

JACOB'S LADDER PART 1

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Genesis 28:10-22

This morning we shall consider the conversion experience of Jacob here in Genesis 28, I have entitled my message, 'Jacob's Ladder,' which I could also have entitled 'JACOB HAVE I LOVED!' There is much here in this chapter that would require a few sermons, but we shall consider the importance application regarding the gospel. Yes, the gospel is set forth here; we have a glorious type of the gospel represented here in Genesis 28. The life of Jacob is a very interesting study, perhaps one day we might teach a study on the biography of Jacob. Jacob is included in that blessed expression of God's revelation to His people. How often do we read in Scripture, God expressing Himself by saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Then you have that particular appellation, the God of Israel, which we know that Jacob's name was changed to Israel in Genesis 32:28. You will be blessed in studying the life of Jacob, because you will discover much about yourselves also. There are 6 things I would like to present to you this morning; we shall consider only the first 3:

- I. Jacob's Deception.**
- II. Jacob's Departure.**
- III. Jacob's Dream.**
- IV. Jacob's Discovery.**
- V. Jacob's Delight.**
- VI. Jacob's Dedication.**

The first thing we shall consider is: **I. Jacob's Deception.**

Though this is not in our text, I believe it is very pertinent to our study and why Jacob was where he was. Now, we must also understand that Jacob's life is a story of struggle, that is, even from the womb he struggled with his twin Esau. Esau was born first and grew up to be a hunter, an outdoorsman. Jacob was a simple indoors man, perhaps always pulling upon his mother's skirt. Jacob was a soft man in comparison to Esau's roughness. Isaac and Rebekah are the parents of these twins. When they were born the second born Jacob was holding on to the heel of first born Esau. From the beginning there was a struggle. We also see where Isaac loved Esau and Rebekah loved Jacob.

In chapter 27 we see that Isaac is getting old and his eyesight is getting dim. One day he asks his son Esau to go the field and get some good tasting meat, venison for him before he would die. His wife Rebekah overheard the conversation and while Esau was away, she cooked up a meal and dressed up Jacob to feel and smell like Esau. Jacob pretended to be Esau by bringing the food Rebekah prepared, though Isaac was somewhat suspicious, he gave the blessing to the younger Jacob instead to the older Isaac. As you can tell, things didn't go so well when Esau returned from the field with his

meat. In Genesis 27:36 we see Esau's response to what Jacob had done, "*And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?*" Thus, we see Jacob's Deception.

Secondly, **II. Jacob's Departure.**

Esau did not take it too kindly regarding what Jacob had done, this was the last straw, he perhaps thought, Jacob has swindled me for the last time and he swore deadly revenge. Notice what he plans to do to Jacob, Gen.27:41-43, "*And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. 42 And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. 43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran.*" Now, it was when he was on the run that Jacob had his first significant encounter with God. Thus, we Jacob's departure.

Thirdly, **III. Jacob's Dream.**

Jacob travels to Padanaram and I'm sure his thoughts consumed him as he felt that his life has collapsed around him. His home has completely fallen apart; he had to flee because his own brother sought to kill him and travels to Haran to see an uncle he has never met. I'm sure he was contemplating will he receive me or ask me to leave since I don't have a dowry for a wife. Maybe he said to himself, what in the world has happen to my life. There's a sense that Jacob felt that he had hit rock bottom, traveling by himself in the desert and can't even make it to the city Luz before they close the gates for the night. He finds himself, alone without family, without friends, out under the stars all by himself. Amazing this is how God finds most sinners when He saves them; they have come to the end of themselves. This is where I believe we find Jacob. He is on a long journey, weary from his travel and spends the night in the open, lonely and confused and perhaps wondering, is this what life is all about. The question that needs to be ask, is, what brought him to this point? The answer is simple and true, HIS SINS! It was his sins that brought him to this point and at the end of it all, what does sin have to offer him for its services, stones for a bed, a stone for a pillow and left all alone! Sin is fun and sin is pleasurable, but sin is deceiving and the end of sin is always misery. Well, whatever Jacob's thoughts had been, he had come to the end of himself. Night has overtaken him and he begins to find a place under the stars. He finally found a suitable spot and he takes a stone for a pillow and propped himself up for the evening. Though Jacob had in reality hit ROCK bottom as the Psalmist says in Psalm 30:5, "*...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*" Well, his rough night will turn out to be a tremendous life changing blessing. Matthew Henry says this regarding his night's sleep, "*...the best night's sleep he ever had in his life.*" The God of his fathers was going to reveal Himself to Jacob. Quickly notice the phraseology in Gen.27:20 in contrast to Gen.28:21. He says, thy God, not our God or my God then in 28:21 he

says: MY GOD! Here in Genesis 27 is the first time Divine revelation is given to Jacob, after this there were subsequent revelations to Jacob from God. The joy of the LORD came to Jacob by means of a dream. Now, in our Wednesday nights study in the book of Daniel we dealt with the issue of God's revelation through the medium of dreams. In short the word of God is quite clear in setting forth that God no longer uses dreams as a means of revelation, we have the complete written revealed will of God in the Bible. The canon is complete and God speaks to us now by His word, anything outside of that would not be of God. We have something far better than dreams according to Peter; we have the WRITTEN WORD OF GOD! At the mount of transfiguration in Matthew 17:5 we read, "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Now Peter makes reference to this and notice what he says in 2 Peter 1:16-21, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but **were eyewitnesses of his majesty**. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. 19 We have also **a more sure word of prophecy**; whereunto ye do well **that ye take heed**, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Heb.1:1 & 2 clearly states, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." God in the Old Testament spoke by the medium of dreams. He finally falls asleep and has a dream. God breaks into his life, by the means of a dream. This dream is define by four major beholds:

- Genesis 28:12, "And he dreamed, and **behold a ladder** set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven..."
- Genesis 28:12, "...and **behold the angels** of God ascending and descending on it."
- Genesis 28:13, "And, **behold, the LORD** stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed."
- Genesis 28:15, "And, **behold, I am with thee**, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

At the end of the last behold Jacob awoke. We shall consider this part next week, but for this morning we shall consider the dream. God revealed Himself to Jacob in such a powerful way that God preface His revelation with a stunning BEHOLD 4 times! He wanted to make sure Jacob understood the importance of this supernatural revelation. Now, the most important part of this revelation is the ladder and this is where we will spend much of our time. This is the only time the word ladder was used in Genesis and for that matter throughout the whole Bible, this is known as a hapax-legomenon, (a word or phrase that appears only once in a manuscript). If I was doing a series I would preach a

sermon on each of these 4 beholds. There are 8 things we shall consider under our third point, The Dream in regards to the ladder, first:

1. The Savior of the Ladder.

The first thing we see in the revelation from God is, “**Behold a ladder...**” We need to know the most important part of the ladder and that is, the ladder represents the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a type of our Savior, the ladder is Jesus Christ. This is the work of God in revealing Christ to sinners. 2 Cor.4:6, “*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” God is the one who shines His light into the darkness of our hearts, it is God who is pleased to reveal Himself to us and it is God who shows us the ladder to heaven. Jacob saw only one ladder because there is only one way to God the Father and that is through Jesus Christ His Son. Again, John 14:6, “*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*” As we saw on Wednesday night, it is God who reveals Himself to us, in Matt.11:27, Jesus says, “*All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*” Jesus says to Peter in Matthew 16:17, “*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*” God the Father from heaven was revealing to Jacob that there was only one way to Him and it was through the ladder, that is, Jesus Christ. We must also see that the door to heaven is open, it was opened for Jacob and it is opened for you this morning, you must by faith come to Christ, He is the ladder to heaven, yea He is the door to heaven. Rev.4:1 says, “*After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven...*” On my dear ones, there is a door open in heaven and there is a ladder provided to ascend to heaven, but day the door will be closed and the ladder removed and there shall be no access to heaven. Take heed to the words of Isa.55:6 & 7, “*Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*” In John 10:9, Jesus Christ Himself says, “*I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved...*” We are told in our chief text that Jacob dreamed, “*And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven...*” Jesus Christ Himself gave us insight regarding who was this ladder, turn quickly to John 1:51, “*And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*” Thus, we see first, the Savior of the Ladder.

2. The Setting Up of the Ladder.

Secondly, we see The Setting up of the Ladder, “*...behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven...*” We see secondly that this ladder was set up on earth and it reached all the way to heaven. As we have seen Jesus Christ is the ladder. The setting up of this ladder on earth speaks of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ came from heaven to earth for the purpose of saving man. God had to manifest Himself in flesh in order to save man. Jesus left the glories of glories to come to earth to take upon Him the robe of flesh. Romans 8:3 says, “*For what the law could not do, in that*

it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” The word of God is very clear regarding the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ. 1 Tim.3:16, *“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”* In Phil.2:6-8, *“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”* One more verse regarding the incarnation of Christ in Hebrews 2:16 & 17, *“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”* Christ came to earth in obedience to the Father, He came to do the will of the Father, He kept all the demands of the Father, He lived and died without sin, He came to save His people from their sins and He came and died so that God would be the just and justifier of all those who believe in Christ. By incarnation we basically mean that Christ as the second person of the Godhead bodily literally embodied Himself in the flesh. He was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless lived and gave Himself upon the cross to save His people. Without the incarnation we have no salvation. Thus, the ladder being set up on the earth is a type of Jesus Christ coming down to earth as the redeemer of sinners.

3. The Sacredness of the Ladder.

The third thing we see is The Sacredness of the Ladder, *“And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven...”* This ladder reached all the way to heaven, that is, the top of this ladder reached heaven. This third point can be seen twofold, it can speak of reconciliation, that is, Christ is the only way any of us can reach heaven and He did it by His powerful worked on the cross, wherein, by His atonement, He brings sinners from this earth to the glories of heaven in the grace of salvation, that is, His coming down to earth to die on the cross in the only means whereby a sinner can reach heaven. But it could also mean the resurrection of Christ. He came and died and has ascended to heaven where He sits enthroned in heaven. Turn quickly to Acts 1 where Christ has resurrected and ministered to His Apostles for 40 days and now is finally returning to heaven, look at verses 9 – 11, *“And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”* Thus, the sacredness of this ladder, though set up on earth, but the top of it reaches heaven. (If time allows: set forth the sacredness of the preaching the gospel, that is, in the gospel is the righteousness of God declared, Romans 1:16&17). 2 Cor.5:17-21, the important work of reconciliation, by Jesus Christ on the cross. Look to Christ as your ladder to heaven. Come in repentance towards God and faith towards to the Jesus. Let’s pray. Let’s sing Jeremiah 24:7, *“And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.”*