

An Encounter With God

by R. Edward Miller

R. Edward Miller's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of a genuine encounter with God, highlighting the importance of grace, faith, and the fear of the Lord in our spiritual journey.

Duration: 1:05:26

Scripture: Genesis 28:13-22, Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:38, Acts 10:44-48, Acts 19:1-7

Topics: "Encounter"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the topic of dreams and visions. He mentions that while most dreams are just dreams, there are also visions of God that are given as dreams. The speaker emphasizes the importance of giving and explains that while God doesn't need our money, we need to cultivate a spirit of giving. He encourages listeners to set goals and desires in their hearts and trust that God will bring them to pass. The speaker also shares a personal testimony of seeking a genuine conversion and highlights the faith required in giving sacrificially.

Transcript

Well, praise the Lord. Genesis 28. Now, there's a major change in Jacob's life after the blessing, and Rebekah began to do a little bit more maneuvering, and she realized that Esau was very angry and had threatened to kill Jacob.

So, she went to Isaac with a complaint about her daughters-in-law, who were Philistines, and she wasn't at all happy about that, and used that as a means to incite Isaac to send Jacob back to where Rebekah came from to seek a bride and to escape Esau's wrath, as we know that the man is the head of the house. Are we agreed or not? Well, in this case, and in most cases, the woman is not the head, but she's the neck that turns the head, so she got what she wanted. And that was protection for Jacob.

And so Jacob was sent down back to Paran, where Rebekah came from, where Rebekah's family lived, and on his way, at Bethel, he stopped and slept that night. And in a certain place, we read in the 11th verse, he tarried there all night, because the sun was set, and he took the stones of the place and put them for his pillow, and laid down in that place to sleep. If I had a stone for my pillow, I wouldn't sleep.

I don't know if that means he had a hard head or not. And he dreamed, behold, a ladder set up on earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac,

the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.

And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south, and in thee, and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all the places where thou goest. Bring thee again to this land, for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken unto thee of." The words of God when he speaks to us are usually quite brief, but extremely, extremely filled with riches and realities.

He had two major encounters with God in a whole lifetime. Abraham had a few more. A real encounter with God is not that often.

They are very high, and for that reason they are very important in a life, and until the first one, the first encounter with God, is the entrance into a relationship with God. We have, shall I say, lowered salvation until you can save yourself. You do this, and do that, do something else, even if you are an evangelistic service, you raise your hand, you come forward, you say the sinner's prayer, you sign a pledge, give your name and address, start coming to church, attend the services and the classes, and learn to know all the things, and you've done everything.

All that you were told to do, you did. Now you're a Christian. But there's not been an encounter with God.

There's not been a meeting with God. That is different. That is different.

And that life will be empty, and will be a strain, because to try to live a good Christian life without Christ living within, it's a hard job, and full of many failures. This is his first encounter with God, and God made it very clear. He said, I am the God of thy father, thy grandfather, and stopped.

He didn't say, I'm your God, did he? He wasn't yet, but he planned to be. Now that ladder signifies Christ. That's the way into heaven.

There's only one way into heaven. Any other way, Jesus said, is a thief and a robber. Anyone tries to enter any other way.

If we try to make our way into heaven, we're thieves and robbers as far as God's concerned. There's only one way. And if you'll notice, it was a ladder, not an escalator.

We would like an escalator. We'd like to ride into heaven. Better yet, we'd like for one of the angels to carry us.

That would be lovely, wouldn't it? But they don't do that. Jacob didn't see one angel carrying anything. They were just going up and down, carrying messages, probably, showing that they are ministering spirits, and they minister on earth, and they receive their instructions from heaven.

And we see that God stood at the top. In fact, the older versions say that God rested on the top of the ladder. In other words, he's observing, he's watching, he's caring for everything.

But the other, as I say, the older versions use the word rested. In other words, he wasn't trying to do something. God isn't straining.

