

Walking in the Full Authority of Your Mantle

There are strategic times and seasons when God encounters His church in unique ways. About 20 years ago, God released many profound encounters, strategic destinies and powerful mantles.

Many who received these mantles remained hidden. In the intervening years, there has been a deep work of maturity. Now is the time when they will begin to walk in the full authority of their mantles. Jacob's life is a prophetic model.

In Genesis 28, Jacob had a profound dream (Gen. 28:12-17). In the dream three images were highlighted to him:

1. A stairway.
2. Angels ascending and descending.
3. The Lord (Yahweh).

Each of these images is preceded by the Hebrew word *hinneh* meaning "Look!" *Hinneh* adds dramatic gesture. It goes with a lifted arm and an open mouth: "There, a stairway! Oh, angels! and look, the Lord Himself!" (J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis*). It makes the narrative very vivid for the reader, bringing Jacob's dream into the present as if it was happening right now (Bruce Waltke, *Genesis*). God wants to reveal to us the same spiritual realities Jacob saw. Before Jacob had this dream, he was unaware of the spiritual activity all around him. Through the dream:

1. He saw a gateway (Gen. 28:17).
2. He observed the intense activity in the Spirit realm.
3. He encountered the God of covenant.

Above, Upon Or Beside

The most interesting aspect of Jacob's dream is the location of God. Most Bible translations say God was above the stairway, but the Hebrew word can mean "above," "upon" or "beside." The Hebrew text makes four locations possible for God:

1. Above the stairway.
2. Upon the stairway.
3. Beside the stairway.
4. Beside Jacob.

Following the model of the tower of Babel in Genesis 11, God would be at the top. But the book of Genesis makes a clear contrast between the ways of humankind—which led to the tower of Babel—and the ways of God—demonstrated through the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the sons of covenant. Yahweh was the God of covenant. Covenant is the most serious and intimate of all relationships.

God's presence upon or beside the stairway gives a much more intimate picture than Him above it. The context of covenant argues against God being above the stairway and for Him being upon it, beside it or even beside Jacob. Consider also:

When God spoke to Jacob in the dream, He "said" to Jacob, rather than "called" to him (Gen. 28:13). "Said" favors an intimate picture, whereas "called" depicts God distant at the top of the stairway.

When Jacob woke from the dream he strongly asserted, "The Lord is in this place" (Gen. 28:16). These words convey closeness, not distance.

In John 1:51, Jesus said He was the stairway.

What Did Jacob Experience?

When I first learned there were four possible locations for God in Jacob's dream, I sought God for further insight. My prayer was simple: "God, please show me what Jacob saw." God answered by giving me a vision. In the vision, I was traveling through a tunnel of blue light. I came out of the tunnel, and before me was a huge blue eye that contained infinity. I started to travel into the eye. Next, the scene changed. I was standing in a small room with two mirrors directly opposite one another. Because the mirrors reflected back to each other, you could see multitudes of mirrors in both directions. God is multidimensional and infinite. Each subsequent mirror represented another dimension of Him, and there are infinite dimensions. Even if you climb a mountain to get a better view within one dimension, you are still only seeing within one dimension.

The vision left me stunned. Suddenly I saw the depth of our covenant God in a new way. The color blue is often associated with revelation, and of course eyes are windows into the soul. When a man and a woman are in covenant relationship, they have the right to look into each other's eyes in a way that would be inappropriate for others. Jacob's dream was an invitation to know the depth of covenant relationship with God. Instead of showing me exactly what Jacob saw, God revealed to me the dimension of the revelation. It's no wonder Jacob woke up overcome with awe. Once again, God emphasized to me that Jacob's dream was about covenant and intimacy.

The 20-Year Delay

After having this dream, Jacob left the region of Israel and stayed in Haran with his uncle Laban. Jacob returned to Israel 20 years later (Gen. 31:38, 41). He also stepped into the spiritual gateway he first encountered in his dream. Once again he encountered God's angels (Gen. 32:1). Once again he encountered God—this time in the form of a Man (Gen.

32:24-30). The encounter was so profound that he wrestled with God physically. The deepest issues of Jacob's heart came to the fore as he wrestled throughout the night. Eventually the Man said, "Let me go, for the day breaks." But Jacob refused, "I will not let You go, unless You bless me!" (Gen. 32:26 The Man affirmed that because Jacob had wrestled with God and with man, his name would be changed to Israel. Jacob means "deceiver." Israel means "prince with God." Jacob stepped into a much greater position of spiritual authority.

There are intentional signposts in the Hebrew text that link Jacob's encounter through the dream in Genesis 28 (scene one) with his encounter in Genesis 32 (scene two). One thing that is immediately evident is the increased intensity of the encounter in Genesis 32. Consider the following differences between the two scenes:

In Scene 1 Jacob "sees" God.

In Scene 2 he "wrestles" with God (wrestling is one of the most intense forms of interaction).

In Scene 1 Jacob "hears" God.

In Scene 2 he "speaks" with God.

In Scene 1 God is "beside" or "before" Jacob.

In Scene 2 God is "face to face" with Jacob.

In Scene 1 Jacob encounters God.

In Scene 2 he encounters God, and his name is changed to Israel.

Jacob had two profound encounters with God—first, in a dream, second, wrestling with a Man. In between these two encounters, he worked for his uncle Laban for 20 years. Laban continually controlled and exploited Jacob—repeatedly changing his wages (Gen. 31:7, 41). It was a frustrating situation that prevented Jacob from getting ahead in life. He was trapped.

Jacob's life speaks to our day. About 20 years ago, there was

a season of profound encounter across the body of Christ. (From 1993 to 2006 God uniquely encountered me again and again. As I look back, I recognize that God was mantling me—but this was also true of many, many others). Many encountered God in profound ways, but then things happened outside of their control. Instead of walking in their promised destinies, they spent these years in relative hiddenness, serving in some capacity but trapped, the profound encounters with God mere distant realities. This is about to change.

There is no time, space or distance in the Spirit realm. The place you experienced in the Spirit realm many years ago is as real today as when you first experienced it—you can go back to it. Right now, we stand on the brink of a new season. Many are about to see spiritual realities for the first time—they will see heavenly gateways, angelic activity, and the God of covenant speaking directly to them. But others are about to rediscover gateways that they first encountered 20 years ago. Not only will they have fresh encounters with God, but they will also come forth with a profound new authority that will cause dramatic shifts in the earth. {eoa}

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