

The God of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob: Wrestling into Your Destiny

Dr. John Carmichael

[Mat 22:31-32 NASB95] 31 "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: 32 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

[Act 3:13 NASB95] 13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, [the one] whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.

[Act 7:31-32 NASB95] 31 "When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he approached to look [more] closely, there came the voice of the Lord: 32 'I AM THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC AND JACOB.' Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look.

[Jhn 1:51 NASB95] 51 And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

- Jacob's story is one of the most encouraging stories in Scripture because God did not choose a perfect man. He chose a man in process. Jacob was a deceiver, a schemer, and a man running from the consequences of his own decisions. Yet God pursued him, revealed Himself to him, wrestled with him, and transformed him.
- Jacob's greatest victories were not won through cleverness, manipulation, or human effort. His greatest victories came through encounters with God.
- Many people want God's promises, but they neglect God's presence. Jacob discovered that destiny is unlocked through divine encounters.

What happens when a person encounters God deeply enough that their identity, character, and destiny are forever changed?

The life of Jacob reveals that God transforms ordinary people through life-changing encounters with His presence.

I. Learn to See Heaven Opened

- a. **[Gen 28:12-15 NASB95] 12** He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. **13** And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. **14** "Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. **15** "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."
- b. Running from Esau, Jacob stopped at Bethel with nothing but a stone for a pillow. In the night, God opened heaven before him. He saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven. Angels were ascending and descending.
- c. God renewed the covenant given to Abraham and Isaac.
- d. Before Jacob's life changed outwardly, God first changed his vision inwardly.
- e. Many people only see their problems. God wants us to see His promises.

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- f. Application: The Holy Spirit still opens spiritual eyes today. God still gives visions, dreams, revelation, and divine direction.

II. Learn That God's Presence Is Already Here

- a. [Gen 28:16 NASB95] 16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it."
- b. Jacob thought he was alone. Jacob thought he was abandoned. Jacob thought he was running for his life. Yet God was already there.
- c. God's presence is not dependent upon our awareness of Him. God was working before Jacob recognized it.
- d. Application: Many believers are praying for God to show up when He is already working around them. Sometimes revival begins when we recognize the presence that is already available.

III. Your Destiny Will Be Birthed Through Wrestling with God

- a. [Gen 32:24 NASB95] 24 Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.
- b. Twenty years passed between Bethel and Peniel. Jacob had experienced victories, failures, blessings, and disappointments. Now he faced a crisis as Esau approached. Before Jacob could face Esau, he had to face himself.
- c. Some breakthroughs only come after a season of spiritual wrestling.
- d. God was not trying to destroy Jacob. God was transforming Jacob.
- e. Application: Prayer is often more than asking—it is wrestling. There are moments when believers must press through until God completes His work in them.

IV. Refuse to Let Go Until You Receive a Blessing

- a. [Gen 32:26 NASB95] 26 Then he said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."
- b. Jacob had spent much of his life pursuing blessings through natural means. Now he sought God Himself.
- c. He held on through pain. He held on through darkness. He held on until breakthrough came.
- d. Persistent faith receives what casual faith abandons. The blessing came to the one who refused to quit.
- e. Application: Some answers come immediately. Others require perseverance, hunger, and determination. Breakthrough belongs to those who keep seeking.

V. Your Destiny Will Likely Come with A New Name

- a. [Gen 32:28 NASB95] 28 He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed."
- b. Jacob means "supplanter" or "deceiver." Israel means "one who has prevailed with God."
- c. God changed more than Jacob's circumstances. God changed Jacob's identity.
- d. A genuine encounter with God always produces transformation.
- e. Jacob left Peniel with: A new name. A new walk. A new confidence. A new future.
- f. Application: The Holy Spirit does not merely comfort us; He transforms us. God still changes identities, breaks strongholds, restores lives, and redirects destinies.

- **When we encounter God, refuse to let go of Him, and surrender fully to His purpose, He changes our identity and leads us into our destiny.**
- Jacob's life teaches us that destiny is not found in talent, intelligence, or human effort. Destiny is found in the presence of God.
- At Bethel, Jacob discovered that heaven was open.

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- At Peniel, Jacob discovered that transformation was possible.
- The same God who met Jacob still meets people today. He still reveals Himself. He still changes lives. He still gives new names, new purposes, and new futures.
- The question is not whether God is willing to meet us. The question is whether we are willing to pursue Him until the encounter changes us.