

017 Jacobs Dream

MEMORY VERSE: "Behold, I am with you and will keep you." Genesis 28:15

SCRIPTURES: Genesis 27:41-45; 28; 33:1-15

AIM: God is faithful, and committed to molding Jacob into a submissive and humble follower

"My brother tricked me and my father too. I'm going to kill him!"

The angry voice of Esau rang out in the silence of the camp. Esau had come home and found out that Isaac had given the birthright blessing to Jacob.

Jacob and Esau's mother, Rebekah, heard what Esau had said. "You must leave this house immediately," she told Jacob. "Hurry to your Uncle Laban's house in Haran. Stay there until your brother gets over being so angry. Then you can come back home again."

Isaac also thought it was a good idea for Jacob to go to visit his uncle. "If you stay here you might marry a Canaanite girl who worships idols. That would never do! Your uncle has some daughters who are lovely girls. They worship the true God. I want you to marry one of them," Isaac said.

So Jacob fled for his life. Though his mother hoped to one day see her son again, that didn't happen because of the strife between Jacob and Esau. Jacob's sin had a consequence.

One evening, on his way to visit his Uncle Laban, he stopped to camp along the way. He found a smooth stone for a pillow and lay down on the ground to sleep.

When you sleep do you ever dream? Sometimes we have good dreams and sometimes we have scary dreams. But Jacob had a beautiful dream. He dreamed that a stairway reached from the ground all the way into heaven! And on that long ladder he saw angels going up and down!

And who do you think was at the top of the ladder? God! Jacob heard God say, "I am the God of your grandfather Abraham and your father Isaac. The ground you are lying on is yours. I will give it to you and your children and your children's children. You will be the father of a great nation. There will be many children and they will populate this land." God also promised to be with Jacob's family and protect them.

Then Jacob woke up. "I've stumbled into heaven where God lives!" he exclaimed.

The next morning Jacob got up very early and placed the stone on which he'd been sleeping on its side. It was like an altar. He poured olive oil on it and named the special place Bethel.

He prayed, "Oh God, if You protect me and give me food and shelter on this journey, I will always remember You as the true God. This place will be a special place of worship."

As he began his journey down the path to the strange, far-off land, Jacob felt like a different person inside because God had told him he was not alone anymore.

Jacob continued his journey and after many days of traveling, he came near Haran. Some shepherds were waiting by a well with their sheep. Jacob asked them if they knew his Uncle Laban.

"Yes," they said. "And look, there's his daughter Rachel. She's bringing his sheep for water."

Jacob looked and saw a beautiful girl coming to the well with her flock of sheep and goats. He came forward and removed the heavy stone that covered the mouth of the well. Then he told her who he was.

Full of excitement, Rachel ran to tell her father. Laban came hurrying out to welcome Jacob and take him home.

Jacob helped Laban with his sheep for a month. Then Laban said, "Just because you're a relative, that's no reason why I shouldn't pay you for your work. What do you want?"

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"I will work for you for seven years if you will let me marry Rachel," said Jacob. By now he loved her very much. Laban agreed.

When the seven years were ended a great marriage feast was arranged. At nightfall, in the darkness, Laban brought Jacob his bride. But when the next morning dawned, Jacob found that the woman he had married was not Rachel, but Leah, Rachel's older sister.

"What sort of trick is this?" Jacob raged at Laban. "I worked seven years for Rachel! What do you mean by this trickery?" Now he understood what it felt like to be cheated.

"It's not our custom to marry off a younger daughter ahead of her sister," Laban replied. "But you may marry Rachel next week if you promise to work another seven years." At that time and in that culture men often had more than one wife in spite of God's dislike of their custom.

So Jacob agreed to work another seven years. He was married to both sisters, but he always loved Rachel more.

Jacob no doubt came to realize that the deception he had caused against his father was as wrong as the deception Laban had planned. God forgave Jacob, and Laban, but they had to live with the problems their deceptions caused.