Kingdom of God is within and the journey taken is the inner man journeying from a bestial nature which is mortal into a son of God which is eternal.

So Jacob trudges through the wilderness, decreasing so God can increase. He finally comes to a place where God has him yoked to another person. Our walk starts as a personal experience with Him. He makes love with us — puts a carrot ahead of our nose so we keep chasing the carrot and that leads to more trouble. For Jacob finally reaches the destination where most of his rough dealings took place as he had to contend with, not his mother or father, but someone much like himself. He is yoked to his uncle. Jacob's uncle, Laban, was a cheat and a conniver much like Jacob himself. By the time Laban finished with Jacob his righteousness had been removed, his pride was gone, but his iniquity still stood between himself and God.

Isaac had died and it was time Jacob returned to his first love and be reconciled with Esau, his brother. However, there were still things in his hidden recesses of his heart that would keep a pure union with Esau from happening. Oh, how we long for joy without sorrow, peace without warfare, comfort without mourning, and the Kingdom of God without dying. It was time for

Jacob to be harvested and enter God's presence. It is a frightful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And so it was with Jacob. Instead of humbling himself immediately as did Joshua, he fought God and wrestled until all of Jacob was no more. His iniquity was taken from him and like Isaiah he could cry, "I am a man undone and my iniquity is taken from me." Actually all the hidden sin that so beset Jacob was taken from him and he became an open epistle now to be read of men. Now and only now could God bless his works and his

life for he totally belonged to God. So much so that his name changed. His nature changed, his substance changed, his character changed. Now God could bless him, his works, his family. Oh, the wisdom of God. We all must pass through the painful valley of the shadow of death like our forerunner Jacob did so we become the Israel of God. Israel is not a country. It is a the very substance of the new creation. Old things have passed away, behold, all things are new.



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