

The LORD is in this Place

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[0 : 00] Let's turn back then to the chapter that we read, to the book of Genesis, chapter 28. And we can read again at verses 16 and 17.

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it. 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. Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.

The story that we have here in chapter 28, or at least this part of it, Jacob's dream, is probably one of the best known dreams throughout literature.

Jacob's ladder. And we'll come to look at the dream itself in a little while, and the significance of the dream. But first of all, I want to look at the situation that has brought Jacob to this particular place.

[1 : 18] And this is why we read the previous chapter and the parts of it, and we see what kind of character Jacob was, and his relation with his brother Esau.

And you see, also pointed out that it is because of Esau that Jacob finds himself in the situation that he's in.

Well, indirectly. It's really his own fault, if we can put it that way. But we'll look at that in more detail in a moment or two. And you remember, then, that when Jacob and Esau had been born, something that we tend to forget, that they were actually twins.

Not identical twins, but they were twins. And when they were born, as you'll see in chapter 25, in verse 23, when the struggle was going on in Rebekah's womb, then she asks the Lord what exactly is happening.

And she's told that there are two nations in her womb. And she's told, the Lord said to her in chapter 25, in verse 23, Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided.

[2 : 42] The one shall be stronger than the other. The older shall serve the younger. And that was the prophecy and the promise that God had made to Rebekah when she had born this pair of twins.

And you remember, of course, that in the birth, it is Esau that comes out first, but Jacob is holding on to his heel as he is born. And you can read that in the stories beforehand.

And then you remember after that, of course, that we see how Jacob deceives Esau. And two, first of all, his birthright, giving away his birthright.

You remember for the mess of pottage, as it's put, or for the stew. And then he deceives Esau again over the blessing that Isaac, his father, was to give him.

And you remember that that was when Isaac had become old and sent Esau out to kill Benison and to make a stew so that he would bless him. And you remember how Rebekah overheard that.

[3 : 50] And then she dresses up Jacob in the skins, a skin of a goat that she was then going to cook as the savory meat. And Isaac is deceived into thinking that this is actually Esau.

And he gives the blessing to Jacob that he was planning to give to Esau. And you see that in the previous chapter. And if you look back in chapter 27 at verse 27, you see that Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed.

May God give you of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine. Let people serve you and nations bow down to you. Be Lord over your brothers and may your mother's sons bow down to you.

Cursed be everyone who curses you. And blessed be everyone who blesses you. Now that is quite a substantial blessing that Isaac gives mistakenly to Jacob thinking that it is Esau.

And you remember the rest of the story how Esau then comes, of course, discovered that Isaac has been deceived. And that the blessing that Esau is given from verse 39 onwards is a blessing that is completely inferior to what has been given to Jacob.

[5 : 19] And you are told in verse 40 there. And you are told in verse 40 there that Esau is told by your sword you shall live and you shall serve your brother.

So Esau had good reason to hate his brother. Or perhaps hate is maybe too strong a word. But certainly to have, shall we say, nasty feelings towards his brother.

He's lost his birthright. He's lost his blessing. And then comes the passage that we read where he determines that he will in fact, once Isaac dies, that he will kill Jacob.

But mothers, like mothers are, are very protective of their favorite sons.

And there indeed is a lesson for us. We see clearly that Esau is Isaac's favorite. And that Jacob is Rebecca's favorite.

[6 : 24] And it's a lesson to us that as parents, we should not have favorites among our children. I suppose it's very difficult not to have favorites in a sense.

There's always one who seems to be closer to one parent than the other. And if you're the one in the middle, you're usually in trouble, etc. and so on.

Well, you know what happens in these situations. But here we see the typical situation of a dysfunctional family, in a way, because of favoritism.

And that's something that we see in various places in scripture. But Rebecca is very protective of Jacob. And it seems, in a way, that Jacob here is very much a mommy's boy.

If you've followed the story of Jacob up until now, what you see of him is that he appears to be constantly with his mother. While Esau is much more outside and an outside guy, a typical sort of male figure.

[7 : 32] Whereas Jacob seems, in a sense, almost to be tied to his mother's apron strings. But the result of this is, of course, that Jacob is then sent away.

