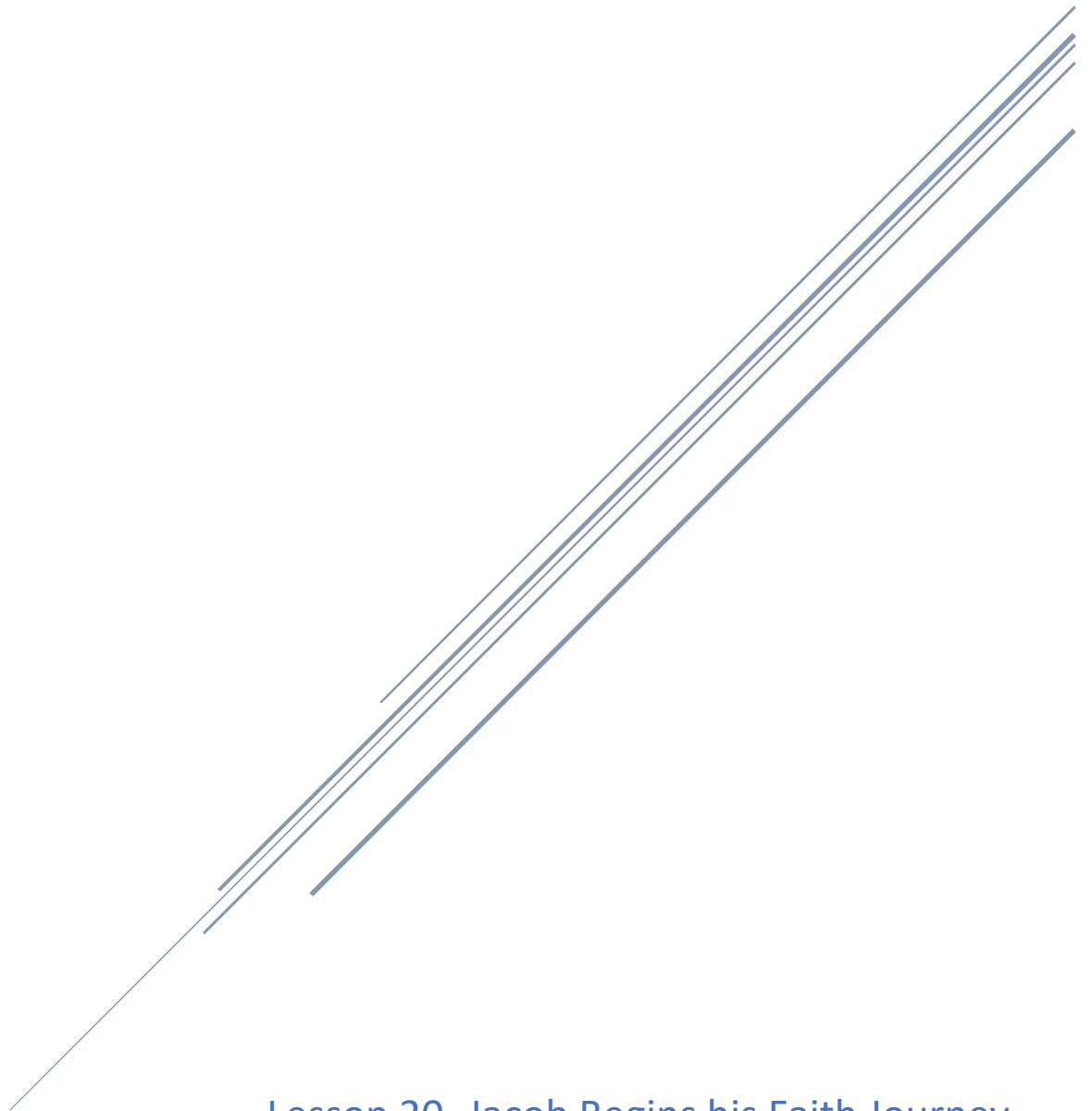


# THE KINGDOM, THE BIBLE, & US

Understanding the Bible's story, Jesus' importance, and Our place in God's plan



Lesson 20- Jacob Begins his Faith Journey  
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## Introduction

In this lesson we pick back up where we left Jacob. Genesis 27, Rebekah devises the plan for Jacob to trick his father into thinking he is Esau. The plan works. Isaac gives Jacob the blessing he intended to give Esau.

