

Series: A New Beginning; Sermon: A New Encounter
Delivered by: Dr. Josh Moody, senior pastor; Date: March 12, 2017

Bible text explored: Genesis 28:10–22

¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. ¹²And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! ¹³And behold, the LORD stood above it^[a] and said, “I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. ¹⁴Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. ¹⁵Behold, 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.” ¹⁶Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” ¹⁷And 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.”

¹⁸So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. ¹⁹He called the name of that place Bethel^[b], but the name of the city was Luz at the first. ²⁰Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, ²¹so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, ²²and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God’s house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you.” [ESV]

^[a]Or beside him ^[b]Bethel means the house of God

Review and application:

1. Why (vv. 10-11) would Jacob have felt vulnerable, rejected, and placeless as he made the long trek from Beersheba to Haran alone? (See *Gen. 27:41*.)
2. In Jacob’s dream (vv. 12-15), why was it significant that . . .
 - . . . the stairway had angels coming from, and going to, God’s presence?
 - . . . the LORD stood by him?
 - . . . He called Abraham Jacob’s father, bypassing Jacob’s own father, who had attempted to remove him from God’s conduit of blessing?
 - . . . He promised not to leave Jacob even when he was outside the “promised land”?
3. Does the fear Jacob’s dream evoked (vv. 16-17) suggest that until then he hadn’t experienced God as real?
Has there been a situation in which you’ve sensed the Lord actually meeting you?
4. What (vv. 18-22) was the significance of Jacob . . .
 - . . . erecting a makeshift altar or memorial?
 - . . . making a vow that acknowledged God’s ownership of everything?
 - . . . naming that place *Bethel*?
5. Did God confirm Jacob’s perception that He had chosen this isolated place to reveal his presence? (See *Judg. 20:18, 26-27; 1 Sam. 10:3*.)
6. How does Jesus personify the stairway to God? (See *John 1:51*.)