And you notice the excuse that is given. In verse 46 of chapter 27, Rebecca said to Isaac, Now, it would seem that it wasn't just because these were Canaanite women and probably idol worshippers.

But that there was more to it than that. It seems that Esau had brought one, two, we're not told exactly how many wives he had at this stage.

There's some debate about that. But it seems that they were making Rebecca's life a misery in many ways. And again, of course, there are lessons for us in that as well.

I'm not going to go into daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law and things. We'd get into all kinds of trouble if we went down that road. But here we see, of course, that this is used as an excuse.

[8 : 58] That Jacob would then be blessed by Isaac. And as you notice, it's obviously Rebecca who puts this suggestion in Isaac's mind. And Isaac directs to him, you must not take a wife from the Canaanite woman.

Arise and go. How different by comparison to how Isaac had got his wife. You remember when Isaac had married Rebecca, it was Rebecca who came to Isaac.

That Abraham had sent his servant. And Rebecca had consented to come without ever having seen Isaac. So here, Jacob is sent out in a completely different way.

He has to go and find a wife for himself. But the suggestion is that he find it from among his relatives. Take as your wife from there, one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.

So in effect, he would be taking, of course, someone who was closely related to him. If you notice that, Laban is his uncle. And therefore, any daughters of Laban would be his cousins, close relatives.

[10 : 16] But that seems to be quite acceptable in this particular situation here. And he is sent with Isaac's blessing again.

From verse 3 onwards. God Almighty bless you, make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May he give the blessing of Abraham to you, to your offspring, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings, that God gave to Abraham.

And you see the result of this with Esau. Esau realizes somehow that his wives have upset his parents. And then he goes and takes closer relatives, the wives' daughters of Ishmael.

Hoping that that would please his father and his mother. And in a way that he might get back into favor again. Again, there's plenty we could say about that.

Trying to please your parents and the wife or the husband that you choose is a dangerous occupation at the best of times. And does Esau make a mistake here?

[11 : 27] Again, Scripture doesn't really open it up to us. But it seems that not being happy with just the Canaanite woman that he had. That he's got another one here.

And having three wives. I cannot think of anything worse than having three wives. It's bad enough with one. And you can draw your own conclusions, of course, from that. As you think of these relationships that are almost like dysfunctional relationships within this family.

But that's the situation then as Jacob leaves Beersheba. It's amazing to think that Jacob at this point is 77 years old.

That's something that we don't often realize. 77 years old. He's been tied to his mother's apron strings for 77 years. And during that time it seems the only occupation he had was looking after sheep.

Not that there's anything wrong with looking after sheep. That's perfectly acceptable, of course. And we see that later on. That that becomes a blessing to him. When he is, in fact, with labor in many different ways.

[12 : 40] But he is forced, in a sense, forced to leave. Because of his own behavior. Now remember that the name Jacob means deceiver.

Supplanter. And it's because of the deceit that he has rendered, on Esau particularly, that he is forced to leave.

And imagine the picture you have here of this 77-year-old man. Who has never left home before. Never been away from his mother's side or his father's side.

Never been on his own before. And here he is, having to travel by himself. To go to his uncle to look for a wife.

We're told later in chapter 32 and verse 10. Jacob says that all he had with him was his staff. Nothing else.

[13 : 48] No one else accompanied him. And you contrast that to how Rebecca had been brought back when Isaac sent for her.

That she had been brought back with a retinue of servants and camels, etc. Here is Jacob on foot. By himself. You might think that 77 is quite old to be undertaking a journey like this.

And from one point of view, it is. Nowadays, if we were to think, if I was to think, I'm not 77 yet, but I'm not far off it. If I was to think of taking a journey like this.

He walks 48 miles in the first day. To walk that kind of distance. And it was, I think, around about 400 miles to go to Aaron. That sort of journey would seem daunting.

If not horrific, that you would have to undertake it by yourself. He doesn't have a camel. He doesn't have a mule. He doesn't have anything. And as you see, when he comes to a certain place and stayed there that night because the son of the set.

[14 : 59] He doesn't even have a bedroll. The typical sort of carpet thing that they would unfold and set out to lie down on. He has nothing with him at all.

What does he do? He takes one of the stones of the place. Puts it under his head. And lies down to sleep. I suppose at this stage that he was pretty tired.

