

Jacob

by Alan Redpath

Alan Redpath's sermon on Jacob explores the transformative journey from deceit to divine encounter and the importance of repentance in the Christian life.

Duration: 55:13

Scripture: Genesis 32:26-35, Exodus 20:7, Psalm 51:17, Matthew 6:33, Luke 18:13

Topics: "Jacob"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the life of Jacob and his journey from a man who began well but ended up in a state of spiritual degeneration. The preacher emphasizes that the automatic progress of every Christian is not to go through a linear progression of spiritual growth, but rather, one can jump from a place of spiritual victory to a place of spiritual struggle. Jacob's life serves as an example of this, as he experienced both moments of divine power and moments of being mastered by the flesh. The sermon concludes by highlighting Jacob's ultimate redemption and the importance of ending one's life well.

Transcript

Dr. Alan Redpath speaking at Belgrade Heights Convention, Christmas 1967. The title of the message, The Life of Jacob. Good afternoon, everybody.

It's a great pleasure to be back here today to speak in the name of the Lord to you all. I don't know any preacher in Britain that could keep a British audience awake on an afternoon like this, with a temperature like this. But you are different.

You are much more sturdy, and I understand that we haven't really reached the average for Belgrade Heights so far. I'm waiting and hoping for the average one not to come. It was on a day like this in Chicago, not so long ago, I was chasing a cat, and they were both walking.

Now, before we turn to the word, let us turn to the Lord of the word in prayer. Will you echo in your heart the prayer which I would offer on your behalf and mine? Speak, Lord, for thy servant hereof. Speak, Lord, for thy servant hereof.

Speak just now some message to meet my need, which thou only dost know. Speak now through thy holy word and make me see some wonderful truth thou hast to show to me. For Jesus' sake.

Amen. Would you open your Bible, please, this afternoon with me at the book of Genesis, and we shall be considering the three passages which we read together, which cover a section of the life of this man, Jacob. But for our key verse, we turn to Genesis chapter 32, and verse 28.

Genesis 32 and 28. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed. No more Jacob, but Israel.

You might say at the outset, well, what's in a name anyway? Well, there's a great deal in a name, because whenever you think of some of the great people in the world, you always have in your mind a character that lies behind the name. The name suggests character, the kind of person he was. If that is true today, it was much more true in the days of our Lord.

Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sin. There's no magic wand in the name Jesus. It's the character behind the name.

There is none other name unto heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved. And if that was true in New Testament times, it was much more so in the times about which we're considering this afternoon. Thy name shall be called no more Jacob.

What does that name mean? Cheat, swindler, deceiver, supplanter. Thy name shall be called no more Jacob. But Israel, prince with God.

What an amazing change in his name that took place, after an all-night encounter with the omnipotent Lord. What interests me most is to see whether this man had an equally dramatic change in his character. If so, how did it happen? Was it sudden? Was it climactic? Was it drastic? Or was it gradual? Thy name shall be called no more Jacob.

Somehow I want to be kind to Jacob, but I want to expose Jacob, because in doing so I expose myself. There's an awful lot of the Jacob life about us all. What a wonderful thing if this convention marked for each of us the end of the Jacob life, and the beginning of the Israel life.

Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel. Well now, let me just take one minute to paint in the background, that we may have it clearly on the canvas, so we may follow and understand what we're getting at today. You like romance? You like drama? Well, here you have it, in the story of the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob's father and mother.

What a story it was, love at first sight. They fell in love with each other immediately, and the Bible is careful to tell us that Isaac loved Rebekah, and Rebekah loved Isaac. It was a wonderfully happy home to start with, but it didn't last too long that way, as is often the case.

Isaac and Rebekah had everything in common to start with, but when their children were born into that family, Isaac entreated the Lord for Rebekah, and the Lord heard his prayer. And into that home were born twin boys, Esau and Jacob. And they began struggling with each other before they were born, and that was a struggle which never finished till they died.

