

# GENESIS 28

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Genesis 28:1–22

Isaac Sends Jacob to the East/Jacob's Vision

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God." (John 3:16–18). "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!" (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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**Links** to every chapter of this word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies of **Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) ([folder](#)) (which is what this document is). This incorporates 2 previous studies done in the book of Genesis. However, much of this material was thrown together without careful editing. Therefore, from time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no overall editing done once all of this material was combined. There is a second, less complete set of weekly lessons of **Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Every word of that study can be found in the word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies.

This study makes reference to a wide-range of sources. There are quotations from doctrinal teachers, of course; but from Catholic commentaries and from other sources as well. Wherever I found relevant truth, I quoted from it or was inspired by it. Even though it is clear that some churches have a better concept of our reason for being here than others, that does not mean that there is no truth to be found anywhere else. So, from time to time, I will quote from John Calvin, even though I do not subscribe to 5-point Calvinism; I will quote from some Catholic sources, even though I believe that they are very wrong regarding Mary, the pope, apostolic succession and other such doctrines. On occasion, I will quote from a source which is totally wrong on that subject; and then explain why. The intention is for this to be the most thorough and accurate study of Genesis available anywhere.

Also, it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables or every word Various Commentators doctrines as well (sometimes, these can be repetitive). These are tables which are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them (based upon the suggestion of a friend). However, if you ever doubt the translation of a word, phrase or a verse, these translation tables are then available. If you ever want to read most of the relevant material on a particular verse or concept of a verse, that is available herein.

**Preface:** In Genesis 27, it has been determined that Jacob will go east to marry a woman from their family rather than a Canaanite woman, as his brother Esau had married. Genesis 28 begins with his father, Isaac, giving him a blessing before he goes—a blessing which recognizes Jacob as being the line of God’s promise.

Esau, his twin brother, takes notice of this and the importance of marrying someone from the family, so, even though he was already married to two women of Canaan, Esau then married a daughter of Ishmael (Isaac’s half brother).

Meanwhile, Jacob traveled north, going through Luz, where he had a dream-vision of angels going from earth to heaven and back again; and God is above all of this (this is often referred to as *Jacob’s ladder*). God speaks to Jacob and gives him the promises previously delivered to Abraham and to Isaac; and then God promises to be with Jacob wherever he goes; and that He would bring Jacob back to this land.

When Jacob awakens the next morning, he is amazed at the place where he is, and renames it *Bethel* (which means, *house of God*). At the end of this chapter, Jacob makes a vow to God about tithing.

There is a great deal of supplementary material covered in this chapter. Many have alleged that the Bible is filled with contradictions—therefore, many pages are devoted to taking some of these contradictions and explaining them; which set of doctrines is followed by *The Uniqueness of the Bible*. There are two other very important doctrines in this chapter: *The Spiritual Life in the Old and New Testaments*; and *A Spiritually-Empowered Jesus Christ is our Spiritual Model*.

There are many **chapter commentaries** on the book of Genesis. This will be the most extensive examination of Genesis 28, where you will be able to examine in depth every word of the original text. Every attempt has been made to make this both a complete and self-contained study. Therefore, all references, vocabulary, and related concepts should be found within this extensive study. Easy access links to more in-depth studies of some vocabulary words, concepts and doctrines are also provided.

#### Quotations:

Mae West: *She’s the kind of girl who climbed the ladder of success wrong by wrong.*<sup>1</sup>

Arnold Schwarzenegger: *Just remember, you can’t climb the ladder of success with your hands in your pockets.*<sup>2</sup>

Thomas Guthrie: *It is not with a rush and a spring that we are to reach Christ’s character, and attain to perfect saintship; but step by step, foot by foot, hand over hand, we are slowly and often painfully to mount the ladder that rests on earth, and rises to heaven.*<sup>3</sup>

Douglas William Jerrold: *Talk to him of Jacob’s ladder, and he would ask the number of the steps.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From <http://quotes.yourdictionary.com/ladder> accessed June 8, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> From <http://quotes.yourdictionary.com/ladder> accessed June 8, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> From <http://quotes.yourdictionary.com/ladder> accessed June 8, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> From <http://quotes.yourdictionary.com/ladder> accessed June 8, 2017.

Kukis: *The key is never a miraculous experience; the key is never a sign or a miracle; the key is always the truth and our response to it.*

Mike Scott: *Flags, rags, ferryboats, scimitars and scarves every precious dream and vision underneath the stars  
You climbed on the ladder with the wind in your sails you came like a comet blazing your trail too high, too far, too soon  
You saw the whole of the moon!*<sup>5</sup>

Lytton: *Sublime Philosophy! Thou art the patriarch's ladder, reaching heaven; And bright with beckoning angels  
but alas! We see thee, like the patriarch, but in dreams, By the first step, dull slumbering on the earth.*<sup>6</sup>

Krummacher: *Earth is a court of Paradise; life, here below, is a short pilgrimage; our home is above, and the life  
of a blessed eternity illuminates our path.*<sup>7</sup>

Lange: *Where God's Word is found, there is a house of God. There heaven stands open.*<sup>8</sup>

Hebrews 1:1–2 **Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, Whom He appointed the Heir of all things, through Whom also He created the world.** (ESV; capitalized)

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<sup>5</sup> From <http://quotes.yourdictionary.com/ladder> accessed June 8, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> From <http://quotes.yourdictionary.com/ladder> accessed June 8, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:17 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses).

<sup>8</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:17 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses).

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Many who read and study this chapter are 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well.

In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Definition of Terms	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Advents of Jesus</b>	When Jesus first came to walk on this earth, that was the 1 <sup>st</sup> Advent. When He returns to destroy the nations who are about to invade Israel, that will be the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Advent. <b>David on the two advents of Jesus Christ</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ). ( <a href="#">Stan Murrell</a> )
<b>Angel of Jehovah</b>	The Angel of the Lord [= the Angel of God] is one of the preincarnate forms of Jesus Christ. The Angel of Jehovah is identified as Jehovah. Gen. 16:7-13 21:17-18 22:11-18 31:11-13 48:15,16 Exodus 3:2 cf. Acts 7:30-35 Ex. 13:21 14:19 Judg.2:1-4 5:23 6:11-23 13:3-22 2Sam. 24:16 Zechariah 1:12-13. The Angel of Jehovah is distinguished from Jehovah. Genesis 24:7 40 Ex. 23:20 32:34 Num. 20:16 1Chronicles 21:15-18 Isa. 63:9 Zech. 1:12-13. See the <b>Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>Chiasmus</b>	This is a format where the first passage can be matched to the final passage; the second passage can be matched to the second-to-the-last passage, etc. It is called a <i>chiasmus</i> (or, <i>chiasmus</i> ) based upon the letter chi (X). Many times, this structure can be used to find the key element of the psalm or to rearrange the psalm. ( <a href="#">Chiasmus example</a> ) ( <a href="#">Thomas B. Clarke</a> ) ( <a href="#">Brad McCoy</a> ) ( <a href="#">Biblical Chiasm Exchange</a> )
<b>Church Age</b>	The period of time in history where God works through the body of believers, also known as the church. This age began on the Day of Pentecost, following our Lord's resurrection and ascension, and continues today. See the <b>Three Dispensations: The Age of Israel, the Age of the Hypostatic Union and the Church Age</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>Cluster Genealogy</b>	A genealogy where the patriarch is named along with several of his sons and several of their sons. Generally, this is only for 3 or 4 generations.

Definition of Terms	
<b>Documentary Hypothesis (also known as JEPD Theory)</b>	Documentary Hypothesis simply asserts that the Pentateuch was not authored by Moses but written 1000 years (give or take) after Moses by several authors who wrote portions here and there and then other men have performed extensive revisions and editing after them. See the <b>Doctrine of Documentary Hypothesis</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ). Josh McDowell did an outstanding treatise of this in <a href="#">The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict</a> (or <a href="#">Evidence that Demands a Verdict Vol. 2</a> ).
<b>The Geographic will of God</b>	This is simply stated as, <i>where does God want me to be?</i> The <b>Geographic Will of God</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>Immanence and Transcendence of God</b>	<i>Immanence</i> is where God is fully present in the physical world and thus accessible to His creatures in various ways. ( <i>Immanence</i> is not to be confused with <i>imminence</i> , which refers to the timing of the Lord's return to earth.) <i>Immanence</i> means that God is present in all of His creation, yet He is distinct from it (that is, He also <i>transcends</i> it). <i>Transcendence</i> means that God transcends, goes outside of, exists above, or is wholly independent from the universe and all physical laws. God made the universe, but He is not confined by the universe nor is He subject to its physical laws. <b>Immanence and Transcendence</b> .
<b>Linear Genealogy</b>	A linear genealogy (also called a <i>straight-line genealogy</i> ) follows one particular line for 4 or 5 or more generations. Very rarely is more than one son named in any generation.
<b>Rapture [of the church]</b>	The rapture is the physical transfer of all believers who are alive at the end of the Church Age from earth to meet the Lord in the air. This is not the 2 <sup>nd</sup> advent of the Lord, which occurs 7 years later. ( <a href="#">Rapture @ Grace Bible Church</a> ); ( <a href="#">Pre-Tribulation Rapture @ Grace Bible Church</a> ); ( <a href="#">Rapture @ Got Questions</a> ); ( <a href="#">Rapture @ Theopedia</a> ).
<b>The Revealed God (or, the Revealed Lord)</b>	We all come to a time of God-consciousness where we understand the concept and possibility of the existence of God. At that point, we face 2 great questions: (1) do we want to know this God and (2) are will willing to believe in God as He has revealed Himself or do we make a god in our own image and worship that? In both the Old and New Testaments, God will make Himself known (He reveals Himself) to those who will believe in Him and to others as well. We know Him firmly and concretely as Jesus Christ; and in the Old Testament, He is known as the God of the Jews, the Creator of the Universe, the God of Moses (or of Abraham), etc.
<b>Sin unto Death</b>	This is not a particular sin, but the point at which harsh discipline is no longer working on the believer, so God takes the believer out of this world in a very painful way. For more information, see the <b>Doctrine of the Sin unto Death</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>Type, Antitype, Typical</b>	A <i>type</i> is a preordained representation wherein certain persons, events, and institutions of the O.T. stand for corresponding persons, events, and institutions of the N.T. Types are pictures or object lessons by which God has taught His redemptive plan. They are a shadow of things to come, not the image of those things (Col. 2:17 Heb. 8:5 10:1). <sup>9</sup> See the <b>Doctrine of Typology</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).

<sup>9</sup> From <http://www.dake.com/dake/types.html> accessed July 30, 2013.

Some of these definitions are taken from

[http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=1556](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=1556)  
<http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml>  
<http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf>  
<http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d>  
<http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/termsanddefs.htm>  
<http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics.html>  
<http://www.theopedia.com/>

## An Introduction to Genesis 28

**Introduction:** With this and the previous chapter, the patriarch Isaac is set aside, and we spend the next 10 or so chapters studying the life of Jacob, the next patriarch in the history of Israel. Abraham had been the man of great faith, offering up his own beloved son, Isaac. Isaac, although he lived longer than his father and son, has considerably less written about him, and so it is difficult to determine and summarize his role (although Isaac will recognize in this chapter that Jacob continues the line of blessing, and he celebrates this).

However, Jacob is much a man of his own will, more so than Abraham and Isaac. Jacob often superimposes this will over others whenever he believes it is called for. He is so contentious that even the **Angel of God** will wrestle with him (indicating his active opposition to God) before he returns to the land God has promised him.

*MacLaren: [Jacob] is a crafty schemer, selfish, over-reaching, with a keen eye to the main chance. Whoever deals with him has to look sharply after his own interests. Self-advantage in its most earthly form is uppermost in him; and, like all timid, selfish men, shifty ways and evasions are his natural weapons.<sup>10</sup>*

Genesis 28 is actually a study in contrasts. In previous chapters, Jacob has schemed to receive the blessings of the firstborn; and he actually got his father to give him an end-of-life blessing, believing him to be Esau (Genesis 27:1–30). However, in this chapter, Isaac, Jacob's father, is going to give him the blessing of Abraham to him and to his children—which is a pretty major thing for Isaac to do. He has, in no more than 1 or 2 days, accepted that Jacob is the son of blessing, and so finalizes this blessing. However, at the same time, Jacob, because of his scheming, has made his brother Esau angry enough to kill him. Therefore, Jacob is going to leave the country for awhile, at the urging of his mother. So, on the one hand, his father recognizes him as the blessed son, to be blessed with the Land of Promise; and, on the other hand, Jacob will leave the land of Canaan and go east to his family in Paddan-aram.

Throughout most of his life, Jacob never seems to quite get it right. He lies, schemes and manipulates in order to receive God's blessing; and God would have blessed him without all of that. It is as if he continues wrestling against God to try to take from Him what He would freely give.

It is difficult to determine who wrote Genesis 27. Isaac is so old at this time that it is unlikely that he physically wrote this, although he could have dictated it. There is so little that Isaac could have actually written in Genesis anyway (Genesis 24–26 or 27) that he could have dictated it in one or two sittings.<sup>11</sup> It is possible that Jacob could have written it; however, there is a lot of detail concerning what had occurred between Esau and his father, which is something that Isaac would appreciate, but Jacob, less so. Chapter 27 is a fitting end for Isaac because, except for Genesis 28:1–5, he is never mentioned again in Scripture as a participant in any conversation or activity. In any case, Jacob probably did not write these Scriptures right away because he was spiritually immature—but he

<sup>10</sup> Alexander MacLaren, D. D., Litt. D., *Expositions Of Holy Scripture*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:10–22.

<sup>11</sup> I would not be surprised if the book of Genesis was principally passed along through memorization, as there are memorization tricks that seem to be build into this book.

may have written them or passed them along many years later. Chapter 28 is undoubtedly Jacob's work, containing information only Jacob would know.

And, I use the word *write*, which is not necessarily correct. What we read could simply be what Jacob has told his wives and sons; and he would have included the history of Abraham and Isaac as well (which they would have told him as a child).

It is my opinion that the Scriptures were kept alive by word of mouth and by memorization. I think that man was much more capable of remembering things than he is now. And, as we have studied throughout, the very organization of many chapters of Scripture appear to be designed for memorization.

Furthermore, there are indications that some of what is recorded in Scripture is extremely personal, such as a description of Jacob waiting 7 years to marry Rachel—the words used are those of a man in love, not of a detached 3<sup>rd</sup> party simply recording interesting history decades or centuries later.

We begin with Isaac blessing Jacob (with cognizance); Jacob on his flight from Esau; we have some information about Esau and his third wife (information easily obtained by Jacob in Genesis 33) and we have Jacob's dream and Jacob's ladder. It is his dream which is very personal.

When studying Genesis 28, I wondered if anyone else saw Jacob is a type of nation Israel; removed from the land twice—the second time, seemingly for good. At least one other person saw this parallel:

*Scofield: Dispensationally, the scene speaks of Israel the nation, cast out of the Land of Promise because of evil-doing there, but holding the promise of restoration and blessing; (Genesis 28:15 Deut. 30:1–10). To "an Israelite indeed" Christ speaks of Jacob's vision as to be fulfilled in the Son of man (cf Genesis 28:12 John 1:47–51).<sup>12</sup>*

Arthur Pink will go into **great detail** as to how Jacob is a type of Israel.

Some people attempt to put a happy face on Jacob. Barnes writes: *[W]e can discern the general distinction in the lives of the three patriarchs. Abraham's is a life of authority and decision; Isaac's, of submission and acquiescence; and Jacob's, of trial and struggle.*<sup>13</sup> The thing is, about 90% of the roadblocks and detours in Jacob's path, he puts there himself.

### Why does God choose Jacob over Esau?

Too many commentators give the same answer as is found in the College Press Bible Study: *God's election of Jacob was not arbitrary, but the consequence of His foreknowledge of the basic superiority of Jacob's character over that of Esau: a fact certainly borne out by what they did in the later years of their lives and by the acts of their respective progenies.*<sup>14</sup>

H. Allon makes a few accurate assessments, but ultimately fails by comparing these two men: *Jacob and Esau are very like men that we meet every day—commonplace, ordinary men, neither of them distinguished in character or ability. They were children of a weak father and of a crafty mother. Neither of them has any special religiousness. In the case of Esau the sensuous half of the man is all that could be desired, the spiritual half is altogether wanting. The natural half of Jacob's character is far less noble than that of Esau, but there were also in him certain religious susceptibilities—a religious imagination and sentiment and personal purity—which constituted the possibility of religious development. The difference between them is the difference between the good things in a bad man*

<sup>12</sup> C. I. Scofield, *Scofield Notes from the Scofield King James' Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:10.

<sup>13</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:1–22.

<sup>14</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:20–22.

*and the bad things in a good man, with their contrasted issues. Both of these youths began with the somewhat feeble religiousness of Isaac's tent. It took no hold upon Esau the profane, and he became Edom. It did take some hold upon Jacob the crafty, and he became Israel.<sup>15</sup>*

In essence, Allon is saying, Jacob is just a little bit better, ultimately; and a bit more spiritual.

Many commentators make the mistake that the College Press Bible Study does, many of them writing, *God knew that Jacob was a better person than Esau, ultimately so the line of promise went through Jacob* (or words to that effect). There is no indication that the character of Jacob and the character of Esau were dramatically different. Whereas Jacob was scheming and manipulative, Esau was whiny and lacked an understanding of what it was he thought he wanted. Both men, no doubt, believed in the God of Abraham and Isaac. The difference between the two men is, many generations later, the Lord Jesus Christ was born from the line of Jacob and not from the line of Esau. God foreknew that and acted in accordance with that. Simultaneous to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, many of the descendants of Jacob were negative toward the plan of God—which is why (on a human level) our Lord was crucified.

In fact, along these same lines, is Herod the Great (and, therefore, his sons) are descended from Esau; and our Lord's humanity is descended from Jacob. By proclaiming Jacob the line of promise, it has nothing to do with Jacob being a slightly better person than Esau; it has to do with the spiritual direction of these two lines.

**Fundamental questions about Genesis 28:** There are some very fundamental questions about Jacob's spiritual life which arise from this chapter which will require some thought and discussion. God will appear to Jacob in a dream and Jacob will respond to this appearance. Two fundamental questions would be: (1) What is the impact of God's appearance on Jacob's spiritual life? (2) How are we to process this part of the chapter, given that none of us will experience an actual vision of God in our lives.

After God appears in a dream to Jacob, he does 6 different things in response. 5 of those things are okay—even legitimate—but the last thing that he does—a vow to God—can certainly be questioned. Essentially, Jacob will offer God 10% of his profits *if* God comes through. Does that strike you as just a bit impertinent?

In order for spiritual growth to occur, we must marry the words of God to the faith in our souls. Had Jacob merely taken the words spoken by God at face value and believed them, he would have experienced spiritual growth. He would have been better prepared for his future. God's words are *more important* than His appearance to Jacob.

As I study a chapter, questions will occur to me—some of them important and many of them minor. Not all of these questions will be satisfactorily answered.

## Fundamental Questions About Genesis 28

One of the big questions is, *how does God appearing to Jacob impact his life?* A follow-on question would be, *are we not short-changed in the Church Age, as we will not see or hear God during our lives?*

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In case you are unfamiliar with Jacob's character, VBVM gives us the bullet points.

<sup>15</sup> *The Sermon Bible Commentary*; ©1888-1893; in the Public Domain; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll, M.A., LL.D., from e-sword, Genesis 28:20–22.

## Verse by Verse on Jacob's Shortcomings

- He relies on himself and his intellect rather than relying on God
- He turns to God only after his schemes have brought him trouble
- Like his father, he fails at times to assume the leadership role in his family
- Generally, he tends to fight against God rather than work with God

If we keep Jacob's shortcomings in mind, it is easier to not get confused by this chapter.

From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_28b.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_28b.pdf) accessed May 27, 2017.

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I only found one??

## Several Commentators Introduce Genesis 28

*Sermon Bible Commentary: If there be little poetic or romantic charm in the history of Isaac, what a wealth of it there is in that of Jacob! A double deceit, followed by banishment from his country; this expulsion relieved and brightened, first by a glorious vision and then by unexampled prosperity in the strange land whither he had gone; long toils, travails, disappointments, and quarrels; and, at last, light at eventime in Egypt, and the spirit of prophecy resting upon his soul. Jacob's love for Rachel is the most pleasing trait in his character, as the prophecy from his deathbed is the most sublime.<sup>16</sup>*

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It is important to understand what has gone before.

## The Prequel of Genesis 28

When Rebekah, Isaac's wife, eventually became pregnant (at age 60), she felt an abnormal amount of pain within and she was told by God, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger." (Genesis 25:23b; ESV)

Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons, Esau and Jacob and Esau was born first—although Jacob was holding his heel when he exited the womb.

For whatever reason, each parent had a favorite son: Isaac enjoyed hunting with his son, who was an outdoors man; and Rebekah spent her time with Jacob, who was a quiet man who lived in tents (an indoors man) (Genesis 25:27).

Because Esau was the firstborn, he would normally have received the greater blessing and the double portion; and his line would have been the primary line (continuing the line of Abraham and Isaac). However, at some point in his life, Jacob got it in his head to take these things as his own.

Regarding the twins, the Bible focuses in on two incidents. Esau had been out hunting and he was unsuccessful, returning to their encampment starving. Jacob was making a pot of beans at the time, which Esau greatly desired. Jacob agreed to feed Esau in exchange for his birthright as the firstborn. Esau swore an oath before Jacob that his birthright would be given in exchange for these beans. Then Esau ate his fill and left, despising his birthright. **Genesis 25** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

<sup>16</sup> *The Sermon Bible Commentary*; ©1888-1893; in the Public Domain; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll, M.A., LL.D., from e-sword, Genesis 28:1–22.

## The Prequel of Genesis 28

By the time we get to Genesis 27, many estimate their age to be 77; and Isaac, poor of sight, believes that he is soon to die. He tells his son Esau to go out and kill some fresh game, and they will eat this meal together and Isaac will bless him with his end-of-life blessing. Rebekah overhears this conversation, and quickly puts a plan into motion to disguise Jacob as Esau so that he might receive this blessing. The deception works and Isaac blesses Jacob rather than Esau, giving him clearly a preeminent blessing.

Esau returns soon after Jacob leaves, and is quite distressed over this turn of events, pleading, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" But Jacob's blessing clearly made the recipient the son of the greater blessings, as Isaac had said, "Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!" (Gen 27:29; ESV) The very nature of Isaac's blessing here is such that, it cannot be topped.

Esau was absolutely furious and wanted to kill Jacob, to the point of fantasizing aloud about it to a number of people. When Rebekah hears of Esau's plan, she quickly formulates a plan to send Jacob east to find a wife of proper breeding. The reason that this is done is, only Jacob knows that Rebekah was in on this plan to deceive Isaac. Had Esau or Isaac figured out that the person who pushed this was Rebekah, that would have made their relationship to her rather tense. See **Genesis 27** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Rebekah does in fact have a serious problem with Esau's wives (in fact, both she and Isaac are disappointed in the women that he chose); and Rebekah decides the best thing to do is to send Jacob eastward to find a wife from their family. This gets Jacob safely away from Esau (this is actually a part of this chapter), and protects Rebekah from being found out.

A more [detailed prolog](#) is to be found right before we begin Genesis 28:1.

Genesis 28 will begin with Isaac telling Jacob that he must go east to find a wife of the proper breeding; and Isaac will give him a blessing before he goes (and this time, Isaac clearly knows which son he is blessing).

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

J. Vernon McGee: *In the previous chapter we saw Jacob doing one of the most despicable things any man could do. He did it at the behest of his mother. You know, sometimes people excuse themselves for being mean by saying it is because their mother didn't love them when they were little. Believe me, Jacob couldn't say that. Jacob was loved and spoiled. When he was asked to do something that was not the honorable thing to do, he did it. He stole the birthright from his brother.*<sup>17</sup>

Chuck Smith: *Now if you remember the story earlier, when the servant had gone to Haran to get a bride for Isaac, that Rebekah came out to the well and he said, "Give me a drink" and she said, "Sure, and I'll get water for your camels, too". And that was the little thing that he had set up that he would know the will of God for the one who was to be the bride of Isaac. And how the servant explained this whole thing and he gave to her a gold nose ring and a couple of golden bracelets. And she ran home and said, "Oh, one of Abraham's servants is here and he's looking", you know for they didn't know what his purpose was but he's just here and he's got a lot of camels and she showed the gold earrings and the golden nose ring.*

Smith continues: *And Laban her brother came running out to meet him. "Oh, come, stay in our house". Laban, seeing the gold, he was-he was attracted to this and was a very gracious host and all. And Laban was active in the negotiations to send Rebekah back. She was his sister and so he is the uncle of Jacob and it's important that you sort of fix that relationship in your mind as we move along now in*

<sup>17</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) (Genesis 28); accessed June 4, 2017.

*the story. Laban is the brother of Jacob's mother, the brother of Rebekah and he will be coming soon into our scene.*<sup>18</sup>

We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

### The Principals of Genesis 28

Characters	Commentary
Isaac	Isaac is the living patriarch, the father of twins Jacob and Esau. In this chapter, he will tell his son Jacob to head east to find a wife of proper breeding.
Rebekah	Rebekah is Isaac's wife and, it turns out, a master manipulator. She wanted her favorite son to receive the superior blessing (Genesis 27); but this angered her other son to the point where, she must get Jacob to leave Canaan—but without arousing suspicion in her husband or other son about her participation in great deception of the previous chapter.
Jacob	Jacob is a grown man in this and the previous chapter, some estimating his age to be 77. He allowed his mother to convince him to deceive his father in the previous chapter; and now, because of the anger of his twin brother, Jacob will begin his journey out of the land of Canaan. This chapter takes us merely to the city of Bethel.
Esau	Although Esau plays a very small role in this chapter, it is his murderous anger of the previous chapter which has caused Rebekah to manipulate Isaac into sending Jacob out of the country to find a wife. Once Jacob leaves, Esau marries a third wife, but this time from the clan of Ishmael (rather than a Hittite, like his first two wives).
The angels of God	At the end of this chapter, Jacob will have a dream-vision of the angels of God going up and down on a ladder (escalator, stairs), between heaven and earth. I would understand these to be the elect angels.
God	Jacob will have some sort of vision of God above the angels, speaking to him.

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We need to know where this chapter takes place.

### The Places of Genesis 28

Place	Description
Beersheba	The family of Isaac apparently live in Beersheba at this time. Genesis 26:23, 33 28:10
Bethel (Luz)	Jacob will go north and he stops in Luz, where he has a dream-vision of God.
Haran (Charan)	Haran is Jacob's ultimate destination, as that is the city where his Uncle Laban lives.
Paddan-aram	Paddan-aram is the region where Haran is.

A map follows.

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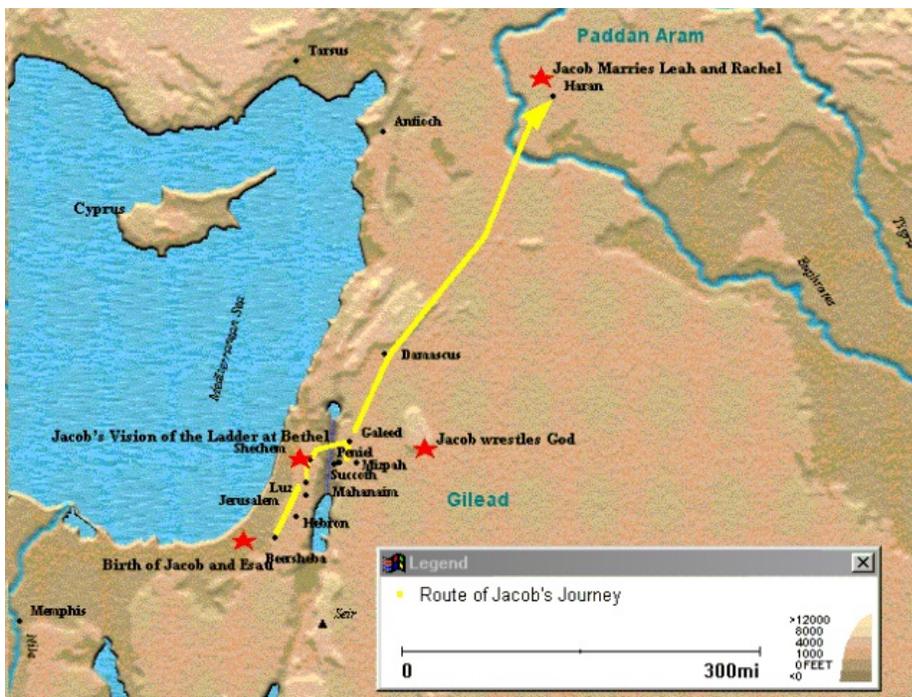
<sup>18</sup> Chuck Smith, *Through the Bible Commentary C2000 Series*; from e-Sword, Genesis 27:1–46.

**Map of Jacob’s Journey;** from the **La Vista Church of Christ**<sup>19</sup>, accessed June 4, 2017.

Jacob begins in Beersheba and proceeds northward to Luz, where he has a vision of God and renames that city *Bethel*. That is all the trip which is found in Genesis 28.

Jacob’s eventual destination will be the region of Paddan-aram; and specifically, the city of Haran, when his Uncle Laban lives. He will select a wife from his mother’s family there. He will reach this destination in Genesis 29:1–4.

Unlike Abraham’s servant, who traveled this same route to find a wife for Isaac, Jacob will have limited means to work with. Abraham’s servant was able to provide a dowry for Isaac’s wife, and bring her straightway back to Canaan. Jacob will have to work for his wife’s dowry in Paddan-aram.



There is some disagreement as to how Jacob traveled and what he had. I maintain that he had at least two camels, some foodstuffs, and his mother’s personal servant, Deborah. I base this on him pouring oil over the rock at the end of this chapter and the mention of Deborah’s death in a later chapter in association with Jacob’s return from Paddan-aram. Many other commentators quote Gen 32:10, which is Jacob speaking to God: “I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps.” I take his statement to indicate that he had nothing of wealth—no personal possessions, nothing with which he could use to bargain—apart from his staff. No doubt, one could take a halfway position here, that he did travel with Deborah; that they did have some foodstuffs; but that they traveled on foot.

Whereas, Isaac was probably upset with his son for deceiving him, and, for that reason, was not interested in providing him a full complement of goods; Rebekah his mother may have been in agreement, so that Jacob did not simply find a wife and bring her back immediately. All of this, by the way, is pure speculation. Nothing is actually said about what Jacob took (apart from the oil and his mention of the staff); and we have no record of any conversation about this issue between Isaac and Rebekah.

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### The Patriarchal Timeline for Genesis 28

Legend	
Birth or death	God speaks with Abraham
Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)	

<sup>19</sup> This is the best map I could find; I am not giving support to the Church of Christ denomination here.

Parentetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
2234 B.C.	2097 B.C.			Genesis 11:24	Terah, Abram's father, is born. Gen 11:24–26 <b>Nahor lived 29 years and fathered Terah. After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and fathered other sons and daughters. Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.</b>
	1978 B.C.			Genesis 11:25	Death of Nahor, Abram's uncle
	1969 B.C.		Noah is 950	Genesis 9:28–29	Death of Noah
2164 B.C.	1967 B.C.			Genesis 11:26–27	Abraham (Terah's son) and Lot (Haran's son) born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram would be the 43 <sup>rd</sup> generation from Adam. Gen 11:26 <b>Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.</b>
2078 B.C.	1881 B.C.	2080 B.C.	Abraham is 86	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 <b>Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.</b>
2064 B.C. (2066 B.C.)		2066 B.C.	Abraham is 100	Genesis 21:1–7 1Chronicles 1:34	Isaac born to Abraham. Isaac would be the 44 <sup>th</sup> generation from Adam. Gen 21:5 <b>Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.</b>
	1841–1816 B.C.			Genesis 25:12–16 1Chronicles 1:29–31	Ishmael's children.
	1834 B.C. 1829 B.C. (Klassen)	2054 B.C.		Genesis 22:1–19	Abraham is told by God to go to the <b>land of Moriah</b> to offer up his son Isaac to God as a sacrifice. This was a 3-day journey away. They then go to <b>Beer-sheba</b> , which could simply indicate that they are returning home to <b>Beer-sheba</b> .
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge <sup>20</sup> puts this date at 1872 B.C., based upon Antiquities by Josephus.					
(2029 B.C.)	1830 B.C.	2030 B.C.	Abraham is 137	Genesis 23:1–20	The death of Sarah. She dies in <b>Kirjatharba</b> , it is <b>Hebron</b> , in the <b>land of Canaan</b> . Gen 23:1 <b>Now Sarah lived 127 years; these were all the years of her life.</b> She is buried in a cave of the field of Machpelah before <b>Mamre</b> ; it is <b>Hebron</b> , in the <b>land of Canaan</b> , purchased by Abraham from the sons of Heth.

<sup>20</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Genesis 22:1.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
(2026 B.C.)				Genesis 24:1–67 Genesis 25:20	Isaac (Abraham's son) and Rebecca. Genesis 25:20 <i>Isaac was 40 years old when he took as his wife Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramæan from Paddan-aram, and sister of Laban the Aramæan.</i> At this time, Isaac is living in the <b>Negev</b> . It is likely that Abraham lived there as well; or near to there.
		2026 B.C.	Isaac is 40	Genesis 25:20	Isaac marries Rebecca. Genesis 25:20
	1826 B.C.			Genesis 25:1	Abraham marries Keturah. Smith puts the date at 1860 B.C.; and Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge at 1853 B.C.
				Genesis 25:2–4 1Chronicles 1:32–33	Abraham's fathers children by Keturah.
	1817 B.C.		Shem is 600	Genesis 11:11	Death of Shem.
2004 B.C.	1807 B.C.	2006 B.C.	Abraham is 160; Isaac is 60	Genesis 25:19, 21–26	Jacob & Esau born to Isaac. Gen 25:26 <i>After this, his brother came out grasping Esau's heel with his hand. So he was named Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when they were born.</i> Therefore, Abraham would be 160 years old.
(1991 B.C.)				Genesis 25:5–6	Isaac is the heir of all things that Abraham has (but, most importantly, of the covenant of God with Abraham).
1989 B.C.	1792 B.C.	1991 B.C.	Abraham is 175	Genesis 25:7–10	Abraham dies. Gen 25:7 <i>This is the length of Abraham's life: 175 years.</i> He is buried in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Nephron (this would be with Sarah).
				Genesis 25:11	God blesses Isaac.
(1943 B.C.)	1788 B.C.			Genesis 25:17	The death of Ishmael. Gen 25:17 <i>This is the length of Ishmael's life: 137 years. He took his last breath and died, and was gathered to his people.</i>
			Eber is 464	Genesis 11:17	Death of Eber.
	1782 B.C.	1978 B.C.		Genesis 25:27–34	Jacob obtains Esau's birthright for a mess of pottage.
	1782 B.C. 1740 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:1–5	A famine in the land; God renews covenant with Isaac at Gerar.
				Genesis 26:6–10	Rebecca and Isaac in Gerar.
				Genesis 26:11–16	Isaac is blessed by God in Gerar.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	1782 B.C. 1735 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:17–22	Strife between Isaac and Philistines in and near Gerar.
	1767 B.C.		Esau (and Jacob) 40	Genesis 26:34–35	Esau marries two Canaanite women.
	1757– 1739 B.C. 1733 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:23–25	Isaac makes an altar in Beer-sheba.
(1943 B.C.)	1744 B.C.		Ishmael is 137	Genesis 25:17–18	The death of Ishmael. Isaac would be 124 (13 years younger); Jacob and Esau would be 64 (they were born when Isaac was 60).
	1738 B.C. c 1732 B.C. (Klassen)	1977 B.C.		Genesis 26:26–33	Isaac's alliance with Abimelech at Beersheba.
(1929 B.C.)	1737 B.C. 1730 B.C. (Klassen)	1929 B.C.	Isaac is about 137	Genesis 27:1–46	Jacob by deception receives a final blessing from Isaac that was meant for Esau. Lange suggests <sup>21</sup> that Isaac is 137 here, Ishmael's age at his death. Isaac will live for another 43 years.
				Genesis 28:1–5	Jacob goes to his Uncle Laban's home in Padan-aram for a wife.
		1928 B.C.		Genesis 28:10–22	Jacob's dream; God speaks to Jacob.
				Genesis 28:6–9	Esau marries a daughter of Ishmael.
		1906 B.C. (For descendants)		Genesis 36:1–42	Esau's marriages and descendants.
	1736 B.C. 1730 B.C. (Klassen)	1928 B.C.		Genesis 29:1–14	Jacob in Haran (Charan).
	1736– 1729 B.C. 1730– 1723 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 29:15–20	Jacob works 7 years to marry Rachel, but is deceived by Laban, and Jacob marries Leah, her older sister.
	1729 B.C. 1724 B.C. (Klassen)	1921 B.C.		Genesis 29:21–31	Jacob marries Rachel

<sup>21</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 27:1–28:9 (General Preliminary Remarks). This is a reasonable theory; the kind of thing that would make a man think of his own mortality.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
(1915 B.C.)	1729– 1716 B.C. 1723– 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1921 B.C. 1916 B.C. (Rachel bears Joseph)		Genesis 29:32–34 Genesis 30:1–6 Genesis 29:35 Genesis 30:9, 7–8, 10–24	Jacob has 12 children by his wives, Rachel and Leah; and by their personal servants as well. Reese breaks the timeline down in smaller increments in his book.
1915 B.C.				Genesis	Joseph is born.
	1711 B.C.			Genesis 36:31–33 1Chronicles 1:43–44 Genesis 26:34–39 1Chronicles 1:45–50 Genesis 36:40–43 1Chronicles 1:51–54	The kings of Edom.
(1909 B.C.)	1716 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 30:25–43 Genesis 31:1–16	Jacob's final years with Laban.
				Genesis 31:17–55	Jacob's departure from Laban.
		1908 B.C.		Genesis 32:1–23	Jacob returns to Canaan.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 32:24–32 Genesis 35:10	Jacob wrestles with the angel.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 33:1–16	Jacob meets Esau face to face.
	1715 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1906 B.C.		Genesis 33:17–20	The resumption of Jacob's journey.
	1711– 1708 B.C. 1706– 1705 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 38:1–5 1Chronicles 2:3	Judah fathers 3 sons.
	1700 B.C. 1687 B.C. (Klassen)	1906 B.C.		Genesis 34:1–31	Dinah, daughter of Judah, is defiled.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 35:1–15	Jacob returns to Bethel.
	1700 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1903 B.C.		Genesis 35:16–19 48:7 35:20–22	Rachel dies when giving birth to Benjamin.
(1898 B.C.)				Genesis 35:27 37:1	The return to Hebron.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	1699 B.C.		Joseph is 17	Genesis 37:2–11	Joseph—his early days and his dreams.
				Genesis 37:12–35	Joseph in Shechem and Dothan.
1897 B.C.		1898 B.C.		Genesis 37:36 39:1	Joseph is sold into slavery, to end up in Egypt.
	c1699– 1690 B.C.	1898 B.C.		Genesis 39:2–6	Joseph enjoys prosperity in Egypt.
	c1695 B.C. 1707 B.C. (Klassen)	1898 B.C.		Genesis 38:6–11	Judah and Tamar.
	1692 B.C.			Genesis 38:12–26	Judah's wife dies.
	1692 B.C. 1691 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 38:27–30 1Chronicles 2:4	The birth of Pharez, the 41 <sup>st</sup> generation from Adam.
	c1690 B.C. 1689 B.C. (Klassen)	1889 B.C.		Genesis 39:7–19	Joseph flees adultery.
		1889 B.C.		Genesis 39:20–23	Joseph is put into jail; yet prospers in jail.
(1887 B.C.)	1688 B.C.	1887 B.C.		Genesis 40:1–23	Joseph gives the interpretation of the dreams of the baker and the butler.
1884 B.C.	1687 B.C.		Isaac is 180	Genesis 35:28–29	The death of Isaac. <a href="#">Now the days of Isaac were 180 years.</a> (Genesis 35:28)
(1885 B.C.)	1686 B.C.	1886 B.C.		Genesis 41:1–37	Joseph interprets the Pharaoh's dream.
		1886 B.C.		Genesis 41:38–44	Joseph is made governor.
				Genesis 41:45	Joseph marries Asenath.
1884 B.C.	1686– 1679 B.C.	1886 B.C. (Beginning)	Joseph is 30	Genesis 41:46–49	The 7 years of plenty. Joseph is 30 when Pharaoh puts him as 2 <sup>nd</sup> in command (Genesis 41:46).
	1685– 1683 B.C.			Genesis 41:50–53	Sons are born to Joseph.
	1685– 1681 B.C.			Exodus 6:16 Num. 3:17 1Chronicles 6:1, 16	The descendants of Levi are born.
	1679– 1672 B.C.	1875 B.C.		Genesis 41:54–57	The seven years of famine.
(1876 B.C.)	1678 B.C. 1677 B.C. (Klassen)	1875 B.C.		Genesis 42:1–44:34	Joseph provides his family with food.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
		1875 B.C.	Joseph is 39	Genesis 45:1–15	Joseph reveals himself to his brothers. 7 years of prosperity followed by 2 years of famine have transpired.
		1875 B.C.		Genesis 45:16–28	Jacob hears that his son, Joseph, is still alive, and he prepares to travel to Egypt himself.
	1677 B.C.			Ruth 4:18 1Chronicles 2:5	Birth of Hezron, the 40 <sup>th</sup> generation.
1873 B.C. <sup>22</sup>	1677 B.C.	1875 B.C.		Genesis 46:1–7, 28	Jacob goes to Egypt after God's assurance in Beersheba.
		1875 B.C.	Jacob is 130	Genesis 46:8–27 Exodus 1:1–5	Summary of the 70 who came to Egypt. Compare Genesis 47:8–9 and 46:27 for Jacob's age.
		1875 B.C.		Genesis 46:29–34 47:1–12	The people of Joseph are established in Egypt.
	1676– 1675 B.C.			Genesis 47:13–21	Joseph continues as prime minister in Egypt, exercising wise leadership during the famine.
				Genesis 47:22–26	The land of the priests in Egypt.
	1672– 1593 B.C.			1Chronicles 2:6–8	Zerah, the brother of Pharez, and his descendants.
	1671 B.C. 1660 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 48:1–22	Blessings to Manasseh and Ephraim.
	1660 B.C. 1665 B.C. (Klassen)				Birth of Berith to Ephraim.
				Genesis 47:28–31	The last days of Jacob; his charge to Joseph.
		1859 B.C.		Genesis 49:1–32	Jacob speaks to his sons, giving them their final blessings and encouraging them.
1857 B.C.	1660 B.C.	1859 B.C.	Jacob is 147	Genesis 49:33	The death of Jacob.
		1859 B.C.		Genesis 50:1–14	The burial of Jacob.
				Genesis 50:15–21	The fears of Joseph's brothers after the death of Jacob.
	1638 B.C. 1644 B.C. (Klassen)				Birth of Resheph (who is in the line between Ephraim and Joshua).
	1625 B.C. 1620 B.C. (Klassen)			Num. 26:58	Birth of Aram (Levi's grandson and Moses' father).

