

SLIDE 01

“A Long Con & An Inside Job” | Genesis 28:10-22

SLIDE 02

Genesis 28:10-22

Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. 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. 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 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. 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. 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.” Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” 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.” 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. He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first. 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, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, 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.”

SLIDE 03

Genesis 25:24-26

When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau’s heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

SLIDE 04

“Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples from within you shall be divided;
the one shall be stronger than the other,
the older shall serve the younger.”

SLIDE 05

Genesis 25:27-28

When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

SLIDE 06

Genesis 25:29–34

Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. And Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!” (Therefore his name was called Edom.) Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright now.” Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?” Jacob said, “Swear to me now.” So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

SLIDE 07

Genesis 27:42–45

But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said to him, “Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran and stay with him a while, until your brother’s fury turns away— until your brother’s anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?”

SLIDE 08

Genesis 27:46

Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?”

SLIDE 09

*Ha, banishment! Be merciful, say "death;"
For exile hath more terror in his look,
much more than death. Do not say "banishment."
There is no world without Verona walls,
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.
Hence banished is banish'd from the world,
And world's exile is death. Then "banished"
Is death mis-term'd; calling death "banished,"
Thou cut'st my head off with a golden axe,
And smilest upon the stroke that murders me*
(Romeo and Juliet, Act III, Scene II)

SLIDE 10

“Humanity will never reach God through its own efforts and ambitions.
It will always fall short of the glory of God.”

“But God came down...”

SLIDE 11

“The phenomena of divine appearance are vehicles for a promise. The story expresses Gods intrusion into human reality which redefines everything. Jacob came to this deserted place, fleeing for his life, undoubtedly without promise. He departs from this encounter changed by the only thing that can change, a word which makes available an alternative future.”

~ Walter Brueggemann, ***Genesis (Interpretation)***

SLIDE 12

Genesis 28:13–14

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. 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.

SLIDE 13

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.”

SLIDE 14

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.” 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.”

SLIDE 15

“There is a continuum in space between the heavenly dwelling and the earthly one such that they are not simply considered mirror images or paired structures, but in the sense that they are more like the upstairs and downstairs of the same building. Yet it is even more than that, as the earthly temple can be thought of as actually existing in the heavenly realm. The temple (*Christ*) is a place in both worlds, just as the grave is a place both on earth and in the netherworld. One might compare it to the wardrobe in the Chronicles of Narnia, which exists in both worlds.”

~ John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*

DISCUSISON QUESTIONS

1. Read the passage. What jumps out at you? Questions about the scripture? Insights?
2. Because of sin and the fall, humanity is born "on the run" by default, either fleeing a past of pain and shame, or sprinting toward a future of possibility and potential. They're both just opposite sides of the same idolatrous coin. Before God broke into your life, what kind of running were you doing? Both? Give examples from your story.
3. In the next few chapters we'll see that Jacob didn't have a *one-and-done* conversion experience where he became perfectly obedient and dependent on the God of the promise. How have you still been tempted to "keep running" after Christ came in?
4. It wasn't enough that Jacob's grandfather had an encounter with God. It wasn't enough that Isaac had an encounter with God. Jacob needed his own faith, and his own encounter. Think of your own life and upbringing. When did you shift from "the faith of your fathers" to your own walk with the Lord? What did it look like?
5. The name of the sermon was "A Long Con & An Inside Job." How does the title fit the story? How does it fit your life?