He's seated on the throne. That's what Isaiah saw in his vision. God was seated on the throne, because he's in such total control of everything.

He's not anxious, he's not worried about things. We worry about things. We see a person go into a valley, and take a deep dive, and get into trouble, and maybe leave church for a while, or do some crazy thing that, in their desperation, the enemy got through to them.

And sometimes it's so serious, we just wipe them off our list of good Christian people. Of course, you usually have to write them back on later. And we get desperate, especially if they're people we're fond of, especially if they're friends or relatives.

But all the while, we're all upset, and worried about them, and praying about them, and trying to help them, and counseling this, and counseling that. All the time, God is resting. God is resting there at the way, at the top of the way.

He's watching it all. He's knowing all that happens. I think some people don't realize that God really does know about things that are happening here on earth.

I've had many people tell me a person's problem, some other person's problem, so that I can pray better. I don't think I have to inform God about all that's taking place. I've always felt that he probably knew more about it than I did.

But there he was, and he was resting, and he was observing. He wasn't climbing. God showed Jacob the way.

After he awoke, he was afraid. I think several reasons. But one was, it was an encounter with the Almighty God.

You know, one of the things that's so sadly lacking in our modern-day church is the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord. And I'll tell you one thing, if you've ever really had an encounter with God, you'll begin to fear the Lord.

That's the beginning of wisdom, the wise man said in Proverbs. That's the beginning of wisdom, David said in a psalm. That's where wisdom begins, is the fear of the Lord.

And the fear of the Lord brings great blessings, and many of them are enumerated in Scripture. But that's where it starts, to realize that how small we are, how helpless we are, how dependent we are, and how we test and try and tempt and strain the mercies of God. And sometimes, he says, my spirit will not always strive with man.

Sometimes, he'll just say, all right, that's it. And when he closes the door, no man can open it. There was a dread, there was a fear came upon Jacob.

As he saw the angels, he saw the way into heaven, he saw that he would have to struggle. He'd have to climb. He'd have to strain and struggle upwards.

As I said, it wasn't an escalator. There was no other way except climbing if you wanted to get there. You know, a lot of people want to be carried.

We sing that song, and I think of it sometimes when I sing that song, Higher Ground. And we sing, Lord, lift me up and let me stand on heaven's table land. Lord, lift me up.

I don't want to have to climb. Lord, lift me up. Or, all right, God, if you're so busy, have the pastor lift me up.

We expect him to lift us up. I thought many times of the woman that touched the hem of his garment. The scriptures say that before she went, now, she wasn't invited.

No one knocked her door and said, come, Jesus wants to heal you. No one offered to take her. She was on her own, totally on her own.

There was no apostle knocking at her door saying, I have a word for you from Jesus. Now, he wants you to come, he's going to heal you. That would be very nice, but it didn't happen.

She was all alone, and she talked to herself before she came to Jesus. And she said, now, she'd been to all the doctors there were, and she'd spent all the money she had, but she said to herself, there's enough power in that man that if I can just work my way through and touch the hem of the garment, I will be healed. She persuaded herself.

She initiated her own faith. She initiated her own actions, and she was healed without even asking for it. And I thought many times, I'd like to be in a church someday where everybody, before they came to church, had a little talk with themselves.

They said, I'm going to church this morning, and I'm going to reach through and touch God. I don't care what anybody else does. And if everyone did that, wouldn't we have a service? Wouldn't we have a service? But usually the talk goes this way.

I don't know if I want to go to church this morning, I don't feel good, but I'll go, and I hope Sammy's got enough power to get through and break through, because I need some help this morning. Well, of course, in your church it goes a little different. It won't be Sammy, it'll be somebody else.

Lord lift me up, and if not, let my pastor do it. It's a ladder. It's a ladder.

And Jacob didn't climb yet, but it was set before him, and from then on he did some climbing and a little slipping up and down, because the angels were going up and down, and sometimes you miss a step and slip down three or four and have to climb them all over again. But not one angel offered to carry him. They were going up and they were bringing messages down, but the ladder was set there.

