



# The Ardent Dreams of Destiny

Bethel Old Testament Lesson 5

# The God of Jacob

Psalm 46:7

The LORD of hosts is with us;  
The God of Jacob is our stronghold.

- ◆ G. Campbell Morgan, pastor of Westminster Chapel in London during the early 20th century, points out something remarkable about Psalm 46:7.

“The Lord of Hosts\* - the God of sun and moon, people and angels, the great and terrible God whose army is comprised of the entire created world is in the same breath called, ‘the God of Jacob’”

\*Yahweh Tsebaoth

# Jacob?

The Grabber,  
The Manipulator,  
The Deceiver

G. Campbell Morgan says:

“I know only one man who is meaner than Jacob, and that is Laban. The only comfort I ever got out of Jacob is that he was one too many for Laban. Of all men for astute, hard-driving meanness recommend me to Jacob. But God is ‘the God of Jacob.’ . . . Oh, my soul, here find thy comfort!

Campbell Morgan continues:

“I do not know whether it helps you, but it helps me. He is the God of Jacob, mean as Jacob was. This is the thing on which my faith fastens. “The Lord of hosts. . .” yes; but “the God of Jacob!” . . . But was that man such a man as I? The longer I live the more astonished I am that God ever loved me at all.

“The longer I live the more astonished I am at the infinite grace which found me and loves me and keeps me. The meanness that lurks within, the possibilities of evil that I have discovered make me ask, “Will God look at me?” He is “the God of Jacob.”

# The God of Jacob, the God of the Covenant is the One Who

- ◆ Initiates and chooses
- ◆ Brings about what He promises
- ◆ Can use evil for good

God is faithful to keep His covenant with His chosen people, in spite of circumstances and in spite of the character or actions of man.

# God told Isaac's wife Rebekah

Gen. 25:23 The LORD said to her [Rebekah],

“Two nations are in your womb;

And two peoples will be separated from your body;

And one people shall be stronger than the other;

And **the older shall serve the younger.**”

Gen. 25:24 When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

Gen. 25:25 Now the **first** came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him **Esau**.

Gen. 25:26 **Afterward** his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called **Jacob**; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

Even though God had told Rebekah that the older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob), Jacob felt that HE had to scheme, plan, be in control, manipulate circumstances and people in order to receive what God had promised.

When Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; and Esau said to Jacob, "Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished." Therefore his name was called Edom

But Jacob said, "**First sell me your birthright.**"

Genesis 25:29-31

## Jacob grabbed the birthright



## Genesis 25:32-34

Esau said, “Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?” And Jacob said, “First swear to me”; so he swore to him, and **sold his birthright to Jacob**. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. **Thus Esau despised his birthright.**

## What was the birthright?

- ◆ The firstborn received the birthright.
- ◆ The firstborn received twice as much property as the other sons in the family.
- ◆ The firstborn became the head of the family.

Jacob refused to trust that God would fulfill His promise, “the older will serve the younger.”

- ◆ Jacob took it into his own hands to wrest the place of prominence and blessing
- ◆ He didn't reach for God; he grabbed only for God's blessings.

# Then Jacob deceived to receive His Father's blessing

Genesis. 27:19-20

Jacob said to his father, "**I am Esau your firstborn;** I have done as you told me. Get up, please, sit and eat of my game, that you may bless me."

Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God caused it to happen to me."

## Genesis 27:21-24

Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come close, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not."

So Jacob came close to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.

And he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" And he said, "I am."

# The blessing given by Isaac to Jacob

Genesis 27:28-29

- Now may God give you of the dew of heaven,  
And of the fatness of the earth,  
And an abundance of grain and new wine;
- May peoples serve you,  
And nations bow down to you;
- Be master of your brothers,  
And may your mother's sons bow down to you.
- Cursed be those who curse you,  
And blessed be those who bless you."

Isaac later acknowledged that the LORD had chosen Jacob to receive the blessing of Abraham

“May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May He also give you [Jacob] the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your descendants with you, that you may possess the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham.” (Genesis 28:3-4)

Jacob was sent from his beloved home to  
go to Haran (Genesis 28:10-22)

- ◆ To escape the murderous anger of his brother Esau
- ◆ To find a wife among his mother's family

- ◆ Leaving his home in Beersheba, he traveled 55 miles toward Haran.
- ◆ He was alone, sent away from family and home.
- ◆ BUT he was NOT in fact alone.

At this low point, when he was devoid of human prop and in need of protection and guidance, the LORD, the God of Abraham and Isaac revealed Himself to a very undeserving Jacob.

Jacob dreamt of a ladder “set on earth with its top reaching to heaven. . . .” (Genesis 28:12)

- ◆ God passed the Abrahamic covenant on to Jacob
- ◆ Jacob was promised the land
- ◆ He was promised many descendants
- ◆ In his descendants all the families of the earth would be blessed.



