

Genesis 28 – Jacob at Bethel

Genesis 28:10-22

Jacob fled his home, a sinner and fugitive under threat of death. He was alone in the wilderness, in the dark, when God reached down to him and gave him assurance of His love and protection.

Read Jeremiah 29:11

Vs 11 – The stone, which was to be stood up as a pillar, was placed “at his head place.”

Vs 12 – The word usually translated “ladder” or “staircase” was similar in meaning to the Mesopotamian temple towers. A steep stairway led the way to an altar at the top of the tower.

What is the meaning of the vision of angels ascending and descending between heaven and earth?

What does the Ladder signify? Read John 1:51

Vs 13-15 – The blessing of Abraham had been given to Jacob by Isaac. God now ratifies that His covenant promise to Abraham and Isaac will be fulfilled through Jacob. It was not enough to be Abraham’s grandson. Jacob had to establish his own personal relationship with God.

Look up Galatians 3:6,7 , John 17:20

When Jacob awakens, Jacob realized that God was in that place. But is God limited to a place like other pagan gods? What had God promised Jacob? Psalm 46:7, 11

Vs 17 – What does he feel? Was that an appropriate response? Read Psalm 2:11

Exodus 20:20 “afraid” versus “fear of God.”

The more we see of God, the more cause we see for holy trembling before Him. Proverbs 15:33

Vs 18-19 – Jacob stood the stone as a pillar and anointed the top of it with oil. That was to memorialize the ladder, which had “stood” on the earth, with the Lord “standing” above it.

Bethel means “House of God.” We do not know where this was located. Jacob returned to the spot on his return journey home to Canaan. The naming of the place “the House of God” did not mean that God was limited to that spot, for God had already promised to be with Jacob wherever he went. But homeless Jacob, on his way to the house of Laban, was hopeful that he would soon return home to the house of Isaac. With that hope in mind, he declared that here, in Canaan, was the House of God.

Vs 20 and 21 – Jacob’s vow is conditional. Was Jacob trying to bargain with God? Is this a “foxhole prayer”?

Jacob’s conditions were no more than what God had already promised him. We cannot, through an offer of worship, induce God to do something in our lives. But where God has already revealed His will or accomplished good things in our lives, our response should be Jacob’s: grateful worship.

It took twenty years for the condition of Jacob’s vow to be fulfilled, and during that time, Jacob was disciplined for the deception he had committed against Isaac and his grasping nature. But the same God who judges also restores. Psalm 30:5.

Lamentations 3:17-26