

GOD'S PROMISE TO JACOB

CORE PASSAGE: GENESIS 28:10-22

CONTEXT

Genesis 25–36 depicts God's ongoing faithfulness to Abraham's descendants, seen first through his son Isaac and then through his grandson Jacob. Despite manipulative and deceitful schemes to obtain both his brother's birthright and his father's blessing, from the womb, Jacob was the one chosen by God to receive the covenant promises passed down from Abraham and Isaac. God's work in and through Jacob's life reminds us that God uses and works through sinful people and unfavorable circumstances to accomplish His will.

KEY CONCEPT

God is present with His people, faithful to His promises, and deserving of our worship.

As you read Genesis 28:10-22:

- Identify how God's promises to Jacob mirrored those He made to Abraham and Isaac.
- Consider what genuine worship of God should look like in your life.



TIMELINE

Esau Sells Jacob His Birthright (Genesis 25)

SESSION STUDY: Jacob Receives God's Promise as He Flees to Haran from Esau (Genesis 28)

Jacob Deceives Isaac and Steals Esau's Blessing (Genesis 27)

Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel and Builds a Family (Genesis 29–31)

Jacob Returns Home to Canaan and Makes Peace with Esau (Genesis 32–35)

Daily Readings

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| ☐ Day 1: Genesis 28:1-22 | ☐ Day 4: Genesis 32:1–33:20 |
| ☐ Day 2: Genesis 29:1–30:24 | ☐ Day 5: Genesis 34:1–36:43 |
| ☐ Day 3: Genesis 30:25–31:55 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 25 |



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

GENESIS 28:10-15

THE LORD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES, EVEN WHEN WE ARE NOT.

Highlight and number each unique promise God makes to Jacob.

10 Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. **11** He reached a certain place and spent the night there because the sun had set. He took one of the stones from the place, put it there at his head, and lay down in that place. **12** And he dreamed: A stairway was set on the ground with its top reaching the sky, and God's angels were going up and down on it. **13** The LORD was standing there beside him, saying, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your offspring the land on which you are lying. **14** Your offspring will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out toward the west, the east, the north, and the south. All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. **15** Look, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jacob dreamed of a stairway connecting heaven and earth with angels ascending and descending upon it. Jesus declared that He is the connection between heaven and earth, God and humanity (John 1:51). Jesus is the way to the Father, and for those who believe in Jesus, the Father is present with us.



Over the course of his life, Jacob experienced God's sovereign and redeeming plan at work. Some moments of Jacob's life were stained with sin, such as when he manipulated Esau for his brother's birthright and tricked his father into blessing him instead of Esau. Other moments were vivid reminders of God's presence with Jacob and His faithfulness despite Jacob's flaws. The scene unfolding in Genesis 28:10-15 is one of the latter.

In the wake of Jacob's deception that garnered his father's blessing for himself, Esau planned to follow the way of Cain and kill his brother, but only after their father died (27:41). This was reason enough to flee, but the family also experienced strife on account of Esau's Canaanite wives (v. 46). Rebekah saw in the second a cover for the first, so she counseled Isaac to send Jacob away to Haran, his family's hometown, to find a wife there. Then Isaac blessed Jacob and sent him away from the family and the promised land to the land of his father-in-law, Laban (28:1-5,10).

How have you experienced separation and isolation on account of sin and circumstances?

were going up and down. We should note there is no prescriptive language written about Jacob's encounter that should cause us to expect God's interaction with us in this way. Rather, this experience was confined to a particular circumstance and has a particular purpose in the narrative.

In Jacob's dream, God spoke to renew His promises with Abraham's descendant, as it was Jacob, the younger brother, whom God chose before birth to carry the covenant forward. The promises of God's covenant here line up with what He first established with Abraham (Genesis 12; 15; 17; 22) and later reaffirmed with Isaac (Genesis 26).

