

The Vision of Jacob's Ladder

Genesis 28:1-22

- I. THE EDICT FOR JACOB (Genesis 28:1-5)
 - A. The Preface to the Edict (Genesis 28:1)
 1. The need for the edict (Genesis 28:1)
 - a. Isaac called Jacob.
 - b. Isaac blessed Jacob.
 - c. Isaac charged Jacob.
 - d. Note: A charge was needed considering the blessing that was given.
 - (1) Blessings come with responsibilities.
 - (2) Many people like the blessings but do not show as much enthusiasm about the charges that comes along with them.
 - (3) Many people love the privileges but do not like the precepts.
 - (4) However, if you're going to benefit from the blessings, you have to keep the charge.
 - B. The Prerequisites in the Edict (Genesis 28:1, 2)
 1. The forbidden in the prerequisites – to avoid the daughters of Canaan (Genesis 28:1).
 - a. The Canaanites in the Old Testament – They were people full of whoredoms, practicing idolatries, worshipping false gods, full of all kinds of abominations. In fact, when the Lord brought the Israelites back into the Promised Land from Egypt His instructions were to drive all of them out and in most cases not to leave one of them alive (Exodus 34:16; Deuteronomy 7:1-5).
 - b. The Canaanites represented in the New Testament – Are a picture of the unbelievers in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 6:14).
 - (1) The New Testament commands that the Christian (saved believer) only marry another saved believer.
 - (2) When a Christian ignores this command in most cases it only brings sorrow to all those involved.
 2. The favoured in the prerequisites (Genesis 28:2)
 - a. Go unto your mother's family (Genesis 28:2a).
 - b. From there take a wife of the daughters of Laban (Genesis 28:2b).
 - C. The Promises in the Edict (Genesis 28:3, 4)
 1. The promise of a seed (Genesis 28:3)
 - a. Isaac repeats the covenant blessings for Jacob.

- b. These promises would encourage obedience to the edict.
 - (1) That God Almighty might bless thee.
 - (2) That He might make thee fruitful.
 - (3) That He might multiply thee.
 - (4) That thou mayest be a multitude of people.
 - c. The encouragement of the word
 - (1) When God gives you a command, He expects you to be obedient.
 - (2) Look in the pages of His word for His promises He's made to encourage your obedience.
 - 2. The promise of a land (Genesis 28:4)
 - a. Jacob certainly needed to hear this promise as he was being told to leave the land.
 - b. Commands sometimes seem contrary to the promises but obey the command and you will see the promise fulfilled (1 Samuel 7:3; 1 Samuel 12:24). Note: There are times in our lives as the children of God that we cause our own demise in a situation because of our disobedience. It is at that time we need to understand that obedience is key if we expect the Lord to bless our efforts (Joshua 24:14; cp. John 4:23-24; Acts 9:31; Philippians 1:10).
- D. The Performing of the Edict (Genesis 28:5)
- 1. The Obedience of Jacob
 - a. The use of the words "*sent*" and "*went*" describe in the manner in which Jacob performed the command of Isaac.
 - b. He did as he was told.
- II. THE ESPOUSAL OF ESAU (Genesis 28:6-9)
- A. The Inspiration for the Espousal (Genesis 28:6-8)
 - 1. Esau observed (Genesis 28:6-8)
 - 2. Isaac's displeasure with Esau's wives (Genesis 28:8; Genesis 26:34-35).
 - 3. Esau's consideration (Genesis 28:8)
 - B. The Individual for the Espousal (Genesis 28:9)
 - 1. Esau's efforts (Genesis 28:9)
 - a. To correct what he had done in the past (Genesis 26:34-35).
 - b. To please his father and mother.
 - 2. Esau's marriage (Genesis 28:9)
 - a. Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael
 - b. To be his wife.
- III. THE EXPERIENCE AT BETHEL (Genesis 28:10-15)
- A. The Place of Experience (Genesis 28:10-11)
 - 1. The journey toward Haran (Genesis 28:10)
 - a. The trip from Beersheba to Haran was about 500 miles.