They went all through life battling with each other. And a cloud began to descend upon the happiness of that home, and Isaac rapidly began to degenerate. Strange thing, he simply degenerated because he liked venison.

He became a glutton. And because he liked venison, and Esau was able to get some for him, he loved Esau. But, and for the first time between Isaac and Rebekah comes the but, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

So the two parents began to take sides. Isaac loving this sporting boy, this huntsman. Rebekah loving Jacob.

And Isaac had a remarkable gift of being able to send Esau out to catch venison, to get venison for him. And one day he said to him, as you would find in the twenty-seventh chapter of Genesis, the beginning of the chapter, Isaac said, behold now I am old, and I know not the day of my death. What an extraordinary man.

For if I turn over a few pages in my Bible to Genesis chapter 35 and verse 28, I find there that the days of Isaac were a hundred and four score years. And Isaac gave up the ghost and died. That was at least forty years afterwards.

It's extraordinary how many people stop living long before they're due to die. How many people give up the fight and relax and sit back and take it easy. What a strange degeneration for a man who began so well, who was so tender in his youth, so ready to be offered on Mount Moriah as a sacrifice by his father Abraham.

A tender young man, a man who had a great beginning, but a man who became a glutton, and who got so full of food that he couldn't distinguish between venison and goat meat. Gradually a man lost all savour of life, and all desire to live. Terrible thing to get like that.

Jacob is a man who began badly and ended well. You remember his ending? He got all his family around him, commanded the blessing of God upon them all, then tucked his feet up into bed, put his sheets around him, and wakened up in heaven. Now that's how I want to end my life.

I want to be in the fight, in the battle, right away through. How you end life is much more important than how you begin. And in that background of constant fiction which developed in this home, Jacob was taught his first act of deceit.

He was taught to imitate Esau's voice, to wear Esau's clothes, and to steal Esau's birthright. He deceived his old father, who was blind. And you remember when Esau came back home, he just blew his top.

He was absolutely mad with Jacob, and he determined, believing that Isaac was about to die, because he'd said so, he determined that as soon as his father was buried, he'd kill Isaac, kill Jacob. And Rebekah heard him say it. And so she got together with her husband, and suggested that Jacob should have a few days holiday, till Esau had cooled off.

What was intended to be a few days holiday, meant an absence from home of more than 21 years. He never saw his mother again. He got back just in time to bury his dad.

And at that point, we break into the story of Jacob, as it's told us in the 28th chapter of Genesis. And we find him here out of his home, home, home, for the first time. Away from his home.

Mind you, don't get me wrong, he's not a teenager at this point. If any theologian or Bible student could tell me how old Jacob was, I'd be very intrigued to know. I don't know.

I estimate probably about 60. But he was only approaching the prime of life, because he had another 70 years to go. Thank the Lord, I don't have another 70 years to go at this point.

That rather betrays my age perhaps. But I'm very glad at Jacob's time of life, when he was just hitting 60, well I'm glad that most of it's behind me. But the best is yet to be, and the prospect of heaven and glory is wonderful.

But Jacob went out from home, in the prime of life, with the most of his future in front of him. But Jacob was terrified. Because he had a guilty conscience.

And because he had the fear of his brother Esau, on his mind and on his heart. So he lay down to sleep his first night away from home, on a stone. And I'm not surprised that Jacob had a dream.

You usually dream, or very frequently when you're worried. And Jacob was very worried that night, and he had a dream. And you notice three divine exclamation marks, in verse 12 and 13 of this chapter.

Behold, a ladder. Behold, the angels of God. Behold, the Lord.

And in his dream, Jacob saw a ladder, with its base upon the earth, just beside him. A ladder that reached right up into heaven. And up and down that ladder were descending the angels of God, and ascending to heaven.

Going up with Jacob's burdens, and fears, and prayers. Coming down with heaven's supply. And behold, at the head of the ladder, the Lord.

And God spoke to Jacob that night, and made him a promise. A promise of possession of the land in which he lived. A promise to his posterity, that they would be in his seed, would all families of the earth be blessed.

