

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 10



JACOB'S DREAM AT BETHEL

Scripture Text: Genesis 28:10-22

After Jacob's treachery studied in last week's lesson, Esau planned to kill him. To protect him from this, and also to find him a wife of his own people, Isaac and Rebekah sent Jacob to Haran to Rebekah's brother, Laban.

God appeared to Jacob at Bethel in a dream of a ladder reaching from Earth to Heaven. Jacob yielded to God. He was changed by the power of God. God renewed His covenant with Jacob. Jacob was not chosen because he was good. He was made good by God when ye yielded.

MEMORY VERSE: *And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*

—*Genesis 28:17*

DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**Genesis 28:1-9** Isaac sends Jacob away.

Tue.—**Genesis 29:1-14** Jacob meets Rachel and Laban.

Wed.—**Genesis 29:15-35** Jacob reaps his seed of deception.

Thu.—**Genesis 30:22-43** God prospers Jacob.

Fri.—**Psalm 51** A prayer for salvation.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 116 Vows paid in gratitude.

A Special Dream

Genesis 28:10-13 Jacob went out from Beersheba—his home—toward Haran. A certain place . . . tarried . . . all night . . . took of the stones . . . for his pillows—a night in the open with the crudest of comforts. He dreamed—a special dream—ladder . . . top . . . reached to heaven . . . angels of God ascending and descending . . . the Lord stood above it—a way opened between Jacob and God. **I am the Lord God of Abraham . . . Isaac**—a God familiar Whom he had seen in his father and grandfather, but unknown as yet to Jacob. **The land . . . to thee will I give it**—the promise given to Abraham and Isaac (**Genesis 12:2-3; Genesis 13:15-16; Genesis 17:19**), now repeated to Jacob who was to carry on the covenant.

God's direct speaking to Jacob was not an isolated incident. From Adam until the present is a series of such communications, more numerous in the days before there was a written Word of God to guide mankind. Repeatedly we read, **The Lord appeared unto _____ and God spake unto _____**. Also, various ones **inquired of the Lord** and were answered. As the written Word became more complete, the need for direct speaking became less, but still, God speaks through His Spirit and His Word (**John 14: 25-26; Acts 13:2**).

Is there meaning to our dreams? God has spoken to men through dreams: Joseph (**Genesis 37:5-10**), Pharaoh (**Genesis 41**), Midianite (**Judges 7:13-14**), Solomon (**1 Kings 3:5**), Nebuchadnezzar (**Daniel 2**), Joseph (**Matthew 1:20: 2:22**), Pilate's wife (**Matthew 27:19**), etc. He promised in this dispensation to send dreams to some by the works of the Holy Spirit. However, these dreams will come very seldom. Most dreams mean nothing. Dreams from God are clearly understood to be such and always are in accord with the Bible. It is dangerous to attach meaning to our ordinary dreams or to go to those who claim to interpret dreams. So doing, we can be led into disobedience to God and become entrapped in dealings of evil spirits.

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And I Knew It Not

Genesis 28:14-16 Thy seed . . . as the dust of the earth . . . in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed—again, the promise of a Savior to descend from him. Then a personal promise to Jacob—I am with thee . . . will keep thee . . . will bring thee again into this land . . . will not leave thee. Jacob was a fleeing wanderer, the future uncertain. God made it certain. Jacob would be returned to his homeland. **Jacob awaked**—was the dream gone, meaningless as most dreams? No. **Surely the Lord is in this place**—the real presence of God. **I knew it not**—he had not realized this before. He had never known anything personal from the Lord before. The Lord had been near all the time, but he did not know it until now.

The Gate of Heaven

Genesis 28:17-19 He was afraid—healthy fear of God, and no doubt, a godly sorrow for the things he had done in the past. **How dreadful is this place!** The great holiness, power, and glory of God overwhelmed him. **This is . . . the house of God . . . gate of heaven. Jacob rose . . . took the stone . . . set it up for a pillar**—a sincere, spontaneous act to worship the Lord for the great change which had taken place in his heart. **Poured oil upon . . . it**—anointed it, set it apart as sacred. **Called the name . . . Bethel**—meaning "house of God." Its name had been Luz; now it was a special place.

What happened at Bethel? Jacob **was afraid**. He remembered his sins and felt convicted. Here he yielded to God. He accepted the Lord as his God. He gave a tenth of his possessions, a token of having given himself. He testified to the change in his heart by the outward act of setting apart the pillar as a stake in his life, the place where he first truly worshiped God. Jacob could not trust in Jesus' sacrifice to atone for his sins, for Jesus had not yet died. But he did believe and trust God, which included all that God would later do. This was complete as compared to the experience of justification which we can have now. He was now fit to enter into his place in the covenant.

Why Was Jacob Chosen?

Genesis 28:20-22 Jacob vowed a vow—bound himself by a solemn promise. **If God will (1) be with me . . . (2) keep me . . . (3) give me bread . . . and raiment . . . (4) So that I come again**—in short, if God did as He promised in the dream, they were in business. Then Jacob made his promise (1) **then shall the Lord be my God**—committed himself to God—(2) **this stone . . . shall be God's house**—a place to meet God—(3) **of all . . . I will surely give the tenth**—return of his possessions unto the Lord, realizing what he had never known before, that it all came from Him.

Jacob seems to have had nothing to commend him to God as the proper one to carry on the covenant. His past life showed cunning, selfishness, deceit, and lying. Why did God choose him? Because God was not looking at his record as a basis for choosing. If God went by records, no one could be saved, for sin blots every record. **Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us (Titus 3:5)**. Jacob was chosen, not because he was good, but because he was willing for God to make him good. He yielded to God and accepted His mercy. This story is written for our admonition.

Jesus saves the worst of sinners and places them into His great plan of work to help others to be saved also. See **Romans 9:16**.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Something else every couple should save
for their old age is their marriage.**