



Jacob's Dream

Begin with prayer

Read: Genesis 28

Listen: THRU the BIBLE: [Genesis 28](#)

Dear God,

As we gather in Your presence, open our eyes to see Christ as our only way to You. Help us release our bargains and conditions, and instead rest fully in Your grace and mercy. Teach us to serve You out of love.

Amen.



Jacob Leaves Home



Genesis 28

As Jacob prepares to leave, Isaac sends him off with a blessing and a command **not to take a Canaanite wife**. All through the Old Testament we find that **God doesn't want the godly to marry the ungodly**. **Intermarriage always leads to godlessness.**

"May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be an assembly of peoples; and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham."
(Genesis 28:3-4)

Isaac understands that **God blessed Abraham**, and that blessing had transferred to him, and now **this blessing is to be passed on to his son, Jacob**. Isaac now sends Jacob to his brother-in-law, Laban (Rebekah's brother). This family was Syrian. Sometimes the question is asked, **"Was Abraham a Jew? Was he an Israelite?" No, not yet.**

Soon God would **change Jacob's name to Israel**. His twelve sons were Israelites. The line came from Abraham. **He is the father of the race, but he wasn't yet called a Jew.**

We also learn that when Esau saw how much his father hated intermarriage with Canaanites, **he went out and married Ishmael's daughter, hoping that it would please his father. But he had no spiritual discernment** whatsoever since the Ishmaelites were as much rejected as the Canaanites or the Philistines.



Jacob's Ladder

On the first day on the road, Jacob covered about 40 miles. He traveled far and fast to get away from Esau. He stopped for the night in a place called Bethel, which means, “the House of God.”

What do you think he was feeling that night? He was likely lonely and homesick. As far as we know, **this was his first night away from home**, out on his own for the first time.

He lies down and uses **a stone for a pillow**. Bethel was a dreary place in the hills with large, bare rocks exposed. Its topography looked bleak and hostile. Yet this was the place that captured the high point in Jacob's spiritual life, both now and also later in his life. So here is where he lay down to sleep.

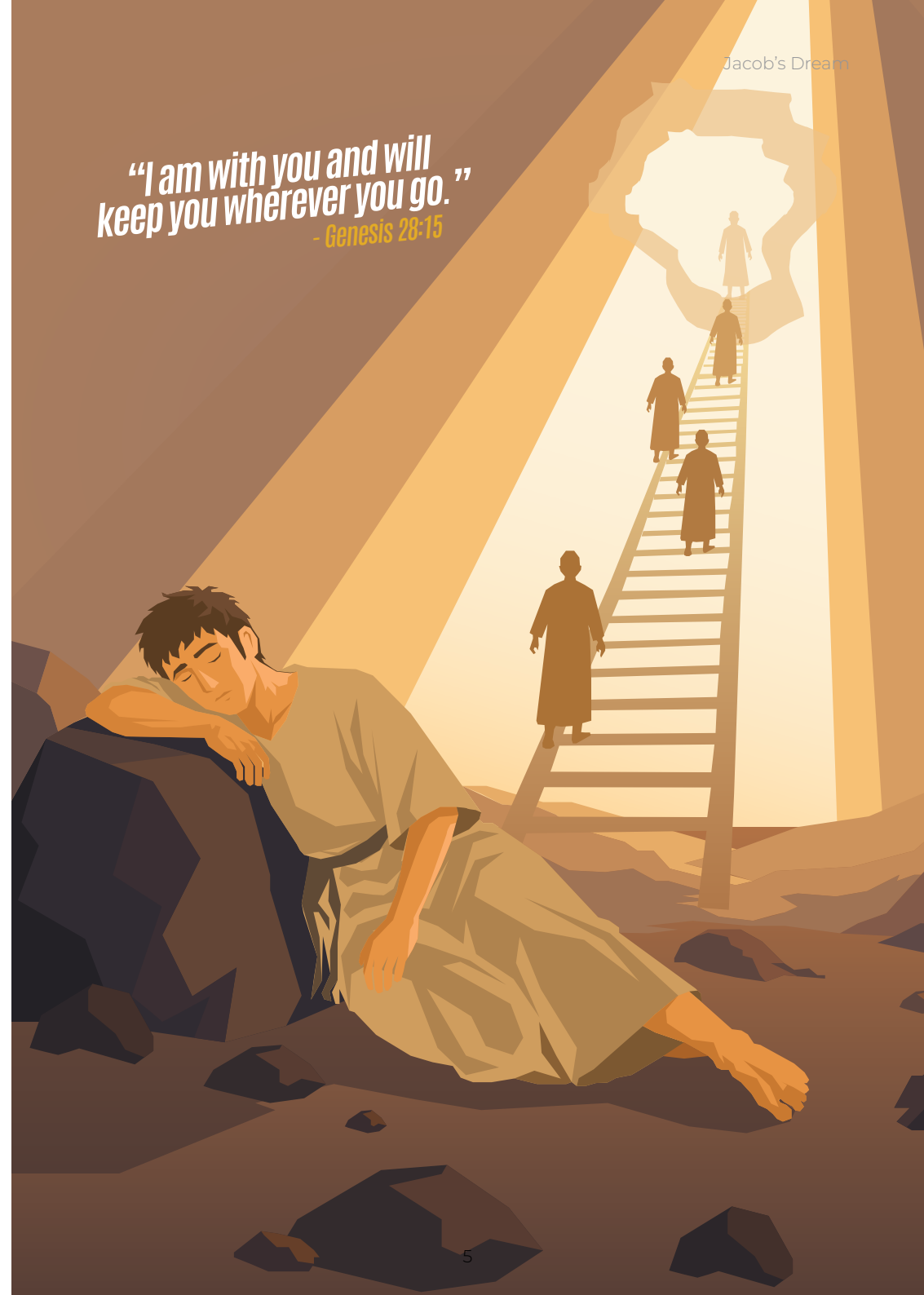
Then Jacob dreamed of a ladder, grounded on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven. Angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood at the top of the ladder and said,