The way was there. Christ is the way. And in a sense, because Christ is the way, it represents the cross.

It represents the cross. There is no other way. No other way.

A new and living way through the blood and through the rent veil, which represents his flesh that was crucified. The only way. And that's in type, and as I said before, you can find Christ in the cross all through the scriptures.

Again God is showing the cross. He's showing there is a way into heaven. All the way.

It's a long way. All the way from earth to heaven, there is a way. A way that will cause you work and sweat and tears, and a way that will cause you fears.

But there is a way, and that way is through Christ. There's no other way. And Jesus said of himself, I am the way, the truth, the life.

Many religions are based on the human actions and are earning our way and our works get us into heaven. And the religions that are most popular are religions that rest on your efforts. The largest, the greatest church in the world is a Catholic church.

And you can earn your way all the way to heaven. In fact, if you live nice enough and well enough, and you pay enough money, if you have it, or in other words, you donate your life to their causes, and you can even pass right by purgatory. We don't have one of those things, but they do.

But it's all on your efforts, and it's the largest church in the world. People like that. People like to feel that they've paid for it.

People like to feel that they've earned it. People like to feel that now I deserve it. Because we have a much better opinion of ourselves than God has.

We don't love ourselves as much as he does, but we have a greater opinion of ourselves than he does. He knows what we are. But we want to wipe that out by feeling that we earned it, we deserve it.

We have it coming to us. It's fair. And because of that, it's very popular.

Any ministry that will cater to that feeling within us is a ministry that will be well-received. Because that's the way we want to feel. We don't want to feel that we're absolutely morally bankrupt.

We don't want to feel that what Paul said, in me, that is in my flesh, there dwells not one good thing. You know, a lot of people like things fair. As I've said before, God is not fair.

He's just, but he's not fair. Fairness is based on equality, and we're not equal. We like to think that fair is fair.

And because fair and fair, if I go to church and pay my tithes and take time for services out of my busy schedule, and if I, all the better, work for God or teach a Sunday school class or become a worker, then it's fair for God to give me things. But if God really gave us what we deserve, health too good, you didn't hear that. If there's one prayer, never pray, not even think of it, that God gives you what you deserve.

That God gives you all he can give you in grace, but not give you what you deserve. There is no good in it. Because we judge ourselves on human standards, because we judge ourselves against the drunkard or against the murderer or against the serial murderer or against the people that have given their life to vile actions and lifestyle.

We think we're worth something. But you see, when you really meet God and the awfulness of his purity, the awfulness of his holiness, I've seen times when that holiness has been revealed. And the first time I saw it, I was about 18, I think, and I don't know why I did.

But I felt I wanted to see the holiness of God. And that prayer gripped me. And I wept and prayed and wept and prayed as every altar, crying out, God, let me see your holiness.

And that went on for about six months. And one night, I just, it is such a deep, I guess you could say longing in my heart. And I don't know why.

And finally they turned the lights out on me and I went home. I went to my little closet and there I went on praying for about a half an hour, an hour. And all of a sudden, all of a sudden, that holiness, and it lasted about one minute and I got out of that closet fast.

It scared me silly. It was so awful. It was so unbelievable.

It was so far from what I thought it might be. It was dreadful. It was frightening.

It was not attractive. I wanted to get away from it. And I never prayed that prayer again.

Nevertheless, nevertheless, little by little, God began to bring me to that. And I realized, take for instance in Argentina where they wept and wept and wept and wept and wept for 10 solid weeks, the whole congregation of about 50. That holiness, that holiness, a cry, God purifies, purify me, purify me.

When Jacob saw that, he said there was a dread. There was a fright. He said, this is awful.