<sup>22</sup> Jacob moves family to the Land of Goshen in Egypt (Genesis 47:28)

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	1623 B.C. 1604 B.C. (Klassen)				The birth of Ram, the 39 <sup>th</sup> generation.
	1615 B.C. 1625 B.C. (Klassen)				The birth of Telah, in the line between Ephraim and Joshua.
				Genesis 50:22–23	Joseph's last days.
	1606 B.C.			Genesis 50:24–25	Joseph's last words.
1805 B.C. (1805 B.C.)		1806 B.C.	Joseph is 110	Genesis 50:26 Exodus 1:6	The death of Joseph. His brothers also die off.
	1606– 1462 B.C.			Genesis 47:27 Exodus 1:7	The population explosion among the Jews living in Egypt.

### Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed October 11, 2011 and August 12, 2014. Included in MacDonald's timeline is a timeline for Egypt interspersed.

See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

The Bible Hub [timeline](#) (accessed January 11, 2015) appears to be pretty thorough, but no one specifically is credited.

From: [http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible\\_study\\_guides/abram\\_to\\_the\\_exodus.pdf](http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible_study_guides/abram_to_the_exodus.pdf) (Christian shepherd). This source believes that the Jews live only a short time in Egypt (210 years).

*The Reese Chronological Bible*; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

*The Modern Language Bible (The New Berkeley Version)*, Revised Edition; ©1969 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; pp. 10–54.

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Here is what to expect from Genesis 28:

### A Synopsis of Genesis 28

Because Esau has expressed a serious desire to kill Jacob in the previous chapter, Rebekah has made an issue of his wives, hoping that Jacob would not marry women from their region (Genesis 27:46). Isaac has been convinced to have Jacob go to Paddan-aram, to Rebekah's family, to find a suitable wife. Although we are not privy to any of the behind-the-scenes conversation between Isaac and Rebekah, it is Isaac who apparently tells Jacob that he must go east, to his mother's family, and find a suitable bride to bring home. However, it is likely Rebekah who led him to that conclusion.

Before Jacob leaves, Isaac blesses him again—this time knowing who he is blessing—and then Jacob is sent on his way.

## A Synopsis of Genesis 28

Afterwards, Esau apparently becomes introspective, and realizes that his wives were not women that his parents approved of. Therefore, he goes to Ishmael's family and marries another woman.

Jacob, meanwhile, is heading north and he stops to rest in Bethel (Luz) where God and the angels of God appear to him in a dream. God blesses him and gives him promises; and Jacob's 3 sets of blessings are **compared** near the end of this chapter.

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

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Someday, I will have to do my own version of this.

## A Synopsis of Genesis 28 from the Summarized Bible

<b>Contents:</b>	Jacob at Bethel and the Abrahamic covenant confirmed to him in a dream.
<b>Characters:</b>	Isaac, Jacob, Laban, Esau, Ishmael, Mahalath, angels.
<b>Conclusion:</b>	The believer should realize that he is ever in God's presence. However no heart can feel at home in His presence until emptied of self and broken.
<b>Key Word:</b>	Bethel (house of God), Genesis 28:19.
<b>Strong Verses:</b>	Genesis 28:12, Genesis 28:15, Genesis 28:22.
<b>Striking Facts:</b>	Bethel, to the Christian, stands for a realization, although often imperfect, of the presence of God through Christ, and the spiritual contents of faith.

Keith L. Brooks, *Summarized Bible; Complete Summary of the Bible*; ©1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 28.

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This is the first of several summaries and outlines provided by others.

## Gill Summarizes Genesis 28

In this chapter an account is given of the charge Isaac gave to Jacob not to marry a Canaanitess, but to go to Padanaram, and take a wife from his mother's family, and of his blessing him before he sent him away (Genesis 28:1–5). Esau took notice of this blessing and charge, which led him to take a wife of the family of Ishmael (Genesis 28:6–9).

This chapter features the dream of the ladder, which Jacob had in his way to Haran (Genesis 28:10–12); the blessing which God conferred upon him there (Genesis 28:13–14); the awesomeness of the place upon his awaking, and of his erecting a pillar in it, and giving a name to it (Genesis 28:16–19). There, Jacob made a vow to God, should he be supplied with the necessaries of life, and be kept in safety by him (Genesis 28:20–22).

Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28 (chapter comments; edited).

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Benson wisely sees this chapter as two very different sections.

## Benson and Henry Outline Genesis 28

1. Jacob's parting with his parents to go to Padan-aram:
  - 1) The charge his father gave him, Genesis 28:1–2,

### Benson and Henry Outline Genesis 28

- 2) the blessing he sent him away with, Genesis 28:3–4,
  - 3) his obedience to the orders given him, Genesis 28:5–10,
  - 4) and the influence this had upon Esau, Genesis 28:6.
2. Jacob's meeting with God, and his communion with him by the way.
- 1) His vision of the ladder, Genesis 28:11–12.
  - 2) The gracious promises God made him, Genesis 28:13–15.
  - 3) The impression this made upon him, Genesis 28:16–19.
  - 4) The vow he made to God upon this occasion, Genesis 28:20–22.

Matthew Henry's outline is quite similar:

- I. Jacob parting with his parents, to go to Padanaram; the charge his father gave him (Genesis 28:1, Genesis 28:2), the blessing he sent him away with (Genesis 28:3, Genesis 28:4), his obedience to the orders given him (Genesis 28:5, Genesis 28:10), and the influence this had upon Esau (Genesis 28:6–9).
- II. Jacob meeting with God, and his communion with him by the way. And there,...
  1. ...his vision of the ladder (Genesis 28:11, Genesis 28:12).
  2. The gracious promises God made him (Genesis 28:13–15).
  3. The impression this made upon him (Genesis 28:16–19).
  4. The vow he made to God, upon this occasion (Genesis 28:20, etc.).

Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 28 (chapter comments; slightly edited). Also Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28 (chapter comments; slightly edited).

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Snider includes the final verse of the previous chapter here, as it tells us why Jacob is really being sent to Paddan-aram.

### Ron Snider's Outline of Genesis 28

- I. Dismissal of Jacob. 27:46-28:5
- II. Esau's fleshly attempt to please Isaac. vs 6-9
- III. Jacob's first vision. vs 10-17
- IV. Jacob's response to God. vs 18-22

From [Makarios Bible Church](#); will open up in Word or WP; accessed June 1, 2017.

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This is a new addition to the introduction of any chapter.

### By the Numbers

Item	Date, duration; size
The date of Genesis 28	1760 B.C. (Benson <sup>23</sup> ). 1928 B.C. (the Bible Hub <sup>24</sup> ). The big difference is attributable to the period of time they believe Israel to be in Egypt. Some believe this to be 215 years; others 430 years.

<sup>23</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 28 (chapter comments).

<sup>24</sup> The Bible Hub [timeline](#) (accessed January 11, 2015).

By the Numbers	
Item	Date, duration; size
The ages of Jacob and Esau.	They are 77, according to Gill, Jewish writers and Polyhistor, an heathen writer. <sup>25</sup> This would make Isaac 137 years old.
Alternate age for Jacob and Esau.	By another method, Clarke suggests that Jacob is 57 years old. James Burton Coffman writes: <i>If the first is correct, then Ishmael had been dead fourteen years when Isaac commanded Jacob to go to the house of Bethuel. If the second calculation is allowed, Ishmael still lived and would not have died until six years later. The statement that "Esau went unto Ishmael" (Genesis 28:9), inferring that Ishmael was alive at the time of the events of this chapter, definitely favors the lower calculations of 57 for the age of Jacob. The Bible here says nothing whatever about anyone's age, and human deductions are subject to all kinds of errors.</i> <sup>26</sup> There is nothing in Genesis 28:9 which requires Ishmael to be living. Many times, <i>Israel</i> is used to refer to the descendants of Jacob many years later.
The age of Isaac.	Many commentators assume Isaac to be 137 years old, the age of his older half brother when he died. That would certainly cause Isaac to consider his own mortality. This view is based upon calculations of Martin Luther, which are gone over in the previous chapter. See <b>Genesis 27</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
Distance from Beersheba to Luz (Bethel).	The distance between Beersheba (where Jacob begins) to Luz (where this chapter takes place is about 48 miles. <sup>27</sup>
The distance that Jacob will have to travel.	Trapp says <sup>28</sup> it is almost 500 miles.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The first title is often applicable to the entire chapter (although it may pertain just to the verses which follow it to the next section heading).

Paragraph Divisions of Modern Translations for Genesis 28 (from Dr. Bob Utley)				
NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (FOLLOWS MT)
Jacob is Sent Away	Jacob Escapes from Esau	Jacob's Departure for Aram and His Dream at Bethel	Isaac Sends Jacob to Laban	Isaac Sends Jacob to Laban
	(Genesis 27:41 to Genesis 28:5)	(Genesis 27:46 to Genesis 28:22)	(Genesis 27:46 to Genesis 28:5)	(Genesis 27:46 to Genesis 28:5)
Genesis 28:1-5	Genesis 28:1-5 (Genesis 28:3-4)			

<sup>25</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:1. The other citations are found there.

<sup>26</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:11.

<sup>28</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 28:7.

	Esau Marries Mahalath		Esau Takes Another Wife	Another Marriage of Esau
Genesis 28:6-9	Genesis 28:6-9	Genesis 28:6-9	Genesis 28:6-9	Genesis 28:6-9
Jacob's Dream	Jacob's Vow at Bethel		Jacob's Dream at Bethel	Jacob's Dream
Genesis 28:10-17	Genesis 28:10-17	Genesis 28:10-17	Genesis 28:10-15 Genesis 28:16-17	Genesis 28:10-19
Genesis 28:18-22	Genesis 28:18-22	Genesis 28:18-22	Genesis 28:18-22	Genesis 28:20-22

From Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 28 chapter comments).

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Many commentators do not appear to *get* Jacob, and he is given far too much credit for his spiritual perspicacity in this chapter. Remember, Jacob only just left his family, where he had gone to great lengths to deceive his own father in order to get a better blessing than his brother. He has not changed dramatically in the space of a week or less. This chapter allows us, to a limited degree, to get into Jacob's head. This study attempts to do that, without assuming too much.

God will appear to Jacob in this chapter. Do not think that Jacob, somehow, deserves some credit for this encounter. He does not!

**Changes—additions and subtractions:** Very often, when I begin a new chapter, I have either discovered a new translations, a new commentary; or have decided to leave out a particular translation or commentary. Sometimes, I make a minor formatting change. I have always placed such comments before the beginning of the first verse. So one formatting change is, *the addition of this more formal approach to changes, giving it a section of its own*. Many times, if I like a change a lot, I will occasionally go back and make that change in previous chapters.

For the past few years, I have begun to use a table which contains the commentary of several commentators. I have used a previous type table for this; and in this chapter, I introduced a new format for it (so both will be found in this chapter). I may change the color a bit in the future.

I have added two tables in the introduction *Fundamental Questions* and *By the Numbers*; the former is about questions which occur to me prior to working on a chapter; or during the commentary process; and the latter table is designed for when time or dimensions are a part of the chapter.

The New English Bible was added to the list of translations, under the Catholic Bibles. This was always one of my favorite translations; but only recently available on the internet. It was the precursor for the Revised English Bible, so often, these are very similar translations.

From Wikipedia: *The New English Bible (NEB) is a translation of the Bible into modern English directly from the original Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic texts (and from Latin for 2 Esdras in the Apocrypha). The New Testament was published in 1961. The Old Testament (along with the Apocrypha) was published in 1970. In 1989, it was significantly revised and republished as the Revised English Bible.*<sup>29</sup>

I also just found and added *The Complete Tanakh* (which is also called *The Complete Jewish Bible*; but it appears to be unrelated to the translation known as *The Complete Jewish Bible*). *The Complete Tanakh* also has commentary by Rashi, which is strictly a Jewish commentary, but it appears to be very helpful (not unlike Kaplan's translation and commentary). I cannot believe that I did not find this reference work until now.

<sup>29</sup> From [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_English\\_Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_English_Bible) accessed March 17, 2017.

The Pulpit Commentary, for some passages, simply inserts a whole lot of additional text; and may be regarded as an expanded Bible translation in that regard. Where it is appropriate, I have begun to insert the Pulpit Commentary exegesis into the list of translations. I began to footnote where they came from, but stopped doing that after awhile.

At the end of the exegesis of every verse, I will make certain that there is a Kukis mostly literal translation and a Kukis paraphrase, both of them marked as such.

I have decided to add spacing between the translation and the commentary.

Document navigation (which is found 4x in the typical chapter exegesis) has been reduced in size; and verse navigation has been added. The verse navigation has now been added to every Genesis chapter.

I changed the way of organizing various translations of the Bible several years ago; but had not incorporated that into this chapter until now.

### **Genesis 28 Prologue (A Review of Genesis 27:42–45):**

Although Genesis 28 is a literary unit in itself, it is dependent upon the previous chapter to understand all that is going on. In the previous chapter, Jacob stole the final blessing that his father Isaac meant for Esau, and this caused Esau to be mad enough to kill Jacob. Rebekah, their mother, was in on this deception, but did not want anyone else to know this. So she had to get Jacob out of town, but without seeming as if she was saving him from Esau. There is no reason for her to know about this dispute between Jacob and Esau; because it all took place in private. Despite the fact that Isaac was quite wealthy and had many men under him, when he blessed Jacob (thinking him to be Esau), they were alone (except that Rebekah was sneaking about in the background all this time).

Because Rebekah instigated all this, the worst case scenario is, Jacob her husband hates her, if he finds out; and Esau, her son, kills Jacob and hates her as well. Through her own manipulation, Rebekah has set herself up for great potential harm. Therefore, she must get her son, Jacob, out of town so that Esau does not kill him, but without associating any of this with the stolen blessing.

Genesis 27:42–45 *But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah [where Esau has expressed a great desire to kill Jacob]. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said to him, "Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury turns away--until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?"* (ESV)

Rebekah needs to get Jacob away from the family compound in order to preserve his life. She herself orchestrated his great deception of Isaac, and now, there is fallout that she was not expecting. The son who was deceived, Esau, wants to kill Jacob. She knows this, but her husband Isaac does not; and she cannot reveal that she knows this to him without revealing that she was a party to the deception—something which would have destroyed their marriage. However, she has come up with another plan.

Gen 27:46 *Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?"*

When you become older and your children are grown, you want your name, your traditions, your faith carried on—which is particularly important in this case as these are the very promises of God. Rebekah does not see any

of this happening with Esau and his family because of the women he has married. This is a real problem for Rebekah, not something that she is just making up.

Clearly, Isaac does not know that Rebekah was in on this deception. He knows that he was deceived, but he does not know that Rebekah was behind it. Rather than tell Isaac, "Look, I persuaded Jacob to deceive you; and now, he has left the compound because Esau wants to kill him." Instead, she says, "I cannot stand my daughters-in-law. Jacob is going to get a good woman from Charan. I am going to send him to my brother's home." Then, suddenly, Jacob is gone and therefore he is safe from Esau.

Isaac does not know that Esau has threatened to kill Jacob; and Rebekah knows, but really should not know. She has simply kept her ear to the ground, so to speak, to know this. Furthermore, she knows the whole story behind Esau's anger, something else that she should not know about.

Rebekah speaks to Isaac and tells him what is going on; so Isaac will send his son Jacob away. Essentially, Rebekah says, "Listen, Isaac, I do not want Jacob to marry heathen women like his brother Esau has. That would be awful! I am going to send him to my brother's ranch so that he can meet a decent woman from my brother's family. That way, he will not marry some Hittite hussy."

So, the cover story is, Esau married Hittite women, which both Isaac and Rebekah object to; and therefore, at this age, Jacob needs to go back east and marry a woman whose God is the LORD. All of this is legitimate; all of this is known to Isaac; so sending Jacob from the land of promise to Haran to marry a near relative is acceptable and understandable. Rebekah, Isaac's wife, came from Haran and from this family. Therefore, Isaac would agree to this departure and he would not associate this with Jacob's deception.

Esau married two Hittite women, which apparently were the bane of Rebekah's existence. She is tired of living simply because of her daughters-in-law, which is a strong indictment of them. We are not told exactly what the problem is with Esau's wives, apart from these wives being heathen. Going back one more chapter, we have Gen 26:34–35 [When Esau was 40 years old, he took as his wives Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. They made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.](#) That verse tells us that Rebekah's complaint did not come out of nowhere. She is not suddenly springing this on Isaac, "You know, I cannot stand Esau's wives." "No, honey, I did not know that!" This is already well-known and documented.

The plan is for Jacob should take a wife from the family of Laban. What the problem is exactly, is never told to us; but I would guess that these Hittite women never accepted the God of Abraham and Isaac. They do not believe in this **Revealed God**; and they might even make fun of Isaac and Rebekah for their faith. Even though Abraham was instructed to leave his family behind, that does not mean that he comes from a heathen family or that his family did not trust in Y<sup>e</sup>howah Elohim. God simply needed for him to separate from his family—and there could be a variety of reasons for that.

So, the cover story is, "Jacob is taking off for Charan, because I want him to get a decent wife." This is what Rebekah tells Isaac, and this is fine with Isaac. Isaac also has problems with Esau's wives. This approach will get Jacob away from Esau, who would have possibly killed him, and Rebekah is never implicated in the great deception.

[Gen 27:45b](#) Then I will send and bring you from there.

The fact that Rebekah is confident that she can send a message to Jacob when he is 100+ miles away indicates that there has probably been some communication between the families over these past few decades. For her to say this indicates that communication between families did take place; and likely were sent along with traders who were going to cover this or that route. This all suggests that they have knowledge of the genealogies of their family to the east.

There is another simple principle at work here—*out of sight and out of mind*. If every day, Esau looks and there is Jacob—that lousy SOB who stole his birthright and then his blessing—Esau would continue to seethe with anger. However, with Jacob gone and out of the picture completely, this is something that Esau will adjust to. At some point, his animosity will subside and disappear completely. He cannot be jealous and angry at someone who is not there.

So, despite the deception, Isaac calls for Jacob to send him away. As the head of the family, it would be Isaac's responsibility to call Jacob in and tell him to do this, and then send him away.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

### Isaac Blesses Jacob and Sends Him Away

Key to this chapter is the final verse of the two previous chapters:

Genesis 26:34–35 *When Esau turned 40, he took two wives to himself: he took Judith, who was the daughter of Beeri the Hittite; and he took Basemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite. These women were bitter toward Isaac and Rebecca.*

Genesis 27:46 *Rebekah later said to Isaac, "I have become so weary of life because of these Hittite daughters. I don't know what I would do if Jacob married a Hittite woman. My life would be ruined."*

In the previous chapter, Jacob, guided by his mother, stole Esau's final blessing from Isaac by pretending to be Esau. Isaac is well-aware that Jacob did this, but he does not realize that Rebekah put him up to it; and that now Esau is talking about killing Jacob. So, Rebekah needs to get Jacob safely out of town, and yet, not appear as if she is aware of the deception of her husband, Jacob. Otherwise, she will be left with her 2<sup>nd</sup> favorite son, his wives that she cannot stand, and her husband who no longer trusts her.

Isaac is convinced by his wife that Jacob needs to marry a woman not from the heathen Canaanites; and for that reason, he must leave Canaan and seek out his family who believe in the Revealed God. Isaac also seems to have quickly come to terms with Jacob being the son of promise. The blessing that Isaac will deliver will specifically transfer God's blessing of Abraham to Jacob. At this point, there is no deception; there is no favorite son. Isaac accepts this as God's will.

As always, 3 separate translations will be produced for each verse. The slavishly literal translation attempts to preserve word order and number, making it more literal than Young's translation (however, I do not preserve the consistency of the translation that Young does). The moderately literal translation may add or delete a definite article, change the number of a noun to correspond with the English sense of thinking, and the order is often changed in order to better represent our English sentence structure. The paraphrase is an attempt to give a thought-for-thought interpretation of what each verse tells us.

Kukis slavishly literal:

Kukis moderately literal:

And so calls Isaac Jacob and so he blesses him and so he charges him and so he says to him, “You will not take from daughters of Canaan. Rise up; go Paddan-aram-ward, a house-ward of Bethel, a father of your mother; and take for yourself from there a woman from daughters of Laban, a brother of your mother.

Genesis  
28:1–2

Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and commanded him, saying to him, “You will not marry one from the daughters of Canaan. [Instead] rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father and take for yourself from there a wife from the daughters of Laban, your mother’s brother.

Kukis not so literal:

Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and gave him a stern command, saying, “Do not marry a Canaanite woman. Instead, rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father, and take a wife from the daughters of Laban (Laban is your uncle, your mother’s brother).

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation<sup>30</sup>; George Lamsa’s translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton’s translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles’ Bible instead of Brenton’s translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton’s (or the text of the Complete Apostles’ Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong’s numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles’ Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

<sup>30</sup> I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use [www.latinvulgate.com](http://www.latinvulgate.com).

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

I will only list the translation from the Dead Sea Scrolls if it exists and if it is different from the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. From [http://www.becomingjewish.org/texts/targum/onkelos\\_genesis.html](http://www.becomingjewish.org/texts/targum/onkelos_genesis.html) and first published in 1862.

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so calls Isaac Jacob and so he blesses him and so he charges him and so he says to him, "You will not take from daughters of Canaan. Rise up; go Paddan-aram-ward, a house-ward of Bethel, a father of your mother; and take for yourself from there a woman from daughters of Laban, a brother of your mother.
Dead Sea Scrolls	This chapter was not preserved at all in the Dead Sea Scrolls.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Izhak called Jakob and blessed him. And he commanded him, and said to him, Thou shalt not take a wife from the daughters of Kenaan; arise, go to Padan Aram to the house of Bethuel the father of thy mother, and take to thee from thence a wife of the daughters of Laban, the brother of thy mother.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Izhak called Jakob, and blessed him, and commanded him, and said to him, Thou shalt not take a wife from the daughters of the Kenaanaee. Arise, go to Padan of Aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father, and take thee from thence a wife from the daughters of Laban mother's brother.
Jerusalem targum	And Izhak called Jakob, and blessed him, and commanded him, and said to him, Thou shalt not take a wife from the daughters of the Kenaanaee. Arise, go to Padan of Aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father, and take thee from thence a wife from the daughters of Laban mother's brother.
Latin Vulgate	And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, saying: Take not a wife of the stock of Chanaan: But go, and take a journey to Mesopotamia of Syria, to the house of Bathuel, thy mother's father, and take thee a wife thence of the daughters of Laban, thy uncle.
Peshitta (Syriac)	THEN Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him, You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mothers father; and take for yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mothers brother.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Isaac, having called for Jacob, blessed him, and charged him, saying, You shall not take a wife of the daughters of the Canaanites. Rise and depart quickly into Mesopotamia, to the house of Bethuel the father of your mother, and take to yourself a wife of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.
Significant differences:	No significant differences.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Isaac sent for Jacob, and blessing him, said, Do not take a wife from among the women of Canaan; But go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and there get yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.
Easy English	<b>Jacob's journey</b>

Then Isaac called Jacob and he \*blessed Jacob. He ordered Jacob not to marry a \*Canaanite woman. Isaac ordered Jacob to go to the place called Paddan-Aram. There, Jacob should go to Bethuel's house. Bethuel was Jacob's grandfather (his mother's father). Isaac told Jacob to marry someone from among Laban's daughters. Laban was Jacob's uncle (his mother's brother).

Good News Bible (TEV)

Isaac called Jacob, greeted him, and told him, "Don't marry a Canaanite. Go instead to Mesopotamia, to the home of your grandfather Bethuel, and marry one of the young women there, one of your uncle Laban's daughters.

*The Message*

So Isaac called in Jacob and blessed him. Then he ordered him, "Don't take a Canaanite wife. Leave at once. Go to Paddan Aram to the family of your mother's father, Bethuel. Get a wife for yourself from the daughters of your uncle Laban.

Names of God Bible

### Isaac Sends Jacob Away

Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him, "You are not to marry any of the Canaanite women. Quick! Go to Paddan Aram. Go to the home of Bethuel, your mother's father, and get yourself a wife from there from the daughters of your uncle Laban.

NIRV

So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. He commanded him, "Don't get married to a woman from Canaan. Go at once to Paddan Aram. Go to the house of your mother's father Bethuel. Find a wife for yourself there. Take her from among the daughters of your mother's brother Laban.

New Simplified Bible

Isaac called Jacob, blessed him, and told him: »Do not marry a Canaanite. »Go to Mesopotamia instead, to the home of your grandfather Bethuel. Marry one of the young women there, one of your uncle Laban's daughters.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible

So Isaac summoned Jacob, blessed him, and gave him these orders: "Don't marry a Canaanite woman. Get up and go to Paddan-aram, to the household of Bethuel, your mother's father, and once there, marry one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.

Contemporary English V.

Isaac called in Jacob, then gave him a blessing, and said: Don't marry any of those Canaanite women. Go at once to your mother's father Bethuel in northern Syria and choose a wife from one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.

New Berkeley Version

Isaac then called Jacob and blessed him; he also charged him, "You are to marry no Canaanite girl. Get ready; go to Paddan Aram [Road (or Plain?) of Aram, that is, of Syria, located in Mesopotamia, which means, between rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris. Haran is the town in that Plain, which still exists as Harran, a small village 280 miles N.E. of Damascus.] to the family of Bethel, your mother's father, and get you a wife there from your uncle Laban's daughters.

New Century Version

### Jacob Searches for a Wife

Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and commanded him, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman. Go to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, in Northwest Mesopotamia. Laban, your mother's brother, lives there. Marry one of his daughters.

New Life Version

So Isaac called Jacob and prayed that good would come to him. He said to him, "Do not marry one of the daughters of Canaan. Get ready, and go to the house of your mother's father Bethuel in Paddan-aram. Take a wife for yourself from the daughters of your mother's brother Laban.

New Living Translation

So Isaac called for Jacob, blessed him, and said, "You must not marry any of these Canaanite women. Instead, go at once to Paddan-aram, to the house of your grandfather Bethuel, and marry one of your uncle Laban's daughters.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So then, IsaAc called for Jacob. he blest him and told him: 'You must not take a woman from among the daughters of the CanaAnites. Now, get up and go quickly to MesoPotamia, to the house of my father-in-law, BathuEl, and find yourself a woman among the daughters of your mother's brother Laban.
Beck's American Translation	Isaac called for Jacob, blessed him, and instructed him, "Don't marry any of the women of Canaan," he told him. "Leave and go to the plain of Aram, to the home of Bethel, your mother's father, and there marry a daughter of Laban, your mother's brother.
International Standard V	<b>Isaac Sends Jacob to Paddan-aram</b> Later, Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, instructing him, "Don't marry a wife from the local Canaanite women. Instead, get up, travel to Paddan-aram [Paddan-aram was located in northwest Mesopotamia], and visit the household of Bethuel, your mother's father. Marry one of Laban's daughters, since he's your mother's brother.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	So Isaac summoned Jacob to him, and gave him his blessing, and laid this charge upon him: It is not for thee to marry a woman of Chanaanite stock; rather bestir thyself, and make thy way to Mesopotamia of the Syrians; there dwelt thy mother's father, Bathuel, there thou mayest wed one of the daughters of thy uncle Laban.
Translation for Translators	<b>Isaac gave instructions to Jacob</b> Then Isaac summoned Jacob, and gave him a blessing. He told him this: "Do not marry a woman from the women of the Canaan people-group. Instead, go right away to Paddan-Aram <i>in northwest Mesopotamia</i> , to the house of your mother's father Bethuel. Ask one of the daughters of your mother's brother Laban to marry you.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Isaac called Jacob and blessed him. He commanded him, saying to him, "Never take a woman from the daughters of Canaan. Rise, go to East-Syria, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father. Take a woman from there of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.
The Bible in Modern English	Consequently Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him, and commanded him not to take a wife from the girls of Canan. " Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take yourself a wife from there from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.
Conservapedia Translation	Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and instructed him, and told him: "You will not marry any of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take from there a wife from among the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	<b>Jacob Sent to Padan Aram</b> Consequently Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him, and commanded him not to take a wife from the girls "Arise, go to Padan Arain, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take yourself a wife from there from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.
HCSB	Isaac summoned Jacob, blessed him, and commanded him: "Don't take a wife from the Canaanite women. Go at once to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father. Marry one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.
H. C. Leupold	And Isaac called Jacob and blessed him; and he laid commandment upon him and said to him: Not shalt thou take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Up, go to Paddan-aram, to the home of Bethuel, thy mother's father, and take a wife to thyself from the daughters of Laban, thy mother's brother.
NIV, ©2011	So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed [S Ge 24:60] him. Then he commanded him: "Do not marry a Canaanite woman [Ge 24:3]. Go at once to Paddan Aram [That is, Northwest Mesopotamia; also in verses 5, 6 and 7] [S Ge 25:20], to the house of

your mother's father Bethuel [S Ge 25:20]. Take a wife for yourself there, from among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.

Urim-Thummim Version

Isaac called Jacob, blessing him and charged him with the command, you will not take a woman from the daughters of Canaan. Get up and go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's dad and acquire yourself a woman from that region, from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2002)

Isaac therefore called Jacob, greeted him with a blessing, and charged him: "You shall not marry a Canaanite woman! Go now to Paddan-aram, to the home of your mother's father Bethuel, and there choose a wife for yourself from among the daughters of your uncle Laban.

New American Bible(2011)<sup>31</sup>

Isaac therefore summoned Jacob and blessed him, charging him: "You shall not marry a Canaanite woman! [Gn 24:3-4; 26:35.] Go now to Paddan-aram, to the home of your mother's father Bethuel, and there choose a wife for yourself from among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother [Gn 22:22.]. [28:1-9] A glimpse of Rebekah's shrewdness is provided by 27:42-28:2. She is aware of Esau's murderous plot against Jacob (27:42-45) but realizes the episode of the stolen blessing is still painful to Isaac; she therefore uses another motive to persuade Isaac to send Jacob away-he must marry within the family (endogamy), unlike Esau. Esau, unreflective as usual, realizes too late he also should marry within the family but, significantly, marries from Abraham's rejected line. At this point in the story, Jacob (and his mother) have taken the blessing for themselves. Their actions have put Jacob in a precarious position: he must flee the land because of his brother's murderous intent and find a wife in a far country. One might ask how God's blessing can be given to such an unworthy schemer. There is a biblical pattern of preferring the younger brother or sister over the older-Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Rachel over Leah, Joseph over his older brothers, Ephraim over Manasseh (Gn 48:14), David over his older brothers.

New English Bible

Isaac called Jacob, blessed him and gave him instructions. He said, 'You must not marry one of these women of Canaan. Go at once to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, in Paddan-aram, and there find a wife, one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.

New Jerusalem Bible

So Isaac summoned Jacob and blessed him; and he gave him this order: 'You are not to marry any of the Canaanite women. Go off to Paddan-Aram, the home of Bethuel your mother's father, and there choose a wife for yourself from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

New RSV

Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, 'You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women. Go at once to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father; and take as wife from there one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.

Revised English Bible

So Isaac called Jacob, and after blessing him, gave him these instructions: 'You are not to marry a Canaanite woman. Go now to the home of Bethuel, your mother's father, in Paddan-aram, and there find a wife, one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

So Yitz'chak called Ya'akov, and, after blessing him, charged him: "You are not to choose a wife from the Hitti women. Go now to the home of B'tu'el your mother's father, and choose a wife there from the daughters of Lavan your mother's brother.

<sup>31</sup> Also called the revised edition.

The Complete Tanach And Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and he commanded him and said to him, "You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take yourself from there a wife of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.

**to Padan:** Heb. הַבְּדַן like הַבְּדַן. [From Targum Onkelos]

**to the house of Bethuel:** Heb. הַבְּתוּלָה to the house of (תְּבִילָה) Bethuel [Targum Onkelos]. Any word that requires a "lamed" at the beginning may take a "hey" at the end instead. [From Yev. 13b] .

exeGeses companion Bible

### **YAAQOV AT BETH EL**

And Yischaq calls Yaaqov and blesses him and misvahs him, and says to him, Take not a woman of the daughters of Kenaan. Rise, go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethu El the father of your mother; and from there take a woman of the daughters of Laban the brother of your mother:...

Hebrew Names Version

Yitzchak called Ya`akov, blessed him, and commanded him, "You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Kena`an. Arise, go to Paddan-Aram, to the house of Betu`el your mother's father. Take a wife from there from the daughters of Lavan, your mother's brother.

Judaica Press Complete T.

Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am disgusted with my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries a Hittite woman like these, from among the native women, what good will life be to me?" so Isaac sent for Jacob and blessed him. He instructed him, saying, "You shall not take a wife from among the Canaanite women. up, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take a wife there from among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. Genesis 27:46 is included for context. The Tanakh includes it as a part of this paragraph.

Kaplan Translation

### *Jacob takes the Blessing*

Isaac summoned Jacob and gave him a blessing and a charge. 'Do not marry a Canaanite girl [See Genesis 24:3.],' he said. 'Set out and go to Padan Aram, to the house of your maternal grandfather Bethuel. Marry a daughter of your uncle Laban. The Kaplan Translation, particularly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, takes note of historic rabbinic opinions.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And Yitzchak called for Ya'akov, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take an isha of the Banot Kena'an. Arise, go to Paddanah-Aram, to the bais Betuel avi immecha; and take thee an isha from there of the banot Lavan achi immecha.

### **Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

The Expanded Bible

### **Jacob Searches for a Wife**

Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and commanded him [-and said to him], "You must not marry a ·Canaanite woman [-daughter of Canaan]. ·Go [-Get up and go] to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, in ·northwestern Mesopotamia [-Paddan-aram; 25:20]. Laban, your mother's brother, lives there. Marry one of his daughters.

NET Bible®

So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman [Heb "you must not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan."!] Leave immediately [Heb "Arise! Go!" The first of the two imperatives is adverbial and stresses the immediacy of the departure.] 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. When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this.

Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote.

Kretzmann's Commentary

Jacob Dismissed in Peace

And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. What Rebekah had planned came to pass; Isaac saw the point of her objection and took the hint given in her words. Isaac formally called Jacob, welcomed him with all kindness, and then gave him the definite command not to marry a Canaanitish woman. Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel, thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban, thy mother's brother. There was evidently some, at least occasional, communication between the two families of relatives, since Isaac knew of the daughters of Laban.

The Pulpit Commentary

And Isaac called Jacob (to his bed-side), and blessed him,—in enlarged form, renewing the benediction previously given (Genesis 27:27)—and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan (cf. Genesis 14:3). Intermarriage with the women of the land was expressly forbidden to the theocratic heir, while his attention was directed to his mother's kindred. Arise, go to Padan-aram (vide Genesis 14:10; Genesis 25:20; Genesis 27:43), to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father;—(vide Genesis 14:24). If yet alive, Bethuel must have been very old, since he was Isaac's cousin, and probably born many years before the son of Abraham—and take thee a wife from thence—though Isaac's wife was found for him, he does not think of imitating Abraham and dispatching another, Eliezer in search of a spouse for Rebekah's son. Probably he saw that Jacob could attend to that business sufficiently without assistance from others—of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother (vide Genesis 14:1–24:29). "Isaac appears to entertain no doubt of Jacob's success, which might be the more probable since the same reason which kept Jacob from marrying in Canaan might prevent Laban's daughters from being married in Haran, the worshippers of the Lord being few (Inglis).

The Voice

Isaac called Jacob to him, blessed him again, and instructed him.

**Isaac:** You are not to marry one of the Canaanite women. Get up and pack your things, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel (your mother's father), and find a wife there among Laban's daughters. (Laban is your mother's brother.)

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Yits'hhaq <sup>[He laughs]</sup> called out to Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> and he respected him and he directed him and he said to him, you will not take a woman from the daughters of Kena'an <sup>[Lowered]</sup>, rise, walk unto Padan-Aram <sup>[Field palace]</sup>, unto the house of Betu'el <sup>[Destruction of El]</sup> the father of your mother and take for you from there a woman, from the daughters of Lavan <sup>[White]</sup>, the brother of your mother,...

Concordant Literal Version

And calling is Isaac to Jacob, and is blessing him and instructing him. And saying is he to him, "Not take shall you a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Rise, go to Padan, Syria, the home of Bethuel, your mother's father and take for yourself thence a wife, from the daughters of Laban, the brother of your mother.

Context Group Version

And Isaac called Jacob, and esteemed him, and charged him, and said to him, You shall not take a woman { or wife } of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father. And take yourself a woman { or wife } from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

English Standard V. – UK

Jacob Sent to Laban

Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed [ver. 6] him and directed him, "You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women [[See ch. 27:46 above]; ch. 24:3]. Arise [Hos. 12:12], go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel [ch. 22:23] your mother's

father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

NASB

### Jacob Is Sent Away

So Isaac called Jacob and blessed [Gen 27:33] him and charged him, and said to him, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan [Gen 24:3, 4]. Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel [Gen 25:20] your mother's father; and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

Ron Snider

So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him, and said to him, "You will never take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

Young's Updated LT

And Isaac calls unto Jacob, and blesses him, and commands him, and says to him, "You will not take a wife of the daughters of Caanan; rise, go to Padan-Aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take for yourself from there a wife, of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.

**The gist of this verse:**

Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and commanded him not to take a Canaanite wife, but to go to Padan-Aram to his Uncle Laban and take a wife from there.

Genesis 28:1a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i> ]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lamed]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
Yis <sup>e</sup> châq (יִשְׁחַק) [pronounced <i>yihse-KHAWK</i> ]	<i>he laughs; laughing; transliterated Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i> ]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>BV</sup></i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

**Translation:** Isaac called for Jacob...

Here we have quite the interesting family dynamic. Jacob has just pretended to be Esau and has received Esau's blessing from Isaac. Esau is so mad, he is ready to kill Jacob, and he is probably plotting Jacob's death at this point in time. Rebekah knows all of this; and Isaac knows that he has been deceived by Jacob, and that Esau is fuming. Jacob may or may not know that Isaac knows. He does know that Esau intends to kill him. Isaac probably does not know that his wife engineered the entire deception. You may be thinking, "Well, this sounds like Thanksgiving at my house."

Despite all of the personal parallels that you have no doubt already made, it is an interesting dynamic. When Isaac calls Jacob in, at the behest of Rebekah, will he somehow let Jacob know, “I know that you deceive me.” Or will he simply carry on, acting like an old man who is not fully aware of what is going on? Interestingly enough, this is never mentioned. We know that Isaac knew what happened when Esau showed up; and it is reasonable to suppose Isaac knows, because Esau eventually had to show up. However, Isaac does not, insofar as we know, say anything about this.

Sometimes, two people when interacting both know the same thing; but they simply choose not to speak of it. I believe that is what is occurring here.

Isaac *knows* that Jacob deceived him, because Esau came to him right after Jacob left. But, Isaac will not reprove his son for what he did, but double-down on the original blessing, even though the first blessing was given in deceit. In fact, interestingly enough, Isaac will not say anything to indicate that he is upset or disappointed in Jacob (insofar as we know). How Isaac came to that thinking, we do not know.

Genesis 28:1b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bârak <sup>e</sup> (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced <i>baw-RAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless [as God, man and other created things], therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone [with a blessing]; to curse</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	<i>him; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to him, toward him</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

**Translation:** ...and he blessed him...

This suggests that Isaac says nothing to his son Jacob about the deception. Isaac knows what has happened, but instead of saying, “I already blessed you a few hours ago;” he just blesses Jacob again. The content of this blessing is given to us in vv. 3–4. Somehow, Isaac has managed to calm himself, despite what he may have felt earlier. Perhaps he simply took this as the overruling will of God, which is what it was.

This second blessing confirms the line of promise as going through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We do not have any idea how Isaac feels about this, but he clearly accepts it as God's will.

## This New Blessing Conferred Upon Jacob by Isaac (Various Commentators)

The Geneva Bible: *This second blessing was to confirm Jacobs faith, lest he should think that his father had given it without Gods leading.*<sup>32</sup>

Benson: *That is, purposely and designedly, and in faith now confirmed that blessing to him, which before he had given him unknowingly. And hereby God confirmed Jacob's faith against doubts and fears, and comforted him against future troubles that might befall him.*<sup>33</sup>

Guzik: *Perhaps now Isaac resigns himself to what his wife Rebekah told him was the LORD's will all along - that the older would serve the younger and that Jacob, not Esau, would receive the birthright. So he sent Jacob on with blessing and instructions.*<sup>34</sup>

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

### Genesis 28:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tsâvâh (צוּ) [pronounced <i>tsaw-VAW</i> ]	<i>to commission, to mandate, to appoint; to ordain; to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge [command, order]; to instruct [as in, giving an order]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect, 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6680 BDB #845

**Translation:** ...and commanded him,...

Isaac also gives Jacob a stern command, the content of which will be found in the words which follow.

### Genesis 28:1d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

<sup>32</sup> From <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/geneva-study-bible/genesis/genesis-28.html> accessed July 21, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:1.

<sup>34</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 28:1–2.

Genesis 28:1d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lô' (לא or לול) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
lâqach (לקח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
min (מן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bath (בת) [pronounced bahth]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
K <sup>e</sup> na'an (כנען) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> NAH-ġahn]	which possibly means <i>merchant</i> and is transliterated <i>Canaan</i>	masculine proper noun; territory; pausal form	Strong's #3667 BDB #488

**Translation:** ...saying to him, "You will not marry one from the daughters of Canaan.

Notice that this is Isaac who says this. However, this command did not just come out of nowhere. Rebekah did not suddenly say on that day, "Listen, we need to talk about Esau's heathen wives (Genesis 26:34–35). They are coarse, they run around half-naked, they drink until they are drunk, and they keep a filthy house. I hate going over there."<sup>35</sup> She has already expressed her feelings to Isaac before—I suspect on numerous occasions. In fact, each time that Rebekah discovered a new fault, she probably said something to Isaac about it, beginning with, "I don't know how much longer I can put up with Esau's wives."

Therefore, this discussion between Rebekah and Isaac had continued for some time; and it is even possible that words were said to Jacob on occasion. Or, things were said, to indicate extreme displeasure in Esau's wives.

So, what was different this time? Why did Isaac not call Jacob into his study and say, "Boy, you cannot marry some local girl; you must go east to find a proper wife.?" Because, this time, when Rebekah complained about Esau's wives, she said, "We cannot allow Jacob to fall prey to these sleazy women around here. He must be sent to Paddan-aram to find a respectable woman." Jacob was Rebekah's favorite son. She did not want to send him away before. But now, his life was threatened by Esau; and Rebekah knew that Esau could express his hatred at any time (he said he would wait until his father was dead; but, she certainly did not think that this was a guarantee). So, Rebekah complained about Esau's wives, said that Jacob could not be allowed to marry a Canaanite woman, and that it was time for Isaac to act on this matter. Even though, this is mostly conjecture, I am assuming that I have most of this right.

While Rebekah was not batting 1000 in the advice department, still it was God's plan for there to be some related progenitors for the Jewish race. Because Rebekah was probably considerably younger than Isaac, Laban's daughter (Jacob's cousin) would likely be considerably younger than Jacob is. At this point in time, Jacob is

<sup>35</sup> These objections are all conjecture on my part.

approximately 70 years old (this would probably be equivalent to a 40 year old man today).<sup>36</sup> He has led a long life without being married—and his mother probably had something to do with this.

It is not up to Rebekah to make a decision like this. She cannot say, “Our son Jacob must marry a decent girl; so I am sending him east to my family.” This is a decision that Isaac had to make; but no doubt, he was heavily influenced behind the scenes. We have gone from Esau threatening Jacob’s life to Jacob being caused to leave Canaan in probably a day or two.

