

## Genesis 28 Bible Study

In Genesis 28 we see evidence of the contagious nature of familial sin. Genesis 27 saw Jacob deceiving his father Isaac in order to get the blessing of the first-born son. Now we are going to see that deception perpetrated on Jacob himself by his uncle and his children.

This chapter starts off with Isaac sending Jacob off to find a wife among his family members.

**28:1** So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman!" **28:2** Leave immediately for Paddan Aram! Go to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and find yourself a wife there, among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. **28:3** May the sovereign God bless you! May he make you fruitful and give you a multitude of descendants! Then you will become a large nation. **28:4** May he give you and your descendants the blessing he gave to Abraham so that you may possess the land God gave to Abraham, the land where you have been living as a temporary resident." **28:5** So Isaac sent Jacob on his way, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean and brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau. (Genesis 28:1-5)

*What does Isaac command Jacob not to do?*

*Why would him marrying outside of his clan be something objectional to this patriarch?*

The Canaanites were a mixed race. They had intermarried with dozens of clans for political reasons. This mixture would not only pollute the royal line, but it would pollute the purity of the Israelite's faith. Isaac had received this same command from his father Abraham in Genesis 24:3.

Notice what blessing Isaac gives to Jacob. *Does this sound familiar?*

Now let's take a look at how Esau reacted to this interaction.

**28:6** Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him off to Paddan Aram to find a wife there. As he blessed him, Isaac commanded him, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman." **28:7** Jacob obeyed his father and mother and left

for Paddan Aram. <sup>28:8</sup> Then Esau realized that the Canaanite women were displeasing to his father Isaac. <sup>28:9</sup> So Esau went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael, along with the wives he already had. (Genesis 28:6-9)

*According to this passage, why did Esau choose to marry the daughter of his uncle Ishmael?*

*Esau did avoid marrying a Canaanite woman, but what does choosing to marry from the unchosen line of Abraham say about the spiritually mature of Esau?*

Now we get to the further blessing of Jacob in his dream of the stairway, or ladder, to heaven.

### *Jacob's Dream at Bethel*

<sup>28:10</sup> Meanwhile Jacob left Beer Sheba and set out for Haran. <sup>28:11</sup> He reached a certain place where he decided to camp because the sun had gone down. He took one of the stones and placed it near his head. Then he fell asleep in that place <sup>28:12</sup> and had a dream. He saw a stairway erected on the earth with its top reaching to the heavens. The angels of God were going up and coming down it <sup>28:13</sup> and the Lord stood at its top. He said, "I am the Lord, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of your father Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the ground you are lying on. <sup>28:14</sup> Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west, east, north, and south. All the families of the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using your name and that of your descendants. <sup>28:15</sup> I am with you! I will protect you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I promised you!" (Genesis 28:10-15)

*In this dream what do we learn about Jacob's relationship with God? (see vs. 13 and 15)*

*What promises does God make to Jacob?*

This blessing should be familiar, as we have seen it given to both Abraham and Isaac before Jacob. (see Gen. 13:16; 22:17, 12:2-3; 15:5, 18; 17:3-8; 22:15-18; 35:11-12).

Now let's take a look at Jacob's response to this blessing:

28:16 Then Jacob woke up and thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, but I did not realize it!" 28:17 **He was afraid** and said, "What an awesome place this is! This is nothing else than the house of God! This is the gate of heaven!" 28:18 Early in the morning Jacob took the stone he had placed near his head and **set it up as a sacred stone**. Then he **poured oil on top of it**. 28:19 He **called that place Bethel**,\* although the former name of the town was Luz. 28:20 Then Jacob **made a vow**, saying, "If God is with me and protects me on this journey I am taking and gives me food to eat and clothing to wear, 28:21 and I return safely to my father's home, then the Lord will become my God. 28:22 Then this stone that I have set up as a sacred stone will be the house of God, and I will surely **give you back a tenth of everything you give me.**"

\*Bethel means 'House of God'

What six things does Jacob do in the form of worship upon waking up?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Several of these things that Jacob does here become important to the people of Israel. From here on out we will see Bethel is considered a holy place where God can be seen. Tithing and making vows to God become the norm for the people of God. Also, the standing stone becomes a constant thing for the Israelites to remind them of visitations by God to His people. Joshua 4:6 says, *"The stones will be a reminder to you. When your children ask someday, 'Why are these stones important to you?'"*

Jacob's multiple reactions to the presence of God become the archetypical of Israel's worship. We will see God's people responding to Him in all of these ways for the rest of scripture. God promised to be with Jacob, and He promises to be with us. Jacob is an example of how God's promises to us prompt our worship of Him. *In what ways can you grow your worship by growing your mindfulness of His promises?*