This is the house of God. This is God's place. God said to Moses, as soon as Moses heard the voice of God, maybe 100 yards away, maybe 200, maybe 300, and as soon as he could hear, he said, Moses, don't you get any closer.

You stay there and take your shoes off your feet. Why? I want you to touch my holiness. I don't want you to be separated by anything.

I want you to put your feet where the holiness is and touch it with your own body. And Moses did. When he realized it was God, he covered his face and fell all the way down to my God.

As I've heard many times, I'm in your presence and I'm unclean. I don't care how clean you think you are. When God manifests his holiness, you won't tell God how good you are.

You'll cry out for mercy. This was an encounter with God. But in that, in that awful encounter, there was a ladder.

In that awful encounter, it was shown there's a way, Jacob. You're Jacob. You're what you are.

I know what you are. But there is a way. You can come.

There is a way. It reaches all the way to earth from heaven. There is grace.

You're not locked out because you're a filthy sinner. You're not locked out because you are who you are, a deceiver, a liar. You're not locked out for that reason.

Because there's grace. Because there is grace. God has made a way.

A new and living way for us. And we read that he dreamed that. And the Lord stood there and said what he said.

And then he said, the land whereon you lie. Remember, he wanted the blessing. He wanted the birthright and the blessing.

He got it from Isaac. But now God gives it. Direct.

Direct to him. He begins, he takes the same promise he'd given to Abraham. Which Jacob so longed to have.

He gives it to him. This time it isn't Isaac. It's the Almighty.

And he said, gave him that same blessing. More than Isaac's blessing. He got the blessing from God.

The land where you lie, I will give it to you and to your seed. And your seed will be many. And they'll spread abroad to north, south, east, and west.

And in thy seed, which means in Jesus. Shall all the families of the earth be blessed. That's what Jacob so longed for.

That's why he was ready to even pretend to be Esau. That's why he wanted that birthright. There was that wonderful promise.

There was that promise that he could foresee. I don't think he saw very much. But the little he saw, he so wanted that he was willing to deceive his father.

But in that wanting, God put that desire there. God put that want there. God put that in his heart way back.

So he tried to get the birthright. It was in him. I want it.

I want that promise. I want what God gives. I want it.

It was given to my grandfather. It was given to my father. Because God said the same thing to Isaac.

I want it. And he got it. And he got it.

You know, God puts desires in our hearts. And those are holy desires. Go to work on them.

Go do everything you know to do. Pray. Seek the Lord.

Fast. Whatever. But I have a goal.

I have a goal. My first goal. My very first goal.

I wanted a genuine conversion. I didn't want to say a sinner's prayer. In fact, I did that 50 times at least.

Literally. Church after church. I wanted reality.

And after six months of weeping and praying and walking the floors at night, one afternoon he came. And it was real. Set your goals.

Let those desires grow in your heart. Let them get bigger and bigger. Cultivate them.

Because those are seeds that God has planted. And he knows how to bring it to pass. Look how he had to deal with Jacob.

He took him through all kinds of things before he was through. But he made it, didn't he? And the one thing I like about Jacob is God used him to show that even with the worst of the family, with the worst of the lot, he can bring forth the best. It's not because we're worthy.

It's not because we're... I think God delights to use the worst ones. Not the best ones. I know in dealing with children and young people, the worst kids are the most promising.

The ones that give you the most trouble. I like those. I'll fight with them.

Because I know they've got stuff there. They've got something in there that's not satisfied. I've had people say to me, Oh, pray for this young man.

He makes such a wonderful preacher. He's got such wonderful giftings. I know he'll never make it.

I don't bother to pray for such people in that sense. God doesn't use those kind of people. They're too good already.

He uses the worst. One time I asked God why he chose me to use me. And he said, So I can show others how much I can do with something so worthless.

Behold, I am with thee. I will keep thee in all places where you go. I will bring you again into this land.

For I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. What a beautiful promise. What a beautiful promise.

Whatever God takes you through, He says, I'm there. And I'm going to bring you through. And I'm going to bring you all the way through.

