

Genesis 28.10-22 Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. <sup>11</sup> And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. <sup>12</sup> And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! <sup>13</sup> And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. <sup>14</sup> Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. <sup>15</sup> 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 promised you." <sup>16</sup> Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." <sup>17</sup> And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

<sup>18</sup> So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. <sup>19</sup> He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first. <sup>20</sup> Then Jacob made 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 clothing to wear, <sup>21</sup> so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, <sup>22</sup> and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you."

## Genesis 28:10-22 | Jacob's Ladder

*Pray*  
 - Abortion bill  
 - war  
 - ordinary uses } *Lord draw close.*

Our story for the rest of our time in Genesis this year centers around Jacob. I'll be up front with you one of my goals for this sermon is to make you fall in love with the Bible. Let's get to the story.

### 1. The Ladder

Genesis 28.10-11 Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. <sup>11</sup> And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep.

Jacob is on the run. His brother hates him for tricking their father into giving him the family blessing and wants him dead. Jacob's mother, Rebekah, convinced Jacob to flee to her brother's house in Haran. Remember Jacob is a homebody, he doesn't like to go outside. This story is Jacob's first day on the run, at night he needs to sleep, but there is nowhere to sleep, he is outside with nothing to sleep on but a rock for a pillow. When your head is laid down on the rocks, that's what we call a low point. He falls asleep.

*Jacob is on the run*

*Head on the rocks  
Low point.*

Genesis 28:12-13a And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the Lord stood above it...

The only thing deeper than the ground might be a dream and Jacob dreams. And he dreams of something you need when you're really low, he dreams of a ladder. A better translation might be stairway, but for copyright reasons we can't say stairway to heaven.

The ladder is set up on the earth, but it extends all the way into heaven. It is a connection between heaven and earth, a meeting point between these two realms. And on the ladder are the angel's of God going up and coming down. At this connection between Heaven and Earth God's messengers and intermediaries are at work. Likely doing those things that angels do between heaven and earth. What are those things? Well we know that they have something to do with holding national identities together. The rise and fall of empires (Deut 32:8).

But it is not an angel that speaks to Jacob. It is the one standing above the ladder, but its stranger than that, because the Hebrew is a bit ambiguous he could also be the one standing beside the ladder. It is the Lord who speaks directly to Jacob. Not the angels. Do you see the gravity and supremacy of the message that Jacob is going to receive. The Lord himself will relay it with his own messengers present. They have been delegating their own concerns but their concerns are subsumed as merely in the service of this promise to a sinful fugitive on the run with his head on the rocks. More important than the rise and fall of empires. This is what the Lord says:

## 2. The Promise

Genesis 28:13 "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring.

The utter graciousness of God here can't be missed. Jacob prayed no prayer. Offered no worship. Sought no help. And yet the Lord meets him here, his first night homeless, to say that he will make him a home because of God's own faithfulness to his promises.

Genesis 28:14 Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Picture this single man sleeping on a rock in the wilderness. Now zoom out your drone so that he becomes merely a dot on the screen. Look out how this single point expands. His offspring is like the dust that surrounds him. His life will expand in every direction and the benefits of his blessing will touch every single family on earth. There is not one family

*Dreamed of a ladder.  
stairway*

*On Earth A into Heaven*

*Angels  
Ascending &  
descending  
doing what  
Angels do.*

*↑ ↓ of Empires.*

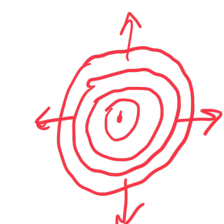
*Lord speaks  
directly.*

*This is the story!*

*Utter grace.  
God seeks!*

*Promise of a Home*

*Land & offspring.*



*- All families  
blessed.*

- in you & your blessing.  
 - Not particularly  
 - Good man.  
 - Strong

Scope & object  
 ladder  
 Heaven & Earth

which will not be blessed through this man. He is not a particularly good man, he is not a particularly strong man. But God's promises are unshakeable. Their scale is unsearchable. What do you see when you look at your child? What do you see when you look at a friend or a coworker or a stranger that we feel compelled to strike up a conversation with? I worked with a missionary once who said, every child I see, I see a nation. **The scale of the Lord's blessing is unsearchable.**

Genesis 28:15 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 promised you."

I am with you

**The object of the Lord's blessing is personal.** Jacob learns that the Lord is with him and will keep him wherever he goes. He will not go outside of the Lord's promises. God makes his promises certain to Jacob.

### 3. The Vow

Genesis 28:16-17 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." <sup>17</sup> And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Same place, changed man

The place is the same. But Jacob had transformed and with his new eyes he looks upon his desolation and confesses. This is no ordinary wilderness. The Lord is in this place and I did not know it. How awesome is this place! It is the house of God, the gate of heaven.

You know at one point all the people of the earth were united in one language and they committed themselves to building a tower which would reach up to the heavens. They convinced themselves that they could attain heaven without God. And they named their project the gate of heaven. The word was shifted slightly and the name became Babel as their language was confused by the Lord and man's attempt to crawl to heaven himself was lost in foolishness.

But here, in this blank wilderness a new Babel is formed. But it is not from man to God but from God to man, and here in this place by his promise God establishes with this lost man the gate of heaven the house of God. God will dwell here.

Genesis 28:18-19 So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. <sup>19</sup> He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

The pillow that had symbolized his shame, he now stands on its end like a tower that stretches to heaven, and he anoints it so that it shines like light, and he names the place house of God. And before Jacob leaves the land for the first time he makes a vow to God.

Pillar of light  
 House of God

Vow

Vow  
↓  
I will be your God  
You will be my people  
Lord's Prayer.

Genesis 28:20-21 Then Jacob made 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 clothing to wear, <sup>21</sup> so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God,

Jacob receives the promise of God to him and responds quite appropriately with a vow of commitment to the Lord. And this vow is as simple as the Lord will be his God.

What does it mean that the Lord is his God. This is the foundation of our hope. That God is with us, and we are his and he is ours.

Tithe =  
Expression of the  
truth.

Genesis 28:22 and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you."

The tithe. Do you see what Jacob understands about his tithe. It was all given to him by God first. And his tithe is a symbol of that. His vow is that his life is God's. His whole world has shifted to begin to see that all of everything he has done is characterized by God's working first.

John 1  
Read it

Now there is another scene where this happens in scripture. That I have to show you. Jesus is calling his first disciples and he calls Philip who goes and tells his friend Nathanael. Nathanael is a skeptic, especially because Philip shares that Jesus is from Nazareth, and what kind of good ever comes from that backwater? But Jesus approaches Nathanael and says, "behold an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" And Nathanael responds in character by saying, "how do you know me" and Jesus answered "Before Philip called you when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

John 1:49 Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Now we don't know what Philip was doing under the fig tree. Scripture never tells us, it is a secret which remains to this day between Christ and Nathanael. Just as the meeting between God and Jacob in the wilderness was their own with no witnesses. But it was enough for Nathanael to know that this surely was the Christ. But Jesus is looking to expand his vision further. Here is what he says.

John 1:50-51 Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these."  
<sup>51</sup> And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Do you see what Jesus did there. He said, I am Jacob's ladder. I am the house of God, the true temple. I am the gate of heaven the "way" to God. This is what it means to see Jesus. To see Jesus is to realize that truly God is in this place, and I did not know it.

What is  
meeting Jesus.

God come to us.

— transforms the ordinary,  
Heaven & Earth.