We mustn't think of Jacob as an old man. As we would think of 77. In our sort of chronology here. The equivalent, if you look and see later how old Jacob is when he dies.

He's well into nearly 150 by the time he dies. Or older. I can't remember exactly how old he was when he died. I think it was 147. But somewhere around there. But this is, think of him as halfway through his life.

In other words, he might well, you might well see him here as in the prime of his life. Never been married before. Maybe that's why he's so fit at this stage.

[16 : 04] Who knows? I used to looking after sheep, etc. and so on. There are various things that we could conjecture. But nevertheless, the picture of loneliness and desolation that we get here.

When he comes to this particular place. Now it doesn't seem that he's aware that there is a city nearby. Maybe he's not familiar with the road.

Well, he's never travelled this way before, as far as we know. But instead of seeking shelter in the city. Perhaps he doesn't even know the city's there. He simply lies down on the ground.

And he takes one of the stones and puts it under his head to sleep. I don't know if you've ever slept with a stone under your head.

It doesn't sound exactly very comfortable. And you would have thought that Jacob would have found something more comfortable than a stone. But then again, it seems that maybe he was quite used to sleeping on the ground.

[17 : 11] Even though they had tents, etc. He may well have just slept on the ground and been quite used to it. Perhaps looking after his sheep before. Some commentators suggest that he had spent nights out before.

In the open air. It doesn't really matter. But nevertheless, in the picture of loneliness, as he sleeps, he dreams a dream.

Now, this is quite an amazing dream. He dreamed and behold there was a ladder set up on the earth.

And the top of it reached to heaven. Now, the word translated as ladder is badly translated. The better translation would be stairway.

Rather than ladder. We tend to think of a ladder with the wrongs in it. That the angels are climbing up and climbing down on the other side. And if you think of just one ladder, they would get in each other's way all the time.

[18 : 17] That's not the picture that we should have of it at all. It is like a stairway. And I suppose as soon as we say stairway to heaven, it brings certain things to our mind.

I'm not so sure among the age group here. But many of you will be familiar. Or some of you might be familiar. With a very famous song called Stairway to Heaven.

Stairway to Heaven by Led Zeppelin. Stairway to Heaven. Stairway to Heaven. No. Some people it does. And yet, if you look at the lyrics of that song, which are very, very interesting.

There's a lyric at the end of it that says this. It says, the final verse, it says, If you listen very hard, the truth will come to you at last.

If you listen very hard, the truth will come to you at last. Now, I'm not going to go into the interpretation of the song and the lyrics of Stairway to Heaven.

[19 : 19] Because there's a great debate about what it exactly means. But that applies to what is happening here. And you see that Jacob is listening in his dream. He has no choice in a dream except to listen.

You can't close your ears in a dream and decide not to hear. But the dream that he has given, probably one of the best known biblical dreams in history, is quite a significant dream.

The angels of God ascending and descending on this stairway. What exactly does that mean?

Is this just a dream? Or is it more in the sense of a vision that he is given to see what actually is going on between heaven and earth?

How do we interpret? Well, again, we go back to our golden rule. We interpret scripture with scripture. Is there anywhere else in scripture where this is referred to?

[20 : 26] We can look, of course, at the book of Job. And we see the angels in chapter 1. That the angels are coming together. As if it were for an audience with God.

And then as if it were being sent out on their respective tasks. And you see the importance of the order of the words. The angels of God ascending and descending.

Those who are ascending have completed the work that they have been given to do. And those who are descending are coming to carry out the work that they have been given to do.

Is there anything else that we can take from scripture that helps us to interpret this? Well, yes, there is. If you go to the Gospel of John in chapter 1.

Again, you don't need to turn to it. I'll read it to you. Jesus' conversation with Nathaniel. Later, Bartholomew. In chapter 1.

[21 : 36] What does Jesus say to him? Jesus answered him in verse 50. Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree. Do you believe? You will see greater things than these.

And Jesus said to him. Truly, truly, I say to you. You will see heaven opened. And the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

Who is the Son of Man? Of course, it is Jesus himself. And therefore, we have to see, like so many commentators do, everyone takes into account that the interpretation of the stairway is that it shows us how Jesus Christ himself, the Son of Man, opens the stairway to heaven for us.