And I won't leave you till I do. That's lovely, isn't it? He gave him that promise. He said, I'm going to bring you again.

I'm going to go with you. Whatever he went through. It was over 20 years.

He was 21 years just getting his bride, wasn't he? And then how much after that, we're not sure. But I'm going to keep you all that time. And God did keep him all that time.

We'll go into the story later. Jacob waked up and said, Surely the Lord is in this place. And I knew it not.

And he was afraid and said, How dreadful is this place. This is none other but the house of God. And this is the gate of heaven.

And Jacob rose up early in the morning, took the stone he had for a pillow, and put it up for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. That was a ceremony they used in those days. Call the name of the place Bethel.

Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God be with me, if what he says is true, will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God. Then I will surrender completely. I want you to notice something.

God said in the 15th verse, Behold, I am with thee. I will keep thee in all places where you go. I will bring you again to this land.

I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And I want you to notice, there is not one condition in those promises. Many promises are conditional.

Other promises are not conditional. One reason they are not conditional, because the promises to Abraham were conditional. He had to leave his land, he had to leave his home, he had to leave his relatives, and until he did, God didn't come to him again.

His promises were conditional. But Abraham fulfilled the conditions. And because he fulfilled the conditions, the different conditions God gave him, and because he offered up his son Isaac, if you remember, then God promised him and his seed, didn't he? Therefore, because Jacob was loved and Esau was hated, therefore, God, in a sense, to keep his own promise to Abraham, had to bring forth Jacob.

Because he was the only seed left, wasn't he? And he gave these promises to Jacob, and there wasn't one condition made. There are promises that are conditional, there are promises that are not. Don't mix them up.

Don't mix them up. God gives many promises conditional. If you fulfill the conditions, but there are promises that are not conditional.

And these are promises that are not conditional. God said, just as what I am going to do. It was more a purpose, a divine purpose on God's part.

Like again, he said, you haven't chosen me, I've chosen you. And I'm going to make you bring forth food. Those weren't conditional, were they? I'm going to prune the vine.

I'm going to take care of it. My father's a husband. He's going to take care of all this.

Those are not conditional promises. For God so loved the world, gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believe it, there's a condition. But if we believe his word, then he says, you haven't chosen me, I've chosen you.

Now I'm going to do this. You fulfill that condition, but here's a beautiful promises that are not conditional. And that's what God does with it.

He gives us promises that are not conditional, just as what he's going to do out of his own will, out of his own goodness, out of his own grace, out of his own mercy, is that I'm just going to do it. He didn't say how he was going to do it. He didn't say, Jacob, to be able for me to fulfill this, I'm going to have to make you work seven years without wages.

That's not fair. And because you had a little deceitful moment with your father Isaac, which was all right, because it belonged to you, we'll have a little deceitful moment with Leah. Your dad didn't do what was right, and I am going to have to do what is right.

Because you don't like Leah, you want Rachel, but I like Leah. And you see, the way I've had my story now, you see, Leah, out of Leah came Judah and Levi, the two priestly tribes. Jesus is the lion of the tribe of Judah, not Joseph, not Rachel's son.

In other words, to do what was right, it looked like God practiced a little bit of deceit too, didn't he? But that's the way I had my story. Now I want to go back to the 22nd verse. And this dome which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Abraham said the same thing. You know, a lot of people think tithing is in the law, so we don't have to do it. God didn't ask Jacob to do this, and God didn't ask Abraham to do it.

They said they would do it. They wanted to do it. It came from them.

It came from their own hearts. It came from their own initiative. People say, well, tithing is in the law, and tithing is not in the New Testament.

I beg your pardon, it goes way back before the law, and it has nothing to do with the law, because God gave no law to Abraham, but he said, I want to do it. I want to have something to give to you. I want to show in some way I want to show how much I appreciate, how much I love you, how much I owe everything to you.