Jacob’s suggested marriage to a first cousin is not to be considered the *Bible way* as the genetic stew has changed since those times. Given the ages of the patriarchs, it is obvious that they were made of sterner stuff than we are today. Their genetic makeup was such that, even though there was a lot of genetic degeneracy following the flood, they still lead long and healthy lives during this period of time (a little more than double the length of our present lives). My point being that we do not go out today and marry our cousins. Genetically, we are too similar nowadays and such a move causes great detriment and risk to our children.

Esau’s wives are Hittites. This reference to *a daughter of Canaan* simply says that, no woman of the land where they have moved to will be a suitable wife for Jacob. This is why, earlier in a previous chapter, Esau’s wives are said to be a bane to Rebekah’s existence.

Here is what appears to be occurring behind the scenes: Jacob and Rebekah both know that Esau has murder in his heart for Jacob. When he gets the chance, he will kill Jacob. So Rebekah has to get Jacob out of there, but in such a way that does not indicate that she has been a party to this plot to deceive Isaac, her husband.

**Genesis 28:1** And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and commanded him. And he said to him, “You will not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

When Isaac makes this pronouncement, all of it appears to be his idea. No doubt Isaac will tell Esau this at a later time. He won’t tell Esau, “Your mother had this great idea about getting Jacob a wife from our relatives;” he will say, “I have sent your brother Jacob to get a wife from our relatives.” So, when this decision is made, it is going to appear as if Isaac made the decision, even though it is actually Rebekah trying to save her son Jacob from her other son Esau.

All of this is quite slick, one might say, on the part of Rebekah. Jacob will be given safe passage out of Canaan, so that he is safely away from Esau; but the problem is, Rebekah will never see her favorite son Jacob again. Her plan for Jacob to receive the firstborn-son blessing from Isaac had worked, but things did not turn out the way that she wanted them to. This is not God’s plan for us to manipulate others to getting them to do what we want them to do.

Esau and Jacob are the same age. Esau married around or before turning 40. However, here, it is clear that Jacob has not yet married, and Rebekah has convinced Isaac that he should not marry a woman of Canaan. There were many different groups of people who lived in Canaan, but the key was, they did not participate in Y<sup>e</sup>howah worship (although, as we have studied, there were believers in Y<sup>e</sup>howah throughout Canaan—and some because of Abraham).

Bear in mind that this is a cover story, to separate Jacob and Esau, so that Esau does not kill him—but there is a real concern here as well. For a plan that had to be developed on the fly, this is actually quite brilliant. Even Isaac and Esau will both think that the decision for Jacob to leave is Isaac’s decision. Rebekah barely leaves a fingerprint behind.

As an aside, I am not really certain that their relatives from the east were involved in Y<sup>e</sup>howah worship either, at this point in time. Later in Genesis, we will find out that some of them have little *deity statues* (Genesis 31:19–35:1–5). So the worship of heathen gods was widespread among them. This might explain why God wanted Abraham to separate from his immediate family (Genesis 12:1).

<sup>36</sup> This is an extrapolation from the Patriarch Timeline. I think that Luther puts him at age 77.

Isaac continues to speak to his son Jacob.

Genesis 28:1 Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and commanded him, saying to him, “You will not marry one from the daughters of Canaan. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 28:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced koom]	<i>stand, rise up, arise, get up</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Paddân (פַּדָּן) [pronounced pahd-DAWN]	<i>to extend, a plateau; garden, field; transliterated Paddan, Padan</i>	proper singular noun/location with the directional hê	Strong's #6307 BDB #804
ʾĀrām (אַרָּם) [pronounced uh-RAWM]	<i>the highland, high region; exalted; and is transliterated Aram; sometimes rendered Syria, Mesopotamia</i>	singular proper noun	Strong's #758 BDB #74

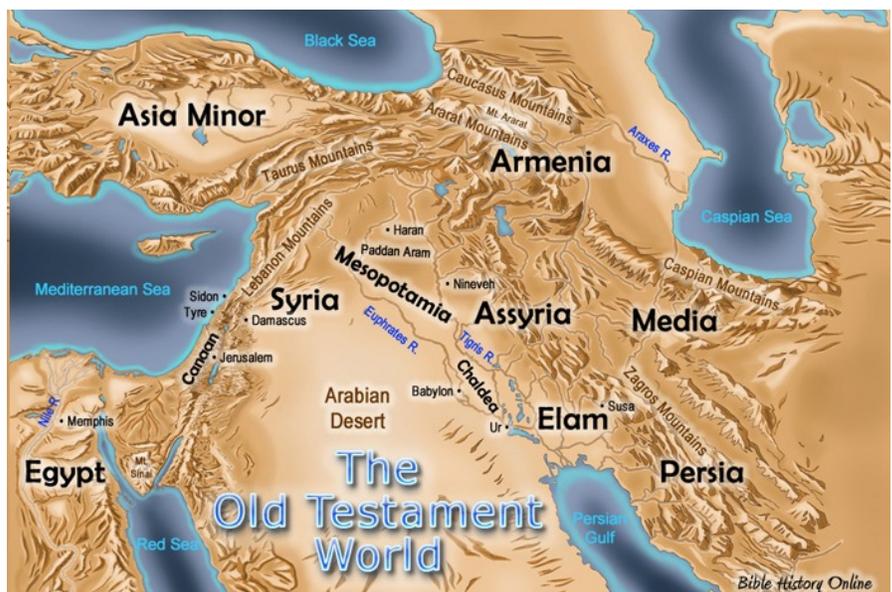
Together, these words refer to the table land of Aram; Paddan or Paddan-Aram, a region of Syria.

The directional hê is the *âh* (ה) ending to a noun, usually found after a verb of motion. This is called the *directive hê* or the *he locale*, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question *where?* The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun *heaven* and the most literal rendering in the English would be *heavenward*. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions *to* or *toward*.

**Translation:** [Instead] rise up and go to Paddan-aram,...

It is obvious that Isaac or Rebekah had been keeping in touch with Rebekah’s family. They knew where they were and they knew that there were daughters there who were Jacob’s age or younger. Otherwise, it would make little sense to send Jacob east where there may or may not be daughters of a marriageable age.

**Map of Paddan-aram (large overview);** taken from [Bible-history.com](http://Bible-history.com); accessed June 8, 2017. Canaan, the land God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is next to the Mediterranean Sea; and Paddan-aram is a part of Mesopotamia.



Paddan-aram (or, simply Paddan) is in the upper Mesopotamia near Haran, somewhat upstream from the merging of the Euphrates and Harbur Rivers. It is also mentioned in Genesis 25:20 and 31:18.

Genesis 28:2b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house-ward, to the [his] house [residence; household, habitation]</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article and the directional hê	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
B <sup>e</sup> thûw'êl (בֵּיתְאֵל) [pronounced behth-oo-ALE]	<i>destroyed of God, God destroys; man of God; a virgin of God; a house of God, dweller in God; and is transliterated Bethuel, Bathuel</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #1328 BDB #143
'âb (אָב) [pronounced aw <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1 BDB #3
'êm (אֵם) [pronounced aim]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51

**Translation:** ...to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father...

Isaac is telling Jacob to go to the compound of Bethuel, who is Rebekah's father and Jacob's grandfather. However, Jacob is not going to have any dealings with Bethuel (who may or may not be alive at this time), but with Laban, his son.

*The house of Bethuel* simply refers to his family; all who have come with him originally and all who are descended from him.

There is little agreement at this point. Did Jacob travel alone or with a group (and what size?); did he walk or did he travel on camels (or mules). One passage quotes is Gen. 32:10, where Jacob is speaking to God: "I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps." The interpretation given this is, Jacob literally only had his staff when he crossed the Jordan; but now, upon his return, he has enough people to make up two camps. This is actually a remarkable observation.

Later, after Jacob returns to the Land of Promise, his mother's servant, Deborah, is said to die (but we never speak of his mother dying); and this is a great tragedy. Furthermore, she is apparently with Jacob's family and he buries her. This suggests to me that his mother gave him her personal servant to travel with because she had made this trip before, coming from Paddan-aram to Canaan. Even though she is not mentioned until her death, it is reasonable to suppose that she went with Jacob to Paddan-aram.

Based upon this, Jacob had more than simply a staff when he crossed the Jordan. So, we might take Genesis 32:10 as not a completely literal statement, indicating the Jacob had very little with him when he left the Land of

Promise. This would not be considered a complete listing of all his supplies. After all, would it make sense to send Jacob on this trip, but without any food whatsoever?

Certainly, compared to Abraham's servant, who went east to find a wife for Isaac, Jacob went with nearly nothing in hand. I think what we are looking at here is a balance between swiftness to get him out of Canaan, but there seems little reason to think that Jacob took nothing at all on this trip (again, it is implied that he went with his mother's personal servant).

There are those who disagree. Clarke writes: *It appears, from Genesis 28:11, that he lodged in the open air, with a stone for his pillow; and from Genesis 32:10, that he went on foot with his staff in his hand; nor is there even the most indirect mention of any attendants, nor is it probable there were any. He no doubt took provisions with him sufficient to carry him to the nearest encampment or village on the way, where he would naturally recruit his bread and water to carry him to the next stage, and so on. The oil that he poured on the pillar might be a little of that which he had brought for his own use, and can be no rational argument of his having a stock of provisions, servants, camels, etc., for which it has been gravely brought. He had God alone with him.*<sup>37</sup>

Now, throughout human history, there have been many men who have depended upon God alone for their provisions. However, this does not mean that you choose to go totally unprepared to travel from point A to point B. Nor does it mean that people in Scripture were so holy that, they never needed to consider rations. God obviously looks out for us and takes care of us. But if you have a refrigerator and pantry filled with foodstuffs, and yet you go out camping without taking anything along, I would say that is just ignorant. You are testing God!

On the other hand, some of us are placed in situations where there are no choices and there are long periods of time where we have no rations (like those pushed from their towns and homes because of wars or natural disasters), then, quite obviously, we must depend upon God for this blessing.

Genesis 28:2c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i> ]	<i>take, seize, take away, take in marriage; send for, fetch, bring, receive</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced <i>shawm</i> ]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb of place	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i> ]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61

<sup>37</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:2.

## Genesis 28:2c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bath (בַּת) [pronounced <i>bahth</i> ]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law<sup>b</sup>-VAWN</i> ]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
'âch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i> ]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #251 BDB #26
'êm (אֵם) [pronounced <i>aim</i> ]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51

**Translation:** ...and take for yourself from there a wife from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.

Jacob is being told to check out Laban's daughters and to take a wife from among them. We will find out that Laban has at least two daughters of a marriageable age.

Genesis 28:2 [Instead] rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father and take for yourself from there a wife from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

**The Line of Shem, the Line of Canaan and Marriage to the Hittites:** After the flood, there was an incident where Noah got drunk, and his sons responded in different ways. His son Ham made fun of his father and delighted in the incident; his sons Japheth and Shem treated their father with respect (Genesis 9:21–27). When Noah awoke, he cursed the line of Canaan (Genesis 9:25), as Canaan was a son of Ham (Genesis 9:18, 22). Noah blessed the line of Shem and identified it as the line of promise (Genesis 9:26–27). Therefore, it was a bad idea for the sons of Isaac, who were in the favored line, to marry the sons of Canaan, who had been cursed.

It is speculation, however, that this is the issue for Abraham, when finding a wife for Isaac; or Rebekah's suggestion to Isaac that if Jacob marries a Canaanite, this would ruin her life (Genesis 27:46). What she implies is, a wife for Jacob be found with her family in the east (or she allows Isaac to come to the conclusion that Jacob be sent to the east to her family—Genesis 28:1–2). As we have come to find, Rebekah is a great manipulator, so her statement made in Genesis 27:46 could have led her husband Isaac to say, "Then, maybe we should send Jacob east to find a wife, as my father did for me." She makes him think that it is his idea (although we do not know that this is exactly what happened); her problems with Canaanite wives is stated in Genesis 27:46; and Isaac is the one to tell his son Jacob to go east in Genesis 28:1–2. That Isaac makes the decision to send Jacob east, is my filling in the gap between those two passages.

I would assume that Abraham and Isaac and Rebekah were aware of Genesis 9:20–27, but this passage is not cited or even implied. Abraham simply states that Isaac should not take a wife from the Canaanites (Genesis

24:1–4); and Isaac is saying the same thing here in this passage. The only statements that we have as to motivation come from Genesis 26:34–35 (where Esau’s Hittite wives are said to make life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah) and Genesis 27:46 (where Rebekah says that her life would be ruined if Jacob married a Hittite woman). The Hittites were the sons of Heth, the second son of Canaan (Genesis 10:15).

Let me suggest this: (1) the divine point of view is that the line of promise remain uncontaminated by the cursed line (Genesis 9:20–27); and (2) the human point of view is, these daughters of Heth (a son of Canaan) make terrible daughters-in-law. God has a plan of separation; Abraham and Isaac fulfill this plan by using common sense and judgment (and, it is okay to judge your children’s friends).

The book of Genesis not only leads us to the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but it also documents how this line is kept pure, despite the many attempts to contaminate it. The first major attempt to contaminate the line is Genesis 34, where the people of Hamor proposed an alliance and intermarriage between the two families. In Genesis 36, we see how corrupted the Esau line becomes, merging with the people of Seir. God finally isolates the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Egypt (Genesis 45–50). A small number of people from Egypt will become a part of Israel; but they forsake their previous national identity to do so (they are called the *mixed multitude* in Exodus 12:38; and some women, no doubt, became wives of some of the descendants).

Besides this being God’s plan which takes us from Adam to Christ (this line of promise going through Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David); this is the eventual end of mankind, where there will be a clear separation between the people of promise and the people of cursing (Revelation 20:12–15).

Gill suggests: *[Laban had] unmarried [daughters], of which no doubt Isaac and Rebekah had knowledge, a correspondence being kept up between the two families, though at a great distance.*<sup>38</sup>

Genesis 28:1–2 Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and commanded him, saying to him, “You will not marry one from the daughters of Canaan. [Instead] rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father and take for yourself from there a wife from the daughters of Laban, your mother’s brother. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Based upon the knowledge of Rebekah’s Paddan-aram family and information found in Scripture about Ishmael’s line, I think it reasonable to suppose that there was some contact between families—perhaps infrequent, but with basic information as to those born in these extended families (which seemed to be quite important to the Hebrews). So, even though I have not seen evidence of Gill’s assertion above, I believe to likely be true.

There are 4 points-of-view here, all of which should be explored. How does Isaac understand this series of events; how does Rebekah understand them, and how do these events relate to the plan of God? It is quite amazing as to how all of these events synch up, which events involve the volitions of Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau; and how their free will interplays with the will of God.

We have 4 sets of human volition, 4 people who see things in a certain, limited way; and we have God’s plan, which must function and move forward, despite the volition of these 4 people. The interaction and thinking of these 4 people is quite amazing, when each person is examined in relation to this entire situation.

Most people will know and understand the things listed below, but this allows everyone to catch up to where we are in this marvelous narrative.

### First, Let Me State the Obvious

1. The parents are Isaac and Rebekah. Isaac believes that he will die soon (as he is about the age of his older half-brother).

<sup>38</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:2.

## First, Let Me State the Obvious

2. Isaac's favorite son is Esau; Rebekah's favorite son is Jacob.
3. Isaac wants to bless his favorite son with the divine blessing of the line of promise.
4. Rebekah wants for her favorite son, Jacob, to receive this blessing.
5. Both Jacob and Esau want to receive this end-of-life blessing from Isaac, their father; and both men want the divine blessing of the line of promise—God's promise to Abraham.
6. Neither Jacob nor Esau have any spiritual maturity to speak of.
7. The son of promise is Jacob; he is the one who must receive the promise of Abraham; and he must also get married in order to have children.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

L. M. Grant: *Though scripture tells us that Isaac loved Esau, he had not done as Abraham had in making sure that Isaac's wife was of his own kindred. Rebekah's words to him now evidently awaken him out of such laxity, and he called Jacob and charged him that he must not take a wife of the Canaanites, but must rather go to Padan-aram and take a wife from the kindred of his grandfather, in fact one of the daughters of Jacob's uncle Laban (v.2). Today a marriage of cousins is not wise because weaknesses have multiplied greatly since sin was introduced into the human family, and special weaknesses attach to each family. Those weaknesses would be doubled by the marriage of two who are closely related, and the children therefore likely to be badly affected. In early history this was not a problem at all.*<sup>39</sup>

Genesis 28:1–2 Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and gave him a stern command, saying, “Do not marry a Canaanite woman. Instead, rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take a wife from the daughters of Laban (Laban is your uncle, your mother's brother).”

### Why Jacob is Sent East to Find a Wife (as Isaac Understood it)

1. At this point, at age 77 (or so), Jacob is not married.
2. However, the blessing of Abraham was laid upon Jacob in the previous chapter (where Isaac had been deceived); and in this chapter, where Isaac will act with full knowledge of what he is doing and who he is blessing. Isaac will confer Abraham's blessing upon Jacob.
3. A portion of this blessing includes “[May] God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples.” (v. 3)
4. What is needed in order for a man to be blessed by God, to be made fruitful and for God to multiply him? He needs a wife.
5. Esau's has taken two wives from that general area, and they are not favored at all by his mother. Genesis 26:34–35 27:46
6. Isaac took a wife from his family in the east, and this worked out quite well for him. Genesis 24:67 26:8–9
7. Because Jacob going east to find a wife happens so suddenly, there is little that can be gathered to send with him. In other words, Jacob will not have enough on him to purchase a wife (that is, he will not have a gift for the father); so that he can simply choose and then bring his new wife back to Canaan.
8. Therefore, sending the son of promise to the east to get a wife who also believed in the God of Abraham would be a prudent next step.

This is rather sudden, for Isaac; so it does not allow him enough time to turn some of his assets into easy-to-trade assets (like, gold, silver and jewelry) (this is an assumption on my part).

<sup>39</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-28.html> accessed June 3, 2017.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Speaking of the line of promise, the NEV commentary notes: *It must be remembered that Israel are ethnically linked to the other Arab nations in the 'land'- Jacob's 12 sons married wives from there; some of their mothers were Arab slave girls; Jacob's wives were Arameans, as was his mother (Genesis 28:5); historically there was much intermarriage with surrounding nations, throughout Israel's history; Ephraim and Manasseh were half Egyptian. Rahab, Ruth etc. are all reminders of the amount of Arab blood in the average Jew. The definition of 'Israel' was therefore not so much on ethnic principles but rather on spiritual ones. Anyone who has walked the streets of modern Israel and pondered the question 'What is a Jew?' will have come to this conclusion, as they see Russians, Americans, black Africans... all wearing skull caps.*<sup>40</sup>

Genesis 28:1–2 Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and gave him a stern command, saying, “Do not marry a Canaanite woman. Instead, rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take a wife from the daughters of Laban (Laban is your uncle, your mother's brother).”

### Why Jacob is Sent East to Find a Wife (as per Rebekah's Plan)

1. Jacob is Rebekah's favorite son; let me suggest that, all things being equal, she did not really want to send him anywhere.
2. However, in Genesis 27, she guided Jacob to deceive his father Isaac; and, as a result, Esau wanted to kill Jacob. Genesis 27:41
3. Rebekah heard about Esau's plan to kill her favorite son, and therefore, must act in order to protect Jacob. Genesis 27:42
4. Logically, the only way that Jacob could be protected would be to remove him from the land of Canaan. That way, he would be far from Esau.
5. Rebekah realized that Jacob needed to be married and did not need to marry a Canaanite woman; and this gave her the perfect plan. Genesis 27:43–45
6. Rebekah cannot reveal to Esau or to her husband Isaac that she was behind this plot to deceive Isaac. This would have ruined her relationship with those two men. So, Rebekah had to protect her son Jacob, and preserve the secret of her involvement in deceiving Isaac.
7. Sending Jacob to Paddan-aram to find a wife (as Isaac's servant was sent to find her) seems like an ideal way to save her favored son; and to keep her involvement in the deception hidden (only Jacob is aware of it).
8. It is likely that Jacob is sent to Paddan-aram with limited resources, as Rebekah knows he cannot return too soon (Rebekah could always send a servant with resources at a later date, if she perceives that the threat from Esau was diminished).

Some of this is conjecture, based upon what we know of the characters involved.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 28:1–2 Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and gave him a stern command, saying, “Do not marry a Canaanite woman. Instead, rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take a wife from the daughters of Laban (Laban is your uncle, your mother's brother).”

### How Esau Views the Whole Jacob Situation

1. Esau has had it out for his brother Jacob for a very long time.
2. Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage (that is, some baked beans, when Esau was starving).
3. Even though Esau knows that he is the favored son of his father and even though he knows his father wants to bless him, Jacob somehow slipped right in the middle of all this and took away Esau's blessing.

<sup>40</sup> From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen28com.html> accessed June 2, 2017.

## How Esau Views the Whole Jacob Situation

4. As a result, the blessing of the firstborn, the line of blessing, will go through Jacob and not through Esau.
5. Esau needs to somehow make the best of a bad situation. He knows that his current wives are viewed with some disgust by both his mother and father; and surely, that had some affect on this series of events, when this line of blessing did not go to him (he may not have fully connected the dots).
6. At some point, he finds out the Jacob is leaving town. We have no idea how this affected Esau; and it seemed like he was going to enjoy letting his hatred seethe, having no idea when Jacob would return (my guess is, most everyone expected for this to take a year or two).
7. Esau's solution is to find a woman (or women) who are believers in the Revealed God (I am assuming that he realizes this much, at the very least), and to marry them. So he will go and marry a woman from Ishmael's family.

It appears that Esau attended this particular blessing of Jacob (which will be discussed and justified later).

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[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 28:1–2 Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and gave him a stern command, saying, “Do not marry a Canaanite woman. Instead, rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take a wife from the daughters of Laban (Laban is your uncle, your mother's brother).”

## Jacob's Understanding of His Going East to Find a Wife

1. Both Jacob and Rebekah knew the full story. They planned the deception together, Jacob received the blessing from his father, but then, there was a sudden modification to this plan.
2. His mother, Rebekah, who paid attention to such things, found out that Esau was so angry, that he wanted to kill Jacob—and she recognized that this was not just an idle threat.
3. Jacob understood that leaving Canaan was the most prudent plan of action, as he certainly did not want to die at the hands of his brother.
4. Jacob also understood that he needed to find a wife in Paddan-aram, and he probably understood that this cover story protected his mother from the anger of Esau and the disappointment of Isaac (if Isaac found out the full extent of the deception).
5. Jacob understood that he needed to leave Canaan quickly (in order to get away before Esau knew what was happening); and that meant that he left with a small caravan and limited resources. We will later deduce that Jacob traveled with his mother's personal servant, who came from Paddan-aram, which is where they were going to.

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Genesis 28:1–2 Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and gave him a stern command, saying, “Do not marry a Canaanite woman. Instead, rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take a wife from the daughters of Laban (Laban is your uncle, your mother's brother).”

## How God Moved Jacob from Canaan to Paddan-aram

1. God is dealing with many problems:
2. The line of blessing is going to go through Jacob, but Jacob does not have a wife.
3. The only women near to Jacob are heathen women (with, perhaps the exception of the daughters of Ishmael).
4. Rebekah, Jacob's mother, does not want to let go of Jacob. Here he is 77 years old, and they are still closely associated as mother and son. This relationship appears to discourage marriage.
5. Regarding Isaac: Esau is his favorite son, not Jacob. How does God guide Isaac to bless the proper son,

## How God Moved Jacob from Canaan to Paddan-aram

- given Isaac's preferences?
6. Isaac has no problem with letting Jacob leave Canaan; he would have had a problem blessing Jacob over Esau.
  7. God must have the superior blessing fall upon the shoulders of Jacob, He must get a proper wife for Jacob (she could not be a godless Canaanite), and He must separate Rebekah and Jacob. You cannot take your mother along on the first date with your future wife.
  8. As we have studied in the previous chapter, God has used all of the bad decisions of Isaac, Rebekah and Jacob (and Esau) in order to solve all of these problems (Genesis 27 is the basis for solving all of these problems).
  9. So God, without compromising or affecting anyone's volition—without even making a grand appearance to tell this family, "Here is how it is going to be...."—sets His plan in motion.
  10. Like all that God does, His plan is perfect; and He accomplishes His plan whether we are *on board* with it or not.

So you see, everyone views this situation in a slightly different way; everyone has their own irons in the fire, so to speak; and yet God has His plan which He will advance, no matter what.

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Esau seemed to have no orientation to the plan of God. The seed of promise would take the land of Canaan from the Canaanites and Esau marries two Canaanite women. How exactly would that work? Do you see how problematic that is? It is not a problem if a few Canaanite women disassociate themselves from their people and cling to the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, Jacob himself cannot have a Canaanite wife—that would imply that the people of promise are half Canaanite!

Jacob, on the other hand, would marry women from his own tribe (his original intent was to marry one woman, but things happen).

In Genesis 27, both Rebekah and Jacob deceive Isaac so that Jacob receives the greater blessing. Esau is so angry, he is ready to kill Jacob. For this reason, Rebekah realizes that Jacob must leave the country for a time.

Genesis 28:1–2 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, "You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. (ESV)

There is a confused and fairly complex interpretation of Scripture which suggests that 2 or 3 or 4 people write the Old Testament; and then it got woven together. For instance, the Jehowist usually (but not always) uses the name *Jehovah*; the Elohist usually (but not always) uses the title *Elohim*; and the priest (s) was mostly concerned about priests getting a lot of action in Scripture.

There is an additional claim that the P narrative uses the geographical name *Paddan-aram* (a region or a country) and the J narrative uses *Haran* (a city) instead. Therefore, the P narrative is said to include Genesis 31:18 33:18 35:9; 26 46:15; and the J narrative includes Genesis 27:43.<sup>41</sup> Although we find this approach in many seminaries; and many intellectuals base their exegetical studies on this; it is crap based upon a crap theory (that there was no writing at all centuries, to the time of Moses and beyond).

I insert this because it is important to see some of the distortions of true doctrine; and how deeply imbedded they are. There are many Bible colleges which teach this (which is known as **Documentary Hypothesis**; or the **JPED Theory**).

<sup>41</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:2.

## The College Press Bible Study asks, *Are There Two Different Accounts?*

College Press Bible Study: *We are told by the critics that we have here two accounts of Jacob's departure differentiated by dissimilar motivations; In one version, the motive is fear of Esau's revenge; in the other, it is Rebecca's aversion to Hittite women and her determination that Jacob shall choose a wife from among her own Aramaean relatives. "In their eagerness to find material for separate documents, or evidence of duplicate accounts, the critics seem to be ever ready to sacrifice the force and beauty of the narratives with which they deal. They dissect them to the quick, rending them into feeble or incoherent fragments, or they pare them down by the assumption of doublets to the baldest forms of intelligible statement, and thus strip them of those affecting details, which lend them such a charm, because so true to nature.*

College press continues: *This involves the absurdity of assuming that two jejune or fragmentary accounts, pieced mechanically together, have produced narratives which are not only consistent and complete, but full of animation and dramatic power. An attempt is made to establish a difference between J and E on one hand, and P on the other, as to the reason why Jacob went to Paddan-Aram. According to the former (Genesis 27:1-45), it is to flee from his brother, whom he has enraged by defrauding him of his father's blessing. According to the latter (Genesis 26:34-35; Genesis 28:1-9), that he may not marry among the Canaanites, as Esau had done, to the great grief of his parents, but obtain a wife from among his own kindred. P, we are told, knows of no hostility between the brothers. But all this is spoiled by the statement in Genesis 28:7, that 'Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Paddan-Aram.' His father sent him to get a wife (Genesis 28:1-9), but his mother to escape Esau's fury (Genesis 27:42-45).*

College Press continues: *[T]here is no incompatibility between these two objects. In order to gain Isaac over to her plan without acquainting him with Esau's murderous designs, Rebekah simply urges her dissatisfaction with the wives of Esau, and her apprehension that Jacob might contract a similar marriage with someone of the daughters of the land. Isaac had one object in mind, Rebekah another. There is nothing for the critics to do, therefore, but to pronounce the unwelcome words, 'and his mother,' an interpolation. In order to prove their point they must first adjust the text to suit it. But tinkering the text in a single passage will not relieve them in the present instance.*

College Press continues: *The hostility of Esau is embedded in the entire narrative, and cannot be surrendered from it. Why did Jacob go alone and unattended in quest of a wife, without the retinue or the costly presents for his bride, befitting his rank and wealth? When Abraham desired a wife for Isaac he sent a princely embassy to woo Rebekah, and conduct her to her future home. Why was Jacob's suit so differently managed, although Isaac imitated Abraham in everything else? And why did Jacob remain away from his parents and his home, and from the land sacred as the gift of God, for so many long years till his twelve sons were born (Genesis 35:26 P)? This is wholly unaccounted for except by the deadly hostility of Esau.*

College Press concludes: *"In order to obtain Isaac's consent to the plan, without hurting his feelings by telling him of Esau's murderous intentions, she [Rebekah] spoke to him of her troubles on account of the Hittite wives of Esau, and the weariness of life that she should feel if Jacob also were to marry one of the daughters of the land, and so introduced the idea of sending Jacob to her relations in Mesopotamia, with a view to his marriage there" (BCOTP, 280). "The true state of Esau's spirit is shown by his resolve to kill his brother as soon as his father should die. To avert the danger, Rebekah sent away Jacob to her family at Haran. Isaac approved the plan, as securing a proper marriage for his son, to whom he repeated the blessing of Abraham, and sent him away to Paddan-aram (Genesis 32:10)" (OTH, 96). The first verse of ch. 28 so obviously follows the last verse of ch. 27 that we see no pertinent reason for assuming separate accounts of the motive for Jacob's departure.<sup>42</sup>*

The College Press Bible Study points out: *It should be recalled that J stands for the Jahvistic Code, E for Elohistic, and P for the Priestly.*

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<sup>42</sup> The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 27:45-28:5.

Rebekah planned it out for Jacob to take Esau's blessing. However, she did not factor in Esau's anger being great enough to kill Jacob. Therefore, Rebekah had to help Jacob leave Canaan, but she could not reveal that this is because Esau was going to kill him (as that would let on that she was a part of the deception plot—Genesis 27). So, she tells Isaac that Jacob must leave Canaan to marry a good wife (Genesis 28:1–2).

### Rebekah's Devious Plot (Many Commentators)

James Burton Coffman: *Of special interest is Genesis 27:46 of the previous chapter, which we have included here because it gives a glimpse of the continued involvement of Rebekah in the crucial decisions of this family. It appears that she might, even here, have been less than candid with Isaac.*

Coffman continues: *There's not a word here [in Genesis 27:46] of the knowledge that Rebekah had regarding Esau's intention of killing Jacob, nor of the previous decision Rebekah had already made to send Jacob to her brother's home in Paddan-aram; and, while what she said was most certainly the truth, it was far from all of the truth.*<sup>43</sup>

Wenstrom: *Notice how she manipulates Isaac using a persuasive argument to get Isaac to do what she wants. She doesn't relate to Isaac, Esau's plot to kill Jacob since she knew that Isaac would have not believed that his favorite son would do such a thing.*

Wenstrom continues: *Rebekah let it be known how distressed she was over the Canaanite women whom Esau had taken as wives (cf. 26:34-35) and then she insinuated that if Jacob did the same she would not be fit to live with. No wonder Isaac agreed to Rebekah's plan since what man wants to live with a bitchy wife! Proverbs 21:9, "It is better to live in a corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman."*<sup>44</sup>

MacLaren: *[Jacob will flee] from home on account of his nobler brother's fierce wrath at the trick which their scheming mother and he had contrived. It was an ugly, heartless fraud, a crime against a doting father, as against Esau. Rebekah gets alarmed for her favourite; and her fertile brain hits upon another device to blind Isaac and get Jacob out of harm's way, in the excuse that she cannot bear his marriage with a Hittite woman. Her exaggerated expressions of passionate dislike to 'the daughters of Heth' have no religious basis. They are partly feigned and partly petulance. So the poor old blind father is beguiled once more, and sends his son away.*<sup>45</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable: *Rebekah used her dislike for Esau's wives as an excuse to gain Isaac's permission for Jacob to go to Paddan-aram. Paddan-aram was the area around Haran...Evidently Rebekah had kept Esau's hatred for Jacob from his aged father because she believed Isaac was near death (Genesis 27:41). Rebekah's deceit secured the blessing for Jacob, but it resulted in his having to flee from his home. As far as Genesis records, Rebekah never saw him again.*

Kidner: *[Rebekah's] broaching the subject of Jacob's marriage was a masterstroke: it played equally on Isaac's self-interest and his principles. The prospect of a third Hittite daughter-in-law and a distracted wife would have unmanned even an Abraham.*

Waltke: *Rebekah's manipulative language to spare Jacob again displays the poverty of Isaac and Rebekah's relationship. As demonstrated by the previous deception, Isaac and Rebekah do not seem able to communicate honestly with one another on important spiritual matters.*<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017 (slightly edited).

<sup>44</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) accessed May 27, 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Alexander MacLaren, D. D., Litt. D., *Expositions Of Holy Scripture*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:10–22.

<sup>46</sup> These 3 quotes are all from Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 27:46–28:5. Constable provides original references there.

## Rebekah's Devious Plot (Many Commentators)

Expositor's Bible Commentary: *It is so commonly observed as to be scarcely worth again remarking, that persons who employ a great deal of craft in the management of their affairs are invariably entrapped in their own net. Life is so complicated, and every matter of conduct has so many issues, that no human brain can possibly foresee every contingency. Rebekah was a clever woman, and quite competent to outwit men like Isaac and Esau.*

Expositor's Bible Commentary continues: *In the first part of her scheme she feels herself at home. She is a woman who knows exactly how much of her mind to disclose, so as effectually to lead her husband to adopt her view and plan. She did not bluntly advise Isaac to send Jacob to Padan-aram, but she sowed in his apprehensive mind fears which she knew would make him send Jacob there; she suggested the possibility of Jacob's taking a wife of the daughters of Heth. She felt sure that Isaac did not need to be told where to send his son to find a suitable wife. So Isaac called Jacob, and said, Go to Padan-aram, to the house of thy mother's father, and take thee a wife thence. And he gave him the family blessing-God Almighty give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee-so constituting him his heir, the representative of Abraham.<sup>47</sup>*

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Rebekah invents an ingenious excuse for Jacob's sudden departure from his house. She professes to be concerned lest he should form an alliance in marriage with the children of Heth, as his brother Esau had done. (Genesis 27:46.) She probably intended, at first, only to arrange for a brief absence, believing that Esau's temper would soon cool. This showed a deep knowledge of human nature; for the fiercer the rage, the sooner it spends itself. Rebekah was also prompted by a religious motive. She would save Jacob from the sin into which Esau had fallen; and as she knew that the purpose of God was on the side of her ambition she had faith in that great future which was in store for Isaac. Thus it was adversity that set Jacob on this journey. God by this means was wakening him up to a sense of his own evil and weakness, so that he might learn to find the true refuge and home of his soul. Thus affliction conducts us by new ways in our pilgrimage, so that our extremity may be God's opportunity to help and deliver us.<sup>48</sup>*

Wenstrom: *Genesis 28:10-13 records Jacob's departure from Beersheba. In this passage we see Jacob receiving direct revelation from the preincarnate Christ who reconfirms to him the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant and reassures him of His presence and protection while in exile in Paddan Aram. Thus far in our study of this chapter, we have seen in Genesis 28:1-5 that Isaac agrees with Rebekah's plan to send Jacob away to her brother Laban in Paddan Aram in order to secure a wife for Jacob.*

Wenstrom continues: *Her real reason for sending Jacob away was to protect him from Esau's plot to kill him and not really to secure a bride for Isaac. This is clear since Rebekah did not provide Jacob with money and materials to give to Laban her brother, which would constitute the "price" to secure a bride.*

Wenstrom continues: *Evidently, Isaac assumed that Rebekah would see to it that she would provide Jacob everything he would need to secure a bride since Jacob was her favorite. His assumption proved wrong and costly since Rebekah never sees Jacob again..*

Wenstrom continues: *Rebekah's conspiracy to deceive her husband Isaac so that he would bless Jacob her favorite rather than Esau his favorite son would come back to haunt her. By not seeing Jacob again she has reaped what she has sowed.<sup>49</sup>*

Part of Rebekah's brilliance here is, she already set all of this up, as she really did not like Esau's wives and their heathenistic practices.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll; ©1887-1896; public domain; from e-sword, Genesis 27:41-28:22.

<sup>48</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:1-5 (Main Homiletics of the Paragraph).

<sup>49</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:8-9); accessed May 28, 2017.

<sup>50</sup> I am making that assumption here that she did not like their behaviors or thinking.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Here is the irony in all of this. We learned in the previous chapter that Rebekah could be devious, underhanded, and manipulative. She had brought Jacob up in the same way. He had become devious, underhanded and manipulative. If there was something that he wanted—such as his father’s blessing—he would do whatever was necessary to receive it. His mother was more than a willing participant; she was the initiator. Jacob is going to go and meet his Uncle Laban, and it will turn out that, Laban has perfected being devious, underhanded and manipulative to an art form. He makes Jacob look like Little Lord Fauntleroy.<sup>51</sup>

God is going to teach Jacob some lessons. “Do you think it is a good idea to manipulate people? Do you think that it is right to be unscrupulous and dishonest? Let me put you face to face with one of your own relatives, Jacob, who is everything that you are and more so.”

Recall back when Esau was so hungry, he would give anything for a meal, and Jacob said, “You see this red beans and rice? I will make all you want—just give me your birthright.” Laban has a daughter that Jacob will fall head over heels in love with. He will work for 7 years for Laban for this daughter, but, on the morning after his wedding, wake up to find that he has consummated marriage with the less attractive, older sister. Laban did that to him. Then Laban said, “You want to marry the younger daughter? Of course you can; just work 7 more years for me.” So you may be somewhat disturbed about Jacob’s character and the things which he has done; but all the deception he has pulled will come right back on his own head. This is known of poetic justice. This will be the narrative of the next two chapters of Genesis.

**Genesis 28:2** Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father. And take a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

Genesis 28:1–2 Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and gave him a stern command, saying, “Do not marry a Canaanite woman. Instead, rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father, and take a wife from the daughters of Laban (Laban is your uncle, your mother’s brother). (Kukis paraphrase)

Interestingly enough, although a servant went to the east to select a wife for Isaac, Isaac has told Jacob to do this personally. Perhaps it is this new generation that Jacob represents, where he himself chooses his wife. Whether there is influence from Rebekah here or not, we don’t know. “We shouldn’t leave choosing a wife up to a servant. Jacob needs to do this on his own.” I am speculating on discussion that may have taken place between Isaac and Rebekah.

As we have observed, Rebekah and Jacob both tend to be rather deceptive and manipulative. It is likely that Jacob gets this from his mother. This will turn out to be a family trait. Laban, Rebekah’s brother, will also turn out to be deceptive and manipulative. He will try to get things to work out to his own benefit. No matter what the circumstance or situation, Laban will figure out how to make that work to his own profit, and then he will move things in that direction. He is the kind of businessman who believes that, he needs to win every deal, he needs to come out on top every time—and if things are not working out for him, cheating and conning are legitimate. This is the man to whom Isaac is sending Jacob. Con-man Jacob will be sent to his Uncle Laban, who is even a greater con-man.

Now, Isaac will give Jacob a legitimate blessing, where Isaac knows that this is Jacob, and he knows that Jacob may be gone for awhile. Isaac has no idea if he will see his son again.

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<sup>51</sup> I realize this reference is old. Should I have said Urkel? Or that horse whisperer girl on *Heartland*?

And ʾEl Shaddai will bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you and you have been to an assembly of peoples. And He will give a blessing of Abraham to you and to your seed with you; for your possession of earth of your travels which has given God to Abraham.”

Genesis  
28:3–4

And ʾEl the Almighty will bless you, make you fruitful and multiply you so you become a [great] assembly of peoples. Furthermore, He will give the blessings of Abraham—[both] to you and to your descendants. For the ground [over which] you have traveled [is] your possession, [that very same ground] which God had given to Abraham.”

And God the Almighty will bless you, and He will make you fruitful and multiply you into a great assembly of peoples. He will give all of the blessings of Abraham to you and to your own sons and daughters. All this ground which you have traveled on will be yours—just as God had promised to Abraham.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And ʾEl Shaddai will bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you and you have been to an assembly of peoples. And He will give a blessing of Abraham to you and to your seed with you; for your possession of earth of your travels which has given God to Abraham.”
Targum (Onkelos)	And the All sufficient God bless thee, and make thee to increase and multiply, and become an assemblage <u>of tribes</u> ; and give the blessing of Abraham to thee and thy sons with thee, that thou mayest inherit the land of thy habitation which the Lord gave to Abraham.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And El Shadai will bless thee <u>with many possessions</u> , and increase thee and multiply thee <u>into twelve tribes</u> , <u>and thou shalt be worthy of the congregation of the sons of the Sanhedrin, the sum of which is seventy, according to the number of the nations</u> . And He will give the blessing of Abraham to thee, and to thy sons with thee, and cause thee to inherit the land of thy sojourning, which he gave unto Abraham.
Jerusalem targum	And El Shadai will bless thee <u>with many possessions</u> , and increase thee and multiply thee into <u>twelve tribes</u> , <u>and thou shalt be worthy of the congregation of the sons of the Sanhedrin, the sum of which is seventy, according to the number of the nations</u> . And He will give the blessing of Abraham to thee, and to thy sons with thee, and cause thee to inherit the land of thy sojourning, which he gave unto Abraham.
Latin Vulgate	And God almighty bless you, and make you to increase and multiply you: that you may be a multitude of people. And give the blessings of Araham to you, and to your seed after you: that you may possess the land of your sojournment, which he promised to <u>your grandfather</u> .
Peshitta (Syriac)	May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a multitude of peoples; And give the blessings of Abraham to you and to your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you dwell, which God gave to Abraham.
Septuagint (Greek)	And may my God bless you, and increase you, and multiply you, and you shall become an assembly of nations. And may He give you the blessing of my father Abraham, even to you and to your seed after you, to inherit the land of your sojourning, which God gave to Abraham.

Significant differences: Two of the targums add the phrase *with many possessions* in the first sentence. The targums has *tribes*, *12 tribes* rather than *an assembly of peoples (nations)*.

Two of the targums add *and thou shalt be worthy of the congregation of the sons of the Sanhedrin, the sum of which is seventy, according to the number of the nations* into the text.

The Latin as *your grandfather* rather than *Abraham*.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And may God, the Ruler of all, give you his blessing, giving you fruit and increase, so that you may become an army of peoples. And may God give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed, so that the land of your wanderings, which God gave to Abraham, may be your heritage.
Easy English	Isaac asked God *Almighty to *bless Jacob. Isaac asked God to give very many *descendants to Jacob. So then Jacob would be the father of a very large group of nations. Isaac said, `God gave a *blessing to Abraham. Let God give it to you and your *descendants as well. So then you will own the country where you are camping. God gave this country to Abraham.'
Easy-to-Read Version	I pray that God All-Powerful [Literally, "El Shaddai."] will bless you and give you many children. I pray that you will become the father of a great nation. I pray that God will bless you and your children the same way he blessed Abraham. And I pray that you will own the land where you live. This is the land God gave to Abraham."
Good News Bible (TEV)	May Almighty God bless your marriage and give you many children, so that you will become the father of many nations! May he bless you and your descendants as he blessed Abraham, and may you take possession of this land, in which you have lived and which God gave to Abraham!"
<i>The Message</i>	"And may The Strong God bless you and give you many, many children, a congregation of peoples; and pass on the blessing of Abraham to you and your descendants so that you will get this land in which you live, this land God gave Abraham."
Names of God Bible	May <b>El Shadday</b> bless you, make you fertile, and increase the number of your descendants so that you will become a community of people. May he give to you and your descendants the blessing of Abraham so that you may take possession of the land where you are now living, the land that <b>Elohim</b> gave to Abraham."
NIRV	"May the Mighty God bless you. May he give you children. May he increase your numbers until you become a community of nations. May he give you and your children after you the blessing he gave to Abraham. Then you can take over the land where you now live as an outsider. It's the land God gave to Abraham."
New Simplified Bible	»Almighty God will bless your marriage and give you many children. You will become the father of many nations!

