

Jacob Forms a Relationship with God

Gen. 28:10-22

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God reveals himself to his people to promise his protection and provision. Our response must be one of obedience and worship. Holman OT Commentary

Unifying Principle:

In the midst of human turmoil, we grow weary and can lose sight of the purpose for our lives. How can we escape the confusion to refresh and reorient ourselves to get back on track? God created an opportunity for the weary Jacob to reconnect with his spiritual mission and resources for him to begin his life's journey with renewed vigor.

The Lord's Self-Revelation to Jacob

Gen. 28:10-15

Jacob's desperate need: (10-11)

- a. Left home and fled to Haran in fear and shame. (10)
- b. Settled down for the night out in the countryside: (11) Few people ever suffer as much as Jacob was suffering. He was suffering four emotions all at once: fear, shame, loneliness, and destitution.
- c. Made a pillow of stones: destitute, possessing only what he could carry. Note the estate: *And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.* (His grandfather) *Then Isaac* (his father) *sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him.* Jacob was having to leave all possessions back home, fleeing for his life.

Jacob's dream: God's provision to meet the need. (12-15)

- a. God's ladder: (12)
 - The ladder was the vision of a stairway stretching all the way from earth up into heaven.
 - The ladder pictured the great gulf and separation between heaven and earth.
 - The ladder also pictured this fact: there is a great stairway stretching between earth and heaven.

Main Idea: The ladder to heaven in Jacob's dream had one end planted in the earth with its top reaching to heaven. This is no less than a picture of Messiah. Jesus himself said so: *"Truly, truly I say to you, Here after you shall see heaven open, and the angels of Elohim ascending and descending upon the Son of Man"*.

Therefore, this ladder is the Body of Messiah; a picture of the cross (which suspended him between heaven and earth and the base of whose post was sunk into the earth).

- b. God's angels: Seeing angels ascend and descend from earth to heaven encouraged Jacob's heart.
- c. God's presence in heaven: (13a) "The Lord" is the redemptive name for God.
- d. God's Word and promises:
 - 1) Guaranteeing the Promised Land. (13b) The land of Canaan.
 - 2) Guaranteeing the promise seed: (14)
 - 3) Guaranteeing the special seed: The Savior of the world in whom all families of the earth would be blessed.
 - 4) Guaranteeing His presence, protection, and leadership, and the fulfillment of His promises and purpose. (15)

Jacob Responds to the Lord's Self-Revelation

Gen. 28:16-22

Jacob's new insight: (16-19)

- a. He now knew the Lord was with him whether he felt it or not. (16) Jacob awoke and was engulfed with a deep sense of God's presence. Jacob had been suffering mentally and emotionally for days, and he was sensing great conviction of sin because of the great wrong he had done against his father and brother. God was present with him now, and God would always be present with him protecting and meeting his needs.
- b. He sensed how awesome his experience had been: (17)
- c. He needed to set the place apart as a special place of worship: (18)
 - 1) He dedicated the place as a very special place of worship.
 - 2) Named the place: Bethel (19)

Jacob's renewed commitment and vow to God. (20-22)

- a. The reason: God's promise to protect, lead, and provide for him. (20)
 - 1) The vow: That the Lord of redemption and salvation would always be his God. (21)
 - 2) That he would always worship God in Bethel when there. (22)
 - 3) That he would be faithful in tithing to God.

Principle: God takes the initiative in bringing sinners back to himself.

References: Holman OT Commentary

Experiencing Genesis