

Stairway to Heaven

Genesis 28.10-22

Jacob is on the run, facing an uncertain future. He has deceived his father. His brother wants him dead. He's not trusting in God. Then he has a vision, worships God, and commits to follow Him. What changed? Have you had a vision of God's blessing in your life?

God's Revelation and Promise (10-15)

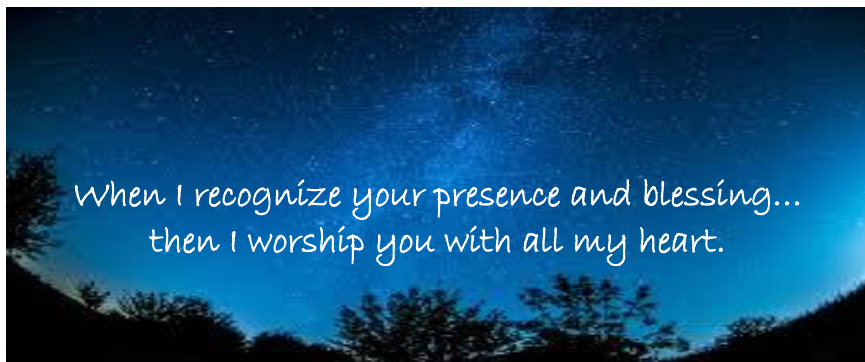
- On the run (10-11)
- The dream (12-13a)
- The promise (13b-15)

Jacob's Worship and Commitment (16-22)

- God is here! (16-17)
- A place of worship (18-19)
- A life of worship (20-22)

Meeting God on our Journey of Faith

- *Recognize God's presence and blessing in your life.*
- *Worship God in your 'Bethel'!*
- *Worship = commitment of all we are and have to God.*



1. In Genesis 27, Jacob wins 'the father's blessing sweepstakes'! It's time for a 'victory lap' – but instead, here in Gen. 28, he's on the run, fleeing for his life! This reflects a spiritual principle for our lives: It is possible to be blessed, yet have a miserable life. In this case, the *way* Jacob acquired blessing produced his state of distress. How might a Christian seek blessing in a way that actually results in grief? Can we do this in the church? In evangelism? How? And how can we avoid doing it?
2. The function of the 'ladder' or 'stairway' in Jacob's dream is uncertain, but most likely refers to a flight of steps on ziggurats (like the Tower of Babel). The pagan culture of the day thought these stairs enabled divine beings to move between earth and heaven. The difference in Jacob's dream, of course, is that God was standing at the top of it. Jacob's life-altering revelation is of the transforming power of God of heaven working on earth in his life. Examples of God working in Israel's history are all through the Bible. How has God worked in your life?
3. When Jacob awakens, he is awed by God's presence in that place – it is *the house of God* and *the gate of heaven*! So Jacob names the place *Bethel*, which means *house of God*. Where is our 'Bethel' today (see 1 Cor. 6.19-20)? Through faith in Jesus Christ, what are we now (see Eph. 2.19-22)? Do angels work in our lives today (see Heb. 1.14)? How does God want us to worship Him (see John 4.23)?
4. When we think of 'conversion experiences,' we usually think of someone coming to faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. But in the Christian life – the 'walk of faith' – there are other significant 'conversion experiences' as well. When a believer recognizes with deeper awareness than ever before the wonders of God's grace, it can literally change the trajectory of his or her life. That is what this episode in the life of Jacob exhibits. Can you think of a time when you 'caught a vision' of God's incredible love for you? How did it affect your life?

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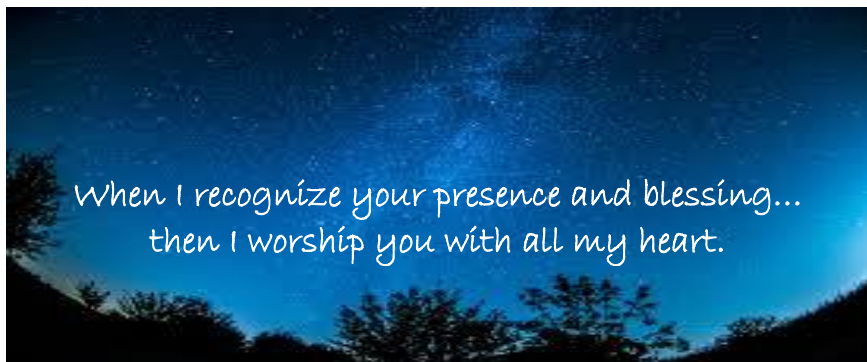
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