



DATE: November 9, 2008

TEXT: Genesis 28:10-22

TITLE: "Genesis XVIII: Jacob's Ladder"

This morning we are looking at Jacob. Last week we looked at Jacob's parents, Isaac and Rebekah, and at Jacob's brother Esau. I will share 3 lessons taken from the life of Jacob covering two events in his life.

Lesson # 1 Sin has consequences. We have seen this lesson many times, but it is a major theme in the life of Jacob because he is constantly making wrong choices. Genesis 27 tells us the story of Jacob stealing his father's blessing from his brother Esau. I do not want to read the entire story so I will briefly tell the story.

Isaac was getting old and was nearly blind. He decided to pass this blessing to his firstborn son Esau. The blessing usually meant the son would receive 2/3 of the property and income. It made the recipient of the blessing the head of the family. He knew this was not the Lord's will but he didn't care. He told Esau to go hunting and kill some game and prepare a meal and then he would receive the blessing. Rebekah, his wife, overheard this conversation and

called her favorite son Jacob. She killed a goat, covered Jacob's arms with hair, stole Esau's clothes and told her son to lie to his father. Jacob protested... but his mother won the day. Jacob went in, lied to his father 3 times, Isaac was fooled by the false hair and the smell of Esau's clothing and gave to Jacob the blessing. The result was terrible. *The Pulpit Outline* states this...

Jacob suffered greatly throughout his life as a result of this sin. He lost the wealth and influence he had enjoyed up to this time. He never saw his mother again. He served another man vigorously for some twenty years, reaping time and again the same deception he had sown toward Esau. And because of his own favoritism of his own sons, they cut his heart again and again through deception.

We are soon going to see the blessing Jacob receives from the Lord. Jacob indeed was a child of God. Jacob indeed was the chosen prophet of God. But even as a child of God he suffered as a result of his choices of sin.

The same is true of us. As I say almost every week, if we have surrendered to Jesus Christ, if we have truly made Him and his Word Lord of our lives, we are the children of God. We receive the promises of God. However, when we make wrong choices, when we ignore or refuse to obey God's Word, we suffer the consequences of sin. Some times the consequences can last for a life time. Also, we as Christians are in a sinful world... some times the sin of the

world touches our lives and we suffer the consequences. Christians are victims of crime.

Christians suffer diseases and physical death. The great apostle Paul suffered a very hard life.

He had an ongoing illness that was never cured. He spent much of his life in prison and he was

eventually put to death. But he said these wonderful words....

21For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know (Phil. 1:21)

Sin has consequences... our own sin and the sin that surrounds us.

Lesson # 2 See our wonderful access to our Lord. We see this lesson in the dream of

Jacob found in *Genesis 28:12-15*

He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Jacob was at his lowest emotional point. He had just been kicked out of his home. He had said goodbye to his mother. He had lost all his wealth. He laid on the ground with a rock for a pillow. No tent, no bed, nothing. But then he had a dream. In this dream he encountered the

living God and saw a wonderful vision. He saw a ladder, a staircase going from earth to heaven and he saw angels going up and down this staircase and he saw the Lord Himself at the top of the staircase. And he heard the wonderful promises of God.

Notice first the vision. Jacob saw a connection between heaven and earth. Jacob saw messengers from God himself going to earth and returning to heaven. Jacob saw the Lord himself at the top of the staircase.

You see this is a question every human being must answer. Is there a god and if there is a God does He care about his creation and does He interact with His creation. I am sure at this time in the life of Jacob he was asking himself this question. He was at the low point of his life. Is there a God and does He care? He receives the answer to his question. Yes and Yes. There is a God and God does indeed care and God does indeed interact with His creation.

Jacob is seeing the reversal of the tower of Babel. Remember in Genesis 11 we saw people trying to build a tower to heaven. God reacted in anger and scattered the people. Jacob is seeing that no tower needs to be built because God has built a staircase. God has built the

access. God comes to His creation. God sends His angels to His creation. The Word of God is answering Jacob's question... and the Word of God is answering the question for everyone of us.

There is a God and he cares for each and every one of His children. *Hebrews 1:14* gives us this wonderful promise...

14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Angels are still coming to earth. Angels are ministering to those who will inherit salvation... that is you and me. That is the children of God. Angels surround us and care for us. That is the promise of God.

But it gets better, this vision of God. The staircase represents access to God. It is the conduit between the Lord and His creation. Do you remember the story of the calling of Philip and Nathanael by our Lord Jesus? Philip became a disciple of Christ. He went to his brother Nathanael and invited him to also follow Christ. Nathanael was skeptical. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" he asked. But he went with his brother. Jesus called Nathanael to be a disciple. Jesus told him he had seen him under the fig tree. Nathanael believed because of this

vision. But then Jesus ended the dialogue with this statement (*John 1:50-51*)

50Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." **51**He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Do you understand what Jesus is saying? Jesus is saying "I am Jacob's Ladder.... I am the staircase that connects Heaven to the earth. Jesus said...

5Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" **6**Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. **7**If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." (*John 14:5ff*)

Jesus is the staircase to God. Jesus is the Lord standing at the top of the staircase.

Do you see that the vision of Jacob was for you and for me? As Jacob saw this vision he heard this wonderful promise of God...

There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

"All peoples on earth will be blessed." That is you and me. We are the descendants of

Jacob. The Lord promises to watch over us wherever we go.

Jesus is our staircase. Angels are coming to us from heaven to minister to you and to me.

The Lord is with us wherever we go. These are the promises seen the Jacob's ladder. What a wonderful vision given to you and to me.

Lesson # 3 God's people need to continually rededicate our lives to our Lord.

Genesis 28:18-21 states....

Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. 19 He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz. 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear 21 so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God

Jacob builds and alter and dedicates his life to the Lord. We will see later that he will have to do this again after his wrestling match. Have you noticed that rededication is an essential part of being a Christian. I have. Again and again and again I have to say... "O.K. Jesus, you are the Lord of my life." Or "O.K. Jesus, you are Lord of this situation." Or " O.K. Jesus you are Lord of this relationship." Or "O.K. Jesus you are Lord of this nation."

The danger in life is that we are "Indian givers." We say "Jesus, be Lord of my life." But then we refuse to give him our children. But then we refuse to give him our time. But then we

refuse to give him our worry. We refuse the ministering of the angels around us. We refuse the ministering of the Holy Spirit that is in our lives. We need times of rededication. Maybe, if you are like me... it has to be a daily practice. I start most every day with the words, "Jesus be Lord of my life today." Jesus gave us this command

23Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. (Luke 9:22)

Take up the cross of Christ daily. Every day we need to rededicate our lives to our Lord.

We are climbing Jacobs ladder
 Every round goes higher higher
 Sinner do you love my Jesus?
 If you love him why not serve Him
 Soldier of the Cross.

Jesus is the ladder... dedicate you life to Him

AMEN