We need to keep in mind that while this situation in this family seems out of control, God is very much in control. God is working through these sinful actions to accomplish His will of using Jacob to carry on the promise of Abraham.

The Messiah will come and offer salvation for people to be in God's Kingdom, He will come through the nation Jacob will form. These are very flawed people in this family though. It can seem like the promise plan of God for the Kingdom is threatened. However, it is never threatened nor doomed to fail. God sees to it His plan will be accomplished.

Genesis 28:1-5, Rebekah convinced Isaac to send Jacob away to her brother Laban so that he will not be tempted to marry a Canaanite woman like Esau did. The real reason she wants this is so she can protect Jacob from Esau's plan to kill him after Isaac dies.

Jacob was sent in away to his uncle Laban. Esau married another wife (his third) from one of the daughters of Ishmael.

We will pick up the story of Jacob here and see what God does in his life.

## Jacob's Journey

### **Genesis 28:10-22**

Jacob is at the Haran area. He camps for the night. While here he has a dream from the Lord.

### Jacob's dream

He sees a ladder from earth to heaven. Angels of God are ascending and descending on this ladder.

What do you think this imagery is showing Jacob?

God gives Jacob a promise from above the ladder (vs 13-15). Take note of the wording in the promise and see how similar it is to what God told Abraham.

God began by telling him who He is. "I am the Lord (Yahweh), the God (Elohim) of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac.

God also promises Jacob the land rights.

God then promises Jacob his offspring shall be, "like the dust of the earth..."

Notice the significant portion of the promise, "in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Is this the same promise God made to Abraham?

God confirms to Jacob the promise of Abraham is formally passed on to him.

### **Jacob's response (16-17)**

He called name of the place Bethel (House of God). There is some irony in the story. Abraham set out from Haran (Genesis 12), while Jacob is going back to Haran (Genesis 28). Abraham set up an altar between Bethel and Ai (Genesis 12) during his journey with the Lord.

### **Jacob's Vow (18-22)**

Jacob vows if God brings him back to that place, God will be His God (Yahweh will be his Elohim). This implies that at this point in his life, Jacob is not a fully devoted follower of Yahweh. Jacob has more development to go through, and to be honest this is a very immature response from a place of little or no faith on Jacob's part. Jacob is somewhat testing God out first. He is in essence saying, "God, I'll only follow you and make you my main God if and only if you bring me back safely to this place."

Do not get me wrong, at least Jacob made a promise with good intentions to follow the Lord, but his vow is not one to be commended for Christians to follow through with either.

Jacob would set up a place for worship to God when he got back, and promised to tithe to God all that God blessed him with.

God will certainly be with Jacob. Through the adversity, Jacob is disciplined. On the other hand, God uses the discipline to bless Jacob and bring him back with the numbers and possessions of a small city.

## Jesus & the Ladder of God

Let's look at something interesting that Jesus said.

### **John 1:51**

What did Jesus say that sounds similar in wording to Jacob's dream with the ladder?

Jesus said angels would be ascending and descending where?

Jesus said on Him (the Son of Man) would the angels of God be ascending and descending.

What do you think Jesus was getting at? What's the point of his imagery?

Jesus used the same imagery in Jacob's dream that the Jews of His day should also have been familiar with. Jesus pointed out that He was the ladder in a sense that Jacob saw. Jesus is the key, the bridge, between God in Heaven and sinful man on earth below. Jesus is truly Jacob's ladder from the dream.

Do you see how in God's wisdom, what He communicates in the Old Testament finds a greater fulfillment and purpose through Jesus in the New Testament?

## Conclusion

Jacob has his first direct encounter with God. God gives Jacob a confirmation that the promise of Abraham is passed on to him. Jacob has been chosen by God to carry on the blessing of the Kingdom.

Jacob's response shows a man of little to no faith. He puts God to the test. God shows mercy and will honor Jacob's request. God will protect and be with Jacob, yet God will let Jacob go through adversity in order to develop him and grow his faith.

We also looked at how Jesus used the imagery in Jacob's dream, the ladder. Jesus affirmed He is the One that connects people on earth to God above in Heaven. Only through Jesus can someone know the Father.

It is amazing to see how something written in the first book of the Bible sets the stage for things to come thousands of years later. God shows us in Genesis that it will be through His Son, Jesus, that He brings people into the Kingdom.