

Genesis 28:10-22
The Angel of Jehovah (7)

Introduction

The trials of Abraham and Jacob are a type of the life of the N.T. believer. Through much affliction we enter glory.

“With Jacob at Bethel”

- I. Jacob's Miserable Condition
 - A. A description of his misery
 1. It may appear that everything is going his way, that the future lies wide open before him
 2. But, he is an older man, he is lonely, he goes out empty, his brother seems to be in position to receive the blessing, he fears for his life, he is a fugitive going into exile.
 3. And to add to all this the guilt of his deception of Esau and Isaac follows him.
 4. Why, if he was supposed to be the heir of the promises, had God not spoken to him?
 - B. The significance of his misery
 1. It is first a lesson in chastening, not only for Jacob but also for us.
 - a. Sometimes we find ourselves in a situation much like Jacob's, where the future is unknown, filled with anxieties, and perhaps even miserable because of sin.
 - b. Then God is chastening us, like Jacob, in order to destroy our works so that we trust in Him alone.
 - c. But in this chastening, as with Jacob, he is always with us.
 2. It is also a lesson in sovereign, unconditional election and grace
 - a. In his election, according to Romans 9:11-13, Jacob was not chosen because he was better than Esau.
 - b. This shows itself also in his life here.
 - (1) Jacob shows his sinfulness.
 - (2) Jacob sleeps, not seeking the blessing of God.
 - (3) While he is completely passive, in sleep, Jehovah comes to him in a gracious revelation.
- II. Jehovah's Gracious Answer
 - A. Specifics of the dream
 1. What is a dream?
 - a. A dream is different than a vision, in that it arises out of thoughts, fears and experiences of one's life.
 - b. This dream is a special revelation from God, answering the fears of Jacob.
 2. The content of the dream.
 - a. A ladder
 - b. Angels descending and ascending
 - c. Jehovah at the top, sending and receiving the angels and speaking to Jacob
 - B. Meaning of the dream
 1. On the surface there is the rich truth of God's providential care
 - a. He is with Jacob, He will keep him, and will fulfill every word of His promise to Jacob
 - b. There is great consolation to the child of God in this
 2. But there is more -- the bridging of the gap between heaven and earth by God
 - a. This points to the whole of the Mediatorial work of Christ, both in his death, but also in his continued intercession (John 1:51)
 - b. So it is a message to Jacob, not only of comfort in difficult earthly circumstances, but also of assurance of salvation.
 - c. Wouldn't you like to have a dream like this? You do in Hebrews 2:9.
- III. Jacob's Believing Response
 - A. In response Jacob
 1. Immediately recognizes the presence of God -- "How awesome this place is!"
 2. Spontaneously worships God
 3. Makes a vow to God
 4. Renames the place Bethel and consecrates it to God
 5. Commits himself to tithe
 - B. The response of Jacob shows his faith
 1. Some take the expression of his vow in the form of a conditional sentence as an expression of doubt and of bargaining with God
 2. But this is real faith, demonstrated in:
 - a. His vow
 - b. His consecration of the place, representing the whole land, to God
 3. We don't need a "holy place" to worship God, but do it, through Christ, in Spirit and truth.