And a promise of divine protection. Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places where thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land. For I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

And Jacob wakened up. And when he awakened, he was afraid, and said, surely the Lord is in this place. And I knew it not.

How dreadful is this place! None other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven. And there, Jacob made his first altar at Bethel. And there he entered into a covenant with God.

And said, well, if the Lord will keep me, will protect me, will lead me safely on my journey, will bring me safely back home again. He'll be my God, and I'll worship him. And I promise, I'll tithe all I possess from this moment.

Now in that chapter on my Bible, this is where it may be, it may be that you won't agree with me, but you can come and talk to me afterwards about it. I have written the word, Jacob's Regeneration. For in New Testament language, I believe that this was the moment of Jacob's conversion to God.

At least, in that first encounter with the Almighty, there are two elements in Jacob's experience which are absolutely essential to the experience of conversion. One, a sense of God's holiness. Two, a sense of Jacob's sin and unworthiness, and inadequacy for life without God.

Nobody is truly converted to God who in some measure doesn't experience the sense of the holiness of God, and the awful gap between a holy God and a sinful human heart. A lot of people who profess conversion, and who don't stand, simply don't stand because they've never seen the reality of God's holiness and their sin. Well, there at Bethel, Jacob that night, I'm suggesting to you, in his first encounter with heaven, in that dramatic moment when he met the Lord, I believe that Jacob was converted.

Well then, if he was, if you will accept that, you would expect to see immediately a great change in Jacob's life. Eagerly you would look into the future to see the wonderful way in which Jacob was immediately transformed. But you know the story of chapters 29, 30, and 31 well enough to support me when I say that at that moment and for 21 years, Jacob was no different from what he was before.

No different at all. The moment he got into the country where he was traveling, he met his uncle. And he formed a business partnership, Jacob Laban and Company Limited, which hadn't the foggiest chance of success from the start.

Because it was the partnership of a man who feared God with an unbeliever. And that partnership was doomed to fail from its very beginning. Two years later he was cheated into marrying the wrong woman.

And then began a tremendous battle between Laban and Jacob. It was just as if diamond was cutting diamond. And the one outstanding difference in Jacob's experience now was this.

That he began to feel and find that other people were practicing on him what he had once practiced on other people. What he had once thought to be terribly clever to deceive his brother, now he found that others were deceiving him. He tried to ensure that all the cattle who were strong and healthy would be his.

But Laban outmatched him and outwitted him, cheated him time again, changed his wages ten times. I don't think that suggests a rise in salary, but rather a drop. And all through those twenty years Jacob fought tooth and nail, and Laban fought tooth and nail.

And he wasn't the same, he was the same all the way through, not changed one little bit. Well you say to me, if that's true, and if we say this was Jacob's experience of regeneration, that's a sheer impossibility. Ah, but wait a minute my friend, here we begin to find ourselves in this picture once again.

Far from being an impossibility, it's an experience that's all too common on the part of many, many of us. The actual experience of conversion, and our encounter with God, didn't actually make a great deal of difference to us, did it? Were we really very much different afterwards than we were before? Isn't this an Old Testament picture of a New Testament truth? That it's possible for every one of us in this building to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but mastered by the flesh. To have within us divine life, but to find that life throttled by the old life.

Isn't it the experience of many, that as the years have gone by, that life of God by the Spirit within us hasn't grown. And the life of the old nature within us all has choked it. It's the experience which the New Testament calls carnality.

A phrase that was used by the Apostle Paul, you remember, of the Corinthian church. I may be wrong about this, but I'm suggesting to you that nobody becomes carnal when they're born again. If you go back to the moment of your conversion, perhaps you can.

Perhaps you don't know the moment, or the day, well it doesn't matter much as long as you know you are now. But if you can go back to the day and back to the moment, I wonder, I can. I tell you there wasn't anything carnal about me then.