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	God Almighty [Heb El Shaddai or God of the Mountain] will bless you, make you fertile, and give you many descendants so that you will become a large group of peoples. He will give you and your descendants Abraham's blessing so that you will own the land in which you are now immigrants, the land God gave to Abraham."
Contemporary English V.	I pray that God All-Powerful will bless you with many descendants and let you become a great nation. May he bless you with the land he gave Abraham, so that you will take over this land where we now live as foreigners.
New Berkeley Version	God Almighty bless you, make you prolific and multiply you so that you may become an association of peoples. May He grant you and your descendants after you the blessing He bestowed on Abraham, so as to possess the land in which you are now a stranger, which God gave to Abraham."
New Century Version	May God Almighty bless you and give you many children, and may you become a group of many peoples. May he give you and your descendants the blessing of Abraham so that you may own the land where you are now living as a stranger, the land God gave to Abraham."

New Life Version	May the All-powerful God bring good to you and give you many children until you become many nations. May He give you and your children after you the same gift that He gave Abraham. May He give you the land that He gave Abraham, the land where you are now a stranger."
New Living Translation	May God Almighty [Hebrew El-Shaddai.] bless you and give you many children. And may your descendants multiply and become many nations! May God pass on to you and your descendants [Hebrew seed; also in 28:13, 14.] the blessings he promised to Abraham. May you own this land where you are now living as a foreigner, for God gave this land to Abraham."

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	May my God bless you, prosper you, and make you increase; for you will become a gathering of nations. And may He give the blessing of my father AbrahAm to you and to your seed that comes after you to inherit the land that you're staying in, which God gave to AbrahAm.'
International Standard V	May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful so that your descendants [Lit. that you] become a whole group of people. May he give you and your descendants the blessings that he gave Abraham. May you possess the land where you have lived [Lit. land of your journeying] that God gave to Abraham."
New Advent (Knox) Bible	God Almighty bless thee, and make thy posterity thrive and increase, so that a multitude of nations may spring from thee. May he grant to thee, and to thy race after thee, the blessing which he promised to thy grandfather Abraham; possession of the land in which thou dwellest now as a stranger.
Today's NIV	May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham."
Translation for Translators	I will pray that God Almighty will bless you, and enable you to <i>get married and</i> have many descendants, in order that they will become many people-groups. I also will pray that he will bless you and your descendants by enabling you to possess/seize the land in which you are now living as a foreigner, the land that God promised to give to <i>my father</i> Abraham and his descendants."

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	God Almighty will bless you, make- you fruitful, and multiply you. You will be an assembly of people. He gives the blessing of Abraham to you, and to your seed with you. Possess the land of your pilgrimage, which God gave to Abraham."
Conservapedia Translation	The All-sufficient God shall bless you, and make you fruitful, and increase you. You will become a large assembly of people. He shall give the blessing of Abraham to you, and to your descendants with you, and you will someday possess the land in which you are a sojourner, the land that God gave to Abraham."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	And may ALMIGHTY GOD bless you, and make you fruitful, and increase, and may you become an assembly of nations, and may He give the blessings of Abraham to you and your race with you, to inherit the land of your strangerhood, which God gave to Abraham."
HCSB	May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you so that you become an assembly of peoples. May God give you and your offspring the blessing of Abraham so that you may possess the land where you live as an alien, the land God gave to Abraham."
NIV, ©2011	May God Almighty [Hebrew El-Shaddai] [S Ge 17:1] bless [Ge 48:16; Nu 6:24; Ru 2:4; Ps 129:8; 134:3; Jer 31:23] you and make you fruitful [S Ge 17:6] and increase your numbers [S Ge 12:2] until you become a community of peoples. May he give

you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham [S Ge 12:2, 3], so that you may take possession of the land [S Ge 15:7] where you now reside as a foreigner [S Ge 17:8], the land God gave to Abraham."

Urim-Thummim Version

And Elohim Shaddai bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be a company of nations, passing the blessings from Abraham to you and your offspring. Then you may dispossess the land where you are a wayfarer that Elohim gave to Abraham.

Wikipedia Bible Project

And El-Shaddai will bless you, and will have you bear fruit, and multiply, and you would become a crowd of peoples. And he will give to you the blessing of Abraham, you and your seed as well--- to inherit the land you wander, which God has given to Abraham."

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community Bible

*May God Almighty bless you and make you increase to become a group of nations. May he grant you and your descendants the blessings of Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you live now, and that Yahweh gave to Abraham.*

The Heritage Bible

And may God Almighty kneel down with goodness to you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, that you may be a multitude of people; And may he give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you, that you may possess the land of your temporary residence which God gave to Abraham.

New English Bible

God Almighty bless you, make you fruitful and increase your descendants until they become a host of nations. May he bestow on you and your offspring the blessing of Abraham, and may you thus possess the country where you are now living, the land which God gave to Abraham!

New American Bible (2011)

May God Almighty bless you and make you fertile, multiply you that you may become an assembly of peoples. May God extend to you and your descendants the blessing of Abraham, so that you may gain possession of the land where you are residing, which he assigned to Abraham." Ex 32:13.

New Jerusalem Bible

May El Shaddai bless you; may he make you fruitful and make you multiply so that you become a group of nations. May he grant you the blessing of Abraham, you and your descendants after you, so that one day you may own the country where you are now living as a stranger -- which God gave to Abraham.'

New RSV

»He will bless you and your descendants as he blessed Abraham. You may take possession of this land, in which you have lived and which God gave to Abraham!«  
May God Almighty\* bless you and make you fruitful and numerous, that you may become a company of peoples. May he give to you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your offspring with you, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien-land that God gave to Abraham.'

Revised English Bible

May God Almighty bless you; may he make you fruitful and increase your descendants until they become a community of nations. May he bestow on you and your offspring the blessing given to Abraham, that you may possess the land where you are now living, and which God assigned to Abraham!'

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

May El Shaddai bless you, make you fruitful and increase your descendants, until they become a whole assembly of peoples. And may he give you the blessing which he gave Avraham, you and your descendants with you, so that you will possess the land you will travel through, the land God gave to Avraham."

The Complete Tanach

And may the Almighty God bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and you shall become an assembly of peoples.

**And...the Almighty God:** Heb.שׁוּׁר. May He Who has enough (שׁוּׁר) blessings for those who are blessed from His mouth, bless you.

And may He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you, that you may inherit the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham."

**the blessing of Abraham:** that He said to him (above 12:2): "And I will make you into a great nation" ; (above 22:18): "[And all the nations of the world] will bless themselves with your seed." May those aforementioned blessings be for you. May that nation and that blessed seed emanate from you. [From Tanchuma, Vezoth Haberachah 1]

exeGesés companion Bible	...and El Shadday blesses you to bear fruit and abound you and there become a congregation of people; and give you the blessing of Abraham - to you and to your seed with you; to possess the land of your sojournings which Elohim gave to Abraham.
Hebrew Names Version	May El Shaddai bless you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, that you may be a company of peoples, and give you the blessing of Avraham, to you, and to your seed with you, that you may inherit the land where you travel, which God gave to Avraham."
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	May El Shaddai [ <i>Traditionally rendered "God Almighty."</i> ] bless you, make you fertile and numerous, so that you become an assembly of peoples. May He grant the blessing of Abraham to you and your offspring, that you may possess the land where you are sojourning, which God assigned to Abraham."
Judaica Press Complete T.	And may the Almighty God bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and you shall become an assembly of peoples. And may He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you, that you may inherit the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham."
Kaplan Translation	God Almighty will then bless you, make you fruitful, and increase your numbers. You will become an assembly of nations [See Genesis 17:5.]. He will grant Abraham's blessing to you and your descendants, so that you will take over the land which God gave to Abraham, where you previously lived only as a foreigner.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And El Shaddai bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a kahal amim; And give thee the birkat Avraham, to thee, and to thy zera with thee; that thou mayest inherit the eretz wherein thou art a ger, which Elohim gave unto Avraham.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"And Ēl Shaddai bless you, and make you bear fruit and increase you, and you shall become an assembly of peoples, and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your seed with you, so that you inherit the land of your sojournings, which Elohim gave to Abraham."

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you until you become a group of peoples. May He give the blessing [He gave to] Abraham to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land He gave to Abraham, in which you are a sojourner.
The Expanded Bible	May God Almighty bless you and ·give you many children [ <sup>l</sup> make you fruitful and multiply you; 1:22], and may you become a ·group [assembly; congregation; company] of many peoples. May he give you and your ·descendants [ <sup>l</sup> seed] the blessing of Abraham so that you may ·own [possess] the land ·where you are now living as a stranger [ <sup>l</sup> of your wandering/sojourn/alien status], the land God gave to Abraham."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a

stranger, which God gave unto Abraham. The words of Isaac unmistakably point to the fact that he now openly recognized Jacob as the chosen heir. The consciousness of his patriarchal calling was awakened in him, and he had the strength to give the blessing of Abraham, which included the Messianic promise, to the son whom he would have rejected, but whom God had chosen.

NET Bible®

May the sovereign God [Heb "El Shaddai." See the extended note on the phrase "sovereign God" in Gen 17:1.] bless you! May he make you fruitful and give you a multitude of descendants [Heb "and make you fruitful and multiply you." See Gen 17:6, 20 for similar terminology.]! Then you will become [The perfect verbal form with vav (ו) consecutive here indicates consequence. The collocation הָיָה + preposition לְ (hayah + lÿ) means "become."] a large nation [Heb "an assembly of peoples."]. May he give you and your descendants the blessing he gave to Abraham [Heb "and may he give to you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your offspring with you." The name "Abraham" is an objective genitive here; this refers to the blessing that God gave to Abraham.] so that you may possess the land [The words "the land" have been supplied in the translation for clarity.] God gave to Abraham, the land where you have been living as a temporary resident [Heb "the land of your sojournings," that is, the land where Jacob had been living as a resident alien, as his future descendants would after him]."

The Pulpit Commentary

And God Almighty—El Shaddai (vide Genesis 17:1)—bless thee,—the Abrahamic benediction in its fullest form was given by El Shaddai (vide Genesis 17:1–8)—and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be—literally, and thou shalt become (or grow to)—a multitude—an assembly, or congregation, or crowd called together, from a root signifying to call together (Gesenius), or to sweep up together (Furst); corresponding to ἐκκλησία in Greek—of people. And give thee the Blessing of Abraham,—i.e. promised to Abraham (vide Genesis 12:2; Genesis 22:17, Genesis 22:18). The additions of τοῦ πατρὸς μου (LXX.), אַבְרָם = τοῦ πατρὸς σου (Samaritan), are unwarranted—to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger,—literally, the land of thy sojournings (Genesis 17:8)—which God gave unto Abraham—by promise (cf. Genesis 12:7; Genesis 13:15; Genesis 15:7, Genesis 15:18; Genesis 17:8).

The Voice

May the All-Powerful God [Hebrew, El Shaddai] bless you, make you fruitful, and multiply your descendants so that you will give rise to nation after nation! 4 May God give to you and to your children in this inheritance all of the blessings of Abraham, so that you might someday possess the land where you now live as a foreigner—a land that was promised by God to Abraham.

When the Lord told Abraham to leave Haran and travel to Canaan, most of his relatives remained in Northern Mesopotamia in towns between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The area southwest of Haran becomes known as Paddan-aram (the plain of Aram). Abraham and some of the other patriarchs continue to see this land and its people as their own. This is why Jacob and his family are known as Arameans (Deuteronomy 26:5).

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV

And God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, that you may be a multitude of people; And give you the blessing of Abraham, to you, and to your seed with you; that you may inherit the land wherein you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham.

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.

...and the mighty one of Shaddai <sup>[My breasts]</sup> will respect you and he will make you reproduce and he will make you increase and you will exist for an assembled flock of peoples, and he gave to you the present of Avraham <sup>[Father lifted]</sup> for you and for your seed with you for you to inherit the land of your pilgrimages which Elohiym <sup>[Powers]</sup> gave to Avraham <sup>[Father lifted]</sup> ,...

Concordant Literal Version	And El-Who-Suffices will bless you and make you fruitful and increase you, and you shall become an assembly of peoples. And give to you will he the blessing of Abraham, my father, to you and to your seed with you, for you to tenant the land of your sojournings, given by the Elohim to Abraham.
Context Group Version	And God Almighty esteem you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, that you may be a company of peoples. And give you the esteeming of Abraham, to you, and to your seed with you. That you may inherit the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham.
NASB	May God Almighty [Heb El Shaddai] [Gen 17:1; 35:11; 48:3] bless you [Gen 22:17] and make you fruitful [Gen 17:6, 20] and multiply you [Gen 17:2; 26:4, 24], that you may become a company [Gen 35:11; 48:4] of peoples. May He also give you the blessing [Gen 12:2; 22:17] of Abraham, to you and to your descendants [Lit seed] with you, that you may possess [Gen 15:7, 8; 17:8] the land of your sojourning [1 Chr 29:15; Ps 39:12], which God gave to Abraham."
New King James Version	"May God Almighty bless you, And make you fruitful and multiply you, That you may be an assembly of peoples; And give you the blessing of Abraham, To you and your descendants with you, That you may inherit the land In which you are a stranger, Which God gave to Abraham."
Young's Updated LT	And God Almighty blesses you, and makes you fruitful, and multiplies you, and you have become an assembly of peoples; and He does give to you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you, to cause you to possess the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham."

**The gist of this verse:** Isaac calls for the blessing of Jacob to be the same as the blessing which God gave to him. This is a legitimate blessing.

### Genesis 28:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾĒl (אֱל) [pronounced <i>ALE</i> ]	<i>God, god, mighty one, strong, hero; transliterated <i>El</i></i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #410 BDB #42
Shadday (שַׁדַּי) [pronounced <i>shahd-DAH-ee</i> ]	<i>the many-breasted one; and is generally translated <i>Almighty, the Almighty One; Omnipotent [One]</i></i>	proper noun	Strong's #7706 BDB #994

Together, these two nouns are often transliterated *ʾEl Shaddai*.

## Genesis 28:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bârak <sup>e</sup> (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced <i>baw-RAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless [as God, man and other created things], therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone [with a blessing]; to curse</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	<i>you; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to you, toward you</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

**Translation:** And 'El the Almighty will bless you,...

This is very odd. Recall that Isaac has already blessed Jacob, although Jacob did this pretending to be Esau. It does not appear that Isaac is admitting to this or talking about it. So, he speaks again of God blessing Jacob.

I think that the way we should understand this is, Isaac has resigned himself to what has happened. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob and Isaac has already given his blessing to Jacob rather than to Esau. So, before Jacob leaves—Isaac realizes that he may never see his son Jacob again—he gives him a for real blessing; a blessing which continues the blessings of God to Abraham to Jacob. At this point, there is no duplicity, no misunderstanding as to who is being blessed. Isaac is clearly and unequivocally giving Abraham's blessing to his son Jacob. Even God, Who will honor this blessing, must transfer these blessings to Jacob. There will be no adjustment in heaven for what has already transpired.

Another name for all of this is grace. Jacob does not earn or deserve any of this. Throughout his past, he has been deceptive and manipulative. And, nevertheless, Isaac blesses him anyway. At this point, there is no deception; no confusion; no switcheroo being pulled. Isaac is blessing Jacob knowing that this is Jacob that he is blessing.

## Genesis 28:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
pârâh (פָּרָה) [pronounced <i>paw-RAW</i> ]	<i>to cause to become fruitful, to make fruitful; to increase with offspring</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6509 (& #6500) BDB #826

**Translation:** ...make you fruitful...

Isaac seems to have given in to blessing Jacob, despite his own personal feelings. He calls for Jacob to be fruitful; and compared to his father and grandfather, Jacob will be quite fruitful, having 12 sons and at least 1 daughter. Recall that there is only one son in the line of promise for Abraham and one son in the line of promise for Isaac.

None of this cuts off Esau. Esau and his family will be relegated to the trash heap of history due to a series of decisions which they will make. However, initially, Esau will also be fruitful and have many sons. An entire chapter of Genesis is devoted to this.

At first, Esau marries two Hittite women, which causes a great many problems in his line. Then he combines forces with the people of Seir, thus diluting his line. Jacob, for all his faults, kept his line pure (certainly with help from God); and his family remained isolated from the peoples of Canaan; and later from the people of Egypt. Esau, from the beginning, allowed his line to be corrupted.

Genesis 28:3c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râbâh (רָבַח) [pronounced <i>raw<sup>b</sup>-VAWH</i> ]	<i>to make [do] much; to multiply, to increase; to give much; to lay much; to have much; to make great; many [as a Hiphil infinitive construct]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7235 BDB #915
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
When the object of this verb is preceded by the lâmed preposition, hâyâh often means <i>to become [something that it was not before]</i> .			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qâhâl (קָהַל) [pronounced <i>kaw-HAWL</i> ]	<i>an organized assembly, a called convocation; this is not just a crowd, but people who were assembled for a reason</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6951 BDB #874
‘am (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

**Translation:** ...and multiply you so you become a [great] assembly of peoples.

Isaac, with this blessing, has accepted that Jacob would be the son of blessing. God has made promises to Abraham and then to Isaac to multiply them; and Isaac accepts that this will continue through Jacob.

Interestingly enough, even though the Jewish race begins with Abraham, Jacob will be the only patriarch to sire exclusively Jewish children. Abraham was the father of Ishmael and the father of many sons by Keturah; but his one son by Sarah would be a part of the line of promise (the others are Arabs). Isaac would have twin sons, and

only one of them would be Jewish. Esau's descendants would all be Arabs. But all of Jacob's sons will be understood to be the fathers of the tribes of Israel.

From Jacob would come the 12 tribes of Israel; an assembly of peoples. Despite all of the persecution which has occurred throughout history, there are millions of Jews alive today, spread out in every nation of the earth. After the **rapture** occurs, 144,000 of these Jews will become the evangelists for Jesus Christ. We do not know exactly how that will occur, but I would assume that, after Christians are removed from the earth, this in itself will have a great impact—even though, for a time, there will be only unbelievers on the earth.

I can guarantee you that every effort will be made to hide the Scriptures from man in that era; and that many of the 144,000 will be saved by readings the words of God.

We may also understand that there is a spiritual approach to Jacob being multiplied into an assembly of peoples. All those who have believed in Jesus Christ are the spiritual progeny of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Only one birth matters, and that is the second birth, when a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ (which is represented by circumcision among the Jews).

**Genesis 28:3** And may God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, so that you may be a multitude of peoples.

Genesis 28:3 And 'El the Almighty will bless you, make you fruitful and multiply you so you become a [great] assembly of peoples. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Despite all that has happened and despite the sinful characteristics which Jacob has revealed of himself, Isaac apparently recognizes that the blessing of God will go to Jacob and not to Esau. This represents a great change in Isaac's attitude toward Jacob, and this change of mind appears to take place overnight.

These blessings are very similar to prayers, and God hears these blessings as do those in the periphery of Isaac (which is possibly just Jacob and Rebekah). Furthermore, whatever angels are watching, they also hear these prayers. Therefore, God would make an effort to fulfill such blessings. We may think of these blessings as being innocuous statements like, "Have a good time" when someone goes on vacation, but they are far more than that. God specifically is named; a man of God is saying this; and he is saying this to the one who is next in line to receive the Abrahamic blessings of God. Therefore, God will take these words seriously. God hears these blessings and He acts upon them.<sup>52</sup> Part of the reason is, there is this great angelic audience for all human activity. The angels learn about God's character by observing us and how God interacts with us.

Let's go backward in time to illustrate this. When God created the heavens and the earth, it was instantaneous. Genesis 1:1 lines up with the Big Bang theory quite nicely. The Qal perfect tense refers to a completed event or to an instantaneous event. The Qal imperfect would be used for a series of event or for a process. **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.** The verb is a Qal perfect.

Time, space and matter must come into being all at the same time, which is what Genesis 1:1 describes: **In the beginning [time], God created the heavens [space] and the earth [matter].** It is instantaneous; it has an actual beginning.

However, when God restores the earth, many of the verbs are imperfect, and the process occurs over a period of time (the 6 days of creation). Why didn't God simply snap His fingers and restore the earth? Because He has an audience at this point—all of angelic creation were now in existence, so God reveals His power and intelligence by the restoration of the earth with them watching.

Angels are created beings, and therefore, they have a beginning. When God tells them, "I created you for a purpose;" they either accept what God says as true or they doubt Him. Part of what indicates that God is Who

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<sup>52</sup> Now, to be absolutely correct, God hears these words in eternity past, long before they were uttered, and His plan takes them into consideration.

He says He is, is the fact that He knows the future as if it were the present. Angels are subject to time and the sequencing of events, as are we.

So, these blessings which are given from generation to generation are done in front of an audience, even though there might only be 2 or 3 people actually involved. When Isaac blessed Jacob previously, no one else was there (except for Rebekah, hovering in the background). Otherwise, someone would have blurted out, "That's not Esau; that's Jacob!" However, the audience was invisible, and they observe both the actions of man and the actions of God. Significant events in history do not require a large audience. When Abraham offered up his son, Isaac, on Mount Moriah, there was no human audience. The servants who went with them were waiting at the bottom of the mountain, probably out of sight. But, there were millions of angels there viewing one of the most important events in human history: Abraham offering his son as a **type** of God offering His Son.

In these events, God reveals His character as well as His great plan. God is able to bring His plan to fruition, despite the dysfunctions of this family.

We greatly enjoy movies and television shows (despite how distorted these things are as compared to real life). Human history is like that for angels. They are in the midst of a great morality play, as it were, with a cast of billions—observing. In many cases, God directs them to a particular place and time, just as we have been directed to studying the family of this semi-nomad Abraham.

Perhaps you have seen a movie about an historical event; or it is a biography—and you wonder, *what really happened?* You might read a few books as a result or do a google search, or something in order to un-glamorize the movie you have just seen and to get a better feel for the reality. This is what the angels see. They see the true events; the actual people; they see the pre-Hollywood version.

There is no reason for you or I to know anything about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These are obscure shepherds from 4000 years ago. However, we know these men because these are the men upon whom God wants us to focus. Can you name a powerful king who lived during the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Probably not. Yet, from a human realm, we seem to think that kings, princes and presidents are the greatest and most influential people in the world. They are not! During Abraham's era, there were great power struggles in the east; there were a series of fascinating dynasties in Egypt—but God is concerned with Abraham and his seed. Therefore, we are concerned with him as well.

However, we would not expect any secular historian to record the lives of these men. They would not be seen as important. They are the little people; they are the people who do not matter.

We know very little about the great events of history from this era. Who is in power and where? And over what plot of ground does he rule? There are countries and kings and wars and great struggles occurring all over this area, but our focus is upon this nomadic shepherd family and their impact upon history and upon the plan of God. Their lives are important; the lives of the kings and rulers of that era—not nearly as important. We only know about them as they interact with the family of Abraham.

Just as God literally gathers the angels to this place and says, "Watch this;" so we have been gathered to view this line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and to study them and their relationship with God. We are to examine these lives because this is where God wants us to focus. From Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will come the Jewish people; and God will be with the Jewish people from their inception until the end times.

Isaac continues with his blessing to Jacob. This blessing is no longer marred by deception. Isaac knows who is before him; and his blessing is designed specifically for Jacob. And Jacob really is going away to the east to find a suitable wife.

Jacob is one of the most hard-headed men in all of Scripture—yet the line of promise will go through him, and his God-given name, Israel, will be the name of his people. That is grace!

## Genesis 28:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
b <sup>e</sup> râkâh (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced <i>braw-KAW</i> ]	<i>blessing, benediction, invocation of good; extremely fortunate and happy; a gift, a present; peace, prosperity</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1293 BDB #139
'Ab <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אֲבִרָאם) [pronounced <i>ahb<sup>ve</sup>-raw-HAWM</i> ]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
zera' (זֶרַע) [pronounced <i>ZEH-rahg'</i> ]	<i>a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #854 BDB #85

**Translation:** Furthermore, He will give the blessings of Abraham—[both] to you and to your descendants.

Here is a key phrase—*the blessings of Abraham* would go to Jacob and to his descendants. Isaac is clearly assigning to Jacob the blessings which God gave to Abraham, which blessings are enumerated in Genesis 12:1-3, 7 13:14-17 15:5-7, 18-21 17:6-8 22:17-18. Even though this is not a common phrase found throughout Scripture (I believe it is only found here and in Galatians 3:14), I don't think that there is any argument that this refers specifically to all that God had promised to Abraham, Jacob's grandfather. Isaac is making this assignment of blessing clearly understanding here that he is giving this to Jacob rather than to his favored son, Esau. Isaac had been deceived in Genesis 27; he knew what he was doing in this chapter.

Isaac admits that his is the line of promise. So, in case you thought that v. 3 was simply a generic blessing—Isaac assuming that both of his sons would have many children and grandchildren—Isaac here confers the blessings of God to Abraham upon Jacob. This statement is extremely important—Isaac both knows the blessings which God conferred upon Abraham; and he knows that this blessings will be transferred through him to Jacob. No one is being deceived<sup>53</sup> at this point (that is, Isaac knows that he is blessing Jacob).

Wenstrom: *“The blessing of Abraham”* refers to the fact that Jacob would inherit the promises, privileges, responsibilities and blessings of the covenant that the Lord established with Abraham, which are recorded Genesis 12:2-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1-6, 18; 17:1-8; 22:15-18; 24:7.

Wenstrom continues: *The “Abrahamic” covenant included not only “personal” (Isaac and land of Canaan) and “national” (Israel) promises to Abraham but also contained the “universal” promise of eternal salvation to all mankind through faith in Jesus Christ who is a descendant of Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah. “The blessing of Abraham” also means that Jacob would be in the line of Christ, the Promised Seed.*<sup>54</sup>

Personally, I believe that Jacob recorded these words; but I would guess that he did not fully appreciate at this time what his father was saying; or what God would do for him on behalf of Abraham.

Throughout much of Jacob’s life, he schemed in order to be blessed; and this was not required of him. He needed to relax and enjoy all that God had done for him in eternity past.

**Application:** You do not have to scheme or gamble in order to be blessed. You may be thinking, “Hmm, just in case God wants to drop a few million on me, because this has been a very good week for me; I’d better get a few lottery tickets.” If God was going to drop a few million on you, it would happen with or without having bought lottery tickets.

**Application:** As an aside—and you may think that this will sound pretty weird—I would not buy a lottery ticket and I would not want to win \$50 million (or, whatever). I have a lot going on in my life; and a huge influx of cash like that would not simplify my life, make it better or allow me to retire. It would complicate my life considerably. When I was much younger, I thought that this would be great, if God would drop a bucket of money on me—but as I grow older, I have found that money requires great responsibility and many time-consuming complications.

### Genesis 28:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong’s # BDB #510
yârash (יָרַשׁ) [pronounced yaw-RASH]	<i>to possess, to take possession of, to occupy a geographical area [by driving out the previous occupants], to take possession of anyone [or their goods]; to inherit, to possess; to expel, to drive out</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong’s #3423 BDB #439

<sup>53</sup> Well, the reason for Jacob’s sudden departure is a bit of deception; but his identity is not a matter of deception in this chapter.

<sup>54</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:4); accessed May 28, 2017.

Genesis 28:4b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #776 BDB #75
mâgûwr (מִגֹּוּר) [pronounced <i>maw-GOOR</i> ]	<i>sojourning, sojourning-place; residing, residence, dwelling-place, dwelling, abode; possibly travels, traveling</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4033 BDB #158

**Translation:** For the ground [over which] you have traveled [is] your possession,...

We have not heard much about Jacob traveling; it would have only been incidental to his family traveling about. However, there will be a lot of traveling in his life, beginning at this point (and near the end of his life).

The Geneva Bible: *The godly fathers were continually reminded that they were but strangers in this world: so that they would lift up their eyes to the heavens where they have a certain dwelling.*<sup>55</sup>

Genesis 28:4c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'Ab <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אֲבִרָאָם) [pronounced <i>ahb<sup>ve</sup>-raw-HAWM</i> ]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

**Translation:**...[that very same ground] which God had given to Abraham.”

<sup>55</sup> From <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/geneva-study-bible/genesis/genesis-28.html> accessed July 21, 2014.

Here, there is no question as to the blessing; the blessing of Abraham is transferred to Jacob—all the ground that God gave to Abraham is now promised to Jacob and to his descendants.

## The Land of Canaan and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Various Commentators)

Gill: [T]he land of Canaan...was given to Abraham by promise, but not in possession; he was a sojourner and stranger in it, and so Isaac had been all his days, and now Jacob, who through the blessing was become heir of it; but as yet neither he nor his posterity must enjoy it, but be strangers and sojourners in it, for the exercise of faith, and for the leading of their minds off of all earthly enjoyments, to the better and heavenly country God has provided for his people.<sup>56</sup>

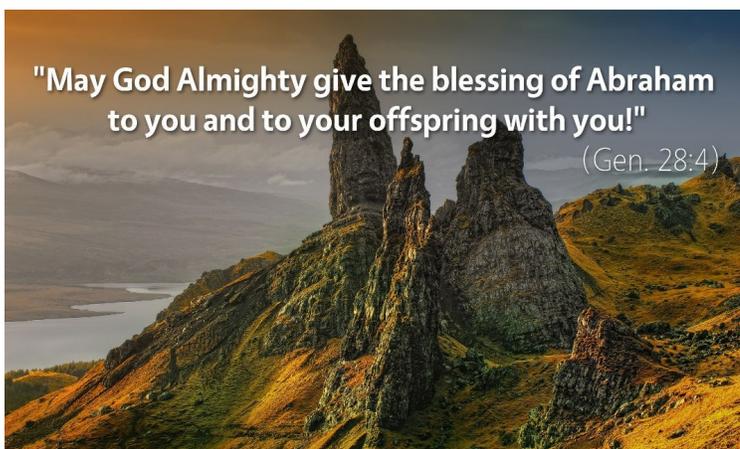
Wenstrom: The possession of the land refers to the “Palestinian” Covenant, which was a confirmation and enlargement of the original “Abrahamic” covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18). The “Palestinian” Covenant stipulated that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who exercise faith alone in Christ alone would not only come into permanent possession of the land of Canaan but also most of the land in Turkey, East Africa, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman and Red Sea, Syria, Iraq, Jordan. The boundaries of this land grant are on the Mediterranean, Aegean Sea, Euphrates River and the Nile River (See Genesis 15:18).

Wenstrom continues: The Lord promises that this land would be given to Abram’s descendants and this promise was fulfilled to a certain extent by Israel under Joshua (Josh. 21:43-45; cf. 13:1-7) and David and Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:20-25; Neh. 9:8).

Wenstrom continues: The “Palestinian” covenant will have its literal and ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 31:37; Ezek. 34:11-16; Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).<sup>57</sup>

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines



**Genesis 28:4** (a graphic); from **Free Daily Bible Study**; accessed June 3, 2017.

This is somewhat surprising that Isaac would so clearly place the blessing of promise upon Jacob. Jacob deceived his father Isaac in the previous chapter (which appears to have been the day before), and got Esau’s blessing instead, which included the promise that God made to Abraham: “I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you poorly.” (Genesis 12:3). One would think that Isaac might be upset over this, and would look to cut off Jacob from any blessing that flowed from Abraham to Isaac. However, Isaac does not take this tact; Isaac passes along the blessing of this land to Jacob, that the land that God gave to Abraham would also be conferred to Jacob and to

his descendants. Isaac, despite the deception, is accepting that God’s grace will pass from him through Jacob. This is quite a turn around; and vv. 1–4 do not occur long after the previous chapter—this may be a day or two

<sup>56</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:4.

<sup>57</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 26:4); accessed May 28, 2017.

or, at most, a week, since Jacob deceived his father (as soon as Rebekah finds out that Esau wants to kill Jacob, she arranges this trip for Jacob). And, remember, Isaac knows that Jacob did this to him; he does not know that Rebekah put Jacob up to this, but he does know that Jacob pretended to be Esau and took Esau's blessing from him.

Was this a moment of weakness, because Jacob was going away? Did Isaac suspect that Jacob would be gone for a long time? Was Isaac resigned to the blessing of God to go through him to Jacob? Or, did this blessing just come out, similar to the blessing the Balaam gave to Israel, when he had been hired to curse them? Based upon my study of this passage, I would think that Isaac gave this blessing from his complete mentality, understanding and meaning every word that he says.

This is perhaps the first time that we have heard Isaac sound as though he has experienced some measure of spiritual growth. He has resigned himself to the loss of his son, Jacob, and has fully accepted that, regardless as to the means, that God, as He had promised Rebekah (Genesis 25:23), will bless Abraham through Jacob and not through Esau. It is very likely that, immediately prior to time of Jacob's departure, that Isaac reread the Scriptures<sup>58</sup> and, after Jacob's parting, he likely added a few chapters himself through dictation to one of his most trusted servants (or to his wife—I believe that Genesis was originally passed down verbally and memorized). Here, Isaac sounds, for the first time, inspired and cognizant of God's plan (to be fair, there is not a lot of history on Isaac).

**Genesis 28:4** And may He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you, so that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham.”

**Genesis 28:4** Furthermore, He will give the blessings of Abraham—[both] to you and to your descendants. For the ground [over which] you have traveled [is] your possession, [that very same ground] which God had given to Abraham.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

At this point, Isaac is giving Jacob a blessing where there is no duplicity. It is Jacob who stands before Isaac; and Isaac knows that this is Jacob.

Isaac is still speaking to Jacob, and he seems to understand, at this point, that the blessings promised to Abraham would flow through him to Jacob. So, at this point, there is no favoritism. Isaac knows who Jacob is, and he passes along the covenantal blessing of God to him. God's blessings will flow through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Jacob is leaving the Land of Promise, but Isaac says that he and his seed would inherit this land—the land that God gave to Abraham. We have to give Isaac credit here; he came around pretty quickly to understanding that the line of blessing would go through Jacob. The other twin was his favorite; Jacob has just tricked him the previous day; and yet Isaac still recognized and accepted the blessing of Abraham would go through Isaac and then through Jacob.

We should recognize that, Isaac is not recognizing the Jacob is the better son in some way or another. Isaac simply accepts what he believes to be the plan of God.

**Genesis 28:3–4** And 'El the Almighty will bless you, make you fruitful and multiply you so you become a [great] assembly of peoples. Furthermore, He will give the blessings of Abraham—[both] to you and to your descendants. For the ground [over which] you have traveled [is] your possession, [that very same ground] which God had given to Abraham.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

**Genesis 28:3–4** And God the Almighty will bless you, and He will make you fruitful and multiply you into a great assembly of peoples. He will give all of the blessings of Abraham to you and to your own sons and daughters. All this ground which you have traveled on will be yours—just as God had promised to Abraham.” (Kukis paraphrase)

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<sup>58</sup> Actually, he had the Scriptures read to him, since he was blind

Isaac is blessing Jacob. "And God the Almighty will bless you, and He will make you fruitful and multiply you into a great assembly of peoples. He will give all of the blessings of Abraham to you and to your own sons and daughters. All this ground which you have traveled on will be yours—just as God had promised to Abraham." (Genesis 28:3–4)

### Isaac accepts Jacob is being the line of promise (Various Commentators)

Constable: *Isaac evidently realized that his desire to give the blessing to Esau was not God's will, so having given it to Jacob (Genesis 27:27–29) he blessed him further (Genesis 28:1–4)...This account is another remarkable demonstration of God's ability to use the sins of men and women to accomplish His purposes and at the same time punish the sinners for their sins.*<sup>59</sup>

Davis: *What man intends for evil God utilizes for good.*<sup>60</sup>

Guzik: *Isaac resigns himself to what his wife Rebekah told him was the LORD's will all along - that the older would serve the younger and that Jacob, not Esau, would receive the birthright. So he sent Jacob on with blessing and instructions.*<sup>61</sup>

Wesley: *Canaan was hereby entailed upon the seed of Jacob, exclusive of the seed of Esau. Isaac was now sending Jacob away into a distant country to settle there for some time; and lest this should look like disinheriting him, he here confirms the settlement of it upon him. This promise looks as high as heaven, of which Canaan was a type. That was the better country which Jacob, with the other patriarchs, had in his eye when he confessed himself a stranger and pilgrim on the earth, Hebrews 11:16.*<sup>62</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable: *This great story teaches that when God's people know His will they should not resort to deceptive, manipulative schemes to attain spiritual success but must pursue God's will righteously. Every member of Isaac's family behaved in a self-centered and unprincipled manner, yet God graciously overcame their sins. This reminds us that His mercy is the ultimate ground of salvation.*<sup>63</sup>

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

In the previous chapter, Jacob deceived his father and received this blessing by means of deception. In this chapter, Isaac is clearly passing along the blessing of Abraham to Jacob.

The ESV; capitalized is used below:

### Isaac Clearly Places the Blessing of Promise on Jacob

Gen. 12:1–3 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

This promise that God made to Abraham was reiterated by God to Abraham on several occasions.

<sup>59</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 27:46–28:5.

<sup>60</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 27:46–28:5. Additional reference there.

<sup>61</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 28:1–2.

<sup>62</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 28:3–4.

<sup>63</sup> From <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

## Isaac Clearly Places the Blessing of Promise on Jacob

After Abraham showed his willingness to sacrifice his son to God, we studied this scene. Genesis 22:15–18 And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

There was a famine in Canaan, and Isaac was considering going down to Egypt. God redirected him. Genesis 26:2–5 And the LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

Now, Isaac gives this same blessing to Jacob. Genesis 28:3–4 "God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May He give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!"

Isaac emphasizes the land, as Jacob is leaving this land for a time.

At the end of this chapter, God will Himself transfers Abraham's blessing to Jacob.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 28:1–4 Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and gave him a stern command, saying, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman. Instead, rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take a wife from the daughters of Laban (Laban is your uncle, your mother's brother). And God the Almighty will bless you, and He will make you fruitful and multiply you into a great assembly of peoples. He will give all of the blessings of Abraham to you and to your own sons and daughters. All this ground which you have traveled on will be yours—just as God had promised to Abraham." What happened at the end of Genesis 27 was a mess. Rebekah talks her adult son, Jacob, into deceiving his father, in order to seize the blessing which Isaac planned to give to Esau instead. Even though the plan was *successful*, Isaac realized that his son Jacob deceived him; and Esau hated Jacob all the more—to the point of wanting to kill him. Almost all families have problems, but these are extraordinary. Yet, God is able to take these two adult parents, both of whom play favorites (and one of whom does not mind deceiving the other on a grand scale); along with the two twin sons—neither of which has a firm grasp on the spiritual life or on their place in the plan of God—and God is able to work His grand will, using all of their good and bad decisions. The line of blessing, determined in eternity past, will go through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, regardless of the family machinations.

**Application:** Believers with doctrine in America recognize how the United States is in a precarious place; and that the 2016 election could have resulted in a dramatic change in the religious freedoms traditionally found in our country. Believers overwhelmingly supported the presidential candidate who stood for religious liberty; but it was close! We have to recognize that God's plan for our lives and for the United States as a client nation is very specific and it will follow a specific course. We have been blessed unlike any country has ever been blessed, and people from all over the world—including paradises like Australia—would like to live and work here. This does not mean that our country will enjoy such great blessings in perpetuity. For ourselves, we can integrate with the plan of God, learn where God wants us to be and how we should think, and this is our only reasonable course of action as believers in the United States (and for the small number of believers who are missionaries—you bless the United States by leaving the United States to do missionary work). We can influence and guide those in our family; and, on occasion, those who are our friends. But, had the worst outcome occurred in 2016, that would have made no difference in our spiritual lives. We still gather together, we still take in Bible doctrine, and we would

continue to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. None of that would change. Becoming panicked or hysterical (as has been occurring on the left<sup>64</sup>) is not our place in the plan of God.

**Application:** Just as God could take the dysfunctional family of Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau, and bring His will to pass; so God is able with the United States. There are presently a lot of crazies in the United States; God is still able to work His will.

### A Review of Genesis 28:1–4:

So far we have studied the first four verses of Genesis 28:

**Genesis 28:1–2** Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and gave him a stern command, saying, “Do not marry a Canaanite woman. Instead, rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father, and take a wife from the daughters of Laban (Laban is your uncle, your mother’s brother).”

This all came about because Rebekah, Jacob’s mother, surreptitiously guided Jacob to deceive his father and receive the end-of-life blessing meant for Esau, Jacob’s twin brother. Esau became so angry over this, he wanted to kill Jacob. So Rebekah needed to get Jacob out of their periphery without revealing that she knew all about this. She would have lost the love and respect of both her husband Isaac (whom she had Jacob deceive) and her other son Esau.

Esau had married some Hittite women, and they were the bane of Rebekah’s existence. Isaac did not like them either. So Jacob was sent eastward to marry someone from their family, just as Isaac had done some 60 years previously. This plot would get Jacob out of town, but without compromising Rebekah’s involvement in the deception of Isaac.

**Genesis 28:3–4** And God the Almighty will bless you, and He will make you fruitful and multiply you into a great assembly of peoples. He will give all of the blessings of Abraham to you and to your own sons and daughters. All this ground which you have traveled on will be yours—just as God had promised to Abraham.”

This time, the blessing given to Abraham is passed down through Isaac to Jacob. This time, there is no deception. Isaac says these words with Jacob before him, knowing that this son is Jacob. Jacob would have many sons (in the Hebrew, this means *descendants*); God would make him fruitful and God will multiply his seed so that he would have many descendants. All of the land that Jacob has traveled over—and much more—is hereby deeded to him, from God to Abraham to Isaac and now to Jacob. It is his line that God will bless.

This is not at all what we would have expected. Jacob had just deceived his father Isaac, and one might think that Isaac would hold back on this blessing—but he does not. The very blessing that God gave to Abraham, Isaac now passes along to Jacob.

Was there a divine influence at this time? Probably. In the book of Numbers, Balaam is hired to curse Israel. God appears to override Balaam’s original intent, and he blesses the children of Israel (all descendants of Jacob, by the way). Num. 24:1–9

Isaac may have simply realized that it is God’s will to pass this blessing along to Jacob, and that is what he does.

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<sup>64</sup> I write this in 2017

And so sends Isaac Jacob and so he departs Paddan-aram-ward unto Laban ben of Bethuel the Aramæan, brother of Rebekah mother of Jacob and Esau.

Genesis  
28:5

So Isaac sent Jacob away and he departed to Paddan-aram to Laban ben Bethuel (the Aramæan), the brother of Rebekah, [who is] the mother of Jacob and Esau.