I remember my second church I pastored, because of the IRS, and it wasn't nearly as bad as it is now, I decided to put offering envelopes, so we could keep track of people's giving. To my amazement, the congregation were very upset with it. They didn't think it ought to be done.

But I pressed through anyway. And to my amazement, the offering increased almost 50% from then on. They all said they were giving our tithes, why should we have to do that? Well, I presume they were, but somehow, some reason, there was considerable increase.

This came from Jacob. We talk about that Jacob nature, don't we? But this came from him. And when we've had an encounter with God, and it's real, there comes a sense, there comes a sense, I want to do something.

I want to be able to give to God. He's given me so much. I know he doesn't need it.

You know, God doesn't need anything we do. I need it. I need to give to God.

I need to give out of my heart. I need to do these things. It isn't that he needs it.

He says, well, now that you've given it, let's put this money to help some orphans, or let's help a mission, or let's take care of our expenses, or let's do this or that. That's fine. What's done with it? Because he can't use it.

I don't want to discourage anybody, or dishearten anybody, but there's no shopping malls in heaven. That's why God made it, so you can't take it with you, you know. I read in a Jewish book, of Jewish customs and so on, of this very wealthy man that was very much in love with his money.

And when he got sick, and the doctor said it was terminal, he called his wife and said, honey, I know I have to go. But he said, they say you can't take it with you, but I'm going to take my money with me. And he said, when I get just about ready to die, I want you to take my money, and put it in that trunk up by the chimney, in the attic.

And when I grow up, I'll get it. Well, the dear wife did what she was told. A couple of days later, she said, I wonder if he did take it with him.

She went up there and opened up the trunk, and look, there it was. She said, oh, I made such a mistake. I shouldn't have put it in the attic.

I should have put it in the basement. Don't try to take it with you. There's no shopping malls there.

God doesn't need your money, but you need to give. I need to give. We need to learn that spirit of giving.

And the more you give, it's an interesting scripture, give and it shall be given to you. Isn't that right? Most of us say, I wish I had so I could give. Is that right? I wish I had so I could.

But the Bible doesn't put it that way. It said give and it shall be given to you. It didn't say wait till you have and then give.

There's three levels of giving. I don't know why I got on the subject. I'll stay for a few minutes.

First is duty. I have to pay rent on my earth that I live on, the house I live in. It's all God's.

It belongs to him. And I claim it. But at least I have to pay a little on it.

That's ordered of the Lord. Then there is the giving of sacrifice. Over in Philippians you read of that.

Over in verse 18, he'd received a gift from Epaphroditus and the things that were sent from them. And he says, it's an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice, acceptable, well-pleasing to God. But by God shall supply all your needs according to his riches and glory by Christ Jesus.

We like to take verse 19 but forget verse 18. They go together. In other words, he was saying God shall supply all your needs to the people who had made a great sacrifice and had given this gift to Paul for the work.

And he said that's a sacrifice that's well-pleasing and a sweet odor to God. He doesn't say that about any other sacrifice. And a sacrifice is when it's really costing you something, isn't it? Like David said, he said, I will not offer an offering to God that doesn't cost me something.

When he made an offering there on the threshing floor. But there's another level of giving. Faith.

Let me illustrate it. You earn \$100. \$10 belongs to God.

Every week you get \$100. That's all. Well, you get more now, but I remember when I got less than that for a week's wages.

Then, the Lord speaks to your heart and says, for a special work, I want you to give \$50. Whoo! What am I going to live on? I want \$50 for this. I want you to have a share in this work.

Well, we'll haggle and haggle and perhaps cry and argue, but you'll end up giving \$50. That's a sacrifice. You have to live on beans and macaroni for a week.

But that's well-pleasing to God. He loves that. But then, you earn \$100 a week, and God says, now for this special work that they're doing, I want you to give \$500.

Well, wait a minute. I don't got \$500. I don't have it.