Now, that seems fairly straightforward. We would have no problem whatsoever with that, were it not that there are so many other different interpretations of what this actually means.

If you go to the Jewish, what's called the Jewish Midrash, that is, the Jewish commentaries on the Old Testament scriptures, you will find that the Jews interpret the stairway in a completely different way.

[22 : 55] They see it as four separate stages, in which the children of Israel were taken into captivity, etc., the restoration under Nehemiah, and they see the stages of Jewish history in the stairway.

Now, there's no scriptural basis for that whatsoever, but be aware of it, that there are other interpretations of what this actually means. But again, if we tie together what we are told about angels, go to Hebrews chapter 1, and the last verses, and what do you see?

That angels are ministering spirits. Who are they ministering to? The people of God. They are ministering spirits that are sent out to minister to us.

I suppose at this stage people would say, well, you know, how many of us have seen an angel? And how many of us have been aware of angels around about us?

Well, I would have to say, yes, I have been aware once of an angel. It was only afterwards that I realized that it probably was an angel. I'm sure many of you will be aware in my father's story as well, in his life story, that a dream, a vision, he was given by an angel before the Second World War.

[24 : 23] It's there as well, which you can read for yourself. And there are many other things that we see every day, very often in the press and in various other places, of people being mysteriously helped and saved by angels.

And not all of them are believers. Sometimes their experience is what leads them to faith. Now, I'm not going to go into angelology.

If we were going to go into a study of angels, we would be here all night, because there are so many things that we can see about angels in Scripture. But we're told very, very clearly in Scripture, and the times that we see angels in Scripture, we see that they are always there to carry out God's instructions.

And usually they're there to help God's people. And sometimes, as in the case of Manoah, they don't realize it's an angel until the angel ascends on the smoke of the sacrifice.

And we're told in the last chapter of Hebrews, and we're told there, Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.

[25 : 38] Why? Because thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Unawares. For all you know, when you've invited a stranger into your home at some time, or shown some kind of kindness, you may well have been entertaining an angel.

And many people will say to that, Well, I don't know. But that is what Scripture tells us. And Scripture is very clear, that the angels are ministering spirit.

There is a world round about us, a spiritual world, of angels and demons, that we are unaware of. Go to the book of Daniel.

And see how at the end, in the visions of Daniel, how Daniel is told, by the angel who is speaking to him, how he's told that the angels are struggling with the demons at times, for the control of what is going on in this world.

And there are others, of course, and again, I'm not going to go into this in detail, who will argue that each one of us has his own guardian angel, that Jesus says that later on.

[26 : 54] Again, that's open to interpretation. But the dream that Jacob sees so clearly here is, the angels of God ascending and descending. Now really, that's not the important thing at all.

I've spent far too long on that. That's not really what matters. What matters is what he sees at the top of the ladder, or the top of the stairway. Behold, the Lord stood above it.

Now who is this? This is Jehovah. This is the Lord God. God, in a sense, God the Father. God the Father. Although most commentators maintain that here, that this is the triune God.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. How do we know that? Because he identifies himself in what he says. Behold, the Lord stood above it and said, I am the Lord, the God of Abraham, your father, and the God of Isaac.

And notice how strange that is. Abraham is not Jacob's father. He's his grandfather. Abraham, your father, and the God of Isaac.

[28 : 08] But it's in a sense that it is through the covenant with Abraham, that this blessing is now coming. And what follows is a reiteration of the covenant blessing that had been given to Abraham.

The land on which you lie, I will give to you and your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south.

And in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 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. Now that is almost exactly the same covenant blessing as God had given to Abraham.

And you notice it's not a new covenant. It's a reiteration of the covenant that is going to come through this family. Abraham, Isaac, and now Jacob.

[29 : 19] And how Jacob must have wondered about what is said there. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, when he is 77 years old and not yet married.

How is that going to be possible? Surely he would have thought back to Abraham and Sarah. How marvelous the birth of Isaac had been.

And he would have thought back as well to the fact that the childish male with Hagar had been rejected. And in the same way that he can see and perceive here that he is in a sense the chosen, the elect of God.

And Esau is not. And you remember that later on it will say in scripture that Jacob I have loved and Esau I have hated. But imagining waking from that dream.

