



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

“There’s No Place Like Home”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Passages (TLV): Gen 28:1-4; 10-31; 31:3, 13, 36-42; 32:2-3, 8, 10-13; 27:41-44

There comes a time when each of us has to leave home. The predictability, stability, and comfort of the familiar get shaken. We go off to college, move to a new city, walk into a new job, or find ourselves in a season we never planned for. Those are the moments when the crutches are gone, when we can’t just lean on what we’ve always known. And strangely, it’s often in those unfamiliar, uncomfortable stretches of the journey that our ears finally open to what ADONAI has been trying to say all along. Jacob’s story in *Vayetze* begins right there—leaving home under a cloud of conflict and stepping into a world that feels anything but safe.

1. HE GOES WITH YOU INTO THE UNKNOWN

When Jacob leaves Beer-sheva for Haran, he is not heading out as a rugged outdoorsman. Scripture tells us, *“Esau became a man knowledgeable in hunting, an outdoorsman, while Jacob was a mild man, remaining in tents”* (Gen. 25:27). Jacob is a tent-dweller, a mama’s boy, suddenly sleeping outside with a stone for a pillow. He has deceived his father, provoked his brother’s murderous anger, and now he is alone, on the run, far from his familiar world. It is in that place of vulnerability—his first night away from home—that ADONAI breaks in. Jacob dreams of a stairway between heaven and earth, angels ascending and descending, and the Lord Himself standing above it, speaking directly to him. The God of Abraham and Isaac now steps into Jacob’s personal story and says, *“Behold, I am with you”* (Gen. 28:15).

Up to this point, Jacob may have known *about* the God of his father and grandfather, but he had not yet met Him in the unknown. The world around him saw “gods” as regional, tied to specific places and altars. Perhaps Jacob assumed he might encounter ADONAI only near his home, near Isaac’s tents and altars. But in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by darkness and danger, God reveals that He is not confined to geography. Jacob wakes up startled: *“Undoubtedly, ADONAI is in this place—and I was unaware”* (Gen 28:16). The Lord meets him not in his strength, but in his fear; not in his polished theology, but in his unfinished character. This is how God works: He comes to imperfect people in uncomfortable places and lets His Presence begin the slow work of transformation. In the unknown, you’re not alone—He Himself goes with you.

2. HE KEEPS YOU THROUGH EVERY TRIAL

God doesn’t just tell Jacob, *“I am with you.”* He also promises, *“I will watch over you wherever you go”* (Gen. 28:15). This is not a passive, distant presence; it is the promise of an active, attentive Watchman. In *“all in which you will walk”*—every stretch of road, every long day, every hard night—ADONAI pledges to keep Jacob. Jacob is stepping into a harsh world with no police, no borders, no guarantees. Yet the Lord declares that bandits, thieves, and even the schemes of others will not have the final word over Jacob’s life. The One who goes with him will also guard him.

And He does. Jacob spends twenty long years under Laban—a man who behaves more like a bandit than a benevolent uncle. Again and again, Jacob is cheated, used, and worn out. He says, *“I was consumed by heat during the day, consumed by frost during the night, and my sleep fled from my eyes”* (Gen. 31:40). Yet, looking back, he can say, *“Had I not had the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac... you would have sent me away empty-handed now. But **God saw my misery and the toil of my hands...** and last night He became the Judge”* (Gen. 31:42). ADONAI kept Jacob, but “keeping” didn’t mean a life without hardship. It meant a life where every hardship became part of God’s chiseling, purifying work. The Lord watched over Jacob *through* the trials, not *instead* of the trials. The same is true for us: His promise to keep us is not a guarantee of comfort, but of formation.

3. HE BRINGS YOU HOME IN HIS TIMING

ADONAI’s promise to Jacob doesn’t stop with presence and protection. He also says, *“I will bring you back to this land... for I will not forsake you until I have done what I promised you”* (Gen 28:15). Before Jacob has even left the Land, God is talking about his return. Jacob’s exile will not last forever. He is a child of the promise, tied to the Land that God pledged to Abraham and Isaac. His departure may be triggered by Esau’s rage, but his return will be governed by God’s Word. Jacob will not have to engineer his own way back; ADONAI Himself will call him home at the right time.

And He does—on God’s schedule, not Jacob’s. Rebekah had said, *“Then stay with him a few days, until your brother’s rage subsides”* (Gen. 27:44), but those “few days” turn into twenty years. Then, at the appointed time, ADONAI speaks: *“Return to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you”* (Gen. 31:3). He reminds Jacob, *“I am the God of Beth-El... where you made a vow to Me. Get up now... and return to the land of your birth”* (Gen. 31:13). As Jacob journeys back, God brackets his exile with angelic encounters—angels at Bethel when he left, and angels at Mahanaim when he returns (Gen. 32:2–3). Even as Jacob trembles at the news that Esau is coming with four hundred men, he clings to God’s promises in prayer, confessing his unworthiness and pleading, *“You Yourself said, ‘I will most certainly do good with you’ ”* (Gen. 32:13). God has been shaping him the whole time, and at just the right moment, He brings Jacob home—just as He said He would.

CONCLUSION

Like Jacob, sometimes ADONAI allows us to land in uncomfortable, disorienting places—some of which we helped create through our own choices. Yet in those places, He says to us what He said to Jacob: “I’m with you. I will watch over you. I will bring you back. I’ll accomplish in you what I need to accomplish to make you the man or woman I’ve always intended you to be.” The question is: Will we respond? Will we say, “If that’s the deal, then ADONAI will be my God and my life will be worship unto You”? And just as importantly, will we renew our faith that His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still stand? God is with Israel. God will watch over Israel. And God will save all Israel. As those grafted into the root, we can rest in His faithfulness and also join His heart—

praying, believing, and making ourselves available as instruments to accomplish His will.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When have you felt most “far from home”—emotionally, spiritually, or physically—and how did you become aware (maybe later) that “*ADONAI is in this place—and I was unaware*” (Genesis 28:16)?
2. How does it change your perspective on hardship to realize that God’s promise to “*watch over you*” (Genesis 28:15) does not mean avoiding trials, but being formed through them?
3. In what areas of your life do you struggle most with God’s timing, wanting “a few days” instead of a longer season of shaping, like Jacob’s twenty years with Laban?
4. Jacob’s vow at Bethel involved worship, trust, and generosity. If you were to make a fresh response to God’s initiative in your life today, what might that look like in your worship, your decisions, and your stewardship?
5. How does Jacob’s story encourage you to trust God’s ongoing faithfulness to Israel and to see yourself, as a believer in Yeshua, connected to His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Thank You that You meet us not only in our strength and stability, but in our fear, our confusion, and the places that feel far from home. Thank You that in every unknown, You are with us; in every trial, You are watching over us; and in every season, You are working to bring us into the fullness of Your promises.

Lord, we confess that we often resist Your process and grow impatient with Your timing. Forgive us for the times we have doubted Your goodness in the wilderness places. Today we choose to trust that You are forming us, chiseling us, and shaping our character, just as You did with Jacob. We offer our lives to You again—our plans, our fears, our resources—as an act of worship.

We also lift up Israel before You. You have not forgotten Your promises to the descendants of Jacob. You are with Israel, You are watching over Israel, and You will save all Israel. Use us as instruments in Your hand to pray, to speak, to love, and to bear witness of Yeshua, the promised Messiah.

In the name of Yeshua our Messiah,
Amen.