I don't know that there's ever been such a spiritual moment in my life. Doesn't that find an echo in your heart? When Jesus met you, when you saw your need of him, when you recognized your own sinfulness, and his power to forgive and trust that he'd die for such a one as you and me. Oh, you opened your heart wide to him.

And he just came in, every barrier was down. No reserves, no hesitancy, you were him. And he was you.

But how often have you had you to use the language of John Newton. Where is that blessedness which once I knew, when first I saw the Lord. Where is that soul-refreshing view of Jesus and his will.

Oh, you weren't carnal when you converted, but you became carnal. And you know how it happened? I'll tell you how. There was a moment in your Christian experience when you resisted the sovereignty of God.

You dug your heels in. I have done it. You stuck, as it were, your chin up and you said, I'm not willing for that.

He said one thing and you said another and you denied him and you refused his authority. And from that moment you didn't lose a relationship, but you lost your fellowship. You're still him.

And he's still you. But because of disobedience to the revealed will of God for your life, you've descended into carnality. The automatic progress biography of every Christian is not to go in succession through Romans 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and eventually reach spirituality.

No, you may go from Romans 4 and jump right into Romans 8 and near the throw of the power of the Spirit of God. And then you may lapse into Romans 7 and end the rest of your life. Just that.

Jacob lived for 22 years like that. Is there anybody listening to me today who knows the sadness and the tragedy of that experience where you're indwelt by divine power and divine resources, but in terms of daily living you are mastered by the flesh. To use the old testament analogy, you've got out of Egypt, but you're not in the land.

You know, we sing some lovely hymns about Canaan. We'll go on singing them till our dying day, but they're quite unscriptural. You'll pardon me saying that, won't you? Because they talk about Canaan's happy shore and what will he do in the swelling of Jordan, etc.

And Canaan is in hymnology always looked upon as heaven. But in the Bible it isn't. In the book of Joshua, Canaan isn't heaven.

It's a place of battle. Oh, well now, I don't expect to do any fighting when you get to heaven. It'll all be over then.

But the difference between the experience of Israel in the wilderness and Israel in the land was just this. In the wilderness it was battle and defeat. In the land it was battle and victory.

Now where are you today? Like Jacob? Twenty years of it, fed up with the whole business. Going down and desperate fighting and quarreling and disputing with his uncle. Nothing went right.

Everything going wrong. Battling and failing. The wilderness.

Out of Egypt. But oh, what a wilderness of failure and defeat. Well, there's Jacob's experience after what I've called his conversion.

But I want to tell you that God had hold of the reins. He let Jacob out on a long lead. He let the reins lie loose.

And Jacob had his own way for a while, for all that time, until one day God checked him and began to pull him up and say to him, Jacob, go back to the land where you came from. And it's a wonderful thing to know that in the sovereignty of God he held the reins. My times were in his hands.

And even my sinful past and my sinful failures as a Christian, he had the reins. He had hold of the reins. He was watching.

He let me go a long, long way from him. But he had hold of the reins. And there came a time when he said, no, get back.

And maybe at Belgrave Heights this year, the Holy Spirit is going to do that with some people. Just take hold of the reins and pull us in. And turn us round and get us back.

So Jacob went back with his ill-gotten gains and his wife and his family. And I think of this man and 22 years of wasted luck. And I ask myself, do you think it really need have happened? Does everybody need to have that experience in the name of heaven? No.

Well, why did he have it? I can suggest two reasons why Jacob had it. It may be that there are reasons why you and I have been in the wilderness for so long. One, when Jacob encountered God at Bethel and received God's promises, tell me, why didn't he go straight home to Esau and apologize and put things right? Why didn't he make restitution? Oh, what a difference it would have made to all his future if only that quarrel had been settled there and then.

But he didn't. I would say it very quietly to you, but say it with a sense of the reality of it in my own past experience. Listen.