“I am the LORD God of Abraham, your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also, your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”
(Genesis 28:13-15)

This area is where **God first appeared to Abraham** after he entered the land. Now God is giving the **same promise to Jacob**. God had **repeated it to Isaac**, and now **He confirms and reaffirms that He will do this for Jacob**.

What a gift this vision was to a **lonely, homesick young man** who had to leave home in a hurry. He was on **his way to a far country**, and on **that first night** God said to him, “I’m going to be with you, Jacob, and I’m going to bring you back to this land.”

“I am with you and will
keep you wherever you go.”
- Genesis 28:15



Christ:

The Vision of a Ladder

What did this vision of a ladder mean? The Lord Jesus interpreted it when He called Nathanael to be His disciple.

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'Because I said to you, "I saw you under the fig tree," do you believe? You will see greater things than these.' And He said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'" (John 1:50-51)

That ladder is none other than Christ Himself. The angels were ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. The angels ministered to Him; they served at His command. Nathanael will later hear God's voice from the top of that ladder, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). We can't come to the Father directly, but we have access to the Father through Christ.

The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the ladder; not one that we can climb but one that we can trust.

This truth was given first to Jacob, the usurper. About Nathanael, our Lord said, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit." (John 1:47) This means, he is not like Jacob, a trickster. **God will deal with Jacob. God has given him this wonderful, glorious promise. But Jacob has so much to learn!**

Isn't that true of all of us today? No wonder God has to teach us. No wonder God has to discipline us. **He did it to Abraham, and He did it to Isaac. He is going to do it to Jacob. Up to this point, everything has been going Jacob's way.** But now the Lord allows a trial to come to Jacob to discipline him. **Trials strengthen our character; they put courage in our lives and enable us to stand for God.**



That ladder is none other than Christ Himself - not one that we can climb, but one that we can trust.



Jacob Recognizes God's Presence

When Jacob woke up, he was afraid.

"Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it... this is the gate of heaven!" (Genesis 28:16-17)

When Jacob ran away from home, he had a limited view of God. He thought that when he ran away from home, he was also running away from God. But God reminds him that he hadn't left him. He promised to be with Jacob.

The first thing Jacob did in the morning was to take the stone he had used as a pillow, set it up as a pillar and pour oil on the top of it. "Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me... and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.'" (Genesis 28:20-21)

Jacob's Transactional Deal with God

Jacob has a lot to learn. **He wants to trade with God.** He says, "God, if You will do this for me, then I'll serve You." **But God has already told him that He is going to do every one of these things for him,** "I am going to keep you; I am going to bring you back to this land; I am going to give you this land; and I'm going to give you offspring."

