

Genesis 28: Jacob's Ladder 09-02-18 PM

Genesis 28 tells the story of Jacob's departure from his parents home. He is sent to Harran in Paddam Aram for two reasons: first, to avoid Esau, who wants to kill him. Second, he is to go there to find a wife; the error of Esau's choices in wives (from the Canaanites) is painfully clear to Isaac and Rebekah. So He leaves home with the blessing of Abraham and journeys alone north.

One night, as he is near the city of Luz, he rests and dreams of a great ladder to heaven. Angels ascend and descend, and at the top is God, who speaks to Him. When he awakens, he makes the pledge to be a servant of the one true God, and changes the name of the location to the house of God, Bethel. God reinstitutes the promise of Abraham to him. Thus Jacob becomes a believer.

It is his dream that is the most important part of the chapter. He sees a ladder (the word might mean a number of things akin to a ladder, but to be clear it is a joining of heaven and earth). He sees angels going up and coming down; angels are ministering spirits to God's elect (Hebrews 1:14) who will greet Jacob again later (Gen. 32:1). Jacob's declarations are important, summed up as:

"Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it..... How awesome is this place! This is none other than the House of God, and this is the Gate of heaven."

What was the meaning of the ladder? It is revealed in the New Testament, in John 1:45-51, when one of Jacob's descendants (1:47) makes the confession of faith (1:49), that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. With this confession Jesus reveals the meaning of the ladder: "hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending **upon the Son of Man.**" The Son of Man IS the Ladder, the connection between heaven and earth.

Not only this, but the statements made by Jacob are related to the works of Christ. He declares the base of the ladder to be the House of God, and the entrance to heaven. In John 10, Jesus uses this language again when He declares in verses 7-9 that "*I am the door* (or gate)". The House of God is none other than the church that Jesus built (1 Timothy 3:15). We are told that in the church is a myriad of angels (Heb. 12:22-25) coming from the place from whence God speaks.

Jacob was bearing witness to Christ's work. The blessing of Abraham, which God makes again to Him, is the blessing that would be on all nations, the Ladder that is Christ. This witness caused his conversion; he made a promise and vow to God.

The dream of Jacob's Ladder is one of six times God speaks to Jacob, which will occur over the course of nearly 100 years (nearly half of the book of Genesis). We are establishing the idea that Jacob will be one of the most important patriarchs. He is by no means perfect, but he is full of faith credited as perfection.