

Jacob's Stairway

Genesis 28

Right after Jacob left Isaac, Esau, his brother, came in from hunting. Isaac said to him, "Who are you?"

He answered, "I am your son, your firstborn,¹ Esau."

But Isaac said, "Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing."

Esau said, "Bless me, even me also, O my father." And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

Isaac answered him, "By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother."²

Now Esau hated Jacob because of this. Esau said to himself, "I will kill my brother Jacob."

The words of Esau were told to Rebekah. She called Jacob and told him to flee to Laban, her brother in Haran. Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, "May God give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring, that you may take possession of the land God gave to Abraham!"

Jacob went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there that night. Taking a stone, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He dreamed there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. The angels of God were ascending³ and descending⁴ on it! The LORD stood above it 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."

Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place,⁵ and I did not know it." He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God." Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar⁶ and poured oil on the top of it. He called the name of that place Bethel. Then Jacob made a vow,⁷ saying, "If God will be with me, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house."

Explanatory Notes

¹Esau had previously sold his birthright to Jacob; he had despised it. ²Esau's descendants would live in need, defeat other nations, but serve Jacob's descendants. ³Going up. ⁴Going down. ⁵God's presence filled Jacob with fear and reverence. ⁶Marker. ⁷A solemn promise.



"God will be with me."

For Reflection

1. One sin often leads to another. Jacob tricked his brother out of his blessing. How did Esau respond?
2. Why do you think God gave Jacob the dream of the stairway to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it?
3. Jesus is the Son of God and Son of Man, on whom the angels ascend and descend. Explain.

Words to Remember

"Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." *John 1:51*