As we see in verse 16. Surely the Lord is in this place. And I did not know it. I wonder how you would have felt if you were out there in the middle of the moorchach by yourself.

[30 : 34] On a cold and frosty evening. And you had had this vision, this dream of the stairway to heaven. And God himself speaking to you in the covenant terms.

The covenant promises. Reannuing this covenant. How would you have reacted to that experience?

You notice that his first reaction is one of fear. He was afraid and said, How awesome is this place?

How awesome is this place? Isn't that very often the experience of the Lord's people? When like Jacob they are going through very difficult circumstances.

Where they seem to feel entirely on their own. They don't know which way to turn. They have an idea of being sent somewhere.

[31 : 34] But yet confusion. Perhaps loneliness. Perhaps distress. All these various things that Jacob is feeling here. And yet in the midst of that experience.

Comes this wonderful vision and dream that he has given. And the covenant blessing with it. And isn't that very often the experience of the Lord's people.

When you are down. When you are in a lonely place. It is then very often that God meets with you. And reinforces the covenant blessing that he has given to you.

It is not the covenant blessing. As it is with Abraham. But it is the new covenant. The covenant of grace. That is given through the blood of Jesus Christ.

And it is Jesus who is the stairway to heaven. There is no other way in which we can approach God the Father. God the Holy Spirit.

[32 : 39] Except through God the Son. And through the blood that was shed at Calvary. No wonder Jacob was afraid.

And no wonder perhaps you and I would be afraid with an experience like this as well. But there is a difference between Jacob's experience and yours. There is no indication for us before this.

That Jacob was a believer. No indication at all. In anything of the history of Jacob up to now. And there are more chapters about Jacob in scripture than on any of the patriarchs in Genesis.

But up until now. There is no indication that Jacob. He knew of God. But that he really believed. In the God of Abraham.

And the God of Isaac. And there are many who think. That this is Jacob's conversion experience.

[33 : 43] That it is here he is converted. At the age of 77 years. I am not sure I totally agree with that.

I find it quite a convincing argument. To suggest that this is the first time. That Jacob. That we see Jacob. Really becoming aware. Of his relationship.

With God. But nevertheless. You notice that. What does that produce? It does not produce the joy. That it should produce. It produces fear. Fear. And perhaps many people will relate to that.

That the first step in their own. In their own conversion experience. Was a stage of fear. When they became aware. Of their own sins.

And they became aware. Of the fact. That unless they found forgiveness with God. That they were doomed. To spend eternity.

[34 : 40] Separate from God. We don't see that Jacob. That Jacob goes through. Perhaps that kind of experience. But he certainly goes through. Some experience here.

Surely the Lord is in this place. And I did not know it. Wouldn't you also say. That surely the Lord is everywhere.

That you don't need to be in a special place. To meet with God. God's omnipresence. Is everywhere. You can meet with him. Anywhere.

At any time. And at any age. Notice. 77 years old. If this is when Jacob is converted. Then. At any particular age.

How awesome. Is this place. Now he's using awesome there. Not in its modern sense. But in the sense of. Producing all.

[35 : 38] That is. Producing a mixture of. Fear. Fear. And reverence. And reverence. That's the original meaning. Of the word. From which we got. A full. Which was exactly the opposite.

A lack of reverence. This is none other. Than the house of God. And this is the gate. Of heaven. Why did he see it as the gate.

Because of the stairway. Because of the stairway. To heaven. And it's probably here. That he realizes. For the first time. The closeness.

Of his relationship. With the eternal. Triune God. What does he do? Early in the morning. He takes the stone. And sets it up.

For a pillar. And he pours. Oil. On it. A lot of people. Have questioned. Where did he get the oil from? This would of course. Be olive oil.

[36 : 36] That would be used. As an oil. Of consecration. That is. Making the place. Sacred. Holy. And the simple answer. Is that he probably. Went into the city.

Of Luce. Or close to Luce. In order to get. That oil. But he gives. A different name. To the place. He calls it. Beth. El. And Beth.

Is the Hebrew word. For a house. And El. Is God. And it literally. Means. The house. Of God. And this is a place. Where he will come.

Again. Twenty years. Later. When he is. Coming back. From Laban. With his wives. And his children. And all his flocks. And his herds.

