

Bible Study - Living for God, Not the World – Continued – Lesson - 24
Pastor Charles A. Hall – November 16th, 2023

Having An Encounter With God

The word Encounter means “To come face to face” an unexpected meeting with somebody or something.

A personal encounter with God is life changing!

With all of the distractions, and evilness in this world, it seems almost impossible to live a life that is acceptable to God, or in accordance to His will without first having a personal encounter with Him. It also seems reasonable that it would be challenging to follow someone that we have never met. To add a little more complexity into this discussion, an encounter with God would not normally be a face-to-face physical meeting, but rather a spiritual encounter. God can make Himself known through His creation, but it would be the spirit of God moving upon His creation, since the Word of God in the gospel of John chapter 4 verse 24 states that “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Being spiritual means being invisible (Colossians 1:15) and without a body, one who is divine, and one who reveals Himself through perfect intellect, emotion, and will. He is the source of all life, and He is self-existent. Since God is not constrained physically, we can have an encounter with Him anywhere, and anyplace, He transcends space and matter. An encounter with God is spiritual, however the encounter can produce a physical manifestation.

In our life’s journey we sometime cross paths with individual’s who make a profound and life changing impact on our life. In other words, meeting that person changed or influenced who we would be from that encounter forward. So, imagine an encounter with the creator of the universe, who is all powerful, all knowing, who is everywhere, and everyplace at the same time, would such an encounter change you, or influence your life from that meeting forward? In our relationship with the Lord it is possible to have several or even many encounters with God. However, when we truly grasp the realization of a spiritual encounter with God, there can be no denying of His power and His might. If we fail to respond favorably to an encounter with God. It is not because of God, it’s because of our deceitful and faithless hearts, which causes us to turn away from God, to embrace the world and all of its evilness.

Jacob, the son of Isaac, the promise son of Abraham and his wife Rebecca, and the brother of Esau had 5 major encounters with God.

First encounter - Jacob encounters God on the way to his mother’s father’s house at a place call Bethel, and the Lord tells him that he will be a mighty man, the father of many nations.

- **Genesis 28:10-22** (10) And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. (11) And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. (12) And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. (13) 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,

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to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; (14) 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. (15) And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither 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. (16) And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. (17) 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. (18) And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. (19) And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. (20) And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, (21) So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: (22) And this stone, 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.

Second encounter - God informs Jacob that the male goat and sheep who are ring, streak, speckled and grizzles are mating. This is after Jacob's father-in-law Laban allowed him to have these after working for him for 16 years and having his wages reduced 10 times.

- **Genesis 31:2-3** (2) And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before. (3) And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.

Third encounter - God tells Jacob to leave his father-in-law's land and to go back to his father Isaac, even though Jacob is fearful because he stole his brother Esau's birth rights as the first-born son. However, Isaac believes and follows God with his 2 wives Rebekah and Leah, their children, flock, and servants.

- **Genesis 31: 10-13** (10) And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstraked, speckled, and grizzled. (11) And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. (12) And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grizzled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. (13) I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.

Fourth encounter with God - Jacob is on his way to see his older brother Esau, and is afraid, he sends his wives, 11 children and servants with all his goods to meet Esau. They passed over fort Jabbok and sent them over the brook, but he stayed behind. Jacob was left alone, and he wrestled with God all night. It was not actually God but a representative of God either an angel or the preincarnate Christ. Jacob wrestled all night until the breaking of the day. And

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the man or angel saw that he would not win, touched the hollow of his thigh, and pull it out of joint as they wrestle. Then the man said to Jacob let me go, but Jacob said not until you bless me. Then the man said what is your name, and Jacob, said my name is Jacob. And the man said, your name is no more Jacob, but Israel (He Struggled with God) and with men and you have won. The man told Jacob now you have power of God as a prince.

- **Genesis 32:22-32** (22) And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. (23) And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had. (24) And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. (25) And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. (26) And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. (27) And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. (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. (29) And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. (30) And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. (31) And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. (32) Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

Fifth encounter - God speaks to Jacob and tells him to go back to Bethel where he met him when he was running from Esau. Jacob told his entire household to prepare themselves to travel to Bethel, and discard all the strange Gods. As they traveled to Bethel God would not allow any of the city around them to harm or pursue after them. Once at Bethel Jacob would build an altar to God and have a drink sacrifice offering to the Lord.

- **Genesis 35: 1-7** (1) And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. (2) Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: (3) And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. (4) And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. (5) And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. (6) So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. (7) And he built there an altar, and called the place El-bethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

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Sixth encounter - God said unto Jacob your name is no more Jacob but Israel, and God said I am God Almighty. And God told Jacob to be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a company of nations shall be of Jacob. And God told Jacob that the land He gave Abraham and Isaac He will give to him. And Jacob built a pillar at the place where He talked with God.

- **Genesis 35:9-11** (9) And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him. (10) And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. (11) And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;

What does an Encounter with God produce:

The prophet Isaiah had an encounter with God that provides us with 5 important things that happens when we have an encounter with God.

- **Isaiah 6:1-8** In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. (2) Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. (3) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. (4) And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. (5) Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. (6) Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: (7) And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. (8) Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Verses 1 - 4

- Coming into presence of God
- Being filled with His Spirit

Verses 5-7

- Give us a heart of Repentance

Verse 8

- Give us Peace, Clarity, and trust / Faith
- Give us understanding to our "Call"