So Isaac send Jacob away to Paddan-aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel, the Aramæan, the brother of Rebekah, who is Jacob and Esau's mother.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so sends Isaac Jacob and so he departs Paddan-aram-ward unto Laban ben of Bethuel the Aramæan, brother of Rebekah mother of Jacob and Esau.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Izhak sent Jakob away, and he went to Padan Aram to Laban bar Bethuel, the Aramite, the brother of Revekah, the mother of Jakob and Esau.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Izhak sent Jakob away, and he went to Padan Aram unto Laban bar Bethuel the Armaite, the brother of Rivekah the mother of Jakob and Esau.
Jerusalem targum	And Izhak sent Jakob away, and he went to Padan Aram unto Laban bar Bethuel the Armaite, the brother of Rivekah the mother of Jakob and Esau.
Latin Vulgate	And when Isaac had sent him away, he took his journey and went to Mesopotamia of Syria, to Laban, the son of Bathuel, the Syrian, brother to Rebecca, <u>his mother</u> .
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Isaac sent away Jacob; and he went to Padan-aram, to Laban, the son of Bethuel, the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacobs and Esaus mother.
Septuagint (Greek)	So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went into Mesopotamia, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebecca the mother of Jacob and Esau.

Significant differences: The Latin has *his mother* rather than *mother of Jacob and Esau*.

#### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	So Isaac sent Jacob away: and he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramaean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.
Easy English	So Isaac sent Jacob away, and Jacob went to Paddan-Aram. He went to visit Laban, the son of Bethuel, who was from the people called Arameans. Laban was the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.
Easy-to-Read Version	So Isaac sent Jacob to Rebekkah's brother in Paddan Aram. So Jacob went to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean. Laban was the brother of Rebekkah. Rebekkah was the mother of Jacob and Esau.
<i>The Message</i>	So Isaac sent Jacob off. He went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah who was the mother of Jacob and Esau.
Names of God Bible	Isaac sent Jacob to Paddan Aram. Jacob went to live with Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean and brother of Rebekah. She was the mother of Jacob and Esau.
NIRV	Isaac sent Jacob on his way. Jacob went to Paddan Aram. He went to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean. Laban was the brother of Rebekah. And Rebekah was the mother of Jacob and Esau.
New Simplified Bible	Isaac then sent Jacob to stay with Rebekah's brother Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Isaac then sent Jacob to stay with Rebekah's brother Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean.
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New Century Version	So Isaac sent Jacob to Northwest Mesopotamia, to Laban the brother of Rebekah. Bethuel the Aramean was the father of Laban and Rebekah, and Rebekah was the mother of Jacob and Esau.
New Living Translation	So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-aram to stay with his uncle Laban, his mother's brother, the son of Bethuel the Aramean.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to [stay with] Laban, the son of Bethuel the Syrian, who was the brother of Rebekah (the mother of Jacob and Esau), in Mesopotamia.
God's Word™	Isaac sent Jacob to Paddan Aram. Jacob went to live with Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean and brother of Rebekah. She was the mother of Jacob and Esau.
International Standard V	So Isaac sent Jacob off toward Paddan-aram [Paddan-aram was located in northwest Mesopotamia] to visit Bethuel's son Laban, the Aramean [In later centuries this region would be called Syria] and brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Jacob took leave of him, and set out on his journey to Mesopotamia of the Syrians, to the home of his uncle Laban, son of Bethuel, the Syrian.
Translation for Translators	So Isaac sent Jacob to Paddan-Aram, to live with Rebekah's brother Laban, the son of Bethuel, who belonged to the Aram people-group.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Isaac sent Jacob. He went to East-Syria to Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, mother of Jacob and Esau.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Thus Isaac sent off Jacob, and he travelled to Padan Aram, to Laban, the son of Bethuel, the Arami, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.
NIV, ©2011	Then Isaac sent Jacob on his way [S Ge 11:31], and he went to Paddan Aram [Hosea 12:12], to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean [S Ge 25:20], the brother of Rebekah [S Ge 24:29], who was the mother of Jacob and Esau.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Isaac sent Jacob, and he went towards Paden, Aram-- to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramite, brother of Rebekah, mother of Jacob and Esau.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community Bible	<i>Isaac sent Jacob away and he went to Paddan-aram to Laban, the son of Bethuel, the Aramean, brother to Rebekah.</i>
The Heritage Bible	And Isaac sent Jacob, and he walked to Padan Aram to Laban, son of Bethuel, the Aramæan [Syrian], the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	So Yitz'chak sent Ya'akov away; and he went to Paddan-Aram, to Lavan, son of B'tu'el the Arami, the brother of Rivkah Ya'akov's and 'Esav's mother.
The Complete Tanach	And Isaac sent Jacob, and he went to Padan aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebecca, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

**the mother of Jacob and Esau:** I do not know what this teaches us. [i.e., We already know from the narrative that Rebecca was their mother.]

exeGesés companion Bible	And Yischaq sends Yaaqov: and he goes to Paddan Aram to Laban, son of Bethu El the Aramiy the brother of Ribqah the mother of Yaaqov and Esav.
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Hebrew Names Version	Yitzchak sent Ya`akov away. He went to Paddan-Aram to Lavan, son of Betu'el the Syrian, Rivka's brother, Ya`akov's and Esav's mother.
Kaplan Translation	Isaac then sent Jacob on his way. [Jacob] headed toward Padan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramaean, the brother of Rebecca, Jacob and Esau's mother.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Yitzchak sent away Ya'akov; and he went to Padanah-Aram unto Lavan ben Betuel the Aramean, achi Rivkah, em Ya'akov and Esav.
The Scriptures 1998	So Yitshaq sent Ya`aqob away, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethu'el the Aramean, the brother of Ribqah, the mother of Ya`aqob and Esav.

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

The Expanded Bible	So Isaac sent Jacob to northwestern Mesopotamia [Paddan-aram], to Laban the brother of Rebekah. Bethuel the Aramean was the father of Laban and Rebekah, and Rebekah was the mother of Jacob and Esau.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Isaac sent away Jacob; and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel, the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother. Bethuel had by this time either died or was no longer actively engaged in business, therefore Laban, Jacob's uncle, is spoken of as the head of the household.
The Pulpit Commentary	And Isaac sent away Jacob (Rebekah only counseled, Isaac commanded): and he went to Padan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethel the Syrian (vide Hos. 12:12), the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother. The historian here perhaps intentionally gives the first place to Jacob.
The Voice	So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean and brother of Rebekah (Jacob and Esau's mother).

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Yits'hhaq <sup>[He laughs]</sup> sent Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> and he walked unto Padan-Aram <sup>[Field palace]</sup> to Lavan <sup>[White]</sup> the son of Betu'el <sup>[Destruction of El]</sup> the one of Aram <sup>[Palace]</sup> the brother of Rivqah <sup>[Ensnarer]</sup> the mother of Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> and Esav <sup>[Doing]</sup> ,...
English Standard Version	Thus Isaac sent Jacob away. And he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.
New King James Version	So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Padan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.
World English Bible	Isaac sent Jacob away. He went to Paddan Aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, Rebekah's brother, Jacob's and Esau's mother.
Young's Literal Translation	And Isaac sent away Jacob. And he went to Padan-aram, to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean, brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

**The gist of this verse:** With that, Isaac sends Jacob to Padan-Aram to Laban, Rebekah's brother.

Genesis 28:5a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced waw]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018

## Genesis 28:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Yis <sup>e</sup> châq (יִשְׁחָק) [pronounced <i>yih</i> s <sup>e</sup> - KHAWK]	<i>he laughs; laughing;</i> transliterated <i>Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ăuh-</i> KOH <sup>BV</sup> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful;</i> <i>to circumvent</i> and is transliterated <i>Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

**Translation:** So Isaac sent Jacob away...

With this blessing, Isaac sends Jacob away. You will notice, although Isaac, as an old man, thinks that he is making all of these decisions, it is really Rebekah who has been behind the scenes manipulating these movements, first to secure the blessing of promise for Jacob; but then to save Jacob from Esau's wrath. However, the blessing given from Isaac to Jacob today was completely uncoerced and from a place of understanding. Jacob knew that he had been deceived the previous day; but he was unaware that Rebekah's fingerprints were all over it.

Guzik followed by Kidner: *Rebekah successfully maneuvered Isaac into telling Jacob to leave. "Rebekah's diplomatic victory was complete; but she would never see her son again."*<sup>65</sup>

Gill: *Isaac sent away Jacob,.... From Beersheba; not in anger, or in a dishonourable way, but took his leave of him no doubt in an affectionate manner; as it is clear he went with his blessing, and had his good wishes for a prosperous journey.*<sup>66</sup> Even though Isaac and Rebekah had their favorite sons, that does not mean that either hated the other son. Isaac has simply adapted—quite quickly, in fact—to the idea that the line of promise will go through Jacob.

Personally, I do not think that Rebekah understood her own actions of the previous chapter would result in Jacob leaving Canaan. Despite her brilliant plan, I don't think that she thought it through to the point where she knew that Esau would absolutely hate Jacob to the point of wanting to kill him; and this is not unreasonable, if she suddenly hatched this plan upon hearing about Isaac's intent to bless Esau. I believe that strong reaction by Esau caught her off guard. Therefore, her only option at that point, unless she wanted to expose herself as the mastermind of the stolen blessing, was to get Jacob out of that area using a sensible reason. I have made some assumptions to come to this conclusion, but I think this reasonably describes Rebekah's thinking. She had a brilliant plan, but she did not fully apprehend where that plan would lead, and how much it would change all of their lives.

Much of this will be speculation, but based upon information which we know.

### Why was there no dowry sent along with Jacob

1. Interestingly enough, whereas Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac, and provided him with a lot of money and gifts, the same is not done for Jacob. His father does not give him 5 camels stacked

<sup>65</sup> David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 27:41–46.

<sup>66</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:5.

## Why was there no dowry sent along with Jacob

to the top with material things. Why is that? Probably because Jacob just deceived Isaac; and possibly because this trip is so sudden. Isaac may understand the reason for sending Jacob—and relate it to him finding a wife—but Isaac does not necessarily have to like what Jacob did. He accepted it, but there is no reason to think that Isaac is going to give Jacob any kind of a break here. “You lied to me, son!” is not expressed anywhere here, but when Jacob arrives in Haran, he will have to work for his wives—he will not get to simply have a bucket of money to give for the woman’s dowry.

2. In fact, this is quite interesting that Jacob will be sent to find a wife without being provided a dowry as well. Based upon testimonies already given, we know that Abraham was extremely rich; and Isaac was apparently quite prosperous as well (if you will recall Isaac in Gerar in Genesis 26). So, we have two options: Isaac is either very well-to-do and could afford to send a dowry along with Jacob or, for some reason, he could not afford to.
3. Furthermore, Rebekah knew that she could not send Jacob away for a month or two simply to buy a wife and return home. Esau would still be upset. So, even if Isaac wanted to send a lot of money along with Jacob, Rebekah may have talked him out of it (we are not given any specifics about this part of Jacob’s apparent lack of funds).
4. We have reason to believe that Rebekah sent her handmaid with Jacob (Genesis 35:8), and let me suggest that, because her son is sent away with nothing, essentially, that she gives him what she can—but certainly not enough to return home quickly.
5. Much of this is unsaid. That Jacob is sent with little or nothing is a logical conclusion, based upon him working for Laban for his wives and a statement which he makes upon his return to Canaan. That Rebekah sends her maid, since Jacob has nothing else, is also a logical conclusion, based upon her death being chronicled as a part of Jacob’s narrative (Genesis 35:8). This is all quite logical and fits together quite nicely (and I don’t know if any other commentators put all of these things together before).
6. So, despite having blessed Jacob—twice—Isaac does not give Jacob any money/silver/etc. Was this intentional on Isaac’s part? Or, did he just leave that up to Rebekah to take care of?
7. Jacob’s mother Rebekah, who does favor him, has little that she can legitimately give to him; so she gives him her own servant.

At the time that I wrote this, I had no idea if any other commentators addressed this topic or what they said about it.<sup>67</sup> I don’t recall any who addressed this. It is fascinating to me, nonetheless.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 28:5a [So Isaac sent Jacob away...](#) Rebekah and Jacob went to a great deal of trouble to deceive Isaac, and it does not appear that this deception ever really paid off. While Jacob is outside of the land, working to pay for his two wives (more on that later), Esau is building up his family along with his wealth and his power. Although Jacob will return with quite a bit of family and possession (he leaves with “just his stick” and returns with two camps); it is clear by comparison that Esau has fared far better in this 20–21 year period of time. When Jacob returns, he will face a myriad of difficulties, including a son who had sex with his mistress; two sons who kill all of the men in a particular family; and his sons will later plot to take away Jacob’s favorite son from him. So, whatever Rebekah and Jacob hoped to achieve appears to have been for nought—although their actions clearly moved the plan of God along (which was not really their intention).

**Application:** Some people go to great lengths in order to secure an inheritance (or to win a lottery; or to engage in some get rich quick scheme). Some work 80 hours a week in order to make the amount of money they believe that they need to. This is not the correct approach to life. As believers, we are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. That needs to be your focus. This does not mean that, 24 hours day, you take in Bible

<sup>67</sup> Before looking at any commentator, I usually have the translation done, the Hebrew exegesis tables done, and 3 sets of notes added, generally independent of any other commentator. Then, most of the time, before reading what other commentators have written, I go back and do some editing and additions. This particular chapter is at 222 pages before reading what any commentator had to say about it. When it is complete, it will probably be around 300 pages (not all of that will be comments from others).

doctrine. There are a limited number of men who ought to have such a concentrated focus. For most people, you grow in grace and knowledge by spending an hour a day in the study of the Word of God (not reading your Bible, not studying your Bible, but being under the authority of a pastor-teacher who has dedicated his life to the teaching of the Word of God). The believer first focuses on setting time aside for himself (and his family) for Bible doctrine; and then works around that for all other responsibilities.

**Application:** This does not mean that it is wrong to work long hours or to invest wisely into various investment vehicles; it simply means that you develop a scale of values and, at the very top of that scale of values, is Bible doctrine. As a maturing believer, you work out the remainder of your scale of values on your own.

Rebekah, Jacob's mother, acted fast to secure his blessing for him; and Jacob, a fully grown man, went along with her, with the intent of deceiving Isaac, his father. There is no evidence that any of this specifically benefitted Rebekah or Jacob, who apparently never saw one another ever again. They both went full-on human viewpoint, even though they could have assured one another that this was about Jacob's spiritual place in the family. The desire to have God's blessing is an okay desire to have; the choice to deceive his father was the wrong thing to do. Your motivation and your actions have to be right; when you do a right thing, it must be done in a right way. Otherwise, you are just wasting your time on earth.

### Genesis 28:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Paddân (פַּדָּן) [pronounced <i>pahd-DAWN</i> ]	<i>to extend, a plateau; garden, field; transliterated Paddan, Padan</i>	proper singular noun/location with the directional hê	Strong's #6307 BDB #804
ʾĀrām (אַרָּם) [pronounced <i>uh-RAWM</i> ]	<i>the highland, high region; exalted; and is transliterated Aram; sometimes rendered Syria, Mesopotamia</i>	proper noun, singular	Strong's #758 BDB #74

Together, these words refer to the table land of Aram; Paddan or Paddan-Aram, a region of Syria.

The directional hê is the *âh* (ה) ending to a noun, usually found after a verb of motion. This is called the *directive hê* or the *he locale*, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question *where?* The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun *heaven* and the most literal rendering in the English would be *heavenward*. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions *to* or *toward*.

ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i> ]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law<sup>b</sup>-VAWN</i> ]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526

## Genesis 28:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾĀrammîy (אַרַמִּי) [pronounced <i>uh-rahm-MEE</i> ]	<i>exalted</i> ; transliterated/translated <i>Aramæan, Aramite; Syrian</i>	gentilic adjective	Strong's #761 BDB #74

**Translation:** ...and he departed to Paddan-aram to Laban ben Bethuel (the Aramæan),...

Jacob is departing to Paddan-aram, going to the home of his uncle Laban ben Bethuel, the Aramæan. This description here helps us with some understanding of a people. Laban went to a certain area and remained there for a very long time. He is then associated with the area, Aram, and is therefore called an Aramæan (both Laban and Bethuel are called Aramæans in Genesis 25:20). He is not necessarily descended from Aram, because he is related to Abraham (Laban's grandfather was Abraham's brother). Because of this, we determine that not all references to a specific national group means that the person referred to is descended from that group. Sometimes, they simply move into a land and have remained there long enough to become associated with that particular land.

Clarke: [*Laban is called*] the Aramean...not because he was of the race of Aram the son of Shem, but because he dwelt in that country which had been formerly possessed by the descendants of Aram.<sup>68</sup>

Poole offers that alternate view: *Syria is sometimes largely taken, and so it comprehends Mesopotamia, or Chaldea, yea, and Assyria, as appears from Isaiah 36:11 Dan. 2:4.*<sup>69</sup> Personally, I think that Poole makes this far too complicated. When you live in a particular area for a lengthy period of time, you are identified with that area. I live in Texas, have lived here for a long time, and consider myself to be a Texan (as do many people who know me). However, I was raised in a land, far, far away.

**Map of Paddan-Aram** from [Bible-history.com](http://Bible-history.com), accessed July 21, 2014. The dotted line shows the route that Abraham originally took. About half of that dotted line refers back to Jacob's route to go to his Uncle Laban's land.

It is clear that God blesses Laban; but this is because Laban is related to Abraham and some of the women from his family will become a part of the Abrahamic line.



This trip is said by some<sup>70</sup> to be 480 miles. Wenstrom suggests<sup>71</sup> 700 miles. Seems like their estimations should not be so different.

<sup>68</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:5.

<sup>69</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:5.

<sup>70</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:5. He cites Bunting's Travels, p. 72.

<sup>71</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:10); accessed May 28, 2017.

Jacob will twice leave the Land of Promise; once temporarily and a second time for a very long time. Israel would be removed from the Land of Promise temporarily (in 722 and 586 B.C.<sup>72</sup>); but then for a very long time (A.D. 70). Other commentators recognized this foreshadowing as well.

### Jacob Portrays Apostate Israel Being Moved out of the Land (Commentators)

Arno Gaebelein: *Jacob's departure stands for Israel's expulsion from their own land to begin their wanderings and suffering, till they are brought back again to the land sworn to the heads of the nation. In the chastening which passed over him.*<sup>73</sup>

L. M. Grant: *Jacob goes out from Beersheba (v.10). This is a striking picture of the nation Israel, the sons of Jacob; for Beersheba means "the well of the oath" and Haran means "mountaineer." Israel has practically left the ground of the unconditional promise of God and has chosen rather the mountain of law-keeping, as though this could ever bring the blessing of God! Just as Jacob, all the time he was in Haran, retained a character of selfish bargaining, so Israel at present remains in a state of self-righteousness, professing to believe and obey the law, but not submitting to the righteousness of God (Romans 10:3).*<sup>74</sup>

L. M. Grant continues: *This is a prophetic picture of the future restoration of communication between heaven and earth, once interrupted by Adam's sin. The fulfilment of this will be during the 1000 years of peace introduced by the coming of the Lord in power and glory. God gave this dream to Jacob in order to assure him that, in spite of Jacob's failure and wandering, God's purposes remained absolutely certain.*<sup>75</sup>

#### Chapter Outline

#### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

### Genesis 28:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'âch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i> ]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #251 BDB #26
Rib <sup>o</sup> qâh (רִיבְקָה) [pronounced <i>rihb-KAW</i> ]	<i>ensnarer; a noose; fat, fattened; a quarrel appeased; which is transliterated Rebekah, Rebekkah, Rebecca</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #7259 BDB #918
'êm (אֵם) [pronounced <i>aim</i> ]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #517 BDB #51

<sup>72</sup> The first time, only the northern kingdom was removed from the land; however, the remaining Jews were removed from the land in 586 B.C. A decree by Cyrus the Great of Persia allowed some Jewish exiles in Babylon to return to the Land of Promise, led by Zerubabel to rebuild the temple, which was completed c. 515 B.C.

<sup>73</sup> Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:1–22.

<sup>74</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-28.html> accessed June 3, 2017.

<sup>75</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-28.html> accessed June 3, 2017.

## Genesis 28:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ăuh-KOH <sup>B</sup> V]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Ēsâv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced ġay-SAWV]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796

**Translation:** ...the brother of Rebekah, [who is] the mother of Jacob and Esau.

It is Laban who is the brother of Rebekah, and it is Rebekah who is the mother of Jacob and Esau. The Bible is generally quite meticulous when it comes to laying out family relationships; particularly when they are related to the line of promise.

You may be thinking, *we know who all these people are and their relationships—why mention it again?* The relationships may be repeated, as this is may be a new writer of Scripture. Jacob recalls this information and he writes it down (or memorizes it) at some later date. He specifies the inter-relationships as one would expect to begin this portion of Scripture. We do not know if this was added to what Isaac wrote; of if it was written in a separate document entirely, later to be edited and joined together by Moses. I personally favor the idea that, none of this was committed to *paper* until Moses or perhaps one or two generations prior to Moses.

On the one hand, the repetition of the names could indicate a new recorder of Scripture; but it could also indicate that Jacob is adding to the historical narrative many years later. The repetition of the names could mean nothing at all.

*The Expositor's Bible Commentary: While each member of Isaac's family has thus his own plan, and is striving to fulfil his private intention, the result is, that God's purpose is fulfilled. In the human agency, such faith in God as existed was overlaid with misunderstanding and distrust of God. But notwithstanding the petty and mean devices, the short-sighted slyness, the blundering unbelief, the profane worldliness of the human parties in the transaction, the truth and mercy of God still find a way for themselves. Were matters left in our hands, we should make shipwreck even of the salvation with which we are provided. We carry into our dealings with it the same selfishness, and inconstancy, and worldliness which made it necessary: and had not God patience to bear with, as well as mercy to invite us; had He not wisdom to govern us in the use of His grace, as well as wisdom to contrive its first bestowal, we should perish with the water of life at our lips.<sup>76</sup>*

**Genesis 28:5** And Isaac sent Jacob away. And he went to Padan-aram, to Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

**Genesis 28:5** So Isaac sent Jacob away and he departed to Paddan-aram to Laban ben Bethuel (the Aramæan), the brother of Rebekah, [who is] the mother of Jacob and Esau. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

With this, the active role of Isaac ends and the active role of Jacob begins. Although Isaac will be mentioned again, it will only be incidentally at the end of Genesis 35. Even though Isaac and Jacob are both alive at this point, our focus will now be upon Jacob.

<sup>76</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll; ©1887-1896; public domain; from e-sword, Genesis 27:1–40.

Paddan-aram is in the northeastern Mesopotamian area, and this is where a part of Abraham's family has lived for some time now.

God told Abraham to separate from his family and go to the land of Canaan. Well, Abraham did not separate from his family—he brought them with—and he only got halfway to Canaan. We don't know if everyone from Abraham's family traveled with him at this time, or whether they came later. In any case, when Abraham eventually went to the land of Canaan, a portion of his family remained in Paddan-aram.

Another Map of Paddan-aram is from [Bible-history.com](http://Bible-history.com) and accessed February 26, 2014. The area marked Mesopotamia is also known as the Fertile Crescent. It was at this point where Abraham had to leave the Euphrates River to travel eastward to Canaan, which is where God had originally sent him. Jacob is in southern Canaan and he will move northward through Syria toward Paddan Aram.



Because Bethuel has lived in this area for a long time, he is called a Syrian. Laban, Bethuel's son, is Rebekah's brother and Jacob's uncle. Many times in Scripture (and this fixes a great many so-called contradictions), people are referred to by the land where they live. I may be called a Texan by some and a Californian by others; however, I was not born in either state. Yet I feel a much greater affinity for Texas and California than I do for where I was born.

If a particular family is prominent in an area, then that area takes on the family name (Aram, Assyria, Canaan). But after the name has been clearly established, then other families who move to that area become associated with the name of that area.

At least one commentator suggested that Jacob was out of the **geographic will of God** to go to Syria. In **vv. 13–15**, God will speak to Jacob, and we will discuss God's geographic will for Jacob at that time.

Another commentator suggests that Isaac and Rebekah failed as parents<sup>77</sup> and had not carefully taught Jacob and Esau about who they should and should not marry; that their marriages ought to be in the line of Shem. We really do not know what Isaac taught his sons, as very little of his life is covered in Scripture; and I am not sure if I can recall anything that Isaac specifically taught either son (apart from teaching Esau to hunt).

It is my estimation that Isaac (or Rebekah) repeated "The History Between Man and God" (that is, the book of Genesis thus far) to their sons; and that their sons could repeat it (that is, they memorized it). I say this simply because we have a narrative which follows Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob and then Joseph—which narratives almost run together. Given some of the personal information found in each narrative, it seems most likely that each of these patriarchs added to the previous narrative, giving the family history during their lives; and the next patriarch picked up from there and continued the narrative.

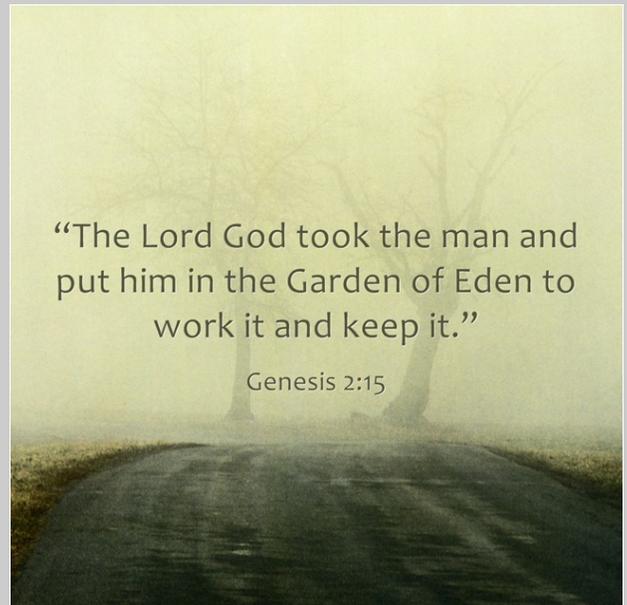
Although it is not very clear that Jacob had much divine viewpoint; it is quite obvious that Joseph has a brain filled with divine viewpoint. Therefore, it had to come from somewhere; and I would suggest to you, that is Scripture (the memorized  $\frac{3}{4}$ <sup>ths</sup> of Genesis that these men knew). Now, why did Jacob act like he did not know a blessed thing, but Joseph behaved very circumspectly? Joseph believed in what he read and adopted the values which he found in his Scriptures; and we know the Jacob fought against God, suggesting that, even though he learned the existing Scriptures and added to them, that he did not really understand the principles of Genesis.

<sup>77</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:7); accessed May 28, 2017.

Genesis 1–26 would be information [probably] known by both Jacob and Joseph. What principles were there?

### The Moral Principles of Genesis 1-28+

1. Genesis 1–2 tell us that there was a Creator-God; and that all we see was created by Him.
2. Hard work is fundamental to mankind. Adam and the woman worked in the garden first as creatures who lacked sin and a sin nature (Genesis 2:15); and later knew that they would have to work constantly in order to survive (Genesis 3:17–19).  
**Genesis 2:15** (a graphic); from [Patheos.com](http://Patheos.com); accessed May 28, 2017.
3. We know that man is a fallen creature and that Satan exists. We know that there is a promise of a savior or redeemer of some sort, through the *Seed of the woman*. Genesis 3
4. We saw how Adam attempted to pass the blame for sinning against God in Genesis 3:12
5. It seems reasonable that man, for a very long time, possessed a conscience which helped to guide him, simply because we are made in God's image. Obviously, our conscience is warped by the sin nature; but it appears that we have this conscience **very early in our lives** (literally, before age 2).
6. We know that there is some kind of sacrifice necessary to appease God; and that it had to be a blood sacrifice. Genesis 4 8:20–21
7. Faith in God was necessary for man's ultimate survival. Genesis 6
8. They would have been aware of the corruption of man and the destruction of all corrupt men by the flood. Genesis 6–8
9. There appears to be one clear command—*you will not murder*—and that the punishment for murder was execution. Genesis 9:6
10. They would have been aware of the curse of Canaan from Genesis 9:20–27
11. They would have known about the confusion of languages and about God purposely spreading men apart from one another, rather than allowing them to congregate as a single people. Genesis 10–11
12. God's calling and specific blessing for Abraham is what we learn in Genesis 12:1–3.
13. There was a very specific line of promise; and Jacob had to be aware of this promise, as he spent a portion of his life scheming to snatch that promise from Esau. Esau was the older brother, by a few minutes, and therefore, was the one to receive the chief blessings of his father (and the double portion as well). There are two incidents recorded where Jacob schemes to take Esau's birthright (Genesis 25:29–35) and his blessing (Genesis 27:1–29). For this reason, we assume that Jacob must have a modicum of understanding of the special blessings which could be dispensed by his father, Isaac.
14. Despite Jacob's many failings, we will find out that he is hard working and honest. Genesis 31:4–7
15. We will find out the his son Joseph will be hard-working, honest, and willing at accept the circumstances of his life as a result of God's will. He did not hold a grudge against his brothers; nor did he stew in his anger against them. He did not wish to get revenge against them for their wrongs that they did to him. Genesis 50:20



“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”

Genesis 2:15

As you can see, there are both moral and spiritual principles within the text for the first half of Genesis.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 28:5 So Isaac send Jacob away to Paddan-aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel, the Aramæan, the brother of Rebekah, who is Jacob and Esau's mother. (Kukis paraphrase)

V. 5 is again picked up by v. 10:

Gen 28:5 Thus Isaac sent Jacob away. And he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother. (ESV)

Gen 28:10 And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. (Green's literal translation)

Between these two verses, we will insert Esau's response to what happened.

### Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 27:56–28:5

1. Having formulated her plan and commanded Jacob to cooperate, Rebekah once again begins to manipulate Isaac to get her way.
2. She approaches Isaac, thinking that if she does not get Jacob away from the house, Esau will kill him.
3. She attempts to present things in such a way as to make Isaac think that the plan to send Jacob away is his.
4. There was very likely some truth in her statement about the misery she endured due to Esau's negative wives.
5. She also knew that this was a point of contention with Isaac as well.
6. She allowed her relatives to make her life miserable, since she was more focused on what was going on around her than on Bible doctrine.
7. While some lye is inevitable if your son is an Esau, one does not have to allow their relatives to make their life miserable.
8. Rebekah is a woman who builds her happiness on her children, and not on the principles of doctrine.
9. She is miserable and attempts to manipulate things in such a way as to ensure her happiness.
10. She never enjoys any happiness, since she allows her children to hold her back spiritually.
11. We have observed how Isaac, with his blind loyalty to Esau, was spiritually hobbled.
12. We now observe the same in Rebekah, as she once again attempts to dictate policy in the home, albeit in an underhanded fashion.
13. Isaac was not really able to deal with the problems of Rebekah, since he himself was guilty in the same area.
14. The man of the family will ultimately be evaluated as to how he handled the family, so every man should pray for wisdom and for God to help him deal with his sinful trend of Adam.
15. Failure to acknowledge and deal with your own sinful trend of Adam will ultimately have an effect on your wife, and your children.
16. Men should pray for God to reveal any blind spots in their thinking in order to be of the fullest value to their family.
17. Isaac once again falls for this and "decides" to send Jacob to his wife's relatives.
18. He issues a permanent prohibition from marrying Canaanites.
19. He commands Jacob to pack and go to Rebekah's family in Haran.
20. He is to look for a wife there, particularly among the daughter's of Laban, her brother.
21. Isaac is basically sending Jacob off to the place where Abraham would never have sent his son.
22. Abraham recognized that Isaac would not have made it spiritually if he lived among the religious reversionists in Haran.
23. This demonstrates Isaac's lack of doctrinal understanding, since it is not merely good enough to wish well for your children, a parent is responsible to provide doctrine and guidance as long as they will listen.
24. Isaac then pronounces a parting wish and blessing upon Jacob, using the name of God from Gen. 17:1.
25. This is completely in line with the fact that he is passing on to him the blessing of Abraham.
26. Isaac does recognize that at some point along the line some descendant in their line must have more than one son.
27. Abraham was promised innumerable descendants, and this will not occur if each generation is only one in number.
28. This parting benediction has a bit of a prophetic character as Jacob will indeed end up as a great company of peoples.

### Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 27:56–28:5

29. After his focus on sexual prosperity and greater numbers, Isaac turns to the one item of the covenant which many people would require, that being land.
30. Isaac now fully recognizes and communicates that Jacob will be the recipient of the full blessing, not Esau.
31. vs 5 in a formal fashion records Jacob's obedience in precise detail.
32. Rebekah may have thought her diplomatic victory complete, but this was the last time she would ever see her son.
33. She did not commit her plans to the Lord, but forged ahead, sure of her own ability to plan and execute her plan.
34. Psalm 37 provides insight into how the adjusted believer should operate. Ps. 37:1-11
35. The truly sad thing is that Jacob's parents have not equipped him in any way to deal with the situation into which they are sending him.

From [Makarios Bible Church](#); will open up in Word or WP; accessed June 1, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 28:1–5 So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him, and said to him, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan "Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother "May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples "May He also give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your descendants with you, that you may possess the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham." (Ballinger's translation)

VERSE 5 Then Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau

### Jack M. Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 28:1–5

1. Rebekah clearly did not inform her husband of Esau's murderous intent.
2. Maybe she thought she was protecting Isaac from the sorrow this knowledge would bring to him or that telling him the real primary reason for Jacob to leave the land might work against her desires for her son.
3. So she approached him with a rationale that both parties were in agreement on and that was the avoidance of a Canaanite marriage for Jacob at all costs.
4. She clearly was not faith-resting the doctrine contained in the oracle of Genesis 25:23.
5. The household had pretty much devolved into a collection of STAs seeking their own interests.
6. At least until Isaac got his act together.
7. Once again she manipulates her son and her husband into doing what she thinks is best, and once again God stands aside to further His plan for Jacob (cf. 27:46).
8. Isaac is amenable to his wife's manipulation and calls before him the son he was never very fond of.
9. He blesses and charges him in much the same words Abraham used when sending his most trusted servant to fetch a wife for his son Isaac (24:4).
10. Isaac orders his son to avoid a Canaanite wife and rather "go to Paddan-Aram" and "take a wife from the daughters of Laban."
11. This directive certainly narrowed Jacob's field of choice!
12. Notice how he refers in verse 2 to Jacob's cousins and in so doing demonstrates the very close connection between mother and son—"your mother's father" and "your mother's brother."
13. In blessing Jacob Isaac reflects very closely the promises made to Abraham.
14. Essentially, everything stated in verse 3 and 4 are to be found in the Abrahamic promises (cf. 12:2-3, 7, 13:15, 17; 15:7-8, 18; 17:1, 6, 8, 16 20; 22:17; 24:7).
15. The covenant was reiterated to Isaac as well (26:3-4, 24).
16. The two main pillars of the covenant are mentioned in this blessing—descendants and land.

## Jack M. Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 28:1–5

17. Jacob is promised procreative prosperity for himself as well as the long term increase in his posterity.
18. He along with his descendants are promised occupation of the land grant.
19. For the early generations this could only be possible via future resurrection.
20. Like Abraham and Isaac before him the land was merely "the land of your sojournings."
21. Isaac reflects the proper understanding that the land was promised to Abraham making all future promises unconditional.
22. Abraham was blessed with these promises because he was obedient while those that succeeded him were blessed by association.
23. This is the first explicit mention of Jacob as the designated heir of Abraham, which is a logical step when considering the oracle and the blessing of Isaac on Jacob in chap. 27.
24. A question: Did Jacob ignore his mother's directive in the previous chapter and only here does what his father says to do?
25. V. 7 indicates that Jacob did what both parents wanted.
26. Jacob's so-called flight from the family home in Beersheba is not reported with any urgency or intensity.
27. He simply is said to be "sent away" by Isaac and proceeds to travel on foot to his destination (see also v. 8).
28. In v. 6 the destination is mentioned in anticipation of the next chapter.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen28.htm> accessed May 27, 2017.

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## Esau Marries Women from Ishmael's Family

vv. 6–9 deal with what Esau observes and what Esau does as a result. It would not be inaccurate to put parentheses around these 4 verses or to set them off in their own paragraph. Everything is framed by Esau's perception (*and Esau saw* in v. 6a and v. 8a; followed by *and Esau went* in v. 9a).

Although it is possible that Esau hears about this blessing later on, the text suggests that Esau observes the blessing as it occurs. As a result, he will be motivated to make a change in his life.

Since there are so many ways that these can be strung together, I have put all 4 of the following verses together. I may need to split these verses up.

**And so sees Esau blessed Isaac Jacob and sent him away Paddan-ward-aram to take from there a woman in his blessing him. And so he lays a charge upon him, to say, "You will not take a woman from daughters of Canaan." And so Jacob listened unto his father and his mother and so he goes Paddan-ward-aram. And so sees Esau that evils daughters of Canaan in [two] eyes of Isaac his father; and so goes Esau unto Ishmael and so he takes Mahalath a daughter of Ishmael ben Abraham, a sister of Nebaioth upon his women to him to wife.**

Genesis  
28:6–9

**Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and then sent him away to Paddan-aram to take from there a wife in his blessing to him [or, *when he blessed him*]. Isaac charged him, "Do not take a woman from the daughters of Canaan." Consequently, Jacob listened to his father and mother and he went to Paddan-aram. Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Isaac, his father, so Esau went to Ishmael and he took to wife Mahalath, Ishmael ben Abraham's daughter ([she is] the sister of Nebaioth) in addition to his [other] wives.**

**Esau observed that Isaac first blessed Jacob and then sent him off to Paddan-aram to take from there a wife as a part of the blessing. Isaac had charged Jacob, “Do not take a wife from the Canaanites.” Jacob obeyed his father and mother and went to Paddan-aram. Esau also observed that Isaac saw the women of Canaan as evil, so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, Ishmael’s daughter, as an additional wife (Ishmael is the son of Abraham and Mahalath is the sister of Nebaioth).**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so sees Esau blessed Isaac Jacob and sent him away Paddan-ward-aram to take from there a woman in his blessing him. And so he lays a charge upon him, to say, “You will not take a woman from daughters of Canaan.” And so Jacob listened unto his father and his mother and so he goes Paddan-ward-aram. And so sees Esau that evils daughters of Canaan in [two] eyes of Isaac his father; and so goes Esau unto Ishmael and so he takes Mahalath a daughter of Ishmael ben Abraham, a sister of Nebaioth upon his women to him to wife.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Esau, when he saw that Izhak had blessed Jakob, and sent him to Padan Aram to take from thence a wife, and, as he blessed him, commanded him, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife from the daughters of Kenaan, and that Jakob had obeyed his father and his mother, and had gone to Padan Aram, Esau, considering that the daughters of Kenaan were evil in the eyes of Izhak his father, went to Ishmael, and took Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael bar Abraham, the sister of Nebaioth, over his wives, unto him to wife.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Esau considered that Izhak had blessed Jakob, and had sent him to Padan Aram to take to him from thence a wife, when he blessed him, and commanded him, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of the Kenaanites; and that Jakob obeyed the word of his father, and the word of his mother, and was gone to Padan Aram: and Esau considered that the daughters of Kenaan were evil before Izhak his father, and Esau went unto Ishmael, and took to wife Mahalath, <u>who is Besemath</u> the daughter of Ishmael bar Abraham, the sister of Nebaioth <u>from his mother</u> , besides his other wives.
Jerusalem targum	And Esau considered that Izhak had blessed Jakob, and had sent him to Padan Aram to take to him from thence a wife, when he blessed him, and commanded him, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of the Kenaanites; and that Jakob obeyed the word of his father, and the word of his mother, and was gone to Padan Aram: and Esau considered that the daughters of Kenaan were evil before Izhak his father, and Esau went unto Ishmael, and took to wife Mahalath, who is Besemath the daughter of Ishmael bar Abraham, the sister of Nebaioth from his mother, besides his other wives.
Latin Vulgate	And Esau seeing that his father had blessed Jacob, and had sent him into Mesopotamia of Syria, to marry a wife there; and that after the blessing he had charged him, saying: You will not take a wife of the daughters of Chanaan: And that Jacob obeying his parents, was gone into Syria: Experiencing also, that his father was not well pleased with the daughters of Chanaan: He went to Ismael, and took to wife, besides them he had before, Maheleth, the daughter of Ismael, Abraham’s son, the sister of Nabajoth.
Peshitta (Syriac)	When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed <u>his brother</u> Jacob and sent him away to Padan-aram to take for himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him, he charged him, saying, You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; And Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and went to Padan-aram; And Esau saw that Isaac his father <u>despised</u> the daughters of Canaan; Then Esau went to Ishmael, Abrahams son, and took Bismath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abrahams son, the sister of Nebioth, to be his wife, in addition to his other wives.

Septuagint (Greek) And Esau saw that Isaac blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Mesopotamia of Syria as he blessed him, to take to himself a wife from there, and that he charged him, saying, You shall not take a wife of the daughters of the Canaanites; and that Jacob listened to his father and his mother, and went to Mesopotamia of Syria. And Esau, also having seen that the daughters of Canaan were evil before his father Isaac, went to Ishmael, and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, the son of Abraham, the sister of Nebajoth, for a wife, in addition to his other wives.

Significant differences: The Syriac adds *his brother* in the first sentence. The Syriac has *despised* rather than *were evil*. One targum adds *who is Besemath* and *from his mother* into this passage. The Latin leaves out the extra verbiage about the other wives of Esau.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English So when Esau saw that Isaac had given Jacob his blessing, and sent him away to Paddan-aram to get a wife for himself there, blessing him and saying to him, Do not take a wife from among the women of Canaan; And that Jacob had done as his father and mother said and had gone to Paddan-aram; It was clear to Esau that his father had no love for the women of Canaan, So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath, the daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael, the sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

Easy English Esau saw that Isaac \*blessed Jacob. He saw that Isaac sent Jacob away to Paddan-Aram to find a wife. Esau heard Isaac tell Jacob not to marry a \*Canaanite woman. Esau saw that Jacob obeyed his father and mother and Jacob went to Paddan-Aram. So Esau saw that his father Isaac did not like \*Canaanite women. Therefore Esau went to Ishmael, Abraham's son. And Esau married Mahalath, who was Ishmael's daughter. Mahalath was Nebaioth's sister. Esau already had other wives.

Easy-to-Read Version Esau learned that his father Isaac blessed Jacob. And Esau learned that Isaac sent Jacob away to Paddan Aram to find a wife there. Esau learned that Isaac commanded Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman. And Esau learned that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and went to Paddan Aram. Esau saw from this that his father did not want his sons to marry Canaanite women. Esau already had two wives. But he went to Ishmael and married another woman. He married Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael. Ishmael was Abraham's son. Mahalath was Nebaioth's sister.

Good News Bible (TEV) Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Mesopotamia to find a wife. He also learned that when Isaac blessed him, he commanded him not to marry a Canaanite woman. He found out that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Mesopotamia. Esau then understood that his father Isaac did not approve of Canaanite women. So he went to Ishmael son of Abraham and married his daughter Mahalath, who was the sister of Nebaioth.

The Message Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan Aram to get a wife there, and while blessing him commanded, "Don't marry a Canaanite woman," and that Jacob had obeyed his parents and gone to Paddan Aram. When Esau realized how deeply his father Isaac disliked the Canaanite women, he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son. This was in addition to the wives he already had.

NIRV Esau found out that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram. Isaac wanted him to get a wife from there. Esau heard that when Isaac blessed Jacob, he commanded him, "Don't get married to a woman from Canaan." Esau also learned that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram.