To meet Esau. This. Is where. He will. Again. Have another vision. Of God. You see. This is not the only time. That he has a vision.

[37 : 30] Of angels. If you read on. In chapter. I think it's thirty-two. Isn't it? When we come to it. You will see that. There's a very interesting.

I think it's thirty-two. There's a very interesting statement. At the beginning. Of the chapter. Thirty-two. In verse one. Jacob went on his way.

And the angels of God. Met him. And when Jacob saw them. He said. This is God's camp. So he called the name of the place. Manaheim. And later in that chapter. There's of course.

The meeting at Peniel. Where he wrestles. With the angel. And you remember. That he receives. The blessing. There as well. I will not let you go. Unless you bless me.

But this is twenty years. In the future. And you notice. That there's a totally different reaction. He's not. No longer frightened. By those meetings.

[38 : 26] But here he is. What is the result of that? He makes a vow. Verse twenty. Jacob made a vow. He said.

If God be with me. Now. Watch how you understand that. This is not a conditional if. He's not laying down a condition on God.

What the if means here. It would be better translated as. Because. Because God is with me. And because God will keep me in the way that I go.

And will give me bread to eat. And clothing to wear. So that I come again to my father's house in peace. Then the Lord will be my God. And this stone shall be God's house.

And of all that you give me. I will give a full tenth to you. Now he's again. The tenth of course. Is. He's simply reusing.

[39 : 23] What Abraham had given to Melchizedek. Remember that Abraham gives Melchizedek. A tenth of all the spoils. So it is a response.

It's not a condition. That he's setting on. On God here. Do you see that all he asks for. Bread to eat. And clothing to wear.

That's all. The basic necessities of life. And he would appear to be satisfied with that. Because God will be with me.

And keep me in the way that I go. And will give me bread to eat. And clothing to wear. So that I come again to my father's house in peace. Then the Lord shall be my God.

We turn that into a complicated agreement sometimes. But you notice how simple it is. As long as we have bread to eat.

[40 : 19] And clothing to wear. Then God. The Lord. The covenant God. Will be my God. How many times do you and I.

Try and put conditions on God. Particularly in our prayers. When we're praying about something. We say we. Very often. So many people say.

If you do this. If. If. Then. And God doesn't work that way. You see that. Particularly in the Roman Catholic faith.

There are so many times. Where people make vows of conditions. That if you grant this and this benefit. Such and such a thing.

I will do. And you see that. Particularly in this. In the prayers to the Virgin. And the prayers to the saints. Don't fall into that trap. You cannot set conditions on God.

[41 : 19] God is not a God. Who responds to. If you do this. Then I will do this. Quite the opposite. God is a God of grace. Who provides for you.

Without you asking. All of us here. As far as I can see. Have bread to eat. And clothing to wear. What else do you need?

What else do you need? And yet of course. Nowadays. We make such a fuss. About the material blessings. That we look for. In this life. But what really matters.

Is. The basic necessities. And one of the basic necessities. Is our relationship. With God. That's the most important thing.

Again. What does he do? He sets up a stone. For a memorial. Again. This was a common Old Testament thing. You see this in various places.

[42 : 16] Remember Samuel. I remember Samuel. Setting up a stone. And calling it Ebenezer. We used to hear that. So often. In our prayers. Particularly in Gaelic prayers.

They would say. Tokeleer. Ebenezer. Cahua. And I used to think about that. And think. What on earth does that mean? Because the only Ebenezer. I was familiar with then. Was Ebenezer Scrooge.

And a Christmas Carol. And it didn't make any sense to me at all. But eventually of course. One learns. What these things mean. And it was a custom. In the Old Testament times.

Particularly in the times of the Patriarchs. To mark particular places and occasions. By raising a pillar. Raising a stone. The Jewish mythology.

Or the Jewish Kabbalah. Actually says that Jacob's pillar. Was four stones. Which were magically fused into one. And raised as a pillar. Without him doing anything.

[43 : 15] Again of course. That is the interpretation of the rabbis. There is no scriptural basis for that. At all. And so this is Jacob's encounter.

With God. If it is his conversion experience. Then you notice. That it is something.