First, God announced His identity and presence with Jacob (28:13). Then God promised to give Jacob and his future offspring the land where he was lying (v. 13). Next, God would multiply Jacob's descendants and the earth would be blessed by them (v. 14). God then closed with a declaration that despite Jacob's sin and consequences, God would remain with Jacob until He fulfilled His promise to bring him back home (v. 15).

Why is it significant that God bookends His promises with assurances of His presence?

On the way to Haran, Jacob encountered God in a dream. He saw a stairway running from earth to heaven, and on it, angels

PERSONAL PREPARATION

GENESIS 28:16-22

THE LORD'S GOODNESS TOWARD US DESERVES OUR WORSHIPFUL RESPONSE.

Underline the actions Jacob took in response to God's covenant.

16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." **17** He was afraid and said, "What an awesome place this is! This is none other than the house of God. This is the gate of heaven." **18** Early in the morning Jacob took the stone that was near his head and set it up as a marker. He poured oil on top of it **19** and named the place Bethel, though previously the city was named Luz. **20** Then Jacob made a vow: "If God will be with me and watch over me during this journey I'm making, if he provides me with food to eat and clothing to wear, **21** and if I return safely to my father's family, then the LORD will be my God. **22** This stone that I have set up as a marker will be God's house, and I will give to you a tenth of all that you give me."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

STEWARDSHIP: According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.



Jacob recognized God's presence in the place he had slept (v. 16), which does not contradict God's attribute of omnipresence. At times, God may choose to manifest His presence in a special way in certain places.

Jacob was rightly moved to response by the fear of the Lord. He described the place as "awesome," the "house of God," and the "gate of heaven" (v. 17). To commemorate his experience with God, Jacob took the stone on which he rested his head and set it up as a marker for the spot and renamed the location "Bethel," which means "house of God" (vv. 18-19). Jacob had experienced God's presence and was reminded of God's faithfulness, so he responded in worship to God, setting up a tangible reminder of God's nearness to him.

The Bible contains many references to sacred spaces and altars of remembrance. Abraham and Isaac constructed numerous altars throughout the promised land in God's honor (12:7,8; 13:18; 22:9; 26:25). Tangible reminders of God's presence and promises can be appropriate ways to demonstrate our worship of God and to remind ourselves of God's faithfulness.

How have you experienced God's faithfulness, and how might you remind yourself to worship God in response?

Because of the one-sided terms of God's covenant with him, in which God took upon Himself the initiative and all the responsibilities of the covenant, Jacob felt the need to respond in a way beyond just a marker for his worship and remembrance. So Jacob made a vow to God. Front-loaded with God's promises regarding care, provision, and return, Jacob declared that if God kept all these, then the Lord would be his God and he would give back a tenth of everything God gave him during the time he would be away (28:20-21).

But this vow seems odd. Its "if/then" nature could call into question God's faithfulness or express Jacob's own lack of confidence in God's promises. But as evidenced in his foregoing encounter with God, Jacob could not deny the Lord's presence, and the history of his father and grandfather testified to God's steadfast commitment to see His promises through.

In the end, both Jacob's worship and his vow were responses to God's covenant. Similarly, we are all people who must respond to God. God initiates; God loves first, and then we respond with faith, love, and obedience (1 John 4:19).

How does the gospel of Jesus compare to this interaction between God and Jacob?

VOWS

Based on Genesis 28:10-22, compare the promises God made to the vow Jacob made in response.

GOD'S PROMISES

JACOB'S VOW

If

Then

How has this examination of God's promises and Jacob's vow helped you to see your responses to God and His gospel in a new light?

Key Concept: God is present with His people, faithful to His promises, and deserving of our worship.



HEAD

What does God's covenant with Jacob teach us about God's character, His faithfulness in particular?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 25, making note of references to God's covenant. Pray through Psalm 25, asking the Lord to reveal His ways and path, to forgive for the ways you have persisted in sin against Him, to remind you of His steadfast covenant love toward you in the gospel, and to deliver you from distress and temptation.



HEART

What in your life competes for your affections and draws you away from worshiping the God who is present with and faithful to His people?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

Because of all that God has done for you in Jesus Christ, how will you respond in worship and obedience?