- b. This would have taken several weeks to complete.
- 2. The place of rest and encounter (Genesis 28:11)
 - a. Jacob found a place of rest at Bethel – Bethel is about seventy miles north of Beersheba.
 - b. This would have taken at least three days to reach even by a donkey or camel.
- B. The Point of Experience (Genesis 28:12-13a)
 - 1. Jacob dreamed of a ladder – A dream rather than a vision (Genesis 28:12)
 - a. Dreams: a vision when one is asleep (Genesis 20:3; Genesis 46:2)
 - b. Visions: a visual revelation to one who is awake (Ezekiel 1:1)
 - 2. The content of the dream (Genesis 28:12)
 - a. A ladder was set up on the earth.
 - b. The ladder reached to heaven.
 - c. The angels of God ascended and descended on this ladder.
 - 3. The Lord of the dream (Genesis 28:13a); The Lord stood above the ladder.
 - 4. The ladder is a type of Jesus Christ (John 1:51).
 - a. Connected to the earth
 - (1) Jacob's ladder was planted on the earth.
 - (2) The Lord took on the likeness of sinful flesh and became man (Romans 8:3).
 - b. Reaching to heaven
 - (1) Jacob's ladder reached all the way up to heaven.
 - (2) The Lord was not only man, but at the same time was entirely God (1 Timothy 3:16).
 - c. Ascending and descending
 - (1) Jacob's ladder had angels ascending and descending upon it.
 - (2) It is only by the ascending and descending of Christ and His finished work that we will one day ascend to be with the Father (John 1:51; John 3:13; Revelation 4:1).
 - d. The knowledge of God
 - (1) Jacob knew not the Lord's presence until the ladder's appearance.
 - (2) We would lack knowledge of the Father without Christ's coming (John 1:14; John 1:18; John 14:9; Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 2:9-13; 1 John 1:2).
- C. The Proclamation of the LORD (Genesis 28:13b-15)
 - 1. The identity of the Lord (Genesis 28:13b)
 - a. The LORD God of Abraham
 - b. The God of Isaac
 - 2. The sevenfold promise of the Lord (Genesis 28:13b-15)
 - a. Of the land (Genesis 28:13b)
 - b. Of the seed (Genesis 28:14)
 - c. Of a blessing (Genesis 28:14)
 - d. Of God's presence (Genesis 28:15)—“*with thee*”
 - e. Of God's protection (Genesis 28:15)—“*will keep thee*”

- f. Of God's guidance (Genesis 28:15)—*"will bring thee again"*
- g. Of God's preservation (Genesis 28:15)—*"for I will not leave thee."*

IV. THE VOW OF JACOB (Genesis 28:16-22)

- A. The Awakening from Sleep (Genesis 28:16a)
- B. The Fourfold Conclusion of Jacob (Genesis 28:16b-17)
 - 1. *"Surely the LORD is in this place"* (Genesis 28:16b).
 - a. Though Jacob knew it not
 - b. Many times we fail to recognize God's presence as He works in and through the circumstances of our lives.
 - 2. *"How dreadful is this place"* (Genesis 28:17).
 - a. Jacob was afraid because of God's power and presence.
 - b. Fear can cause man to serve God with greater conviction and obedience (Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Psalm 112:1).
 - 3. *"This is none other but the house of God"* (Genesis 28:17). Note: It was the house of God because it was determined that He was dwelling there. At the same time, God was not limited to or fully enclosed in one place.
 - 4. *"This is the gate of heaven"* (Genesis 28:17).
- C. The Dedication of the Place to God (Genesis 28:18-19)
 - 1. The diligence of Jacob's dedication – *"Jacob rose up early in the morning"* (Genesis 28:18a).
 - 2. The actions of Jacob's dedication (Genesis 28:18b-19)
 - a. He turned pillows into a pillar (Genesis 28:18b).
 - (1) He set up a pillar from the stone he had used for pillows.
 - (2) He anointed the pillar with oil.
 - b. He renamed the place (Genesis 28:19).
 - (1) From Luz
 - (2) To Bethel (meaning house of God)
- D. The Vow Made by Jacob (Genesis 28:20-22)
 - 1. God's part (Genesis 28:20-21a)
 - a. To be with Jacob (Genesis 28:20)
 - b. To keep Jacob (Genesis 28:20)
 - c. To sustain Jacob (Genesis 28:20)
 - d. To bring Jacob back home in peace (Genesis 28:21a)
 - 2. Jacob's part (Genesis 28:21b-22)
 - a. He would claim the Lord as his God (Genesis 28:21b).
 - b. He would establish Bethel as God's house (Genesis 28:22).
 - c. He would give a tenth of his goods to God (this is the second mention of tithing in the Bible—Genesis 14:20).