

JACOB FLED FROM HOME AND ENCOUNTERED GOD

Genesis 27:41 - 28:22

STRUCTURE

Key-person: Jacob

Key-location: Bethel

Key-repetitions:

- Bless: Isaac blessed Jacob when he sent him away (Gen 28:1); Isaac wished for God to bless Jacob (Gen 28:3); Isaac wished for God to give Jacob the blessing given to Abraham (Gen 28:4); God promised that all people on earth would be blessed through Jacob and his descendant (Gen 28:14).
- Pillow: Jacob used a stone for a pillow (Gen 28:11); Jacob took the stone he used for his pillow and set it up as a memorial pillar (Gen 28:18).
- God made multiple promises to Jacob in his dream (Gen 28:13-15).

Key-attitudes:

- Rebekah's fear that her son Esau would kill her favorite son Jacob.
- Jacob's cowardliness.
- Jacob's fear when he fled from Esau.
- Esau's anger at Jacob.
- Jacob's fear when he realized God was in the place where he slept.

Initial-situation:

Jacob deceived his blind father Isaac into giving him the blessing. Isaac thought he was giving it to his older son Esau. Esau made plans to kill Jacob.

Initial-problem:

Rebekah warned her son Jacob that his brother was plotting to kill him and that Jacob should flee at once to her brother Laban in Haran.

Final-situation:

Jacob promised God that if God brought him safely back to his father's home, then God would be his God and he would tithe.

BIBLE STORY

Rebekah told her son Jacob, "Your brother Esau is plotting to kill you. Now, my son, flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran. Stay with him until your brother's fury subsides. When your brother is no longer angry with you, I'll send word for you to come back. I don't want to lose both of my sons on the same day."

Isaac sent for Jacob, blessed him and commanded, "Go to the house of your mother's father Bethuel. Marry one of Laban's daughters. May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers. May God give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien." Isaac sent Jacob on his way to Rebekah's brother Laban (Gen 27:42 - 28:5).

Jacob set out for Haran. The sun went down and Jacob stopped for the night. Jacob put a stone under his head for a pillow and laid down to sleep. Jacob had a dream where he saw a ladder resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven. The angels of God were going up and coming down the ladder. The Lord stood above the ladder and said, "I am the Lord, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of Isaac. I'll give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth. You'll spread out to the west, the east, the north, and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and through your descendant. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go. I'll bring you back to this land. I'll not leave you until I do what I've promised you."

Jacob awoke from his sleep and he thought, "Certainly the Lord is in this place, but I didn't know it. This place frightens me! This is God's house; this is the Gate to Heaven!"

Jacob took the stone he had used for his pillow, set it up as a memorial pillar, and poured oil over it. Jacob called that place Bethel (*God's house*). Jacob vowed, "I want God to be with me, watch over me on this journey, and give me food to eat and clothes to wear. Then I'll return safely to my father's house. If the Lord does these things, he'll be my God and this stone that I've set up as a pillar will be God's house. And I'll give God one-tenth of all he gives me (Gen 28:10-22).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened to Jacob the night he was fleeing from Esau and he used a rock for a pillow?
2. What was the significance of the ladder to heaven?
3. Why was Jacob unaware of God's presence before his dream?
4. Why are people often unaware of God's presence?
5. Why do some people flee from their homes today?
6. How can God help the person who is forced to flee from home?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **The wife and mother who gives priority to her children instead of her husband will suffer solitude.** When Rebekah deceived her husband in order to help Jacob, her husband Isaac was betrayed, she lost relationship with her son Esau, and she was left alone when Jacob fled from Esau (Gen 27:30 - 28:5).
2. **God is omnipresent.** God is at every place, even when people aren't aware of his presence. Jacob was surprised to find God in the place where he thought he was alone (Gen 28:17).
3. **It is not sufficient for a person to have a godly heritage, because each person needs his own personal relationship with God.** It was insufficient for Jacob to be Abraham's grandson. Jacob needed his own personal relationship with God.
4. **A person's own inadequacy doesn't prevent God from blessing him.** Esau was the outdoors man. Jacob had such limited experience sleeping outdoors that he used a rock for a pillow. Yet God appeared to him (Gen 28:10-22).
5. **What the ladder was to Jacob, the Lord Jesus Christ is to all people: God communicating with people and providing an access to heaven.** The ladder was a vision of God's communicating with Jacob and providing him access to heaven (Gen 28:12). The vision of Bethel was used by Jesus as a symbol of himself when he said that Nathanael would see heaven open and God's angels going up and coming down to the Son of Man (Jn 1:51).
6. **Wherever a person has an encounter with God, it becomes a sacred location.** Jacob took the stone which he had used as his pillow and consecrated it to God in commemoration of his encounter with God. The place would be evermore sacred as the spot at which he first met God (Gen 28:18-19).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Pantomime Retelling of the Story:

The storyteller tells the story one time. Then the storyteller:

- Chooses a listener to pantomime the story as the storyteller tells it a second time.
- Invites a listener to retell the story.
- Asks listeners if the one who retold the story left out or added to the story.