Where can I get it? Because I want you to give \$500. All right, God. But you know as well as I know what I have.

So you're going to have to supply it so I can do it. And that will take some faith. And you give your pledge.

You say, all right, I want you to know. Here's my note. I owe you \$500.

Payable by the 15th of next month. And you've got about 25 days to have some good prayer meetings. Some wonderful prayer meetings, all alone, just you.

And two days before the 15th comes a letter that someone had owed you, that devoured some money from you 14 years before, suddenly remembered it, and sent you \$500. Faith. Faith.

That begins to tap into all the resources of God. And I've seen God build our buildings, take care of our family of 100 people, had to eat every day for 25 years, and there was no income except in Him. All the resources of the world are at your disposal when you learn to give.

One-tenth, we took our books and we added it all up. We found out we were giving nine-tenths. We were living on one-tenth.

And why not? I've lived quite well, haven't I? I've outlived some already. That was a principle that started with Abraham. And when God gave those promises to Jacob, that was Jacob's response.

Of all the things he could have said, that was his response. If you bring me here again, you'll be my God, and I'll give you a tenth of everything that you give me. And because it's in a place it is, and because it's by whom it was given, it's important.

Or God wouldn't put it in the Scriptures. At that high moment in Jacob's life, that's the one thing he thought about. That's the one thing he said to God in his vow to God.

You bring me here. You keep me well and bring me back. Then all that you give me, I'll give you a tenth.

Father, we thank you that you take such people as Jacob. People that in this world, they're not appreciated. Isaac didn't appreciate him.

Esau hated him. But of all the people, he's the one you loved. People didn't, men didn't, but you did.

And Lord, those are the people. You didn't come to save the righteous. You came to save the sinners.

You didn't come to heal the well. You came to heal the sick. And Father, give us to learn from the Scriptures themselves, your ways.

Before Jacob, you set a ladder and said, Jacob, you're a long way down, but there's a way up. There is a way up. Climb it.

And let there be in our hearts that longing that was in David's heart. That brought him step by step up that ladder. Until he met you in Peniel.

And the work was finished. And you restored everything. Even his son Joseph was restored to him.

I thank you, Father. Teach us your ways. I ask in Jesus' name.

Any questions? No, because he hadn't been tested yet. That was the beginning of the 21 years. The question is, you just said that God gave Jacob no conditions.

Then he asked if it was because Jacob had already passed the test. You said no, because he was just beginning to accept the test. That was before Jacob did anything, God gave him the condition.

Okay, his question is, Solomon's character was like that. How did he write down Jacob? Did he experience what he wrote? He didn't realize what he was writing on the spiritual side. Most of the prophets didn't realize what they were writing.

The Spirit wrote through them. And they didn't understand. They tried to understand themselves what they'd written.

The Bible says the prophets looked into it. They weren't revealed yet. Paul said they were hidden from the prophets and the ancients.

And even the angels are looking into these things. But now God has revealed them unto us, which is that great hidden mystery, Christ in us, the hope of glory. The Holy Spirit puts the spiritual understanding in it.

And unless he does, all you've got is a natural book. Unless he does, all you've got is a natural book. And it is written that the natural book, the letter, killeth.

It's the Spirit that gives life. Many people use the songs of Solomon as a mockery, as a reproach to the gospel. Nowadays they're even listed as pornographic literature.

They're even listed as pornographic literature. Going back to the question about digging wells, I really knew the Philistine would take the wells away. Why he still give those wells to them? They were friends.

I don't think he knew that. They were friends. But in those lands, water is very precious.

It's worth more than gold. And when they saw these wells flow again, then they weren't happy with it. That meant riches.

That meant riches of crops and of flocks. And they said, this is ours. We want this.

But finally they stubbed the well. Yes, but it's a long distance away. The Gerar was in the southeast, and Beersheba is southwest.

Just opposite. But they were perhaps 75 miles apart. Then they left off fighting for it.