New Simplified Bible Esau found out that his father Isaac had blessed Jacob and had warned him not to marry any of the Canaanite women. He also learned that Jacob had been sent to find a wife in northern Syria. Jacob did as his father and mother said. He went to Padda-aram. It was clear to Esau that his father despised the local Canaanite women. So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath, the daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael, the sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible Esau understood that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-aram to marry a woman from there. He recognized that, when Isaac blessed Jacob, he had ordered him, "Don't marry a Canaanite woman," and that Jacob had listened to his father and mother and gone to Paddan-aram. Esau realized that his father Isaac considered Canaanite women unacceptable. So he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth, in addition to his other wives.

Contemporary English V. Esau found out that his father Isaac had blessed Jacob and had warned him not to marry any of the Canaanite women. He also learned that Jacob had been sent to find a wife in northern Syria and that he had obeyed his father and mother. Esau already had several wives, but he realized at last how much his father hated the Canaanite women. So he married Ishmael's daughter Mahalath, who was the sister of Nebaioth and the granddaughter of Abraham.

New Century Version Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him to Northwest Mesopotamia to find a wife there. He also learned that Isaac had commanded Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Northwest Mesopotamia. So Esau saw that his father Isaac did not want his sons to marry Canaanite women. Now Esau already had wives, but he went to Ishmael son of Abraham, and he married Mahalath, Ishmael's daughter. Mahalath was the sister of Nebaioth.

New Living Translation Esau knew that his father, Isaac, had blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-aram to find a wife, and that he had warned Jacob, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman." He also knew that Jacob had obeyed his parents and gone to Paddan-aram. It was now very clear to Esau that his father did not like the local Canaanite women. So Esau visited his uncle Ishmael's family and married one of Ishmael's daughters, in addition to the wives he already had. His new wife's name was Mahalath. She was the sister of Nebaioth and the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Now, Esau knew that Isaac had blessed Jacob and that after he blessed him, he sent him away to Mesopotamia of Syria, to find a woman there. [And he also knew that Jacob] was told not to take a woman from the daughters of the Canaanites. and that Jacob obeyed his father and mother and went to Mesopotamia of Syria. So Esau also recognized that his father Isaac viewed the daughters of Canaan as evil. And as the result, he went to see Ishmael (the son of Abraham) and took Mahalath (Ishmael's daughter and Nebaioth's sister) to be his woman (in addition to his other women).

International Standard V ***Esau Marries a Canaanite Woman***  
Esau noticed that after Isaac had blessed Jacob as he was sending him off to Paddan-aram to marry a wife from there, he had instructed Jacob [Lit. him], "Don't marry a Canaanite woman." After Jacob had obeyed his father and mother's instructions to set out for Padda-aram [Paddan-aram was located in northwest Mesopotamia], Esau realized [Lit. saw] that Canaan women didn't please his father

	Isaac, so he went to Abraham's son Ishmael and married Ishmael's daughter Mahalath, who was the sister of Nebaioth.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	An ill day for Esau; here was Jacob sent with his father's blessing to find himself a wife in Syria; forbidden, as he would win that blessing, to marry a Chanaanite; here was Jacob gone all the way to Mesopotamia in obedience to his parents' whim! These women of Chanaan, Esau thought, are little to my father's liking; so he betook himself to Ismael [To Ismael'; that is, probably, to Ismael's family, their father being now dead.], and married a third wife, Maheleth, daughter to Abraham's son Ismael, and sister to Nabaioth.
Today's NIV	Now Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he commanded him, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram. Esau then realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac; so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, in addition to the wives he already had.
Translation for Translators	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Esau married Ishmael's daughter</b></p> <p>Esau found out that his father Isaac had blessed Jacob and then sent him to Paddan-Aram. He also found out that when he blessed Isaac, he told him, "Do not marry a woman of the Canaan people-group," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother, and had gone to Paddan-Aram. Esau also realized that his father Isaac did not approve of women from the Canaan people-group. 9 Because of that, Esau went to see his uncle Ishmael, and married Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael. Mahalath was the sister of Nabaioth and the granddaughter of Abraham.</p>
<b>Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):</b>	
Ancient Roots Translinear	Esau saw when Isaac blessed Jacob, and sent him to East-Syria, to take a woman from there for him. When he blessed him he commanded him, saying, "Take no woman from the daughters of Canaan." Jacob heard his father and his mother, and went to East-Syria. When Esau saw the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Isaac his father, Esau went to Ishmael and took the woman Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael the son of Abraham, and the sister of Nebajoth as his woman.
Conservapedia Translation	When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take a wife from that land, and that while he was blessing him he gave him instructions, saying, "You shall not take a wife from among the daughters of Canaan," and that Jacob listened to his father and mother and was going toward Padan-aram, and Esau could see that the daughters of Canaan were not pleasing in the eyes of his father Isaac, Esau went to Ishmael, and took Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife among his other wives.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	But when Esau knew that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there to comfort him, - and had ordered him saying, "Take not a wife from the girls of Canan," and that Jacob had listened to the voice of his father and mother, and had gone to Padan Aram. Then Esau perceived that the girls of Canan were displeasing in the eyes of Isaac his father, so Esau went to Ishmael and took Malath the daughter of Ishmael the son of Abraham, the sister of Nebaioth, besides his other wives, as a wife to himself.
HCSB	Esau noticed that Isaac blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-aram to get a wife there. When he blessed him, Isaac commanded Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman. And Jacob listened to his father and mother and went to Paddan-aram. Esau realized that his father Isaac disapproved of the Canaanite women, so Esau went to Ishmael and married, in addition to his other wives, Mahalath daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son. She was the sister of Nebaioth.

H. C. Leupold

When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him away to Paddan-Aram to get a wife there or himself, and that as he blessed him he also commanded him, saying: Not shall thou take a wife from the daughters of Canaan; and that Jacob hearkened unto his father and unto his mother and went to Paddan-Aram; and when Esau further saw that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac, his father, then Esau went to Ishmael and took to wife Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael the son of Abraham, and the sister of Nebaioth in addition to the wives that he had.

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Now Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he commanded him, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman [S ver 1]," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram. Esau then realized how displeasing the Canaanite women [S Ge 10:15-19] were to his father Isaac [S Ge 26:35]; so he went to Ishmael [S Ge 16:15] and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth [S Ge 25:13] and daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, in addition to the wives he already had.

Urim-Thummim Version

When Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to acquire himself a woman from that region and that he blessed him giving him a command saying, you will not take a woman from the daughters of Canaan. And that Jacob obeyed his dad and his mother, and departed to Padanaram. Then Esau considered how the daughters of Canaan displeased Isaac his dad. Esau then went to Ishmael, and acquired (in addition to the women he had) Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his woman.

Wikipedia Bible Project

And Esau did see that Isaac blessed Jacob, and sent him off to Peden, Aram to take for him a wife there: and in the course of blessing him, he commanded him to say--- you will not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. And Jacob listened to his father and mother; and went towards Peden Aram. And Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were no good in the eyes of Isaac his father. And Esau went to Ishmael and took Machalat (Mahalat), the daughter of Ishmael, son of Abraham, sister of Nevayoth (Nebaioth), of his women, for himself, for a wife.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community Bible

*Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-aram to choose a wife for himself, and in blessing him had commanded him, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman." And in obedience to his father and mother, Jacob had gone to Paddan-aram. So Esau understood how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac. So he went to Ishmael and chose a wife for himself besides those he already had—Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael, son of Abraham and sister of Nebaioth.*

The Heritage Bible

And Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan Aram to take him a wife from there; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; And that Jacob attentively heard his father and his mother, and walked to Padan Aram; And Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Isaac, his father, And Esau walked to Ishmael, and took Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to the wives which were already to him, to be his wife.

New American Bible (2011)

Esau noted that Isaac had blessed Jacob when he sent him to Paddan-aram to get himself a wife there, and that, as he gave him his blessing, he charged him, "You shall not marry a Canaanite woman," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and gone to Paddan-aram. Esau realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac, so Esau went to Ishmael, and in addition to the

wives he had, married Mahalath, the daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth. Gn 36:2-3.

Then Esau realized how much his father Isaac disliked the women of Canaan. So he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath. She was the sister of Nebaioth and the daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael. Esau added her to the wives he already had.

New English Bible

**Esau takes another wife.**

6Esau discovered that Isaac had given Jacob his blessing and had sent him away to Paddan-aram to find a wife there; 7and that when he blessed him he had forbidden him to marry a woman of Canaan, and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and gone to Paddan-aram. 8Then Esau, seeing that his father disliked the women of Canaan, 9went to Ishmael, and, in addition to his other wives, he married Mahalath sister. of Nebaioth and daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael.

New Jerusalem Bible

When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-Aram to choose a wife there, and that in blessing him he had given him this order: 'You are not to choose a wife from the Canaanite women,' and that, in obedience to his father and mother, Jacob had gone to Padda-Aram, Esau then realised how much his father Isaac disapproved of the Canaanite women. So Esau went to Ishmael and chose for a wife, in addition to the wives he had, Mahalath daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth.

New RSV

Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he charged him, 'You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women', and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and gone to Paddan-aram. So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women did not please his father Isaac, Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael, and sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

Revised English Bible

Esau learnt that Isaac had given Jacob his blessing and had sent him away to Paddan-aram to find a wife there, that when he blessed him he had forbidden him to marry a Canaanite woman, and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and gone to Paddan-aram. Seeing that his father disliked Canaanite women, Esau went to Ishmael and, in addition to his other wives, married Mahalath sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

Now 'Esav saw that Yitz'chak had blessed Ya'akov and sent him away to Paddan-Aram to choose a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he charged him, "You are not to choose a Kena'ani woman as your wife," and that Ya'akov had listened to his father and mother and gone to Paddan-Aram. 'Esav also saw that the Kena'ani women did not please Yitz'chak his father. So 'Esav went to Yishma'el and took, in addition to the wives he already had, Machalat the daughter of Yishma'el Avraham's son, the sister of N'vayot, to be his wife.

The Complete Tanach

And Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan aram, to take himself a wife from there, and that when he blessed him, he commanded him, saying, "You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan." And Jacob listened to his father and his mother, and he went to Padan aram.

**And Jacob listened:** This is connected to the aforementioned topic: When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed [Jacob] and that he had sent him off to Padan-aram, and that Jacob listened to his father and went to Padan-aram, and that the daughters of Canaan were displeasing [to his father], then he, too, went to Ishmael.

And Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were displeasing to his father Isaac. So Esau went to Ishmael, and he took Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, the son of Abraham, the sister of Nebaioth, in addition to his other wives as a wife.

**the sister of Nebaioth:** Since it says, “the daughter of Ishmael,” do I not know that she was the sister of Nebaioth? But this teaches us that Ishmael died after he had betrothed her to Esau, before her marriage, and her brother Nebaioth gave her hand in marriage. This also teaches us that Jacob was sixty-three years old at that time, for Ishmael was seventy-four years old when Jacob was born. Ishmael was fourteen years older than Isaac, and Isaac was sixty years old when they were born, hence [Ishmael was] seventy-four. He lived one hundred and thirty seven years, as it is stated (above 25:17): “and these are the years of the life of Ishmael,” etc. Consequently, Jacob was sixty-three at Ishmael’s death. We learn from here that he hid for fourteen years in the house of Eber and afterwards went to Haran. [This can be deduced from the fact that] he stayed in Laban’s house before Joseph’s birth only fourteen years, as it is said (below 31:41): “I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your sheep,” and the payment for the sheep took place after Joseph was born, as it is said (below 30:25): “And it came to pass when Rachel had given birth to Joseph, etc.,” and Joseph was thirty years old when he became ruler, and from then until Jacob descended to Egypt were nine years: seven of plenty and two of famine. And Jacob said to Pharaoh (below 47:9): “The days of the years of my sojournings are one hundred and thirty years.” Go forth and figure 14 years before Joseph was born, plus the 30 years of Joseph’s age, plus the 9 years from the time he became ruler until Jacob came. The total is 53. And when he [Jacob] left his father, he was 63, totaling 116. Yet he said [to Pharaoh, “I am] one hundred and thirty years old.” Hence, there are fourteen years missing. Thus, you learn that after he had received the blessings, he hid in the house of Eber for fourteen years. [From Meg. 17:1] (However, he was not punished [for these fourteen years] because of the merit [of having studied] Torah, for Joseph was separated from his father only twenty-two years, i.e., from age seventeen until age thirty-nine, corresponding to the twenty-two years that Jacob was separated from his father [when] he did not honor him. These are the twenty years in Laban’s house, plus the two years that he spent traveling [home], as it is written (below 33:17): “And he built himself a house, and for his cattle he made booths.” Our Rabbis of Blessed Memory inferred from this verse that he spent eighteen months on the road, for the house was for the rainy season, and the booths were for the summer. And, according to the calculation of the verses, which we calculated above, from the time he left his father until he went down to Egypt, at the age of one hundred and thirty, we find an additional fourteen years, therefore, it is certain that he hid in the house of Eber to learn Torah while on his way to the house of Laban. And because of the merit of the Torah, he was not punished for them [those fourteen years], and Joseph was separated from him for only twenty-two years-measure for measure. The above is from an old Rashi text).

**to his other wives:** He added wickedness upon his wickedness, for he did not divorce the first ones. [From Gen. Rabbah 67:13]

exeGeses companion Bible **And Esav sees that Yischaq blesses Yaaqov and sends him to Paddan Aram to take a woman from there; and as he blesses him, he misvahs him, saying, Take not a woman of the daughters of Kenaan; and that Yaaqov hearkens to his father and his mother and goes to Paddan Aram; and Esav, seeing that the daughters of Kenaan are evil in the eyes of Yischaq his father; Esav goes to Yishma El and takes and adds Machalath the daughter of Yishma El the son of Abraham the sister of Nebayoth to the women he has, to be his woman.**

Hebrew Names Version	Now Esav saw that Yitzchak had blessed Ya`akov and sent him away to Paddan-Aram, to take him a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Kena`an," and that Ya`akov obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Paddan-Aram. Esav saw that the daughters of Kena`an didn't please Yitzchak, his father. Esav went to Yishma'el, and took, besides the wives that he had, Machalat the daughter of Yishma'el, Avraham's son, the sister of Nevayot, to be his wife.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him off to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, charging him, as he blessed him, "You shall not take a wife from among the Canaanite women," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and gone to Paddan-aram, Esau realized that the Canaanite women displeased his father Isaac. So Esau went to Ishmael and took to wife, in addition to the wives he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, sister of Nebaioth.
Kaplan Translation	Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him to Padan Aram to find a wife, including in his blessing the charge, 'Do not marry a Canaanite girl.' [He also knew that] Jacob had obeyed his father and mother, and had gone to Padan Aram. Esau understood that the Canaanite girls were displeasing to his father Isaac. Esau therefore went to Ishmael and married Machlath [Not mentioned again. Some say that she is the Basemath mentioned in Genesis 36:3 (Yerushalmi, Bikkurim 3:3; cf. Josephus, Antiquities 1:18:8).] daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael, a sister of Nebayoth [See Genesis 25:13. Some say that Nebayoth is mentioned because Ishmael had more than one wife (Ibn Ezra). There is a tradition that Ishmael died at this point, and Nebayoth gave his sister to Esau (Megillah 14a; Rashi).], in addition to his other wives [See Genesis 26:34.].
Orthodox Jewish Bible	When Esav saw that Yitzchak had blessed Ya'akov, and sent him away to Padanah-Aram, to take an isha for him from there; and that when he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take an isha of the Banot Kena'an; And that Ya'akov obeyed his av and his em, and went to Padanah-Aram; And Esav seeing that the Banot Kena'an pleased not Yitzchak his av; Then went Esav unto Yishmael, and took unto the nashim which he had Machalat bat Yishmael ben Avraham, the achot of Nevayot, to be his wife.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And Ėsaw saw that Yitshaq had blessed Ya`aqob and sent him away to Paddan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a command, saying, "Do not take a wife from the daughters of Kena`an," and that Ya`aqob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Paddan Aram. So Ėsaw saw that the daughters of Kena`an did not please his father Yitshaq, and Ėsaw went to Yishma`el and took Mahalath the daughter of Yishma`el, Abraham`s son, the sister of Nebayoth, to be his wife, besides the wives he had.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him to Padan-aram to take him a wife from there, and that as he blessed him, he gave him a charge, saying, You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan-aram. Also Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please Isaac his father. So Esau went to Ishmael and took to be his wife, [in addition] to the wives he [already] had, Mahalath daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth.
The Expanded Bible	Esau ·learned [·saw] that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him to ·northwestern Mesopotamia [·Paddan-aram] to find a wife there. He also ·learned [·saw] that Isaac had commanded Jacob not to marry a ·Canaanite woman [·daughter of Canaan] and that Jacob had ·obeyed [·listened to] his father and mother and had gone to ·northwestern Mesopotamia [·Paddan-aram]. So Esau saw that ·his father Isaac

did not want his sons to marry Canaanite women [<sup>c</sup>the daughters of Canaan were bad/evil in the eyes of his father Isaac]. Now Esau already had wives, but he went to Ishmael son of Abraham, and he married Mahalath, Ishmael's daughter. Mahalath was the sister of Nebaioth.

Kretzmann's Commentary

When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, thus openly acknowledging him as the bearer of the patriarchal blessing, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram; and Esau, seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac, his father, literally, were evil in his eyes; then went Esau unto Ishmael, that is, to the house of Ishmael, the father himself having been dead more than twelve years, and took unto, in addition to, the wives which he had Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife. This woman, Genesis 36:2, is called Bashemath, and she was called the sister of Nebajoth, because he was her oldest brother. Esau probably intended to regain the full regard of his father by this act, since this third wife was a descendant of Abraham, but merely betrayed his utter lack of understanding, so far as the relation of the patriarchs to the prophecies of the Lord with regard to the possession of this land was concerned, for Ishmael and his children were not to be heirs with the son of Sarah.

NET Bible®

Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him off to Paddan Aram to find a wife there [Heb "to take for himself from there a wife."]. As he blessed him [The infinitive construct with the preposition and the suffix form a temporal clause.], Isaac commanded him, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman [Heb "you must not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan."]." Jacob obeyed his father and mother and left for Paddan Aram. Then Esau realized [Heb "saw."] that the Canaanite women [Heb "the daughters of Canaan."] were displeasing to [Heb "evil in the eyes of."] his father Isaac. So Esau went to Ishmael and married [Heb "took for a wife."] Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael, along with the wives he already had.

The Pulpit Commentary

When (literally, and) Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge,—literally, in his blessing him (forming a parenthesis), and he commanded him—saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; and that (literally, and) Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone (or went) to Padan-aram; and Esau seeing that (more correctly, saw that) the daughters of Canaan pleased not (literally, were evil in the eyes of) Isaac his father; then (literally, and) went Esau unto Ishmael (i.e. the family or tribe of Ishmael, aiming in this likely to please his father), and took unto the wives which he had (so that they were neither dead nor divorced) Mahalath (called Bashemath in Genesis 36:3) the daughter of Ishmael (and therefore Esau's half-cousin by the father's side, Ishmael, who was now dead thirteen years, having been Isaac's half-brother) Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth,—Ishmael's firstborn (vide Genesis 25:13)—to be his wife.

The Voice

Now Esau saw that *his father*, Isaac, had *again* blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-aram to find a wife there, instructing him not to marry any of the Canaanite women. He learned, too, that Jacob had gone there just as his father and mother both wanted. So, realizing his father did not like his Canaanite wives, Esau went to see Ishmael and took Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael (Abraham's other son) and the sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife in addition to the two others.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Esav <sup>[Doing]</sup> saw that Yits'hhaq <sup>[He laughs]</sup> respected Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> and he sent him unto Padan-Aram <sup>[Field palace]</sup> to take for him from there a woman, in respecting him and he directed upon him saying, you will not take a woman from the daughters of Kena'an <sup>[Lowered]</sup> , and Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> heard his father and his mother and he walked unto Padan-Aram <sup>[Field palace]</sup> , and Esav <sup>[Doing]</sup> saw that the daughters of Kena'an <sup>[Lowered]</sup> were dysfunctional in the eyes of Yits'hhaq <sup>[He laughs]</sup> his father, and Esav <sup>[Doing]</sup> walked to Yishma'el <sup>[El will listen]</sup> and he took Mahhalat <sup>[Stringed instrument]</sup> the daughter of Yishma'el <sup>[El will listen]</sup> the son of Avraham <sup>[Father lifted]</sup> , the sister of Nevayot <sup>[Flourishings]</sup> , for him for a woman in addition to his women,...
Concordant Literal Version	And seeing is Esau that Isaac blesses Jacob and sends him to Padan, Syria, to take thence a wife for himself, and, in his blessing him, he is also instructing him, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan, and that Jacob is hearkening to his father and to his mother, and is going to Padan, Syria. And seeing is Esau that evil are the daughters of Canaan in the eyes of Isaac, his father. And going is Esau to Ishmael, and taking Mahalath, a daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, sister of Nebaioth, to his wives, for his wife.
Context Group Version	Now Esau saw that Isaac had esteemed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram, to take him a woman { or wife } from there. And that as he esteemed him he gave him a charge, saying, You shall not take a woman { or wife } of the daughters of Canaan. And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and had gone to Padda-aram. And Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan didn't please Isaac his father. And Esau went to Ishmael, and took, besides the women { or wives } that he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth, to be his woman { or wife }.
Darby Translation	And Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-Aram, to take a wife thence, blessing him, and giving him a charge saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; and [that] Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padan-Aram. And Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were evil in the sight of Isaac his father. And Esau went to Ishmael, and took, besides the wives that he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife.
English Standard V. – UK	<b>Esau Marries an Ishmaelite</b> Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he directed him, "You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women", and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and gone to Paddan-aram. So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women [ch. 24:3; 26:35] did not please Isaac his father, Esau went to Ishmael and took as his wife, besides the wives he had, Mahalath [ch. 36:3] the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth [ch. 25:13; 36:3].
New King James Version	<b>Esau Marries Mahalath</b> Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram. Also Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac. So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.
Webster's updated Bible	When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from there; and that as he blessed him, he gave him a charge, saying, You will not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; And that Jacob obeyed his father, and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram; And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan did not please Isaac his father; Then went Esau to Ishmael, and took to the wives which he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

Young's Updated LT

And Esau sees that Isaac has blessed Jacob, and has sent him to Padan-Aram to take to himself from there a wife—in his blessing him that he lays a charge upon him, saying, You will not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan—that Jacob listens unto his father and unto his mother, and goes to Padan-Aram—and Esau sees that the daughters of Canaan are evil in the eyes of Isaac his father, and Esau goes unto Ishmael, and takes Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, sister of Nebajoth, unto his wives, to himself, for a wife.

**The gist of this verse:**

Esau realized that his parents did not approve of his Canaanite wives, so he marries an Ishmaelite.

6-9

Genesis 28:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
'Êsâv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced <i>gay-SAWV</i> ]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
bârak <sup>e</sup> (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced <i>baw-RAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless [as God, man and other created things], therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone [with a blessing]; to curse</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
Yis'châq (יִשְׁחַק) [pronounced <i>yihs<sup>e</sup>-KHAWK</i> ]	<i>he laughs; laughing; transliterated Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Ya'âqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>BV</sup></i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

**Translation:** Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob...

Esau did not expect all of these things to take place. At the beginning of the day, he was going to go out and kill a deer and dress it up and make an incredible stew from this deer, that his father loved; and then his father was

to bless him. But, instead, by the time he gets back, Isaac has already blessed Jacob instead. Then, before Jacob leaves (as arranged by his mother), Isaac blesses him again—and this time, there is no duplicity. Jacob simply gets the blessing that had come from God to Abraham.

It is not clear whether this is a blessing (and perhaps a dinner) given in honor of Jacob, who is going to leave for awhile (no one realizes it, but he will be gone for 20 years). Somehow, Esau hears this. Is he on the other side of a tent listening? Is this a dinner which he comes to as well? All of this takes place so quickly, that Esau apparently does not have time to formulate a plan to kill Jacob.

Esau is no doubt taken aback because, even though the first blessing is based upon deception; the second blessing is not.

At first, my impression was that this blessing took place outside of Esau's presence and that he heard about it sometime later. However, there is a very common Hebrew word for *hear*, and that word is not used here; there is also a common Hebrew word which means *it was made known to \_\_\_*; and that is not used here. Instead, we have the word *rā'âh* (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*], which means *to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know*. Strong's #7200 BDB #906. Although I do not think that this conclusively means that Esau was there, observing the event; it does cause me to lean more toward that view than to any other.

Operating on the assumption that there was an organized blessing for Jacob (a dinner or whatever, which involved family members), Esau understands, at this point, that the daughters of Canaan (specifically, of Heth) were not his best choice. He hears the actual charge that Isaac gives to Jacob, and this makes Esau reconsider some of the choices that he has made.

This all fits together if we understand Isaac's blessing of Jacob to be a public blessing, for family members. There, Esau would see Isaac bless Jacob (where there is no deception occurring); and Jacob's immediate trip to Paddan-aram to find a proper woman to marry would have been a portion of the discussion.

Jacob is being sent east to marry the right kind of woman. Now, if this is a public dinner or celebration, Isaac does not stand up and make a toast to the women of Shem, because all of the Hittite women are lousy people. Nothing so harsh would be stated; but he give Jacob the blessing of Abraham—and it is not the result of coercion or deception—so that Esau apparently comes to the conclusion that he made a mistake when he married his two Hittite wives.

Men can be very egocentric, and Esau might be missing the big picture here or the spiritual side of the blessing of Jacob; but what he does get from this event is, he needs to marry a woman from his family.

### Genesis 28:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i> ]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	<i>him; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to him, toward him</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

## Genesis 28:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Paddân (פַּדָּן) [pronounced <i>pahd-DAWN</i> ]	<i>to extend, a plateau; garden, field; transliterated Paddan, Padan</i>	proper singular noun/location: with the directional hê	Strong's #6307 BDB #804
ʿĀrām (אֲרָם) [pronounced <i>uh-RAWM</i> ]	<i>the highland, high region; exalted; and is transliterated Aram; sometimes rendered Syria, Mesopotamia</i>	proper noun, singular	Strong's #758 BDB #74
Together, these words refer to the table land of Aram; Paddan or Paddan-Aram, a region of Syria.			
The directional hê is the <i>âh</i> (ה) ending to a noun, usually found after a verb of motion. This is called the <i>directive hê</i> or the <i>he locale</i> , which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question <i>where?</i> The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun <i>heaven</i> and the most literal rendering in the English would be <i>heavenward</i> . We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions <i>to</i> or <i>toward</i> .			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ʰ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i> ]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced <i>shawm</i> ]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb of place	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i> ]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
bârak <sup>e</sup> (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced <i>baw-RAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to bless; to kneel down, to bend the knees, and therefore to invoke God, to ask for a blessing, to bless; also to praise, to salute, to curse</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	<i>him; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to him, toward him</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

**Translation:** ...and then sent him away to Paddan-aram to take from there a wife in his blessing to him [or, when he blessed him].

Jacob is going to head east and he is to locate Laban, who had become quite successful over the years since we have seen him before. Taking a wife from there would be a great blessing to Jacob.

There is a little grammar which could be cleaned up and explained here. Rewriting the final few words, but replacing the suffixes with the people to whom they refer, we have: [...for Isaac's blessing to Jacob.](#)

**Application:** For the believer and the unbeliever alike, there are two things which are designed to give them pleasure: marriage and work. If you think that work is drudgery and the worst thing ever, then you have not found your niche in life (admittedly, not every job is greatly fulfilling, but the best sleep in the world is coming home dog-tired from a hard day at work).

**Application:** But, to give some illustrations: my father hated his work. I did not know this until I was a teen and needed to be driven somewhere early in the morning by my father. He was always gone before I got up, so I did not realize that he was in quite the pissy mood in the mornings. The work he did was hot and physically demanding (he was a roofer). Near the end of his life, he was forced to change professions, and he began doing “fix-it” work for friends and neighbors. Because he could do anything, he found himself working full days, making more money than he had made before, and enjoying it so much more. That was his niche. Personally, I taught school for 29 years, and about 20–25 of those years were incredibly wonderful, and I have very pleasant memories of it. Now I deal with my rental property, which means a lot fewer hours (which is good, as I am getting older). All of this work has been tremendously satisfying, for a number of reasons. I have a cousin and her husband who both work at home. It has turned out to be exactly the right kind of work for them. They have been disciplined, and every morning, they get up, have their breakfast and coffee, and then go into their office to work. I also know people who are on disability—who do not work, but simply collect a check from the government—and these are often the among the most unhappy people that I have ever met. I have known some of them to be often angry and pissy, as well as jealous of others. Of course, they are nearly all liberals and, of course, they will spout off in a second's notice all the reasons why they are on disability. But they are generally unhappy and frustrated in this world.

**Application:** Quite obviously, this does not mean any job and any marriage is good; it simply means that, when you find the right one of each, these things are blessings in life.

One of God's specialities is to turn cursing into blessing. You will recall that God cursed Adam for his sin and warned him that he would be working the land, sweating from his brow, in order to eat. This is still true; work still requires time and effort and physical strength. But, for the believer with Bible doctrine and the unbeliever who adheres to the laws of divine establishment, the cursing of work is turned into a great blessing.

### Genesis 28:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tsâvâh (צַוָּ) [pronounced tsaw-VAW]	<i>to commission, to mandate, to appoint; to ordain; to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge [command, order]; to instruct [as in, giving an order]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #6680 BDB #845

Genesis 28:6c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ʰ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to answer</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lôʾ (אֵל אוֹ אִל) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i> ]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i> ]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bath (בַּת) [pronounced <i>bath</i> ]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
K <sup>e</sup> naʿan (כְּנַעַן) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>NAH-gahn</i> ]	which possibly means <i>merchant</i> and is transliterated <i>Canaan</i>	masculine proper noun; territory; pausal form	Strong's #3667 BDB #488

**Translation:** Isaac charged him, “Do not take a woman from the daughters of Canaan.”

Isaac had told Jacob, “Do not take a Canaanite woman as your wife;” and Jacob obeyed Isaac. Esau heard this and he had married two Hittite (Canaanite<sup>78</sup>) women. So he thinks about this. He remains there with Isaac and Rebekah; Jacob is out of the picture (traveling to Paddan-aram), and he will be out of the picture for quite awhile. Therefore, Esau has figured out that he needs to sort this out. If he is married to the wrong sort of women, then he needs to fix that. However, Esau cannot simply set these women aside; he cannot simply cast them out of his life.

**Genesis 28:6** **And Esau saw** that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him away to Padan-aram in order to take a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a command, saying, “You will not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.” (WEB; emphasis mine)

<sup>78</sup> They are called *Canaanite women* because they live in Canaan.

Isaac's blessing to Jacob was likely given in public and Esau observed it, recognizing that this blessing is given without coercion or deception. Jacob is also warned not to take a Canaanite woman for a wife, as Esau had done (Isaac did not say this about Esau; but everyone knew that Esau married local women). Again, this is what Isaac believes this to be about. He is unaware that Esau wants to kill Jacob; and he does not realize that it is his wife who is getting Jacob out of town to save him.

Esau is either there, at this time, listening; or he will find out Jacob was sent east to find a proper wife; and therefore, Esau takes all of this to heart. He knows about Jacob being sent to find a wife—and this is because his parents have problems with his Hittite wives. As has been discussed, Isaac and Rebekah both showed favoritism toward Esau and Isaac, respectively; and this resulted in a great deal of sibling rivalry, competition and insecurity.

Esau will take all of this to heart. In the past couple days, Esau had been sent out to hunt for a deer, and he fully expect to enjoy a wonderful meal with his father and to receive the great blessing of Abraham. At this point, it is clear that this blessing will not be his. First, Isaac blessed Jacob because he had been deceived; but now Isaac blessed Jacob with his eyes fully opened, so to speak.

Esau hears that Jacob is being sent back east to take a wife from their family and Esau takes this to heart. He can not really obsess about killing Jacob, because Jacob is about to be gone—but this does cause Esau to become somewhat introspective. Esau knows that Isaac blessed Jacob in a unique way and without deception, so Esau will actually think about this and try to deal with it while Jacob is gone.

I think that part of this is based upon Esau's incomplete understanding about the blessing of Abraham, which was passed down to Jacob. I don't believe that he fully understood that or what it meant. When he found out that Isaac had blessed Jacob originally, he said, "But have you retained a blessing for me?" He did not say, "But Abraham's blessing should go to me!"

Genesis 28:6 [Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and then sent him away to Paddan-aram to take from there a wife in his blessing to him \[or, when he blessed him\]. Isaac charged him, "Do not take a woman from the daughters of Canaan."](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Genesis 28:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâma' (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHÇ]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
Ya'ăqôb (יעקב) [pronounced yah-ğuh-KOH <sup>BV</sup> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39

## Genesis 28:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'āb (אָב) [pronounced aw <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>father</i> , both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; <i>founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ēm (אֵם) [pronounced aim]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51

**Translation:** Consequently, Jacob listened to his father and mother...

Jacob *listened* to his mother and father. This means that he obeyed them. Recall that his mother was quite frustrated with Esau's Hittite wives; so, since she spent so much time with Jacob, clearly she shared her feelings of frustration to him. Jacob's father, Isaac, sent Jacob away specifically to take a wife who was not a woman of Canaan. He will be sent to marry a woman from his extended family; and he will marry two of his cousins (this is not Jacob's original intention).

## Genesis 28:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hālak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Paddān (פַּדָּן) [pronounced pahd-DAWN]	<i>to extend, a plateau; garden, field; transliterated Paddan, Padan</i>	proper singular noun/location with the directional hê	Strong's #6307 BDB #804
'Ārām (אַרָּם) [pronounced uh-RAWM]	<i>the highland, high region; exalted; and is transliterated Aram; sometimes rendered Syria, Mesopotamia</i>	proper noun, singular	Strong's #758 BDB #74

Together, these words refer to the table land of Aram; Paddan or Paddan-Aram, a region of Syria.

## Genesis 28:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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The directional hê is the *âh* (ה) ending to a noun, usually found after a verb of motion. This is called the *directive hê* or the *he locale*, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question *where?* The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun *heaven* and the most literal rendering in the English would be *heavenward*. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions *to* or *toward*.

**Translation:** ...and he went to Paddan-aram.

Paddan-aram is where Laban lived. This is a reference to the overall area; and Haran refers to a specific town or village when Laban and his family lived.

Paddan-Aram	
Scripture	Text/Commentary
Fausset	Padan Aram [is] "The flat land of Aram," contrasted with the more mountainous region of the north and northeast. of Mesopotamia (Hos. 12:12), "the field (sedeh) of Aram" (Genesis 25:20), the same as Aram Naharaim, "Aram of the two rivers," or Mesopotamia. (See MESOPOTAMIA.) (Genesis 24:10). Aram expresses the highland of Syria, contrasted with the lowland of Canaan. The land between Tigris and Euphrates is a vast flat, except where the Sinjar range intersects it. The home of Rebekah, Laban, etc. <sup>79</sup>
ISBE	Paddan-Aram pad'an-â'ram or pad'an-âr'am (רַאֲם אֲרָם, padan 'ârâm; Septuagint Μεσσοποταμία της Συρίας, Mesopotamía tēs Suriás; the King James Version Padan-aram): In Genesis 48:7, Paddan stands alone, but as the Septuagint, Sam, and Peshitta read "Aram" also, it must in this verse have dropped out of the Massoretic Text. In the time of Abraham, padanu occurs on the Babylonian contract-tablets as a land measure, to which we may compare the Arabic fedda <sup>n</sup> or "ox-gang." In the Assyrian syllabaries it is the equivalent of iklu, "a field," so that Paddan-aram would mean "the field of Aram," and with this we may compare Hos. 12:12 (Hebrew 12:13) and the use of the Hebrew sâdheh in connection with Moab and Edom (Judges 5:4; Rth. 1:6). . Furthermore, padanu and harranu are given as synonyms with the meaning of "road."
ISBE continued	Paddan-aram occurs only in the Priestly Code (P), but it corresponds to the "Haran" of the older documents. The versions agree in translating both as Mesopotamia, and identify with the home of the patriarchs and the scene of Jacob's exile the district of Haran to the East of the Upper Euphrates valley. More in harmony with the length of Jacob's flight, as indicated by the time given (Genesis 31:22-23), is Harran-el-'Awamid, an ancient site 10 miles to the East of Damascus, which satisfies all the demands of history. <sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Andrew Robert Fausset, *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*; from e-Sword, topic: Padan Aram.

<sup>80</sup> *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Corinth.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Paddan-Aram.

## Paddan-Aram

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Smith	<p>Padanaram...signifies the table-land of Aram, that is, Syriac, the Hebrews designated the tract of country, which they, otherwise, called the Aram-naharaim, "Aram of the two of rivers", the Greek Mesopotamia, Genesis 24:10, and "the field, (Authorized Version, 'country'), of Syria." Hos. 12:13.</p> <p>The term was, perhaps, more especially applied to that portion, which bordered on the Euphrates, to distinguish it from the mountainous districts, in the north and northeast of Mesopotamia. It is, elsewhere, called Padan simply. Genesis 48:7. Abraham obtained a wife for Isaac, from Padan-aram. Genesis 25:20. Jacob's wives were also from Padan-aram, Genesis 28:2, 5-7 31:1-8 33:18.<sup>81</sup></p>
<a href="#">Chapter Outline</a>	<a href="#">Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines</a>

Vv. 6-7 read: [Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and then sent him away to Paddan-aram to take from there a wife in his blessing to him \[or, when he blessed him\]. Isaac charged him, "Do not take a woman from the daughters of Canaan."](#) Consequently, [Jacob listened to his father and mother and he went to Paddan-aram.](#) I have come across several commentators who suggest that Jacob left with only a staff in hand.<sup>82</sup> There is nothing in this narrative to suggest that Jacob, fearing for his life, hopped on a camel and got out of there, escaping with only his life and maybe his staff (or that he just took off walking). Rebekah wanted to get Jacob out of there as soon as possible, but Esau's threats were to kill Jacob *after* their father had died. So, a good cover story was developed—by Rebekah, of course—that Jacob needed to marry a woman from their background and genealogical line.

Now, if Jacob left with only a staff and no food or animals, would he have not be vulnerable to an attack by Esau? And wasn't that what Rebekah was trying to avoid?

Now, even though there was not this great preparation with Jacob as there was with Abraham and his head servant, who would go east to take a wife for Isaac; there was some preparation and there was a goodbye and blessing ceremony—which is what we have just studied. We must therefore recognize that Jacob left with some possessions and provisions. It is even possible that Rebekah will give Jacob her personal servant to go with him (as her death will be noted upon Jacob's return to the land of Canaan—Genesis 35:8<sup>83</sup>).

[Genesis 28:7](#) [And Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and he went to Padan-aram.](#)

[Genesis 28:7](#) [Consequently, Jacob listened to his father and mother and he went to Paddan-aram.](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Isaac and Rebekah did agree that Jacob should find a wife from their clan, and Jacob obeyed them. Now, bear in mind, Jacob is 40+ years old—most estimate him to be around 77 years of age (in today's years, that might be comparable to late 30's or early 40's).

Jacob is leaving home for the first time, and this is the will of God, even though Jacob is obeying his parents and not God. God had not yet appeared to Jacob.

<sup>81</sup> Dr. William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary*; 1894; from e-Sword, topic: Padanaram.

<sup>82</sup> M. Dods in the Bible Illustrator makes this claim. *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 27:6-10. He is not the only one.

<sup>83</sup> It is never clear when Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, became a part of Jacob's people.

We will pick up with Jacob's trip in v. 10. We are still in the parenthetical portion, where this is what Esau is observing. Isaac obeys his parents and goes to Paddan-aram.

Genesis 28:1–4 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, "You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May He give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!"

I am assuming that this is a public blessing, with at bare minimum the family attending (and, I would guess all of their servants as well). Jacob is not confused or deceived here; and the blessings of Abraham are clearly passed down to Jacob.

Gen 28:5–7 Thus Isaac sent Jacob away. And he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother. Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he directed him, "You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and gone to Paddan-aram. (ESV; capitalized)

Esau observes all of this, and, knowing that his wives have been problematic for his mother—is developing a plan for his own life. He needs to marry someone of the right upbringing.

### Genesis 28:8

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'âh (הָאָר) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
Ēsâv (וְעֵשָׂו) [pronounced <i>gay-SAWV</i> ]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
râ'âh (הָעַר) [pronounced <i>raw-ĠAW</i> ]	<i>evil, misery, distress, disaster, injury, iniquity, aberration, that which is morally reprehensible</i>	feminine plural adjective	Strong's #7451 BDB #949
bath (תַּב) [pronounced <i>bahth</i> ]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
K <sup>e</sup> na'an (עֵינָן) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>NAH-ġahn</i> ]	which possibly means <i>merchant</i> and is transliterated <i>Canaan</i>	masculine proper noun; territory; pausal form	Strong's #3667 BDB #488

## Genesis 28:8

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿēynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gay-nah-YIM</i> ]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
Together, the bēyth preposition and the construct form ʿīynêy (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gee-NAY</i> ], literally mean <i>in the eyes of</i> ; it can be understood to mean <i>in the opinion of, in the thinking of, in the estimation of; as _____ sees things to be, in the sight of</i> .			
Yis <sup>e</sup> châq (יִשְׁחַק) [pronounced <i>yih<sup>s</sup>-KHAWK</i> ]	<i>he laughs; laughing; transliterated Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850
ʾâb (אָב)[pronounced aw <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3

**Translation:** Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Isaac, his father,...

Esau apparently did a little soul-searching, as strange as that may seem. He knows that Jacob has received the greater blessing and he knows how much his parents think poorly of the Canaanite women that he married. So Esau will take this to heart.

At some point, Esau had to know that Jacob was gone—let me suggest that Rebekah did more than simply arrange for Jacob to leave Canaan to find a wife—my guess is, she also arranged for Jacob to leave without Esau being anywhere around (this would have been for Jacob's safety). But, Esau figures out that Jacob is gone, is told that Jacob is gone; and the official explanation would have been delivered to him: “We want our son Jacob to marry a believing woman of our family.” Esau had known for some time, no doubt, that his wives were not appreciated by Isaac or by Rebekah (Genesis 26:34–35 27:46)—however, all of this confirms that fact and emphasizes it.

Esau, possibly, did some soul-searching. The line of blessing was promised to Jacob by his father; Jacob was being sent to Paddan-aram to marry the right kind of woman; and he was aware, presumably, that his wives were not well-liked by his parents. All this taken together made Esau decide to make some changes in his life.

## Genesis 28:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

## Genesis 28:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Yish <sup>e</sup> mâ'ê'l (ישמעאל) [pronounced yish-maw-GALE]	<i>whom God hears; God is hearing and is transliterated Ishmael</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3458 BDB #1035

**Translation:** ...so Esau went to Ishmael...

Esau does this on his own. Ishmael is the half-brother of his father Isaac, and there is reason to believe that Isaac spoke warmly of his half-brother. The incident recorded in Scripture when they were children is just that—something long in the past. What Esau does here is try to redeem himself; try to make himself appear better in the eyes of his parents.

Wenstrom: “Ishmael” was the son that Sarah’s Egyptian maid Hagar bore to Abraham and his name means, “God hears” which alludes to the fact that God heard or took notice of Hagar’s suffering when she was sent out of the home by Abraham and Sarah while pregnant with Ishmael (See Genesis 16). “Ishmael” became the progenitor of the Arabs, who have traditionally been the enemies of Israel and also from the line of “Ishmael” came Muhammad and Islam, one of the most demonic of religions and a foe of not only Israel but also Christianity.<sup>84</sup>

No one knows how long Jacob would be gone—least of all, Esau—so Esau must seize this opportunity to find a wife acceptable to his parents, in order to ingratiate himself to them, before Jacob returns.