Is it possible that there is somebody, an unbeliever, outside the church, who wouldn't darken the door of a Christian fellowship and has watched you and me for all the years of our Christian experience and before our confession that person suffered at our hands, we treated them unkindly. And you were saved and redeemed and restored and forgiven. And we didn't have the grace and the humility to go back and say I'm sorry.

Beloved, restitution follows conversion. That's what repentance means in the Christian life. And if you take repentance out of Christian experience, it's like inviting another Pearl Harbor in the spiritual water.

Repentance should be the constant act of the life of every child of God. Maybe before we are going to enter into fullness of blessing, God has been putting his finger even in this last two minutes upon something that has made you burn with shame and you've never put it right and you've never said you're sorry and God is calling you to do that very thing. Perhaps that's why you've never grown.

And the other reason, when Jacob was converted he bargained with God. Lord, if you'll keep me, if you'll protect me, if you'll watch over me, if you'll provide for me, then you'll be my God. But you can't bargain

with God like that.

I don't challenge the reality of your conversion, but I do challenge the motive of it because I remember my own. So often our eyes were upon the blessing. We said, Lord, if you can give me the peace that he's got, if you can give me the blessing that he has and the forgiveness that somebody else has, then I'll be a Christian.

Our eyes were upon the blessing instead of the blesser. Maybe that's why it worked, that Jacob never grew. Until God got him back again and here in our second brief portion we find Jacob, oh, terrified now because Esau's on his track with 400 men approaching him and Jacob's afraid and begins to pray.

I read in vain for Jacob praying in chapters 29, 30 and 31. For 21 years he'd never prayed. Who'd said he'd prayed? But prayerless praying, we're all good at that.

There wasn't any praying really in it. And in verse 9 of this chapter he says, Oh God of my father Abram and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which said unto me, Return to thy country and to thy kindred and I will deal well with thee. I'm not worthy of the least of all the mercies and all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant.

Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of Esau. And then taking up the story at verse 24, Jacob was left alone. I can never read this tremendous account of the divine encounter between omnipotence and impotence between Jacob and a holy God.

As there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And Jacob found himself in the grip of God and God was in the grip of Jacob. And there was a desperate encounter fought all through the night.

And God said to Jacob, Let me go for the daybreaker. And Jacob replied, Lord, I won't let you go until you bless me. How do you think Jacob said that? Do you think he was petulant? Was he saying, Lord, enough here.

You're not going to go except you do what you promised to do. Oh, no. It wasn't that.

If you read Hosea chapter 12 and verse 4, you will read that Jacob prevailed with the angel and overcame because he wept and made supplication. And I'm saying no less than the truth. Not using dramatic or exaggerated language when I say that here was a man who'd reached the point of desperation.

And he was saying, Lord, I'm not going to let you go until you bless me. I've been 22 years living this kind of life defeated, failure, and it's sheer hypocrisy. And oh God, I can't go on another minute except you meet me.

Is there anybody here today like that with God? Been living the Jacob life for so long, but oh, you're so sick of it, so sick of yourself, and so tired of it. Your religion is just near a show, and when it comes to it all, it's nothing but hypocrisy. And you say, Lord, I can't let you go except you bless me.

I won't let you go. And Jacob wept and cried. We've lost the power to weep these days.

How I pray that God may break our hearts in this day. Not with just emotion, but with a sense of deep rooted conviction of our desperate need of him. Jacob wept, and Jacob clung to God.

I won't let thee go except thou bless me. Then listen. Out from the darkness of that night a counter there came these words.

What's your name? Do you mean to tell me that God didn't know who it was that was in his grip? Do you mean to say that God didn't know who this stranger was? What's your name? Oh yes, he knew. He had had that encounter in his mind all the time. He knew who he was.

Listen. God wasn't asking Jacob for information, but he was asking Jacob for confession. What's your name? When I look round this crowd this afternoon in the name of the Lord Jesus, I believe the Holy Spirit just says to you very quietly, what's your name? Cheat? Deceiver? Surpriser? What's your name? And with bowed head and with burning cheeks, Jacob said, my name.

