

Abide in Me

John 15:4
*Bible studies for disciples
who make disciples*



Volume 7 - Number 18

The Week of March 20, 2022

God in the Chaos
When Your Pillow is a Stone
Genesis 28:10-22

In our series on the life of Jacob we come to the story of his flight from his home in Beersheba to his mother's family in Haran. It would be a long journey. Along the way and all alone, he stopped for the night. He used a stone for a pillow and after he had fallen asleep, he had a dream of a ladder or stairway that reached from earth all the way to heaven.

READ GENESIS 28:10-22

As you read it...

- Circle each occurrence of the word *place*.
- Double underline all three occurrences of the word *behold*.
- In the left margin of verses 10-12 write *Jacob's Dream*.
- In the left margin of verses 13-15 write *God's Promise*.
- In the left margin of verses 16-22 write *Jacob's Response*.

¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹ And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. ¹² And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!

¹³ And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. ¹⁴ Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. ¹⁵ Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." ¹⁷ And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

¹⁸ So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. ¹⁹ He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first. ²⁰ Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and

clothing to wear, ²¹ so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, ²² and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you."

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE TOGETHER

1. Jacob is on a five-hundred-mile journey from Beersheba to Haran. Why is he leaving home and what is he leaving behind?
2. How would you describe Jacob's relationship to God at the time of his departure?
3. What is suggested by the phrase *he came to a certain place* and why does the narrator use the word *place* five times in this passage?
4. What does this story teach us about God's presence? Share about a time when God surprised you by His presence in a place?
5. What does it mean for Christians to practice the presence of God? What helps you stay aware of God's presence wherever you go?
6. What is the significance of Jacob using a stone for a pillow?

7. What did Jacob see in his dream? What is the significance of the angels of God ascending and descending on the stairway?

8. Before he left home, Jacob received the blessing of Abraham from his father, Isaac. Why did God reaffirm the Abrahamic blessing to Jacob? Why did God use a dream to communicate it?

9. What had Jacob done to receive such a promise? What does God's promise to Jacob reveal about God? His character? His grace?

10. Read John 1:43-51. What did Jesus mean when he told Nathaniel, (1) "You will see heaven opened?" And, (2) "The angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man?"

11. What is your impression of Jacob's vow in verses 20-22?

12. Reflect on what this story teaches us about the way God works in our lives.