This particular issue is not that important in itself; only as it may help us with the ages of Isaac and his sons.

Genesis 28:9 Esau went to Ishmael and took as his wife, besides the wives he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth. (ESV)

### Commentary on Ishmael—Dead or Alive?

By most estimates, Ishmael has died; but going to *Ishmael* simply means that Esau went to his family. If I told you that I was going to *Israel*, you would not insinuate from that, that Jacob (Israel) is still alive.

Gill: [Esau went] [n]ot to Ishmael in person, for he was now dead, Genesis 25:17, and had been dead as is reckoned about fourteen years before this, but to the house of Ishmael.<sup>85</sup>

The Cambridge Bible, on the other hand, has Ishmael at 114 years old and that he would live an additional 23 years, citing Genesis 17:24-25 25:17, 26 26:34.<sup>86</sup> At this point, I don’t know that this is an issue worth going into.

Whether or not Ishmael is alive depends pretty much on the ages of Jacob and Esau in this narrative.

<sup>84</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:8–9); accessed May 28, 2017.

<sup>85</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:9.

<sup>86</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:9. They refer to this as the P (priestly) chronology.

### Commentary on Ishmael—Dead or Alive?

Clarke: *It is supposed that Ishmael must have been dead thirteen or fourteen years before this time, and that going to Ishmael signifies only going to the family of Ishmael. If we follow the common computation, and allow that Isaac was now about one hundred and thirty-six or one hundred and thirty-seven years of age, and Jacob seventy-seven, and as Ishmael died in the one hundred and thirty-seventh year of his age, which according to the common computation was the one hundred and twenty-third of Isaac, then Ishmael must have been dead about fourteen years. But if we allow the ingenious reasoning of Mr. Skinner and Dr. Kennicott, that Jacob was at this time only fifty-seven years of age, and Isaac consequently only one hundred and seventeen, it will appear that Ishmael did not die till six years after this period.*<sup>87</sup>

James Burton Coffman: *If the first is correct, then Ishmael had been dead fourteen years when Isaac commanded Jacob to go to the house of Bethuel. If the second calculation is allowed, Ishmael still lived and would not have died until six years later. The statement that "Esau went unto Ishmael" (Genesis 28:9), inferring that Ishmael was alive at the time of the events of this chapter, definitely favors the lower calculations of 57 for the age of Jacob. The Bible here says nothing whatever about anyone's age, and human deductions are subject to all kinds of errors.*<sup>88</sup> There is no requirement for Ishmael to be alive, even though it reads *Esau went to Ishmael*; implied would be, *Esau went to the descendants or the tribe of Ishmael.*

Barnes: *Esau is induced, by the charge of his parents to Jacob, the compliance of the latter with their wishes, and by their obvious dislike to the daughters of Kenaan, to take Mahalath, a daughter of Ishmael, in addition to his former wives. "Went unto Ishmael;" that is, to the family or tribe of Ishmael, as Ishmael himself was now thirteen years dead. Esau's hunting and roving career had brought him into contact with this family, and we shall presently find him settled in a neighboring territory.*<sup>89</sup>

Poole: *Ishmael seems to have been dead before this, from Genesis 25:17, though that may possibly be a prolepsis, and then this may be Ishmael himself.*<sup>90</sup>

At this point, I do not really have an opinion on this matter. When the text reads that Esau went to Ishmael, this can mean *to the people of Ishmael* as well.

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### Genesis 28:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

<sup>87</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:9.

<sup>88</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

<sup>89</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:8–9.

<sup>90</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:9.

Genesis 28:9b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Machālath (תַּלְחַת) [pronounced mahkh-al-AHTH]	<i>stringed instrument; transliterated Machalath, Mahalath</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #4258 BDB #563
bath (בַּת) [pronounced bahth]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
Yish <sup>e</sup> mā'ê' (יִשְׁמָעֵאל) [pronounced yish-maw-GALE]	<i>whom God hears; God is hearing and is transliterated Ishmael</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3458 BDB #1035
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
'Ab <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced ahb <sup>ve</sup> -raw-HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
'âchôwth (אָחוּת) [pronounced aw-KHOWTH]	<i>sister, half-sister; relative; beloved [bride]; figuratively of intimate connection; metaphorically for relationship between Israel and Judah; another</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #269 BDB #27
N <sup>e</sup> bâyôwth (נְבוּיָת) [pronounced nehb-aw-YOUTH]	<i>fruitfulness; heights; transliterated Nebajoth, Nebaioth, Nebayoth; Nabatæans, Nabateans</i>	proper noun; gentilic singular adjective	Strong's #5032 BDB #614
'al (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
'îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 28:9b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>ʾīshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]</p>	<p>woman, wife</p>	<p>feminine singular noun</p>	<p>Strong's #802 BDB #61</p>

**Translation:** ...and he took to wife Mahalath, Ishmael ben Abraham's daughter ([she is] the sister of Nebaioth) in additional to his [other] wives.

So Esau goes to his Uncle Ishmael, and he takes one of his daughters to marry.

*Wenstrom: The brother "Mahalath" was "Nebaioth"...whose name means, "heights" and whose descendants were the "Nabayati" an Arab tribe that was conquered by Ashurbanipal in the seventh century (668-633 B.C.) and are mentioned in Isaiah 60:7.<sup>91</sup>*

I don't doubt that this was a sincere attempt by Esau to please his parents. I read at least one commentator who complained that, "Ishmael is not the promised line; so Esau was simply revealing his wrong choices." (not an exact quote) Ishmael believes in the Revealed God; and probably the same is true of his daughters and possibly his granddaughters. I think it is easy to show that Ishmael believes in the Revealed God; but his descendants, at least for one generation, probably do as well, as they are named in Scripture (Genesis 25:12–16<sup>92</sup>).

Genesis 28:8–9 **Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Isaac, his father, so Esau went to Ishmael and he took to wife Mahalath, Ishmael ben Abraham's daughter ([she is] the sister of Nebaioth) in additional to his [other] wives.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Let's assume that this is Jacob's writing. The events of Genesis 28:8–9 would parallel those of Genesis 28:9–29:19. So Jacob may be recording this years later in retrospect. He has since matured, partially due to having the stuffing beat out of him in Genesis 32. Prior to the writing of this, he has made his amends with Esau and they have likely buried their father Isaac. This is how Jacob would have known this information in Genesis 28:8–9.

The brief information concerning Esau is found in this short passage and the bulk of the next few chapters will center on Jacob's life. The likelihood of Jacobian authorship is great due to these reasons.

Now, some of us who have used manual typewriters or have written things out in longhand recognize that, you do not easily take a thought or an event which occurs to you many years later, and then you stick it back into the place where it fits. However, most people today are familiar with word processors, where doing something like this is easy to do.

However, I believe that most of all of Genesis was passed along, year by year, to family members, from those who wanted their children to have and know the Word of God. Having the Word of God meant, you heard it many, many times; and you eventually memorized it. In a circumstance like this, it is easy to edit the material. One day, you are telling a set of events to your young children; and, the next day, because you have some additional information, you insert into the narrative—a narrative which you have repeated many times to your children (and they have so learned it). Once the children learn it in this way, then that is how they remember it and how they repeat it to their children.

<sup>91</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:8–9); accessed May 28, 2017.

<sup>92</sup> Esau's generations go out 2 generations past Esau in Genesis 36. I tend to believe that *most* people named in Scripture (certainly not all) are believers in the Revealed God.

When Jacob and Esau meet again, prior to the writing/recording of this passage, but long after its actual occurrence, the first thing that they would talk about would be their respective children, wives and their lives. Jacob would be intrigued by Esau's marriage to a third wife and to one who is not a Canaanite. Since this information chronologically fits into this place, that is where Jacob places it when recounting these events to his children.

A thought occurred to me that I do not know how many other exegetes of Scripture have given thought to the authorship of Genesis and have come up with similar conclusions to mine, if any. For all I know, this view of Genesis authorship could be original with me or the opinion of hundreds of other Biblical scholars.<sup>93</sup> I did not get this portion of what I have written from someone else (although the bulk of what I am writing is information which I have learned from those with the gift of pastor-teacher and the gift of authorship). However, this is not a major point of doctrine; the correct ascribing of human authorship just helps to explain what information is found here and what is not. What is logically missing is detailed information about Esau. This information is missing because (1) it is not through Esau that the promise goes; and (2) Jacob is the human author of this portion of Scripture and he will spend the next 20+ years in Paddan-aram. Since the Bible is a product of divine and human authorship, it is only logical that we should have a divine and a human reason for what is found in Scripture and what is not. The human author does not wave his thoughts, feelings, literary style or vocabulary when writing God's Word. It is in this way that the written Word of God is a perfect type for the living Word of God, Jesus Christ, Yahweh of the Old Testament and the Creator of the universe.

It is only by Jewish tradition that Moses is the author of Genesis (he is possibly the editor, although I doubt even that). There are no New Testament passages which ascribe Mosaic authorship to any part of Genesis, although there are several passages which name Moses as the author in both the Old and New Testaments for the other four books of the Law (see the *Study of Inspiration*). In terms of spiritual growth, whether you agree with my analysis of the authorship of Genesis or not carries very little import with regards to spiritual growth. If, on the other hand, you would prefer to have the correct view of the authorship of Genesis, then, you will certainly agree with me in this respect.

Genesis 28:6–9 **Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and then sent him away to Paddan-aram to take from there a wife in his blessing to him [or, when he blessed him]. Isaac charged him, “Do not take a woman from the daughters of Canaan.” Consequently, Jacob listened to his father and mother and he went to Paddan-aram. Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Isaac, his father, so Esau went to Ishmael and he took to wife Mahalath, Ishmael ben Abraham’s daughter ([she is] the sister of Nebaioth) in addition to his [other] wives.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 28:6–9 **Esau observed that Isaac first blessed Jacob and then sent him off to Paddan-arm to take from there a wife as a part of the blessing. Isaac had charged Jacob, “Do not take a wife from the Canaanites.” Jacob obeyed his father and mother and went to Paddan-aram. Esau also observed that Isaac saw the women of Canaan as evil, so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, Ishmael’s daughter, as an additional wife (Ishmael is the son of Abraham and Mahalath is the sister of Nebaioth).**

Several commentators continue with the point that Ishmael is the rejected line (Isaac is the line of promise). The same thing is true of Abraham and Nahor, and Rebekah and Leah and Rachel (the latter two will be Jacob’s wives) are all descendants of Nahor (Genesis 22:20–23). So, Ishmael being from the rejected line is not really the issue.

### **Esau Attempts to Marry a Woman of the Right Breeding (Various Commentators)**

The Geneva Bible comments: *Thinking by this to have reconciled himself to his father, but all in vain: for he does not take away the cause of the evil.*<sup>94</sup>

<sup>93</sup> So far, I am not aware of any other commentator proposing this.

<sup>94</sup> From <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/geneva-study-bible/genesis/genesis-28.html> accessed July 21, 2014.

## Esau Attempts to Marry a Woman of the Right Breeding (Various Commentators)

College Press Bible Study (quoting SC): *[Esau] assumed that he had lost the blessing because he had married a Canaanitish woman, since Isaac, when blessing Jacob, had impressed upon him not to do so. He consequently thought that by not marrying another of these women, he would win back his father's favor and possibly secure the revocation of Jacob's blessing.*

The College Press Bible Study also notes: *[Esau] married into a family [that of Ishmael] which God had rejected; it showed a partial reformation.*<sup>95</sup> One could make the same point about the family from which Jacob takes his wives.

The Expositor's Bible Commentary: *Though living in the chosen family, he seems to have had not the slightest idea that there was any higher will than his father's being fulfilled in their doings. He does not yet see why he himself should not be as blessed as Jacob; he cannot grasp at all the distinction that grace makes; cannot take in the idea that God has chosen a people to Himself, and that no natural advantage or force or endowment can set a man among that people, but only God's choice. Accordingly, he does not see any difference between Ishmael's family and the chosen family; they are both sprung from Abraham, both are naturally the same, and the fact that God expressly gave His inheritance past Ishmael is nothing to Esau—an act of God has no meaning to him. He merely sees that he has not pleased his parents as well as he might by his marriage, and his easy and yielding disposition prompts him to remedy this.*

The Expositor's Bible Commentary continues: *This is a fine specimen of the hazy views men have of what will bring them to a level with God's chosen. Through their crass insensibility to the high righteousness of God, there still does penetrate a perception that if they are to please Him there are certain means to be used for doing so. There are, they see, certain occupations and ways pursued by Christians, and if by themselves adopting these they can please God, they are quite willing to humour Him in this. Like Esau, they do not see their way to drop their old connections, but if by making some little additions to their habits, or forming some new connection, they can quiet this controversy that has somehow grown up between God and His children, -though, so far as they see, it is a very unmeaning controversy, -they will very gladly enter into any little arrangement for the purpose.*

The Expositor's Bible Commentary continues: *We will not, of course, divorce the world, will not dismiss from our homes and hearts what God hates and means to destroy, will not accept God's will as our sole and absolute law, but we will so far meet God's wishes as to add to what we have adopted something that is almost as good as what God enjoins: we will make any little alterations which will not quite upset our present ways. Much commoner than hypocrisy is this dim-sighted, blundering stupidity of the really profane worldly man, who thinks he can take rank with men whose natures God has changed, by the mere imitation of some of their ways; who thinks, that as he cannot without great labour, and without too seriously endangering his hold on the world, do precisely what God requires, God may be expected to be satisfied with a something like it. Are we not aware of endeavouring at times to cloak a sin with some easy virtue, to adopt some new and apparently good habit, instead of destroying the sin we know God hates; or to offer to God, and palm upon our own conscience, a mere imitation of what God is pleased with? Do you attend Church, do you come and decorously submit to a service? That is not at all what God enjoins, though it is like it. What He means is, that you worship Him, which is a quite different employment. Do you render to God some outward respect, have you adopted some habits in deference to Him, do you even attempt some private devotion and discipline of the spirit? Still what He requires is something that goes much deeper than all that; namely, that you love Him. To conform to one or two habits of godly people is not what is required of us; but to be at heart godly.*<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:6–9.

<sup>96</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll; ©1887-1896; public domain; from e-sword, Genesis 27:41–28:22.

## Esau Attempts to Marry a Woman of the Right Breeding (Various Commentators)

Gill: *This Esau seems to have done in order to curry favour with his father, who was displeased with his other wives, and therefore takes one of his father's brother's daughters; but in this he acted an unwise part, on more accounts than one; partly as it was taking to wife the daughter of one that was cast out of his grandfather's house, and had been a persecutor of his father, and therefore not likely to be agreeable to him; and partly as being a daughter of the bondmaid's son: children born of her could not inherit the land promised to Abraham and Isaac.*<sup>97</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *[T]hough he did not marry a "wife of the daughters of Canaan," he married into a family which God had rejected. It showed a partial reformation, but no repentance, for he gave no proofs of abating his vindictive purposes against his brother, nor cherishing that pious spirit that would have gratified his father.*<sup>98</sup>

Matthew Henry: *Esau did well, but he did it when it was too late, He saw that the daughters of Canaan pleased not his father, and he might have seen that long ago if he had consulted his father's judgment as much as he did his palate. And how did he now mend the matter? Why, truly, so as to make bad worse...He married a daughter of Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman, who was cast out, and was not to inherit with Isaac and his seed, thus joining with a family which God had rejected, and seeking to strengthen his own pretensions by the aid of another pretender...[and he] did it only to please his father, not to please God.*<sup>99</sup>

Clarke presents the measured view of this passage: *Those who are apt to take every thing by the wrong handle, and who think it was utterly impossible for Esau to do any right action, have classed his taking a daughter of Ishmael among his crimes; whereas there is nothing more plain than that he did this with a sincere desire to obey and please his parents. Having heard the pious advice which Isaac gave to Jacob, he therefore went and took a wife from the family of his grandfather Abraham, as Jacob was desired to do out of the family of his maternal uncle Laban. Mahalath, whom he took to wife, stood in the same degree of relationship to Isaac his father as Rachel did to his mother Rebekah. Esau married his father's niece; Jacob married his mother's niece. It was therefore most obviously to please his parents that Esau took this additional wife.*<sup>100</sup>

L. M. Grant: *[W]hen Esau knew that Isaac had given Jacob his blessing and sent him away with a charge not to take a wife from the Canaanites, and that Jacob had obediently accepted the charge of his parents (vs.6-7), then Esau was stirred up about the fact that his two wives had not pleased his father (v.8). Yet how sad was his effort to remedy the situation! Apparently he thought his parents would be more pleased by his adding another wife, just so long as she had some relationship to Abraham! So he took the daughter of Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman (v.9). This is of course the foolish reasoning of the flesh. He knew his father had only one wife: how could he expect him to be pleased with Esau's having three! In fact, even the third one alone would not be pleasing to Isaac, who had been persecuted by his half brother Ishmael. But "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:8).*<sup>101</sup>

Wenstrom: *So Esau goes to his relatives, the home of Ishmael and takes a wife from among them. But again he has no spiritual perception and doesn't realize that Ishmael was not in the line of Christ either and that the Lord had chosen Isaac over him as Abraham's heir. In fact, Psalm 83:6 records an alliance of Edomites with the Ishmaelites against Israel!*<sup>102</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:9.

<sup>98</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 28:6–9.

<sup>99</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:6–9.

<sup>100</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:9.

<sup>101</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-28.html> accessed June 3, 2017.

<sup>102</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:8–9); accessed May 28, 2017.

It is certainly reasonable that Esau has the right motivation to please his parents; but taking to himself another wife may not be the proper choice. Good men could certainly disagree as to his motivation here; but it does tell us in this passage that Esau listens to his parents and realizes that they are displeased with his Canaanite wives. I may consider developing this thought at a later time.

Although, it is admirable that Esau looks to please his parents, there seems to be no indication that he has any interest in God or God’s thinking.<sup>103</sup>

I may need to edit the Expositor’s Bible Commentary somewhat.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Nebaioth is Ishmael’s firstborn, and Mahalath is his younger sister.

**Nebaioth**

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Fausset	Nebaioth [is an] Arab pastoral tribe, associated with Kedar (Isaiah 60:7). Nebaioth was the older of the two, Ishmael's firstborn (Genesis 25:13). Forefather of the Nabateans of Arabia Petraea mentioned at the close of the fourth century B.C. as extending from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea, Petra being their capital. In 310 B.C. they were strong enough to resist Antigonos (Diodorus Siculus, 2:732, 733). In the first century B.C. they flourished under their "illustrious" (Josephus, Ant. 13:13, section 3; 15, section 2) king Aretas, who was chosen also king of Damascus; his successors assumed the name as an official designation (2Corinthians 11:32). Coins are extant of the dynasty which ended A.D. 105, their Nabathaeon kingdom being incorporated with Rome as the province "Arabia." Josephus (Ant. 1:12, section 4) regards "Nabateans" as synonymous with "Arabs," and says that "Ishmael's twelve sons inhabit all the regions from the Euphrates to the Red Sea" (compare Genesis 25:18). Many think the rock inscriptions of Sinai to be Nabatean, and to belong to the centuries immediately before and after Christ. Forster (One Primeval Lang.) thinks them Israelite.
Fausset continued	The name "Nabatean," as applied to a people S. and E. of Palestine, is unknown to the Arab writers, yet it is on native coins, it must therefore have been lost long before any Arab wrote on geography or history. But the Arab writers use Nabat for Babylonians not Arabians. M. Quatremere from them shows that these Nabateans inhabited Mesopotamia between the Euphrates and Tigris; they were Syro Chaldaeans, and were celebrated among the Arabs for agriculture, magic, medicine, and astronomy. Four of their works remain: the book on agriculture, that on poisons, that of Tenkeloosha the Babylonian, and that of the secrets of the sun and moon. Chwolson (Remains of ancient Babyl. Literature in Arabic Translations) thinks that "the book of Nabat agriculture," commenced by Daghreeth, continued by Yanbushadth and finished by Kuthamee, according to the Arab translator, Ibn Wahsheeyeh, the Chaldaean of Kisseen, was so commenced 2500 B.C., continued 2100, and ended under the sixth king of a Canaanite dynasty mentioned in the book, i.e. 1300 B.C.

<sup>103</sup> This is not to say that Jacob is a spiritual giant by comparison. Both men, at this time, do not appear to be interested in their God.

Nebaioth	
Scripture	Text/Commentary
Fausset continued	But the mention of names resembling Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, and of Hermes, Agathodaemon, Tammuz, and the Ionians, and the anachronisms geographical, linguistic, historical, and religious, point to a modern date even as late as the first century A.D. The Greeks and Romans identified the Nabateans as Arabs, and though the Nabateans of Petra were pastoral and commercial whereas the Nabathaeans of Mesopotamia were, according to the books referred to above, agricultural and scientific, it is probable they were both in origin the same people. Scripture takes no notice of the Nabathaeans unless "the rams of Nebaioth" (Isaiah 60:7) refer to them, though so often mentioning Edom. The Nabathaeans must therefore have come into celebrity after the Babylonian captivity. Pliny (Isaiah 60:11) connects the Nabateans and Kedreans as Isaiah connects Nebaioth and Cedar.
ISBE	ne <sup>ʿ</sup> -ba <sup>ʿ</sup> -yo <sup>th</sup> , ne <sup>ʿ</sup> -bi <sup>ʿ</sup> -o <sup>th</sup> (נְבַיּוֹת, תִּיבֵינָה, nebha <sup>ʿ</sup> -yo <sup>th</sup> ; Septuagint Ναβαιώθ, Nabaio <sup>th</sup> ): Firstborn of Ishmael (Genesis 25:13; Genesis 28:9; Genesis 36:3; 1Chronicles 1:29). Isaiah 60:7 mentions the tribe Nebaioth with Kedar, with an allusion to its pastoral nature: "the rams of Nebaioth" are to serve the ideal Zion as sacrificial victims. Again associated with Kedar, the name occurs frequently in Assyrian inscriptions. The tribe must have had a conspicuous place among the northern Arabs. Josephus, followed by Jerome, regarded Nebaioth as identical with the Nabateans, the great trading community and ally of Rome, whose capital and stronghold was Petra. This view is widely accepted, but the name "Nabatean" is spelled with a t (teth), and the interchange of t (teth) and t (taw), although not unparalleled, is unusual. If the name is Arabic, it is probably a feminine plural, and in that case could have no connection with the Nabateans.
Smith	Nebajoth Neba'joth. (heights). The "first-born of Ishmael," Genesis 25:13; 1Chronicles 1:29, (B.C. about 1850), and father of a pastoral tribe named after him, the "rams Of Nebaioth" being mentioned by the prophet, Isaiah, Isaiah 60:7, with the flocks of Kedar.
Smith continued	From the days of Jerome, this people had been identified with the Nabathaeans of Greek and Roman history, and Petra was their capital. (They first settled in the country southeast of Palestine, and wandered gradually in search of pasturage till they came to Kedar, of which Isaiah speaks. Probably, the Nebaioth of Arabia Petrea were, as M. Quatremere argues, the same people as the Nebat of Chaldea. -- McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia).

These obviously need to be edited.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**Genesis 28:8–9** **And when Esau saw** that the daughters of Canaan did not please Isaac his father; then Esau went to Ishmael, and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to the wives which he had for his wife.

V. 8 begins exactly as v. 6 began: *and so Esau sees that...* In v. 8, Esau takes what he knows about his parents' feelings about his wives (or statements which they have made) and he add this to Isaac being blessed with the blessing Esau believed was his and he adds to this that Jacob is being sent east to find a wife from their family, Esau draws the conclusion that *the daughters of Canaan did not please Isaac*.

Esau got moderately introspective and he realized that his parents strongly disapproved of his wives, he added another wife, a daughter of Ishmael. The blessing which Isaac gave to Jacob in the previous chapter—that was all based upon Jacob's deception so Esau felt only anger because of that. However, this time the blessing given by Isaac was significant and not based upon deception. This time the great blessing of Abraham is passed along to Jacob, and all of this is related to the fact that Isaac and Rebekah do not want Jacob to marry a Hittite woman. Esau decides to fix this problem with his parents by marrying someone from their tribe.

Now, recall that there is no animosity between half-brothers Isaac and Ishmael at this point in time. They consider one another to be family, as they are. Their mothers had differences because Abraham was the father of these two boys; and when Isaac and Ishmael were young, there was some animosity on the part of Ishmael. However, at this point in time, there are no ill feelings between the half-brothers. There was no reason for any anger to exist between them. They had gotten together for Abraham's funeral and it appears that things were patched up between them (as their mothers would have been dead by this time).

So Esau marries Mahalath, whose name is actually Machälath (מַחֲלַת) [pronounced *mahkh-al-AHTH*], which means *stringed instrument* (quite a beautiful name). Strong's #4258 BDB #563.

Mahalath is said to be the sister of Nebaioth, who is the oldest of Ishmael's sons (Genesis 25:13). Nebaioth (also spelled *Nebajoth*) is likely the head of a famous people mentioned in Isaiah 60:7. ISBE: *Josephus, followed by Jerome, regarded Nebaioth as identical with the Nabateans, the great trading community and ally of Rome, whose capital and stronghold was Petra.*<sup>104</sup> ISBE qualifies this, suggesting that there are reasons to discount this widely held theory. Assuming this connection, Fausset goes into much greater detail about this people at [Bible-history.com](http://Bible-history.com).

You may ask, *why didn't Esau divorce his Canaanite wives?* Divorce was a very rare thing in those days; and a divorce would have put his wives out in the cold without any means of support. So, whereas, some men did marry a second or third time in life; they did not cast their previous wives aside.

Esau has felt that Jacob has swindled him out of everything; but, at this point, Jacob is gone. Jacob gets this final blessing from Isaac, and it is given without any deception being involved. Furthermore, Jacob left with very little. We could certainly argue that point—I believe that he left with basic supplies and his mother's personal servant; others believe that he literally had nothing but his staff. In either case, Esau recognizes that Isaac has not given all of his vast wealth to Jacob. Esau also realizes that his wives have not made life pleasant for his parents.

Credit Rebekah for making all of this very believable. That is, she needed to make it seem as if the primary reason for sending Jacob east was to find a wife. Not only did she convince Isaac, her husband of this; but she convinced Esau as well (she was actually sending Jacob east so that Esau would not kill Jacob). Esau considers all that happens, believes it, and then decides that his best move at this time is to marry a woman acceptable to his parents. So, he completely bought into this.

Regardless, the line of promise goes through Jacob. Therefore, we will follow Jacob closely and Esau less so.

God's special promises to Abraham do not go through Ishmael or through Esau. This does not make either of these men evil. They likely believed in the Revealed God; but the covenant blessings of God to Abraham will not go to them. They will be blessed, and their family lines will be followed out briefly (we have seen some **cluster genealogies** of Ishmael; we will see cluster genealogies of Esau); but we will not view a **linear genealogy** of either man. Their lines are not going anywhere. Their lines will produce the Arab peoples, who, in general, do not believe in the Revealed God; and who do not today believe in Jesus Christ (with brave and notable exceptions).

<sup>104</sup> *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Nebaioth.

The illustration is, God's promises go to those who have believed in Him; and His greater blessing goes to those who follow His will (which can only be done if you know God's will and thinking).

Genesis 28:6–9 Esau observed that Isaac first blessed Jacob and then sent him off to Paddan-aram to take from there a wife as a part of the blessing. Isaac had charged Jacob, "Do not take a wife from the Canaanites." Jacob obeyed his father and mother and went to Paddan-aram. Esau also observed that Isaac saw the women of Canaan as evil, so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, Ishmael's daughter, as an additional wife (Ishmael is the son of Abraham and Mahalath is the sister of Nebaioth).

Isn't this typical of the unregenerate man? He adheres to form but not to substance. The key to marriage here is not to marry a relative, per se, but to marry a believer in Jesus Christ. When Cain offered a sacrifice, he offered the works of his hands, the fruit and vegetables that he gardened. The idea of giving something to God was what he thought was important. However, he, being spiritually immature, missed out on the spiritual aspect of sacrifice. The sacrificed animal represented Christ's work on the cross. His vegetables represented the work of man's hands; they represented man's religion, making God into man's own image.

With Esau, we have a parallel thought. Don't marry a Canaanite woman, marry a relative instead. So, superficially, he got it right. However, marrying a believer is what God had in mind. There are Gentiles in the line of Christ; they are saved Gentiles. It would be a reasonable hypothesis that the entire line of Jesus Christ is an unbroken line of believers (those who preceded Mary). However, in Joseph's<sup>105</sup> line, we have a break in the line with Coniah, the unbelieving king. This would be a doctrine worth pursuing. See the **Coniah Curse and the Sin Nature** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Esau does not realize that going to the line of Ishmael is not that much better than going to obtain another Gentile wife. Choosing a wife who believed in and revered Yahweh would have been the proper move for him to have taken. We do not know if these women fit the bill.

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Genesis 28:6–9 Esau observed that Isaac first blessed Jacob and then sent him off to Paddan-aram to take from there a wife as a part of the blessing. Isaac had charged Jacob, "Do not take a wife from the Canaanites." Jacob obeyed his father and mother and went to Paddan-aram. Esau also observed that Isaac saw the women of Canaan as evil, so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, Ishmael's daughter, as an additional wife (Ishmael is the son of Abraham and Mahalath is the sister of Nebaioth).

### Various Commentators on Esau's Thinking

Keil and Delitzsch: *When Esau heard of this blessing and the sending away of Jacob, and saw therein the displeasure of his parents at his Hittite wives, he went to Ishmael – i.e., to the family of Ishmael, for Ishmael himself had been dead fourteen years – and took as a third wife Mahalath, a daughter of Ishmael (called Bashemath in Genesis 36:3, a descendant of Abraham therefore), a step by which he might no doubt ensure the approval of his parents, but in which he failed to consider that Ishmael had been separated from the house of Abraham and family of promise by the appointment of God; so that it only furnished another proof that he had no thought of the religious interests of the chosen family, and was unfit to be the recipient of divine revelation.*<sup>106</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Joseph, the legal father of Jesus; not Joseph, the son of Jacob.

<sup>106</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 28:6–9.

## Various Commentators on Esau's Thinking

Expositor's Bible Commentary: *[Esau's] had an idea that Jacob's obedience in going to seek a wife of another stock than he had connected himself with would be pleasing to his parents; and perhaps he had an idea that it would be possible to steal a march upon Jacob in his absence, and by a more speedily affected obedience to his parents' desire, win their preference, and perhaps move Isaac to alter his will and reverse the blessing. Though living in the chosen family, he seems to have had not the slightest idea that there was any higher will than his father's being fulfilled in their doings. He does not yet see why he himself should not be as blessed as Jacob; he cannot grasp at all the distinction that grace makes; cannot take in the idea that God has chosen a people to Himself, and that no natural advantage or force or endowment can set a man among that people, but only God's choice. Accordingly, he does not see any difference between Ishmael's family and the chosen family; they are both sprung from Abraham, both are naturally the same, and the fact that God expressly gave His inheritance past Ishmael is nothing to Esau—an act of God has no meaning to him. He merely sees that he has not pleased his parents as well as he might by his marriage, and his easy and yielding disposition prompts him to remedy this.*

The Expositor's Bible Commentary continues: *[Esau's thinking here is an example] of the hazy views men have of what will bring them to a level with God's chosen. Through their crass insensibility to the high righteousness of God, there still does penetrate a perception that if they are to please Him there are certain means to be used for doing so. There are, they see, certain occupations and ways pursued by Christians, and if by themselves adopting these they can please God, they are quite willing to humour Him in this. Like Esau, they do not see their way to drop their old connections, but if by making some little additions to their habits, or forming some new connection, they can quiet this controversy that has somehow grown up between God and His children.*<sup>107</sup>

TPCG: *Esau's marriage was another attempt to regain the blessing, by trying to please his parents in Jacob's absence. But his choice showed he had no sense of spiritual realities. He does not do exactly what God requires but something like it. But at heart he was unchanged.*<sup>108</sup>

The College Press Bible Study: *Esau belongs to the great army of substitutes, like Cain, i.e., those who substitute their own way of doing things for God's way of doing things.*<sup>109</sup>

Matthew Poole: *[Esau] thought by this means to ingratiate himself with his father, and so to get another and a better blessing; but he takes no care to reconcile himself to God...he mends one fault by committing another, and taking a third wife when he had one too many before.*<sup>110</sup>

Matthew Henry: *Esau thought, by pleasing his parents in one thing, to atone for other wrong doings. Carnal hearts are apt to think themselves as good as they should be, because in some one matter they are not so bad as they have been.*<sup>111</sup>

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Esau attempts to repair the error into which he had fallen by marrying into a heathen family, to the great grief of his parents. He knew that his father had charged Jacob to avoid such a wicked course (Genesis 28:1), and that upon this point he would be most accessible. Therefore he resolves to marry into his father's family. He considered that this would pass with his father as a noble act of filial devotion. But all this is only the wordly policy of the hypocrite. He feigns repentance in order to secure some temporal good or comfort for himself. He is, therefore, the type of hypocrisy and worldliness in religion. He was certainly, all this time, a hypocrite, for he nursed hatred in his heart against his brother, and only waited opportunity to carry out his evil purpose. Such are the characteristics of the religion of hypocrites of all times.*<sup>112</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Expositor's Bible Commentary; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll; ©1887-1896; public domain; from e-sword, Genesis 27:41–28:22.

<sup>108</sup> The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:6–9.

<sup>109</sup> The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:6–9.

<sup>110</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:9.

<sup>111</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:6–9.

<sup>112</sup> The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:6–9.

J. Vernon McGee on a related thought: *Intermarriage always leads to godlessness. I say this as a caution. I recognize that we are living in a day when young people are not very apt to take advice from an old preacher. They wonder what he knows about it all. Frankly, if you want to know the truth, I know a whole lot about this particular matter. I've done years of counseling and have had many, many couples come to me and have been able to watch them through the years. The story is pretty much the same. A young lady or a young man will say they have met the right person, the one they wish to marry. That person is not a Christian. However, they want to marry that person and win him or her for the Lord. May I say this, young lady, if you cannot win him for the Lord before you get married, you will not win him after you are married. May I say this, young man, if you cannot win her for the Lord before you get married, you will not win her after you are married. God forbids the godly to marry the godless. It always entails sorrow. I have seen literally hundreds of cases, and I have never yet seen a case where it has worked. Never yet! You can't beat God. God has put it down indelibly all the way through the Word that the godly are not to marry the godless. "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness?" ( 2Cor. 6:14 ). The New Testament strictly tells Christians that they are not to be unequally yoked. You don't get unequally yoked by sitting on a platform with an unbeliever, as some critics have accused me of doing! You do it by intermarrying. That's the way you join up with them. And God strictly forbids it.*<sup>113</sup>

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

A lot is made out of Esau's motivations and how many different ways that he was wrong about what he did; and some of the verbiage on this I found to be absurd (The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary suggested that he did not, in so many words, *count the cost*). At this point in time, Esau is probably a nicer person than Jacob and we do not know if either man has any sort of a real spiritual life. The Bible tends to dwell upon the failures of each man. My point is, you cannot point to Esau and say, "The line of promise did not go through him because he was a bad person (for whatever series of reasons you want to name) but it did go through Jacob because he was a good person (listing whatever set of reasons you want to list). There is evidence that, near the end of his life, Jacob may have gotten more squared away about life (but this comes from reading between the lines). There is evidence that Esau chose to leave the Land of Promise during the final decades of his life, but for unspecified reasons. However, even these things are not enough to explain why God chose Jacob but not Esau. The gospel of the Revealed God would continue through the line of Jacob; it would not continue in the line of Esau. Whether we can place this on the shoulders of Jacob and/or Esau, the Bible does not really say. God later tells us, "Jacob I loved but Esau I hated." (Mal. 1:2 Romans 9:13). This does not mean that Jacob was a little (or a lot) more righteous than Esau was. It means that the line of promise, which led to the incarnation of God's Son went through Jacob and not through Esau. Therefore, God loved Jacob, but not Esau. The key to this genealogy being the line of blessing is, it would take us to the Messiah.

Let me try to portray this in a different way. Stalin had parents and I know nothing about his parents. Calvin Coolidge had parents, and I know a little bit about his parents. We might say, blessed are the parents of Calvin Coolidge, as he became one of the greatest presidents of the United States. We might similarly say, cursed are the parents of Stalin, because the man was a mass murderer. Now, it may turn out that the parents of Stalin are fairly nice people, compared to the parents of Coolidge. That does not make any difference—we look at what they produced—one family produced a monster and the other produced a fine president. So, blessed are the parents of Calvin Coolidge and cursed are the parents of Joseph Stalin. If you understand this little illustration, then you understand why God loved Jacob and hated Esau. From Jacob's line would come the Jewish people—God's people—and God's Son, Jesus Christ; and from Esau's line would come various groups of Arabs.

For these reasons, lists of why Esau is a terrible person does not really explain why God hated him. On the other hand, could you use pairs of men to illustrate the proper exploitation of the spiritual life as compared to the abuse of one's spiritual benefits? Of course. However, based upon my reading of Jacob and Esau, I would say that these are two men who do not make good illustrations.

<sup>113</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) (Genesis 28); accessed June 4, 2017 (slightly edited).

There are great disagreements about the wives of Esau and how many he had. This will be discussed in more detail in **Genesis 36** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Genesis 28:6–9 Esau observed that Isaac first blessed Jacob and then sent him off to Paddan-arm to take from there a wife as a part of the blessing. Isaac had charged Jacob, “Do not take a wife from the Canaanites.” Jacob obeyed his father and mother and went to Paddan-aram. Esau also observed that Isaac saw the women of Canaan as evil, so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, Ishmael’s daughter, as an additional wife (Ishmael is the son of Abraham and Mahalath is the sister of Nebaioth). (Kukis paraphrase)

### Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 28:6–9

1. Esau was either present during the talk which Isaac had with Jacob, or had somehow been made aware of what was said.
2. From the entire conversation, Esau only figured out that Isaac was not impressed with the Canaanite women.
3. He was unable to sway Isaac at all before with his tears, but it is evident from this passage that he did not give up seeking to sway his father's opinion and somehow get back into his good graces.
4. Esau not only was aware of what was said, he observed the fact that Jacob was obedient to his father and his mother.
5. From this he embarks on a plan which he hopes will regain the favor he has lost.
6. Being an unbeliever he merely acts from what he can perceive with his senses and figure out with his human intelligence.
7. He reads no religious or spiritual significance into the fact that the parents do not wish their son to marry a Canaanite.
8. The issue in marriage is always spiritual, but Esau has no capacity to figure anything spiritual out.
9. He only functions under the NAP system, and cannot GAP anything.
10. Jacob, on the other hand, understands and acclimates to his parental instruction regarding
11. He grasps the principle that RM/RW is a spiritual issue.
12. Esau as we know, was already a bigamist, and his new human viewpoint solution will move into polygamy.
13. He goes to the Ishmaelites, since Ishmael had died some 14 years earlier.
14. He figures that a physical descendant from Abraham would satisfy and please his parents.
15. There is little doubt that Esau wanted to please his parents, which is commendable.
16. There is also no doubt that he does not understand anything of a spiritual nature and his further efforts to please them only put him deeper into trouble.
17. This is an excellent illustration of the unbeliever and his attempt to please God through his works.
18. He does not truly understand God and what He wants, so the unbeliever can never effectively gain God's
19. All his works are predicated upon his natural ability to reason, and not upon Divine revelation.
20. His works, his attempts to please God, just dig him deeper into the hole, adding further sins to his sin
21. The unbeliever has to come to the end of himself and give up his attempts to please God, since no man can please God through human effort. Rom. 3:20; Gal 2:16
22. If a person understood God, they would know that He is perfect and will not lower his standards to accommodate anyone.
23. Since they cannot achieve perfection, they would then be forced to search for another way to please God.
24. That Way is The Way. Jn. 14:6 25. This section is a perfect type:
  - 1) Isaac represents God.
  - 2) Esau is a type of unbeliever seeking to please God.
  - 3) His works only make his situation worse.
  - 4) Jacob represents the obedient believer, who adheres to the Divine revelation.

From [Makarios Bible Church](#); will open up in Word or WP; accessed June 1, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 28:6–9 Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take to himself a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he charged him, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Paddan-aram So Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father Isaac and Esau went to Ishmael, and married, besides the wives that he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth. (Ballinger's translation)

### Jack M. Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 28:6–9

1. In these verses we have a presentation of Esau's reaction to the circumstances of Jacob's departure.
2. He naturally learned of Isaac's blessing and sending his brother off to Paddan-Aram.
3. He learned that the reason for the leaving was because the parents were adamantly opposed to the women of Canaan as a source for a wife for Jacob.
4. Esau didn't have a clue as to the overriding reason for Jacob's leaving.
5. Esau concluded that to marry a close relative was the path to parental goodwill.
6. Only when he realized why Isaac sent Jacob away that he learned of his parents dissatisfaction with his wives.
7. So to garner the parents goodwill Esau decides to take a wife from the family's relatives and approaches Ishmael for a potential wife (v.9).
8. Esau appears not to be concerned about his mother's feelings but does want Isaac's approval (cf. v. 8).
9. So he marries Ishmael's granddaughter, daughter of Ishmael's firstborn son Nebaioth, one Mahalath.
10. Esau attempts to please his father but not God.
11. His attempt to garner the support he once enjoyed with his father went no doubt largely unnoticed by Isaac.
12. Now he has three wives, two Canaanite and one Ishmaelite wife.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen28.htm> accessed May 27, 2017.

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### Jacob's Vision of the Angels

The Cambridge Bible: *The present passage is in some respects one of the most suggestive and impressive in religious literature. The distinctive features of the narrative have been an inspiration in the poetry and prose of religious literature.*<sup>114</sup>

I was expecting to find a **chiasm** with v. 12 in the middle; but had no luck.

### A Chiasm of Genesis 28:10–22 (from Chiasmus Exchange)

- A Gen 28:10–11a **Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set.**

<sup>114</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:10.

## A Chiasmus of Genesis 28:10–22 (from Chiasmus Exchange)

- B Gen 28:11b–12 **Taking one of the stones** of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to **sleep**. And 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!
- C Gen 28:13 And **behold**, 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.
- D Gen 28:14 Your 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.
- C' Gen 28:15 **Behold**, 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."
- B' Gen 28:16–18a Then Jacob awoke from his **sleep** and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." And 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." So early in the morning Jacob took the **stone that he had put under his head**...
- A'2A Gen 28:18b–19 ... and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called the name of **that place** Bethel [= house of God], but the name of the city was Luz at the first.
- 2B Gen 28:20–21 Then 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 clothes to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God,..."
- 2A' Gen 28:22 ...and 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."

Wenstrom: *The parallel structure in Hebrew text between the two sections, Genesis 28:10-13 and 16-19, shows that the worship was a response to the vision. For example, the Hebrew noun matstsevah, "pillar" forms a word play with the Hebrew mutstsav, "set on," which appears in Genesis 28:12 and nitstsav, "stood," which appears in Genesis 28:13. Mutstsav is the hophal participle form of the verb natsav and nitstsav is the niphil participle form of the same verb.*<sup>115</sup>

The format came from [Chiasmus Exchange](#) (accessed May 20, 2017); but the text is from the ESV; capitalized.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Throughout, we have carefully followed Abraham, then Isaac, and now the Bible will focus on Jacob. It is from Jacob that all the sons of Israel (his God-given name) will be born; and all Hebrew males are genetically related to Jacob (apart from those who converted over to become Jews). The line of Jacob will remain isolated genetically, which is an underlying theme. At this point, quite obviously, there is Jacob and no one else. He is not married and he has no children.