That changes his life considerably. From now on. You see. As you follow Jacob's story. That his trust. Is implicitly.

In the God of Abraham. And the God of Isaac. Who will become. The God of Jacob. His spiritual necessity.

That he was probably unaware of. Up until now. Has now been satisfied. And he can see. And he can see. Even through. If he interpreted.

[44 : 09] The stairway. He can see. The reconciliation. Between God. And man. Jacob saw. The Messiah.

The promised Messiah. That was to come. He understood. That that would be the case. And it is through. The descendancy. Of Jacob.

That is what God says to him. In verse 14. In you and your offspring. Shall all the families of the earth. Be blessed.

Follow through. Follow the birth line of Judah. And it is from the tribe of Judah. Of course. That the Lord Jesus comes.

Never mind. All the other. The twelve tribes of Israel. And of course. I'm sure you're familiar again. With how Jacob's name. Has changed to Israel. Later on. At Peniel.

[45 : 11] Quite amazing. Isn't it? How Jacob's. Change of heart. Revolves. Around. A dream. But it's not unusual.

In that. I'm sure all of you. Are familiar. With stories. Of people. Who have been converted. Through things. That they have seen. In dreams. It's not something. That happens to everyone.

God uses many different ways. To bring people. To a knowledge. Of himself. But a dream. Is quite. A common one. The prophet. And the prophets.

And the prophets. Look at Zechariah. Says. Your young men. Shall dream dreams. And your old men. Shall see visions. And so on. What was the difference. In those times.

Of course. Well Jacob. Had no Bible. He had no scripture. He had no Old Testament. There was nothing. Written down. But you and I. Have everything.

[46 : 07] Written down. We have the full revelation. Given to us. In the books of the old. And the new Testament. We can see. How the two fit together. To make one story.

From the beginning of time. Through. To eternity. And we can see. Where the Lord Jesus Christ. Comes. As the promised Messiah. In the middle.

Of the story. And we can see. And understand. How that fits in. With the Old Testament pattern. With all that was shown. Through the Old Testament.

Through the Mosaic system. The sacrifices. Etc. And how it fits into. The New Testament pattern. And there you can see. Just how important. Jacob.

Is. In that particular story. In you. And your offspring. Shall all. Your families. Of the earth. Be blessed.

[47 : 02] If you are a believer. This evening. In the Lord Jesus Christ. You have been blessed. Through Jacob. Through the offspring. Of Jacob. And we should never.

Lose sight. Of that. And we should never. Lose sight. Of the second part. Of the covenant. I am with you. And will keep you. Wherever you go.

And will bring you back. To this land. The land. Of promise. The land. Of promise. And again. Time doesn't permit me. To go into all the symbolism. Of the land of promise.

But you remember. Of course. That it was the land of promise. That brings. The children of Israel. The children of Jacob. From Egypt. Through to the promised land. Through the wilderness.

You and I. Are going through the wilderness. At this particular time. None of us know. How long our journey. Through the wilderness.

[48 : 00] Will be. But nevertheless. The promises. That scripture gives us. All the time. Is that. If we believe. If we are in the covenant.

Of grace. Through Jesus Christ. That we will be brought. Through the wilderness. To the promised land. To heaven.

Itself. And these. Are wonderful things. For us to meditate on. And to hearten us. As we struggle on. From day to day. As it heartened Jacob. To continue his journey.

In. What he had to do. So I hope. That the example. Of Jacob. And Bethel. And the stairway. To heaven. Will be something. That again. Encourages us.

As we look. At our daily walk. Let us. Pray. Father in heaven. We thank you. For your word. This evening. We thank you.

[48 : 56] That we can see. How all these things. Fit together. And that you have. Revealed them. To us. Not through dreams. Or visions. Or anything else. But through your word.

That is now written down. That we can have. A full knowledge. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. And the plan. Of salvation. That is written. So clearly. Through the pages.

Of scripture. We thank you. For the covenant. Of grace. Which has replaced. The Old Testament. Come. And that it is. A covenant. Sealed with blood. With the blood.

Of our Lord. Jesus Christ. We pray. That you would bless us. This evening. As we meditate. On these things. Guide us. Now. As we. Conclude our worship.

Take us home. In safety. And pardon our sins. Through Jesus Christ. Our Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.