



Lesson 20

JACOB'S LADDER

Story Elements

- **TEXT:** Gen. 28:1-22
- **Setting:** circa 1900 B.C.
- **Main Characters:** God, Isaac, and Jacob
- **Plot:** Jacob receives a covenant-confirming vision *en route* to Paddan-aram.
- **Key word(s):** "I am with thee, and will _____ thee..."(15); "If God will be with me, and will _____ me..."(20)
- **Climax:** *Genesis 28:16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.*

Jacob's Departure

- 1) (vv 1-5) Jacob left his home for two reasons:
 - a) Esau, murderously angry after Jacob had stolen the blessing of eldest, vowed to take revenge as soon as _____ had died. (27:41-45)
 - b) Isaac, concerned that Jacob would follow in the folly of Esau, urged him to find a _____ within the family clan.
 - i) This was not about keeping the family line within certain genetic confines but to keep the covenant nation from being corrupted with Canaanite _____. Isaac (and Abraham before him) were living according to the philosophy Paul wrote about in the New Testament:

2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

- ii) Isaac sent Jacob away not only because of his wife's pleading but also because he recognized God's providence in exalting the _____ son above the elder. Notice:

Gen 28:4 And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

- iii) In Gal. 3:14, we are told this blessing of Abraham is granted to the Gentiles who come to Christ in _____.

Jacob's Dream

- 2) (vv 10-15) *En route* to Paddan-Aram, Jacob stopped to sleep in a field near a city formerly known as Luz. During the night, Jacob had a vision of a ladder (or _____) stretching to heaven, with angels going up and down on the stairs and God speaking from the top.
- a) This vision was emblematic of God's _____ over the affairs of men; angels are often pictured as the agents of God's providence.
- b) The vision of Jacob's Ladder was God confirming to Jacob that He had providentially chosen him as the covenant _____ over his brother Esau.
- 3) God reiterated to Jacob his covenant with Abraham, which included the Promised Land, many descendants, a universal blessing, and divine _____.

Jacob's Declaration

- 4) (vv 16-22) Jacob's response was threefold:
- a) He was _____ – he confessed, "Surely the LORD was in this place, and I knew it not!" (v 16)
- b) He was _____ – the heavenly vision provoked a raw fear within him. Whenever sinful man encounters the holy God, great fear is frequently experienced. (v 17)
- c) He was _____ – he erected a commemorative altar and made a solemn vow. The "if" in verse 20 is better understood as a "since."

Application

- 5) In this story Jacob is poor with not much to his name, save his clothes and a few rations for the journey. But it was in this condition that Jacob saw a heavenly vision. As Matthew Henry notes, "God's time to visit his people with his comforts is when they are most _____ of other comforts, and other comforters..."¹
- 6) In John 1:51, Jesus told Nathanael, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." In this reference to Jacob's vision, Jesus was showing Nathanael that He was the focus of the plan of redemption. _____ is Jacob's ladder – Jesus, in his human nature touches earth and in his divine nature reaches heaven.

Answer Key

"Key word(s): "keep" | 1. a) Isaac; b) wife; i) paganism; ii) younger; iii) faith | 2. stairs; a) sovereignty; b) recipient | 3. protection | 4. a) surprised; b) afraid; c) worshipful | 5. destitute | 6. Jesus

¹ Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. Print.