In spite of all your goodness to me, after all these years, my name. Still Jacob. And that's the confession that God wanted.

That's the naked truth, the ugly reality that God got from this man who now wasn't wrestling with God but was nestling into his heart. And it's a wonderful thing in your Christian life when you stop hiding and wrestling and you begin nestling and you tell the Lord, Lord, my name, it's still Jacob. And I can't go on being Jacob anymore.

And there came the answer, thine end shall be called no more Jacob but Israel. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel for he had seen God face to face and God had met him there. And over this chapter in my Bible I have written the word revelation.

Revelation. The man at the end of himself, the man in despair, the man who's desperate, the man who means business with God, the man who says, Lord, I won't let you go except thou bless me, is the man whom God greets and blesses. And Jacob bore the marks of Peniel all the rest of his life.

Now just a minute. I want to say something here very important. So if you were thinking of having a snooze, would you just wake up a moment? Lord, this is very important.

Listen. Here Jacob had his, in quotes, second blessing. He's broken.

The Jacob has been pulverized out of him. He's now in will. Oh my, what things we're going to see in his life.

I follow Jacob very thoughtfully just through these next chapters. You read them yourself. And I tell you, he wasn't a bit different.

Not a bit different after this, no. Oh yes, potentially, potentially he was different. Israel life had now come into his heart.

But he was no different. For the moment he left that encounter with God, three enemies that attack every child of God in a perennial experience, attack Jacob. The world, the flesh, the devil.

The flesh in the person of Esau. And in verse 10 of chapter 33, Jacob said to him, if I have found grace in thy sight, receive a present at my hand, for therefore I have seen thy face. Listen to this.

As though I have seen the face of God. What flattery. What deceit, oh wait a minute, is it flattery? When I meet in life the people that I have wronged, I rather think I do meet the face of God.

That's why with all my heart I desire that I might have put things right before it's too late. Or else one day I'll meet them and have to be judged by God for my behavior to them. But in verse 14, Jacob says, now Esau, I'm paraphrasing, just you carry on a bit, and I'll come again to you, I'll follow you with the cattle and the children, until I come to my Lord unto Seir.

So Esau, verse 16, returned on his way to Seir and Jacob journeyed to Succoth. Right the opposite direction. He had the least intention of going to Seir.

He deceived Esau. Still at the same game. Still, still a deceiver.

Verse 18, Jacob came to Shechem, to Shelem, a city of Shechem, and pitched his tent before the city, the world. He didn't go into it, but he pitched his tent as near as he dare with the disastrous consequences to his family. And the devil, you remember, chapter 31, verse 20 tells us that Rachel was carrying round with her household gods.

And for twenty years, married to Jacob, she'd never got rid of them. What? Do you mean to tell me that a husband hasn't power to get idolatry out of his home? No, if he's living a Jacob life. If he's on that defeat and level of carnality, his whole home goes to Peter.

Jacob had no power over the idolatry practiced by his wife. Even then, what does that tell me? This, this, and this, is the thing I want that the Lord will drive into your heart. Listen.

There is no encounter you and I can have with God which will stand us the test of twenty-four hours, unless the attitude I took in the time of crisis becomes the attitude every day of my life hereafter. What was Jacob's attitude in the crisis? He clung to God. But he left the Lord and he began fighting again, began struggling.

So it was Jacob again who emerged even after Peniel. If into Christ you come in fullness of life and surrender, if this Belgrade Heights Convention marks an experience of absolute yieldedness to the Lord, it doesn't make you any better. And you never will be any better.

God doesn't design to make you better. Many of us Christians begin by faith and continue by trying. Start by trusting and continue by struggle.

And God doesn't purpose to do that with us. But see, when I reach the place that Jacob reached at Peniel and I say to him, I will not go except thou bless me. At that moment, I'm introduced to a new principle of life in which God the Spirit begins to live out his life in me in his power.