Jacob wants to bargain with God, but God doesn't do business with any of us that way. If He had, Jacob would never have made it back to that land.

God's Grace and Mercy

God brought him back into that land by His grace and mercy. **When Jacob did finally come back to Bethel years later, he came back a wiser man.** That's when he returned to worship and praise God for His mercy.

Even today, many people say they will serve the Lord if He will do a certain thing. But God doesn't do business that way. **He will extend mercy to you, and He will be gracious to you without asking anything in return.** Though He asks nothing in return, He does say that if you love Him, you will really want to serve Him. That will be the bondage of love.

It is the same kind of love a mother has for her little child. She wants to bless him. That's the way God wants us to love Him. **He just wants to become your Father through faith in Christ.**



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God just wants to become your Father through faith in Christ.
”

God's Eternal Truths

Relevant to us from *Genesis 28*

1

Jesus Christ is our direct access to God the Father.

- **The Truth:** The ladder Jacob saw reaching to heaven was not just a dream; it was a picture of Christ. We cannot reach God through our own efforts, but God provided a way down to us.
- **New Testament Connection:** Jesus explicitly interpreted Jacob's dream in the New Testament when He told Nathanael, "hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (*John 1:51*). Jesus confirmed, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (*John 14:6*). **Christ is the ladder - not one we climb, but one we trust to bring us to Heaven.**

2

God operates through unmerited grace, not transactional bargains.

- **The Truth:** Jacob tried to trade with God, promising to serve Him if God provided food, clothing, and safety. However, God had already promised to do all these things unconditionally. God does not do business with us on the basis of trade; He brings us into His promises through His grace and mercy.
- **New Testament Connection:** Salvation is the gospel of grace freely given to us through Christ (*Ephesians 2:8-9*). God extends mercy without asking for anything in return because Christ has paid our penalty for sin, and our service to Him should simply be a "bond of love," responding to the grace He has already freely given us through faith in Christ.

Reflection Questions

Question 1

The Purpose of Discipline: Look back at a difficult trial or "exile" in your life. How might God have been using that situation to discipline you, remove your deceit, and strengthen your character?

Question 2

Resting in the Ladder: Jesus is the ladder connecting heaven and earth. Have you trusted Jesus to completely save you from your sins? Is your soul 100% rested fully trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ?

Question 3

Serving Out of Love: God desires our obedience to be a "bond of love" rather than a business transaction. How would you describe your relationship with the Lord? Is it transactional, or in what ways are you experiencing His love and guidance in your life?

Good News

CHRIST

The True Ladder to Heaven

1. **The Revelation of the Vision:** In this lesson, we learned about Jacob's dream of a ladder reaching to heaven. The ultimate meaning of this vision was hidden until the Lord Jesus interpreted it during the calling of His disciple, Nathanael. Jesus told him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (*John 1:50-51*).
2. **Christ is the Connection:** By applying this Old Testament imagery to Himself, Jesus reveals great good news: **that ladder is none other than Christ Himself.** He is the sole mediator bridging the infinite gap between a Holy God and sinful humanity. Furthermore, the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man show that they actively ministered to Him and served at His sovereign command.

3. **The Affirmation of the Father:** In Jacob's original dream, the Lord stood at the top of the ladder. In the New Testament, we hear God the Father's voice affirming Jesus from the top of that ladder, declaring, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (*Matthew 3:17*). Christ has the absolute approval and authority of the Father.
4. **The Exclusivity of the Gospel:** The fundamental problem of humanity is separation from God. Christ makes it clear that **we cannot come to the Father directly; our only access is through Christ.** Jesus leaves no room for alternative routes to heaven, clearly stating the fact, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (*John 14:6*).
5. **The Core Application - Faith vs. Works:** The ultimate takeaway for our salvation is how we respond to this ladder. Religion tells people to work hard and "climb" their way up to God's favour. However, God declares that the **Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the ladder, not one that we can climb, but one that we can trust to save us.**

We are saved not by our own exhaustive efforts to reach heaven, but by **resting our full faith in the One who came down from heaven to rescue us.** Jesus paid the penalty for your sins on the cross, died for you, and rose again on **the third day to proclaim you not guilty, and to forgive your sins, and through Jesus (our ladder),** He will bring us home to heaven nearer to God.



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