

How is the Lord speaking to me through this text?

LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.
The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- How has Jacob's life changed in the first scene of our text (28:10-11)? What impressions are being given by the unnamed place, the sun setting, and the rock pillow? How does dream (God's revelation) speak directly to Jacob's need?
- The comparison between the journey of Abraham's servant (Genesis 24) and this journey of Jacob is hard to miss. What are similarities? What are some differences?
- How might the account of Jacob's journey speak to you in your own journey? How has your life been similar to Jacob's? How have your experiences been similar? How does God's activity in Jacob's life speak to your need?
- How does Jacob's vow reveal that he was changed by this encounter with God (28:20-22)? What does this say about our own responses to God's promises to us?
- How does Jacob's honeymoon surprise (29:25) tell us that he is reaping what he has sowed? How does God (ultimately) fulfill His purposes for Jacob through the broken human relationships that landed Jacob in this place?
- Jacob needed to guard against Laban, but failed. What are the things you need to guard against in your own life?
- Even though Jacob's life is not put forth as a model for us, how can it bring encouragement to believers today? To you?

Truth for Understanding Our World (Part 19)

Haunted by the Past, Promises for the Future

Jerry Cisar — October 9, 2016

Text: Genesis 28:10 – 29:30

Introduction: A Man in Need of a Home (28:10-11)

- A. Jacob is a man without a family... in search of a family.

- B. Haunted by His Past

I. God's Trustworthy Promise (28:12-22)

- A. God is revealing Himself to Jacob in a dream.
 - i. What do angels do?

 - ii. What was it that God revealed in this revelatory dream?
 - a) God identified Himself as the God of Abraham and Isaac.

 - b) YHWH reiterates the promise and the blessing.

 - c) The Lord adds the Promise of His Presence.

 - iii. YHWH is often closest in those places He seems so far away!

 - iv. Jesus is the New Bethel—the revelation of God to the world.

- B. Two things immediately proceed from this encounter with God.
 - i. Jacob is empowered for the long hard journey ahead.
 - ii. Jacob devotes himself to God.
 - a) In English, Jacob's vow can sound like, "I'll wait and see." That is apparently not evident in the original.

Allen Ross: *Jacob made his vow on the basis of what God had guaranteed to do. He was thus taking God at his Word and binding himself to reciprocate with his own dedication.*

- Jacob is here yielding his life to God.
- b) Jacob's vow consisted of two things:
 - "I won't forget you God!"
 - Jacob will put his money where his mouth is.

II. God's Transforming Presence (Genesis 29:1-12)

- A. Jacob came to the eastern peoples.
- B. Three shepherds and their flocks, waiting for more shepherds.
- C. Jacob is empowered to remove the stone that would normally take several shepherds.

- D. As far as Jacob is concerned... mission accomplished.

III. God Triumphant Purposes (Genesis 29:13-30)

- A. Will Laban succeed in delaying Jacob from accomplishing the task?
- B. Laban sees Jacob as nothing more than a hired servant and his daughters as nothing more than livestock to be bartered with.

Waltke points out that his question literally reads, "Are you surely a relative of mine that you should work for me for nothing!" A negative answer is expected. Since a family member would work for nothing, Laban is degrading the blood relationship between himself and Jacob (29:14a) into an economic arrangement. What Laban should have done as a loving relative is to help Jacob get a start on building his own home, as Jacob asks of Laban in 30:25-34 (...). Instead, Laban keeps Jacob as nothing more than a laborer under contract, as Jacob bitterly complains in 31:38-42.

- C. Jacob tastes the bitter fruit which he had once fed his father.
 - i. Does it matter whether or not we pray? Whether or not we guard against deception? Absolutely. But God's promise is trustworthy; His Presence transforming; His purposes triumphant.
 - ii. When we fail to be the ideal servant, God will still complete His purposes in our life. However, it will likely involve struggle, striving, set-backs, and sanctification.