It's no longer I but Jesus. But all the time, I'm liable to a tremendous overwhelming counterattack of the enemy and of the flesh, unless, unless I continue to be as a little child at the feet of Christ. You see, I say it lovingly, but the trouble with many of us is we've got too big for God to use.

Too important. Too professional. A man rang me up at Chicago some time ago.

He said he was the chairman of a board of elders of his church. Long distance call it was, somewhere away in Columbus City, Ohio. And he said, you know, I want to pastor for our church.

Do you know anybody who might be available? And I mentioned three people and I told him something about them. Something about their qualifications and their abilities and we discussed them for about twenty minutes. It was his call, so that was all right for me.

And at the end of twenty minutes he said, this is how he finished the conversation, he said, well thank you very much. But he said, none of those men are big enough for my pulpit. I hope he didn't think me very rude.

But I couldn't resist saying, are you sure, sir, that you don't mean they're not small enough for your pulpit? If you want to know the triumph of God the Spirit and the Israelite, you just keep like a little child. And that's why Genesis 35 to conclude with in just three minutes. A postscript really.

I have marked over the verses of this chapter, realization. For God said unto Jacob, arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there. And I can imagine saying, Jacob saying to God, but Lord that's where I met you first.

And God saying to Jacob, yes, that's exactly the place that I have everything for you all the time. And what does Bethel mean to the Christian? Oh, you'd find it if sometime you read the closing part of the first chapter of John's Gospel. Where the Lord saw Nathanael under a fig tree, and spoke to him and called him by name, and he said, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God.

And Jesus said to him, Why, you call me the Son of God, because I knew your name? Nathanael? It won't be long before you see the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. Bethel, this is what it means. Christian.

God once says back at Calvary today, back to the place where he has a ladder set up, so to speak, in our hearts, whose top reaches to heaven, for he is the Son of Man and the Son of God. Where all my burdens can go up to the throne, and all his resources come down to meet my need. Where I can say I have been crucified with Christ.

It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. The life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. And you notice what a mighty change took place.

In chapter 35, Jacob goes to his wife Rachel and says, Here, get rid of all these strange guards and earrings. Put them out, throw them out. And she did.

And I'm going to make an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way that I went. And they gave him all the strange guards, which are in their hands. And he hid them and got rid of them.

And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the thunder of Jacob. Oh, you get the mark of heaven upon him, the mark of authority, the mark of dynamic, the mark of power. That's what the church needs.

And wherever I go, I meet churches and Christians who say, Oh, God, give us Pentecost. Just another taste of Pentecost. Something in my heart tells me that the Lord is answering and saying, You give me Calvary.

Then Pentecost is inevitable. God will never, never anoint the flesh with power. But when I am prepared to take that self-life of mine and put it where God has in fact put it, at a cross, then he gives me Jesus in all his fullness.

And thy name shall be no more Jacob, but Israel. Are you going to come back to Calvary and stay there? Come back to the place where there's just literally nothing. And where the Lord is everything.

Do you know, you can have the biggest evangelistic campaign that the world has ever known in Australia. It might cost you a million pounds and it won't touch the continent. But when the church gets back to Calvary we'll have revival.

And that will shake the continent. Are we willing for the price of that? Personally? In our own lives? Thy name no more Jacob. Let's pray.

Have thine own way, Lord. Have thine own way. Thou art the potter, I am the clay.

Mold me and make me after thy will. While I am waiting, yielded and still. O Lord, deliver us from our self-confidence.

Deliver us from our pride and trust in ourselves. And bring us broken and weak and feeble and helpless back to Calvary. Not back to experiences, bow back to blessings.

But back to thee, Lord Jesus. Thou in all thy risen power, O do thou dwell in our hearts, ungrieved, in control. And just come through us with dynamic power and blessing and life-giving authority in our lives.

That out from us may go the reminder that we have a living God and he lives within us all. Lord answer our prayer. Send a great revival, Lord.

And begin it now in my needy heart, in the heart of each one of us. And let it spread like a flame through this continent. For Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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