

Jacob's Dream at Bethel

Key Verse: “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.”

—Genesis 28:15

Selected Scripture: Genesis 27:41-28:22
him as an inheritance the land promised to his own father Abraham.—chap. 28:1-4

As Jacob left his parents and traveled toward Haran, he came to a place that would serve as his resting stop for the night. He took some available stones, laying them for his pillows, and having had a long and weary day of travel, quickly fell asleep. (vss. 10,11) Not long after falling asleep, Jacob had a most unusual dream. The scriptural account states, “He dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on

FOLLOWING THE EXPERIENCE of Esau selling his birth-right to his brother Jacob, and the further conferring of the firstborn blessing by Isaac upon Jacob, Rebekah his mother realized it would be wise for Jacob to leave home for a period of time until Esau's anger would turn away. (Gen. 27:41-45) Isaac then blessed his son once again, giving him instructions as to where he should look to in obtaining a wife. He told Jacob to be fruitful, multiply, and prayed that God would give

it. 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; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (vss. 12-14) The dream concluded with the words of our Key Verse. Certainly this was not really a dream at all, but the words of God himself, spoken to his servant Jacob.

These words of the LORD spoken to Jacob were a foregleam, in symbolic language, of God’s great plan for man’s salvation. Man, having fallen from the perfection he once had in Eden, was now unable to have the intimate fellowship of God that Adam had before he fell into sin. In the dream, the ladder represents Jesus, who in due time would reestablish the link between heaven and earth. Jesus provided the ransom price through his death on the cross, and was subsequently resurrected from the dead by the mighty power of God. Through the promised future messianic kingdom in which he and his body members, his church, will rule in righteousness, Jesus will be the means—the ladder—which will once again bring heaven [God] and earth [man] back into fellowship together.

In this dream, God told Jacob that “in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (vs. 14) This was a reiteration of the promise made to his grandfather Abraham. (Gen. 22:18) This seed was Jesus, who was born of Mary, of the lineage of Jacob. It is to be through him, and those associated with him as part of that heavenly ‘seed’ class, that the promised blessings will soon come to ‘all the families of the earth.’ Jacob, as a faithful friend of God, will also have a role in the coming kingdom as one of the earthly “princes,” representatives of that seed which will bless mankind. “You [God] shall make them [Jacob and other faithful ones of old] princes in all the earth.” — Ps. 45:16, *New American Standard Bible* ■