# In Genesis 28:15 God added one more promise

- ◆ “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.”

Jacob is promised God's  
accompanying Presence.

## Genesis 28:16-17, 19

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the **house of God**, and this is the gate of heaven.” . . . He called the name of that place **Bethel**. . . .

Then Jacob made a vow . . . . or was it a bargain?

Genesis 28:20-21

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “**If** God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I return to my father’s house in safety, **then** the LORD will be my God.

# In Genesis 29-30 Jacob the cheater is cheated by his uncle Laban

But in Haran Jacob acquires

- ◆ A family: two wives, two concubines, eleven sons, and one daughter
- ◆ Wealth: great flocks of sheep, goats, camels, cattle, and donkeys
- ◆ A great household: male and female servants

In Genesis 31 when God tells him to return to the land of his fathers, Jacob begins to recognize that God has been with him as He promised.

Gen. 31:3 Then the LORD said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you.” . . .

Gen. 31:5 and said to them [his wives], “I see your father’s attitude, that it is not friendly toward me as formerly, but the God of my father has been with me.”

Gen. 31:7 “Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times; however, God did not allow him to hurt me. . . .

Gen. 31:9 “Thus God has taken away your father’s livestock and given them to me.

# God identifies Himself:

Gen. 31:13 'I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth.'"

# But Jacob still falls back on his deceiving ways

Jacob may acknowledge that God has been with him, but he is still attempting to manipulate circumstances in his own strength.

- ◆ Gen. 31:20 And Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he was fleeing.

- ◆ In Genesis 32, as Jacob approaches a meeting with his brother Esau, he again falls back on his own manipulation, dividing his family into two companies.

- ◆ In Genesis 32:9-12, Jacob finally turns to God in prayer, reminding God of His promises.
- ◆ BUT again he schemes and tries to buy Esau's favor with 5 flocks of animals.
- ◆ Jacob is still trying to control the situation.

That night, Jacob was alone and desperate, and  
GOD took control of Jacob.

- ◆ Jacob wrestled until he was broken.
- ◆ But he still sought the blessing.
- ◆ God changed Jacob's name to Israel



Gen. 32:28 (Amplified) He said, Your name shall be called no more **Jacob** [supplanter, schemer, trickster, swindler], but **Israel** [contender with God]; for you have contended and have power with God and with men and have prevailed.

“... changing someone’s name was a way to exert authority over a person. Jacob accepts the name change, which in this case is equivalent to accepting a change in character.”

Walton, John H., *Genesis (The NIV Application Commentary)* (p. 606). Zondervan.

The *Expositor's Bible Commentary* says:

“There are many unanswered questions in this brief narrative of Jacob’s wrestling with an angel. It is, however, clear that the picture of Jacob’s struggle with God is meant to epitomize the whole of the Jacob narratives. Throughout the narratives Jacob’s life has been characterized by struggle, particularly by a struggle to obtain a blessing from God.”

In the end, Israel (Jacob) acknowledged God as  
his Shepherd and Redeemer

Gen. 35:3 Then come, let us go up to Bethel,  
where I will build an altar to God, who  
answered me in the day of my distress and who  
has been with me wherever I have gone.”

Gen. 48:15 (Amplified) Then [Jacob] blessed Joseph and said, God [Himself ], before Whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac lived and walked habitually, God [Himself ], Who has [been my **Shepherd** and has led and] fed me from the time I came into being until this day. . . .

Gen. 48:16 (Amplified) The redeeming Angel [that is, the Angel the **Redeemer**—not a created being but the Lord Himself] Who has redeemed me continually from every evil, bless the lads!

# At Bethel (Genesis 35:1-15)

- ◆ Jacob had previously had the family put away foreign gods.
- ◆ Then he made an altar to God.
- ◆ And God appeared to him again with his new name and the covenant promise.

# Israel added more sons:

Gen. 35:18-19 It came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him **Benjamin**. So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).

Gen. 48:5 “Now your [Joseph’s] two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; **Ephraim** and **Manasseh** shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are.

# The Sons of Israel = The Tribes

- ◆ Look at your handouts entitled the SONS OF JACOB and PATRIARCHAL FAMILY TREE
- ◆ Joseph receives a double portion
- ◆ Ephraim and Manasseh will become 2 tribes
- ◆ Levi will receive no land. God is their portion.

# The 12 Tribes of Israel



1. Reuben



2. Simeon



3. \*Ephraim



4. Judah



5. Dan



6. Naphtali



7. Gad



8. Asher



9. Issachar



10. Zebulun



11. \*Manasseh



12. Benjamin

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“Holy Father, who transformed a clever  
manipulating Jacob and renamed him Israel,  
meaning ‘God strives,’ I thank You that You are  
the person-smith of my life, hammering out the  
character You want for me.”

Lloyd John Ogilvie, *Quiet Moments with God*