OK, go back to the question about yesterday. We mentioned that Jacob was loved, that Esau was hated. But those were ordained before they were born.

Was the way of our life ordained even before we were born? God knows the end from the beginning, doesn't he? Nothing ever takes God by surprise. But God knew the genetic makeup. And the genetic makeup makes us what we are.

And how we will respond to our environment. Our environment forms and shapes us. But the same environment can produce totally different things, as it did with Jacob and Esau.

They both had the same environment. They both were well taught. Because God said of Abraham, He said, I know Abraham.

He will teach his children right. So they were well taught. But their response to the environment was totally different.

And that's where the genetic makeup comes in. That's why in some of the most miserable environments, some of the most wonderful people can come forth. And just reverse.

And because God knows the genetic makeup, He knows what's going to be. As soon as that genetic makeup is formed, as far as God's concerned, that's the person. So much for the people that believe in abortion.

Just recently, they had a court case. In fact, just last month. Of a woman who caused an accident, in which the mother's baby in her womb was killed.

She was about six or seven months. Not any more than seven months. Perhaps five or six would be better or closer.

They prosecuted her for murder. Because she didn't want it. If she'd wanted it and gone to an abortion, it's not murder.

That's how stupid people can get. As far as God's concerned, He knew who Jacob was and He knew who Esau was before they were born. You mentioned sanctification.

After we were saved, then we may have the baptism of the Holy Spirit and being sanctified. What is the time sequence of those? There is no sequence. Peter preached a sermon in the Book of Acts.

And he said, repent. And he said, believe. Repent.

And be baptized. And He'll fill you with the Spirit. Then he went to Cornelius' house.

Before he finished his sermon, Cornelius was baptized with the Holy Spirit. We suppose he was baptized afterwards. Nothing was ever said about repentance.

Forget sequence. God just does it His way whenever He wants to. When the revival first fell in Argentina, people were being filled with the Spirit faster than we could baptize them in water.

It didn't seem to make much difference to God. Not really. Perhaps technically it's closer.

But in reality, we have listed the gift of tongues as if it was a baptism, and it's not the full baptism. We won't go into it, but there's three major points in the Book of Acts when they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit when the Holy Spirit first came. Fire was on all of them.

They were all filled. And they all spoke in tongues. I know people have received any one of those three without the others.

And it's a... Again, it has nothing to do with sequence. But the full baptism means all three. Does the baptism of the Holy Spirit bring us the change of our lives or bring us power? Power is a part of the baptism.

The full baptism has the power also. Power is signified by the fire. Fire signifies cleansing and power.

We know there is no power on earth except through fire. That's why Jesus said, You have to wait until you're endowed with power. That's when the fire came.

Many people speak in tongues and have no power. Many people are filled with Spirit and have no power. But our people have power and have not been filled with Spirit.

Okay, you mentioned we can have different responses to the same circumstance. And so, when we are climbing the ladder, if we can have the right response to our environment, does that mean we are climbing the ladder? If we have a right response... That means we'll get there easier and quicker. But I'm sorry to say, we have enough of Jacob's Spirit in us that we always don't make the right responses.

It was a ladder. It wasn't a stair step. It's easy to slip on ladders.

And I'm sorry to say, we do quite a bit of slipping. Okay, one more. Go ahead.

Jacob dreamed, and the Bible also mentions some people dreamed, and we dream very often. So, how should we look at our dreams? When I look at my dream, I'm usually asleep. But, Daniel gave it a different name.

He called it a night vision. There are dreams that are night visions. Most of them are just dreams.

But there are visions of God, and they'll be given as dreams. But that's a very small portion of our dream repertoire. The person himself will know the difference.

You know when you're receiving something from God, because God always lets you know when it's really from Him. We make mistakes. But when it's really God, we don't make a mistake.

But when we want it to be God, and try to make it God, we make mistakes. But He doesn't. Well, our time is up.

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