**And so goes forth Jacob from Beer-sheba and so he goes Charan-ward. And so he reaches the place and so he stays there for had gone in the sun. And so he takes from stones of the place and so he places it [near] his head. And so he lays down in the place the that.**

Genesis  
28:10–11

**Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and he advanced toward Charan. He reached a [particular] place and stayed there, because the sun had gone down. He took from the stones of the place and placed [it near] his head. Then he laid down [to sleep] in that place.**

**Jacob left Beer-sheba, heading toward Charan. He came to a particular place and decided to stop there because the sun had gone down. He took a few stones and used them as a pillow, laying down to sleep there.**

<sup>115</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:15); accessed June 1, 2017.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so goes forth Jacob from Beer-sheba and so he goes Charan-ward. And so he reaches the place and so he stays there for had gone in the sun. And so he takes from stones of the place and so he places it [near] his head. And so he lays down in the place the that.
Targum (trans. By Cook)	<u>Five miracles were wrought for our father Jakob at the time that he went forth from Beersheba. The first sign: the hours of the day were shortened, and the sun went down before his time, forasmuch as the Word had desired to speak with him. The second sign: the four stones which Jakob had set for his pillow he found in the morning, had become one stone. Sign the third: the Stone which, when all the flocks were assembled, they rolled from the mouth of the well, he rolled away with one of his arms. The fourth sign: the well overflowed, and the water rose to the edge of it, and continued to overflow all the days that he was in Haran. The fifth sign: the country was shortened before him, so that in one day he went forth and came to Haran.</u> And he <u>prayed</u> in the place of the house of the sanctuary, and lodged there, because the sun had gone down. And he took four stones of the <u>holy</u> place, and set his pillow, and slept in that place.
Jerusalem targum	<u>Five signs were wrought for our father Jakob at the time he went forth from Beersheba to go unto Haran. The first sign: the hours of the day were shortened for him, and the sun was hidden from him before its time, because His Word had desired to speak with him. The second sign: after our father Jakob had lifted up his feet from Beersheba, the country was shortened before him, and he found himself sitting in Haran. The third sign: the stones which Jakob our father had taken in the evening, and set as the resting-place of his head, when he had risen in the morning be found had all become one stone; and that is the stone which he set up in the first covenant, pouring oil upon the top of it. The fourth sign : when all the shepherds had gathered together at the stone to roll it from the mouth of the well, and could not, then came our father Jakob and lifted it with one hand, and watered the flock, of Laban his mother's brother. The fifth sign: after our father Jakob had lifted the stone from the mouth of the well, the well overflowed, and was overflowing twenty years; all the days that our father Jakob dwelt in Haran. These five signs were wrought for our father Jakob in the time when he departed from Beersheba to go to Charan.</u>
Latin Vulgate	But Jacob being departed from Bersabee, went on to Haran. And when he was come to a certain place, and would rest in it after sunset, he took of the stones that lay there, and putting under his head, slept in the same place.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob went out from Beersheba, on his way to Haran. And he arrived at a certain place, and spent the night there, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of the place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob went forth from the Well of the Oath, and departed into Haran. So he came to a certain place and slept there, for the sun had gone down; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it at his head, and lay down to sleep in that place, and dreamed. A portion of v. 12 is included for context.
Significant differences:	There is a lot of additional text in the targums (which appear to be a combination of translation and commentary). The ancient translations are the same as the Hebrew text.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	So Jacob went out from Beer-sheba to go to Haran. And coming to a certain place, he made it his resting-place for the night, for the sun had gone down; and he took one of the stones which were there, and putting it under his head he went to sleep in that place.
Easy English	Jacob left Beersheba and he went towards Haran. When the sun set, he stopped at a certain place. He stayed there for the night. Jacob took a stone and he put it under his head. Then he lay down there to sleep.
Easy-to-Read Version	Jacob left Beersheba and went to Haran. While Jacob was traveling, the sun set. So Jacob went to a place to stay the night. Jacob found a rock at that place and laid his head on it to sleep.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Jacob left Beersheba and started toward Haran. At sunset he came to a holy place and camped there. He lay down to sleep, resting his head on a stone.
<i>The Message</i>	Jacob left Beersheba and went to Haran. He came to a certain place and camped for the night since the sun had set. He took one of the stones there, set it under his head and lay down to sleep.
Names of God Bible	<b>Jacob's First Encounter with God</b> Jacob left Beersheba and traveled toward Haran. When he came to a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had gone down. He took one of the stones from that place, put it under his head, and lay down there.
NIRV	<b>Jacob Has a Dream at Bethel</b> Jacob left Beersheba and started out for Haran. He reached a certain place and stopped for the night. The sun had already set. He took one of the stones there and placed it under his head. Then he lay down to sleep.
New Simplified Bible	Jacob left Beer-sheba and traveled toward Haran. As soon as the sun went down he stopped for the night. He took one of the stones from that place, put it under his head, and lay down there.

#### **Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

Common English Bible	<b>Jacob's dream at Bethel</b> Jacob left Beer-sheba and set out for Haran. He reached a certain place and spent the night there. When the sun had set, he took one of the stones at that place and put it near his head. Then he lay down there.
Contemporary English V.	Jacob left the town of Beersheba and started out for Haran. At sunset he stopped for the night and went to sleep, resting his head on a large rock.
New Berkeley Version	Jacob started out from Beer-sheba and as he traveled toward Haran he reached a certain place where he spent the night because the sun had set [His third or fourth night (see Ch. 22:4, when Abraham had started from the same place)]. He took one of the stones there, adjusted it for his pillow and lay down in that place.
New Life Version	Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed the night there, because the sun had gone down. He took one of the stones there and put it under his head for a pillow.
New Living Translation	<b>Jacob's Dream at Bethel</b> Meanwhile, Jacob left Beersheba and traveled toward Haran. At sundown he arrived at a good place to set up camp and stopped there for the night. Jacob found a stone to rest his head against and lay down to sleep.

#### **Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

American English Bible	So Jacob left the Well of the Oath and traveled on to Haran. And when he reached a certain place, he decided to sleep there, since the sun had gone down. So he chose a stone and placed it under his head, then he went to sleep in that place and started to dream. A portion of v. 12 is included for context.
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Beck's American Translation *Jacob Dreams*

Jacob left Beer-sheba and started out for Haran. When he came to a certain place, he stopped there for the night because the sun had gone down. He took one of the stones of the place and laid it under his head and lay down there. International Standard V **God Visits Jacob in a Dream**

Meanwhile, Jacob had left [Lit. went out from] Beer-sheba and was on his way to Haran. He reached a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun was setting. He found a stone there, used it for a pillow [Lit. for his head.], and slept there for the night, when he had a dream! A portion of v. 12 is included for context. Meanwhile Jacob had left Bersabee, and was on his way to Haran. There was a place he reached as nightfall overtook him, so that he must lie down and rest; so he took one of the stones that lay around him, to make a pillow of it, and went to sleep.

## New Advent (Knox) Bible

## Translation for Translators

**God made a promise to Jacob in a dream**

Meanwhile, Jacob left Beersheba and started walking along the road to Haran. When he arrived at a certain place, he stopped there, because the sun had gone down. He took one of the stones there and put it under his head to use as a pillow. Then he lay down and slept there.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

## Ancient Roots Translinear

Jacob proceeded from Beersheba and went to Harran. Welcomed in a place, he lodged there, for the sun came down. He took stones from the place, and set them for his pillows, and lay in that place.

## Conservapedia Translation

Jacob, meanwhile, went out from Beer-sheba, and toward Haran He came to a certain place, and lodged there, because the sun had set. He took some of the stones of that place, and placed them to serve as pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

## Ferar-Fenton Bible

**Jacob's History in Padan Aram**

Jacob, however, set out from the Well of the Oath; and travelled to Kharan. And he arrived at a place, and rested there, for it was sunset; so he took one of the stones of the place and put it for his pillow, and laid down in the spot-...

## H. C. Leupold

And Jacob went forth from Beersheba and came to Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place and spent the night there, for the sun had gone down, and he took one of the stones of the place and laid it as his head place and he lay down in that place.

## NIV, ©2011

**Jacob's Dream at Bethel**

Jacob left Beersheba [S Ge 21:14] and set out for Harran [S Ge 11:31]. When he reached a certain place [S Ge 12:8], he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head [ver 18] and lay down to sleep.

## Urim-Thummim Version

Meanwhile Jacob proceeded from Beersheba, traveling toward Haran and he reached a particular region and stayed there all night because it was sunset and he took the stones of that region and laid one as a headrest, then lodged there to sleep.

## Wikipedia Bible Project

And Jacob left Beersheba walking towards Charan (Haran). And he crossed a spot, where he lodged, until sunrise, and he took from the stones there to place them under his head; and he lay in that spot.

**Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**Christian Community Bible **Jacob's dream**

Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place the sun had set and he spent the night there. He took one of the stones that were there and using it as a pillow, he lay down to sleep.

Jacob goes to the land of his ancestors in search of work and a wife. On the road, he has a vision in which God renews his Covenant with him.

Unlike Abraham, whom God called when he was already old and who knew the value of life, Jacob is a young man who becomes aware of his vocation gradually. First, he buys the rights of the first-born from Esau whom he has judged and considered irresponsible; but he still does not know the price of God's blessing to his fathers. Then, his mother has to give him courage so that he can take the risk of stealing the blessing. He lets her persuade him and only afterwards does he understand the consequences of his action: he has to escape in order to save his life.

But just when Jacob has to face the hazardous life of a foreigner and a fugitive, he meets God and for the first time he becomes conscious of his own responsibility: he is the bearer of God's promises to the world. People become responsible when they realize that they are accountable to others and must answer for their actions. Jacob understands that he will be accountable to the God who has chosen him.

Yahweh was in this place! Jacob, alone and defenseless, goes to sleep near a city inhabited by strangers. But God renews with him the promises made to his fathers and assures him of his protection: some day this land will be his.

Heritage Bible

And Jacob went out from Beer Sheba, and walked toward Haran. And he impinged upon a place, and stayed there because the sun had gone down; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them at his head, and lay down in that place to sleep.

New American Bible (2002)

Jacob departed from Beer-sheba and proceeded toward Haran. When he came upon a certain shrine [Shrine: literally "place," often used specifically of a sacred site. Here the place was Bethel (⇒ Genesis 28:19), a sacred site as early as the time of Abraham (⇒ Genesis 12:8).], as the sun had already set, he stopped there for the night. Taking one of the stones at the shrine, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep at that spot.

New American Bible (2011)

*Jacob's Dream at Bethel.\**

Jacob departed from Beer-sheba and proceeded toward Haran. When he came upon a certain place [the Hebrew word is often used specifically of a sacred site. The ambiguous word "place" is used here, for the text emphasizes that Jacob has no idea the place he has come upon is sacred; only when he wakes up does he realize it is sacred. The place was Bethel (v. 19), a sacred site as early as the time of Abraham (12:8).], he stopped there for the night, since the sun had already set. Taking one of the stones at the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. [28:10-22] As Jacob is leaving the land on his way to an uncertain future in Paddan-aram, God appears to him at a sacred place that Jacob had visited only to take a night's rest. Jacob's unawareness of the holiness of the place underscores the graciousness of the gift. On his return to Canaan, he will again encounter a divine visitor in the form of the mysterious attacker (32:23-33) and, after his return and reconciliation with Esau, he will again go to Bethel (35:1-15).

New English Bible

**JACOB: Bethel - Jacob's dream.**

Jacob set out from Beersheba and went on his way towards Harran. He came to a certain place and stopped there for the night, because the sun had set; and, taking one of the stones there, he made it a pillow for his head and lay down to sleep.

New Jerusalem Bible

Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he had reached a certain place, he stopped there for the night, since the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of that place, he made it his pillow and lay down where he was.

New RSV

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the 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.

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible

Ya'akov went out from Be'er-Sheva and traveled toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed the night there, because the sun had set. He took a stone from the place, put it under his head and lay down there to sleep.

The Complete Tanach

And Jacob left Beer sheba, and he went to Haran.

**And Jacob left:** Because, it was due to the fact that the daughters of Canaan were displeasing in the eyes of his father Isaac, that Esau went to Ishmael, Scripture interrupted the account dealing with Jacob and it is written (above verse 6): "When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed [Jacob], etc." And as soon as Scripture finished [the account of Esau's marriage], it returned to the previous topic.

**And Jacob left:** Scripture had only to write: "And Jacob went to Haran." Why did it mention his departure? But this tells [us] that the departure of a righteous man from a place makes an impression, for while the righteous man is in the city, he is its beauty, he is its splendor, he is its majesty. When he departs from there, its beauty has departed, its splendor has departed, its majesty has departed. And likewise (Ruth 1:7): "And she went forth from the place," stated in reference to Naomi and Ruth. - [From Gen. Rabbah 68:6]

**and he went to Haran:** He left in order to go to Haran. — [From Gen. Rabbah 68:8,]

And he arrived at the place and lodged there because the sun had set, and he took some of the stones of the place and placed [them] at his head, and he lay down in that place.

**And he arrived at the place:** Scripture does not mention which place, but [it means] the place mentioned elsewhere, which is Mount Moriah, concerning which it is said (Genesis 22:4): "And he saw the place from afar." [From Pes. 88a]

**And he arrived:** Heb. עָגַפּוּ, as in (Josh. 16:7): "and it reached (עָגַפּוּ) Jericho" ; (ibid. 19: 11): "and it reached (עָגַפּוּ) Dabbesheth." Our Rabbis (Gen. Rabbah 68:9, Ber. 26b) interpreted it [the word עָגַפּוּ] as an expression of prayer, as in (Jer. 7:16): "And do not entreat (עָגַפּוּ) me," and this teaches us that he [Jacob] instituted the evening prayer. [Scripture] did not write לְלַפְתּוֹ, [the usual expression for prayer], to teach that the earth sprang toward him [i.e. the mountain moved toward him], as is explained in the chapter entitled הַשָּׁנָה דָּיָג (Chullin 91b).

**because the sun had set:** Heb. שָׁמְשָׁה אֲבַ יָכ [Scripture] should have written [in reverse order]: "And the sun set (אֲבַ יָכ), and he stayed there overnight." [The expression] שָׁמְשָׁה אֲבַ יָכ implies that the sun set suddenly for him, not at its usual time, so that he would have to stay there overnight. [From Gen. Rabbah 68:10, Chullin 91b]

**and placed [them] at his head:** He arranged them in the form of a drainpipe around his head because he feared the wild beasts. They [the stones] started quarreling with one another. One said, "Let the righteous man lay his head on me," and another one said, "Let him lay [his head] on me." Immediately, the Holy One, blessed be He, made them into one stone. This is why it is stated (verse 18): "and he took the stone [in the singular] that he had placed at his head." [From Chullin 91b]

**and he lay down in that place:** [The word אוהה] is a restrictive expression, meaning that [only] in that place did he lie down, but during the fourteen years that he served in the house of Eber, he did not lie down at night, because he was engaged in Torah study. [From Gen. Rabbah 68:11]

exeGesese companion Bible

**THE DREAM OF YAAQOV**

And Yaaqov goes out from Beer Sheba  
and goes toward Haran:  
and he encounters a certain place  
and stays there overnight, because the sun had set;  
and he takes stones of that place  
and sets them for his headpieces;  
and lays down in that place:...

Hebrew Names Version

Ya`akov went out from Be'er-Sheva, and went toward Charan. He came to a certain place, and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. He took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep.

Kaplan Translation

*Jacob's Journey, Marriage and Children*

Jacob left Beer-sheba [Where Isaac lived, Genesis 26:33. However, some say that Isaac then lived in Hebron (see Genesis 35:27), and that Jacob had gone to Beer-sheba to pray (Ramban on Genesis 28:17). Others maintain that Isaac moved to Hebron later (Yov'loth 29:19).] and headed toward Charan [See Genesis 11:31. Some say that this is Charan, where Abraham's brother Nachor (Genesis 11:27,31) now lived (Ramban on 11:28; see note on Genesis 22:20). We thus find that Rebecca's brother Laban lived in Charan (Genesis 27:43, 28:10, 29:4). This is approximately 450 miles north of Hebron. However, there is a city Nahur mentioned in ancient Mari documents, and this may have been a suburb of Charan.]. He came to a familiar place and spent the night there because the sun had already set. Taking some stones, he placed them at his head and lay down to sleep there.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

[VAYETZE]

And Ya'akov went out from Beer-Sheva, and went toward Charan. And he reached a certain place, and tarried there, because the shemesh was set; and he took of the avanim of that place, and put them for his pillow, and lay down in that place to sleep.

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:***The Amplified Bible*

And Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place and stayed there overnight, because the sun was set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down there to sleep.

The Expanded Bible

**Jacob's Dream at Bethel**

Jacob left Beersheba [21:14] and set out for Haran [11:31]. 11 When he came to a place, he spent the night there because the sun had set. He found a stone and laid his head on it to go to sleep [and lay down in that place].

Kretzmann's Commentary

**Jacob's Dream at Bethel**

And Jacob went out from Beersheba, in the extreme southern part of Canaan, where Isaac then had his camp, and went toward Haran, traveling first toward the north. And he lighted upon a certain place, he apparently struck this place by chance, although it was a matter of God's guidance, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. The place where this occurred is designated even here in such a manner as to draw attention to its later importance.

NET Bible®

*Jacob's Dream at Bethel*

Meanwhile Jacob left Beer Sheba and set out for Haran. He reached a certain place [Heb "the place." The article may indicate simply that the place is definite in

the mind of the narrator. However, as the story unfolds the place is transformed into a holy place. See A. P. Ross, "Jacob's Vision: The Founding of Bethel," *BSac* 142 (1985): 224-37.] **where he decided to camp because the sun had gone down** [Heb "and he spent the night there because the sun had gone down."]. **He took one of the stones** [Heb "he took from the stones of the place," which here means Jacob took one of the stones (see v. 18).] **and placed it near his head** [Heb "and he put [it at] the place of his head." The text does not actually say the stone was placed under his head to serve as a pillow, although most interpreters and translators assume this. It is possible the stone served some other purpose. Jacob does not seem to have been a committed monotheist yet (see v. 20-21) so he may have believed it contained some spiritual power. Note that later in the story he anticipates the stone becoming the residence of God (see v. 22). Many cultures throughout the world view certain types of stones as magical and/or sacred. See J. G. Fraser, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, 231-37.]. **Then he fell asleep** [Heb "lay down."] **in that place and had a dream** [Heb "and dreamed."]. A portion of v. 12 is included for context.

#### The Pulpit Commentary

**And Jacob went out from Beersheba**,—in obedience to his father's commandment to seek a wife (Genesis 28:2), but also in compliance with his mother's counsel to evade the wrath of Esau (Genesis 27:43; cf. Hos. 12:12. On Beersheba vide Genesis 21:31; Genesis 26:33—**and went towards Haran**—probably along the route traversed by Abraham's servant (cf. Genesis 14:10).

**And he lighted upon a certain place**,—literally, he struck upon the place; i.e. either the place best suited for him to rest in (Inglis), or the place appointed for him by God (Ainsworth, Bush), or more probably the well-known place afterwards mentioned (Keil, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'). Situated in the mountains of Ephraim, about three hours north of Jerusalem, it was not reached after one, but after several days' journey (cf. Genesis 22:4)—**and tarried there all night, because the sun was set**;—being either remote from the city Luz when overtaken by darkness, or unwilling to enter the town; not because he hated the inhabitants (Josephus), but because he was a stranger—**and he took of the stones of that place**,—i.e. one of the stones (vide Genesis 28:18). "The track (of pilgrims) winds through an uneven valley, covered, as with gravestones, by large sheets of bare rock; some few here and there standing up like the cromlechs of Druidical monuments"—**and put them for his pillows**,—literally, and put for his head-bolster, the word signifying that which is at the head of any one (cf. 1Samuel 19:13; 1Samuel 26:7, 1Samuel 26:11, 1Samuel 26:16; 1Kings 19:6)—**and lay down in that place to sleep** (cf. Genesis 19:4; 1Samuel 3:5, 1Samuel 3:6, 1Samuel 3:9).

#### The Voice

**Meanwhile Jacob left Beersheba and traveled toward Haran. As dusk approached one day, he came to a place where he could stay for the night. He saw stones scattered all around and put one of them under his head; then he lay down to sleep.**

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> went out from B'er-Sheva <sup>[Well of oath]</sup> and he walked unto Hharan <sup>[Burning]</sup>, and he reached the place and he stayed the night there given that the sun came and he took from the stones of the place and he set his headrest in place and he laid down in that place,...

Concordant Literal Version And forth is Jacob faring from Beer-sheba, and going toward Charan. And coming is he upon a place and is lodging there, for the sun has set. And taking is he one of the stones of the place, and is placing it for his pillow, and lying down is he in that place.

Context Group Version And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he came on a certain place, and remained there all night, because the sun was set. And he took

one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep.

NASB

**Jacob's Dream**

Then Jacob departed from Beersheba [Gen 26:23] and went toward Haran [Gen 12:4, 5; 27:43]. He came [Lit *lighted on*] to a certain place [Lit *the place*] [Gen 28:19] and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head [Lit *at his head-place*], and lay down in that place.

New King James Version

**Jacob's Vow at Bethel**

Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.

Webster's Bible Translation

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went towards Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set: and he took of the stones of that place, and put [them for] his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

Young's Updated LT

And Jacob goes out from Beer-Sheba, and goes toward Haran, and he touches at a certain place, and lodges there, for the sun has gone in, and he takes of the stones of the place, and makes them his pillows, and he lies down in that place.

**The gist of this verse:**

Jacob left Beersheba, going toward Haran. He stops in an unnamed place and takes his rest there.

10-11

**Genesis 28:10a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i> ]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
B <sup>e</sup> ēr Shâba' (בְּעֵר שֶׁבַע) [pronounced <i>b<sup>e</sup>ayr SHAW<sup>B</sup>-vahġ</i> ]	<i>well of the oath [seven] and is transliterated Beersheba, Beer-sheba</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #884 BDB #92

**Translation:** Jacob went out from Beer-sheba...

In the previous paragraph, we looked at Jacob's leaving from the viewpoint of Esau. However, now we look at this from Jacob's view. He leaves Beer-sheba. That is where he was living, along with the rest of his family.

Gill: [From Beersheba, Jacob] went alone, without any servants to attend him, though perhaps not without letters of recommendation from his parents, testifying their affection to him, and that he came with their knowledge and consent, and was their heir, as Isaac had been to Abraham; nor without provisions, at least not without money to purchase them by the way, as appears by the oil he had, Genesis 28:18.<sup>116</sup>

It is my opinion that Jacob left with some supplies (as per Genesis 28:18) and one attendant (Deborah, his mother's personal servant). He clearly had the wherewithal to travel from Beersheba to Haran; but it is equally clear that he did not have the money to purchase a wife (so he will have to work for his wives in Paddan-aram).

Had he left with considerable wealth, Esau may have considered harming him along the way. My guess is, Esau knew that he would have a few years at least to win over both of his parents; and that he might be able to turn things around.

Genesis 28:10b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הלך) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Chârân (חָרָן) [pronounced khaw-RAWN]	parched; mountaineer; road, path transliterated Haran, Charan	masculine singular proper noun/location with the directional hê	Strong's #2771 BDB #357

The directional hê is the *âh* (ה) ending to a noun, usually found after a verb of motion. This is called the *directive hê* or the *he locale*, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question *where?* The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun *heaven* and the most literal rendering in the English would be *heavenward*. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions *to* or *toward*.

**Translation:** ...and he advanced toward Charan.

His plan was to go to Charan; however, there is a trip which needs to be looked at. You may recall that Abraham's servant made this same trip to this same general area and the trip there and the trip back was ignored. But not for Jacob. This particular stop is going to be notable.

Jacob has been given the blessing of Abraham from Isaac; and is now heading east to take a wife from his extended family.

**A Map of Jacob's Journey from Beersheba to Haran;** taken from [News You Can Believe](#); accessed June 3, 2017.

<sup>116</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:10.



**Genesis 28:10** And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran.

**Genesis 28:10** Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and he advanced toward Charan. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

So Jacob is heading northeast for two reasons: to save himself from Esau and to find a wife. *To find a wife* was the cover story that Rebekah used to save Jacob from Esau; but marriage to the right woman is a real consideration.

God has Jacob going east for two reasons as well: to realize that he does not better himself or his situation by being a con-man; and to find a wife, through whom his seed would be perpetuated. God blesses Jacob as one in the promised line. God blesses Jacob out of grace. God does not bless Jacob because he is clever and conniving.

Genesis 28:11a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pāga <sup>c</sup> (פגַע) [pronounced <i>paw-GAHG</i> ]	<i>to fall upon, to meet, to encounter, to reach; to entreat [by request], to assail [with a petition], to urge; to strike, to kill, to slay; to touch out of boundary; to reach [to anyone]; to strike a covenant [with someone], to make peace</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6293 BDB #803
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
māqōwm (מקוֹמ) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i> ]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879

**Translation:** He reached a [particular] place...

The name of this place is not given. But it is a very particular place, denoted with the definite article.

This place, Jacob came upon simply by chance in his own eyes. It is how far he had gotten; the sun was going down; and he was tired. However, this is exactly where God wanted him to be.

Clarke suggests the following: *[T]his certain place was Luz, or some part of its vicinity. Jacob had probably intended to reach Luz; but the sun being set, and night coming on, he either could not reach the city, or he might suspect the inhabitants, and rather prefer the open field, as he must have heard of the character and conduct of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. Or the gates might be shut by the time he reached it, which would prevent his admission; for it frequently happens, to the present day, that travelers not reaching a city in the eastern countries previously to the shutting of the gates, are obliged to lodge under the walls all night, as when once shut they refuse to open them till the next day. This was probably Jacob's case.<sup>117</sup> I do not know how many of these communities were gated; nor do we know the population size of Luz.*

Luz is about 48 miles from Beersheba.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:11.

<sup>118</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:11.

## Genesis 28:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lûwn (לוּן) [pronounced loon]	<i>to lodge, to pass the night, to spend the night, to lodge for the night, to abide</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3885 BDB #533
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb of place	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
bôw' (בָּוֵא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
shemesh (שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced SHEH-mesh]	<i>sun; sunrise, sun-rising, east, sun-setting, west (of direction); openly, publically</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8121 BDB #1039

**Translation:** ...and stayed there, because the sun had gone down.

The verb at the end is usually used for *going into a place*; and it can be understood this as well. The sun goes *into* the horizon. This simply means that the sun is setting. Because the sun is setting, Jacob decides to spend the night there.

Several commentators have various things to say about Luz, which is where Jacob was or was near. Several suggest that it is a gated Canaanite community. One commentator claims that Jacob did not get to the gate in time and it was closed; another claims that Jacob chose not to go into the city. We do not really know about any of this—or even if Luz is a major city or a gated city.

I think that it is safest to stay with the text, which says that Jacob stopped here because the sun went down. It was dark, he was tired, and he could not travel any further. These would be the most likely reasons.

## Genesis 28:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

## Genesis 28:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'eben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced EH <sup>B</sup> -ven]	<i>a stone [large or small] [in its natural state, as a building material]; stone ore; used of tablets, marble, cut stone; used of a tool or weapon; a precious stone, gem; rock; a weight of the balance</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #68 BDB #6
mâqôwm (מָקוֹם) [pronounced maw-KOHM]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879

**Translation:** He took from the stones of the place...

We are not told whether Jacob takes one stone or several; but there are a pile of stones, from which he took one or several as a pillow. However, there appears that there is one stone, as per v. 18, where he takes the *stone* (singular) that was his pillow.

**The first of 3 stones in the life of Jacob** (a graphic); taken from [the Wandering Shepherd](#); accessed. June 5, 2017.

This first stone will be used as a pillar, to mark the place where God speaks to Jacob (Genesis 28:18). The second stone will be the one that Jacob removes from the top of a well for Rachel, a shepherdess (Genesis 29:10). The third stone (actually, a set of stones) is set up to denote a treaty between Jacob and his Uncle Laban in Genesis 31:46.



These stones also mark the times in Jacob's related to his families. In Genesis 28, he is leaving his family in Canaan, going to Paddan-aram to try to find a woman to marry. In Genesis 29 he meets his future wife and her family. In Genesis 31, he has left Paddan-aram with 2 wives, 2 mistresses and 11 sons.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

## Genesis 28:11d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## Genesis 28:11d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
sîym (שׂים) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sūwm (שׂום) [pronounced soom]	to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
m <sup>e</sup> ra'āshôth (תַּשְׂאֲרָת) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> rah-uh-SHOHTH]	place at the head, at the head of [anyone or anything]; head-place; pillow, bolster [a long, cylindrical pillow or cushion]	feminine plural noun sometimes used as a preposition; here used as an adverb; but with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4763 (and #4761) BDB #912

The adverbial nature and the suffix both come out of Owen.<sup>119</sup> The suffix is certain.

Verse by Verse: *The phrase in Hebrew literally says "at his head" not under his head I don't know why many English translations, including the NASB, missed this translation, but there are numerous English versions that got the verse correct. The New English, Holman Christian and New King James versions all translate this verse correctly.*<sup>120</sup>

**Translation:** ...and placed [it near] his head.

He places a stone at his head as a pillow. There seems to be quite a disagreement in the various commentaries about this stone. Some suggest it acted as his pillow; Freeman said<sup>121</sup> that folds of his cloak where have softened it for his head; and others suggest that the stone was placed by his head, but not as a pillow. Not that it is an issue with which to concern ourselves; but Freeman's opinion seems to make the most sense.

*Wenstrom: What a difference a day makes. Not too long ago we saw Jacob living under the comfort and protection of his parents' tents but now we see that this has been replaced by a rock.*

*Wenstrom continues: Up to this point in his life, Jacob had spent most of his life as a homebody, living in the family home at Beersheba (Genesis 22:19; 26:33; 28:10). Now, Jacob would have to grow up in a hurry since he is about to enter the school of hard knocks but at the same time will grow closer in his relationship to God.*

It should be pointed out that Jacob is 77 at this time; perhaps comparable to 40 today? In any case, some men do not grow up today until their 40's or 50's (and many times, not even then).

*Wenstrom continues: Back in Beersheba, Esau waits to kill him and ahead of him in Haran, and unknown to Jacob, Laban waits to exploit him. Bruce K. Waltke commenting on this passage, writes, "He is situated between a death camp and a hard-labor camp" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 388, Zondervan).*<sup>122</sup>

<sup>119</sup> *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*; John Joseph Owens; Baker Book House, Grand Rapid, Michigan; ©1989; Vol. I, p. 121.

<sup>120</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_28b.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_28b.pdf) accessed May 27, 2017.

<sup>121</sup> *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; reprinted in 1972 by Logos International; p. 34.

<sup>122</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:11); accessed May 28, 2017.

## Genesis 28:11e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâkab (שָׁכַב) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAH<sup>BV</sup></i> ]	<i>to lie down, to lie down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; to relax</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7901 BDB #1011
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mâqôwm (מִוֶּקֶם) [pronounced <i>maw-KO<sup>HM</sup></i> ]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
hûw' (אוּהוּ) [pronounced <i>hoo</i> ]	<i>that; this; same</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

**Translation:** Then he laid down [to sleep] in that place.

He lays down to sleep there in that place.

**Jacob's Dream by José de Ribera** (a graphic); from **Kerry Fine Art**; accessed June 5, 2017. Jacob may have placed the stones near his head rather than under it.

Several commentators<sup>123</sup> suggest that Jacob slept out in the open because the gate to the city had been shut already. Although that is possible, we do not know if Luz was a gated city; nor do we know how well Jacob knew the area and if he simply stopped right there because it was dark (as the text seems to indicate) or if he knew he could not get to the city in time to get in.



Chuck Smith: [Jacob has] had a hard journey traveling to Bethel some thirty miles or so from the area around Beersheba, a little more than that, thirty-five miles. Tired, he gets to this rocky wilderness, barren area. He's tired, the sun is going down, he puts some rocks together for a pillow, he goes to

<sup>123</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:11 (suggestive comments on the verses).

sleep. He starts to dream. An interesting dream indeed, a ladder from earth reaching up into heaven. The angels of God are ascending and descending. And the Lord is standing there.<sup>124</sup>

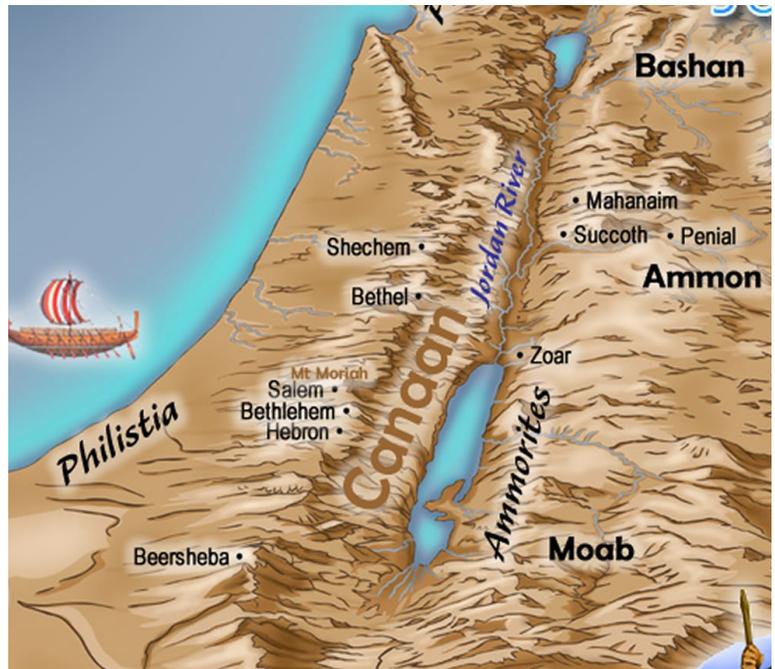
**Genesis 28:11** And he [Jacob] came on a certain place, and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took of the stones of that place, and placed them at his head. And he lay down in that place to sleep.

Genesis 28:11 He reached a [particular] place and stayed there, because the sun had gone down. He took from the stones of the place and placed [it near] his head. Then he laid down [to sleep] in that place. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jacob is moving both north and east, and, when night fell, he lays down to sleep. Jacob would be walking/riding for many days and many nights. However, this is a very significant night in his life. At this point, he is still in Canaan.

The certain place where Jacob is, is Bethel, which means *House of God*.

**Map of Canaan (Bethel)** from [Bible-History.com](http://Bible-History.com), accessed November 17, 2014. Jacob was in Beersheba, he traveled up towards Haran (Genesis 28:10), and here, he is stopped at Bethel (Genesis 28:19; formerly called Luz). He has not traveled very far; but no doubt, the long trip ahead of him is weighing heavily on his mind.



## Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 28:10–11 Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and he advanced toward Charan. He reached a [particular] place and stayed there, because the sun had gone down. He took from the stones of the place and placed [it near] his head. Then he laid down [to sleep] in that place. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 28:10–11 Jacob left Beer-sheba, heading toward Charan. He came to a particular place and decided to stop there because the sun had gone down. He took a few stones and used them as a pillow, laying down to sleep there.

## Jacob's Thoughts and Feelings (Various Commentators)

What follows is going to be reasonable speculation (for the most part).

The Expositor's Bible Commentary on Jacob's thoughts: *What was probably Jacob's state of mind when he lay down on that hill-side? In the first place, and as he would have said to any man he chanced to meet, he wondered what he would see when he got to the top of this hill; and still more, as he may have said to Rebekah, he wondered what reception he would meet with from Laban, and whether he would ever again see his father's tents. Although much of this is speculative; it is interesting speculation nonetheless.*

<sup>124</sup> Chuck Smith, *Through the Bible Commentary C2000 Series*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:1–22.

## Jacob's Thoughts and Feelings (Various Commentators)

The Expositor's Bible Commentary continues: *all these thoughts probably centred in one deep feeling, that he was an outcast, a fugitive from justice. He was glad he was in so solitary a place, he was glad he was so far from Esau and from every human eye; and yet-what desolation of spirit accompanied this feeling: there was no one he could bid good-night to, no one he could spend the evening hour with in quiet talk; he was a banished man, whatever fine gloss Rebekah might put upon it, and deep down in his conscience there was that which told him he was not banished without cause. Might not God also forsake him-might not God banish him, and might he not find a curse pursuing him, preventing man or woman from ever again looking in his face with pleasure?*

The Expositor's Bible Commentary continues: *He had, no doubt, wondered much whether the blessing, of his father was, after all, so valuable a possession, whether it might not have been wiser to take a share with Esau than to be driven out homeless thus. God has never spoken to him; he has heard his father speak of assurances coming to him from God, but as for him, through all the long years of his life he has never heard what he could speak of as a voice of God. But this night these doubts were silenced.*<sup>125</sup>

David Guzik: *One can only imagine the strange flood of feelings in Jacob at this moment: the fear, the loneliness, the isolation, the excitement, and the anticipation. This was an absolutely strategic time in Jacob's life.*<sup>126</sup>

F. Hastings: *And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. Jacob in fear of his life leaves home. The last kiss of his mother is taken. During the day Jacob goes forward cheerfully. Night comes on at length. The path is no longer distinct. The wind moans sadly. A sense of loneliness creeps over him. Fear of Esau haunts him. He sees the figure of his brother behind this shrub and that rock. Had Esau outrun to murder him in that lonely spot? He trembles at every shadow, and shudders at every sound. He thinks of the God of his father and mother, and prays. He lies down in the desert; a furze-bush is his only shelter, and a stone his hard pillow. He looks up into the dark vault all glittering with the silent stars. More intense becomes his loneliness, for the stars have no voice for him. Plotting and far-seeing Jacob had deep home-longings, mystic inquiries, and a wealth of affection in his nature. Of such God can make something; to such God can reveal something. To idolatrous, carnal Esau's how little can God make known. Selfishness hinders. Here in the desert Jacob draws his camel-hair robe more tightly over his feet, and dreams of parents and home, and heaven and God. It might surprise us that he could have such sweet dreams when he was fleeing from the one whom he had undoubtedly wronged. God would over-rule the wrong, and therefore sent him this vision.*<sup>127</sup>

I can accept Hastings above with these qualifications: we do not know, obviously, if this really describes how Jacob felt; or if these various things affected him as described. However, Hastings is taking some literary license here to try to place the reader in the sandals of Jacob.

Wenstrom: *[Jacob] was no doubt feeling alone and forsaken and was feeling anxious about his future. The fact that Jacob was by himself sleeping out in the open air using a rock for a pillow indicates that he was alone with no caravan for protection and did not even have a tent under which he could rest.*<sup>128</sup>

Less than reasonable comes next:

<sup>125</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll; ©1887-1896; public domain; from e-sword, Genesis 27:41–28:22.

<sup>126</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 28:10–12.

<sup>127</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 28:12 (Homilies by F. Hastings).

<sup>128</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:11); accessed May 28, 2017.

## Unlikely that these are Jacob's Thoughts and Feelings (Various Commentators)

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *The sense of his sin is now lying hard upon Jacob. He had been guilty of deceit, had incurred the anger of his brother, and disturbed the peace of his father's household. He had claimed his title to the blessing in a self-righteous frame of mind, and gained admission for that claim by unrighteous means. As long as he is supported by his mother's sympathy and by the excitement of success, he feels but little sense of shame and sorrow. But this is the time with him of outward trouble; and the thought of his sin is forced upon him, and he has also inward trouble. He who had never left his father's house before, for whom everything was provided, now becomes a wanderer. He is left all alone on an untried journey. He set out in the sunshine, and as he was young and vigorous he could keep his spirits from sinking under despondency. But now night comes on. He has no tent, no pillow. He is alone with himself, all seems desolate around him, and he is like one forsaken. A sense of sin rests upon his soul, and a vague dread of unknown terrors. It was thus when everything in life seemed against him that this vision was vouchsafed.*<sup>129</sup>

The problem with the above commentary is it assumes a more thoughtful, introspective and spiritual Jacob than the man that we have come to know. Although he may feel desolate and sad from being away from home, I just don't picture Jacob as being able to relate this to his own sins. Furthermore, Jacob's legalism at the end of this chapter mitigates against such spiritual introspection.

IB: *Jacob's...was a fugitive, and he was afraid. His mother had told him to go off for "a few days," and then she would send and bring him home. But Jacob may have had a better idea of the truth: that it would be no 'few days' but a long time of punishing exile before he could ever dare to return. There was good reason to feel that he was alone with emptiness. When he had lain down to sleep, he was a long way off from the place of his clever and successful schemes. There was nothing to measure his own little soul against except the silent and dreadful immensities he saw from the height of Bethel: the empty earth, the sky, the stars. Yet the strange fact was that there existed in Jacob's soul something to which God could speak. Unprepossessing though he was, he was capable of response to more than the things of flesh and sense. He had not despised or ignored his inheritance. He knew that it was faith in God that had given dignity to Abraham and Isaac, and he had a hunger—even if mixed with baseness—to get his own life into touch with God. When such a man is confronted in his solitariness with the sublimity of the hills and the awful mystery of the marching stars, he may be capable of great conceptions which begin to take shape in his subconscious. In his dreams he sees not only nature, but the gates of heaven. Yet how many there are who fall short of Jacob in this—men in whom solitariness produces nothing, who will fall asleep but will not dream, who when they are forced to be alone are either bored or frightened. Out of the aloneness they dread they get nothing, because they have not kept the seed of religion that in their hour of need and crisis might have quickened their souls.*<sup>130</sup>

Bush: *He who had felt no fear in laying himself down to sleep in a lonely place, and under the cloud of night, is now filled with a holy dismay when the morning arose at the thought of being surrounded with God.*<sup>131</sup>

I don't think that there is a problem with speculating and pursuing this or that line of inquiry regarding the thoughts and motivations of the believers that we study. My problem is when someone makes a statement which has absolutely no basis. The pastor or commentator, when doing this, should make such statements with qualifiers (such is, *now I could be totally wrong about this, but...*). Secondly, and more obviously, a pastor should not build a doctrine or set of doctrines based upon such speculation.

<sup>129</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:10–22 (Jacob's Vision).

<sup>130</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:20–22.

<sup>131</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:16 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses).

## Unlikely that these are Jacob's Thoughts and Feelings (Various Commentators)

Great Texts of the Bible: *[Jacob looked up at] the glorious expanse of an Oriental sky, one quivering, trembling mass of blue, had been above him, and as he had looked up with wonder and awe into its silent depths, deep questionings had beset him. Then as the twilight stole over the scene, and the stars peeped forth, the sense of mystery deepened, and the questions which had been urging themselves redoubled their solemnity and intensity. And so there rose within his heart strong yearnings; and those yearnings half articulated themselves into prayers. The vision was evidently a surprise. But he would have had no spiritual vision if he had had no spiritual desires. We see in the universe only what our moral earnestness prepares and disposes us to see. It is the pure in heart alone who behold the face of God. The spiritual revelations that we receive are but the sublimation and the fruition of our own spiritual struggles. Had there been none of those yearnings and longings in his heart towards a higher and a worthier existence, Jacob would have seen no angels.*<sup>132</sup>

The problem with the above is, God is working in Jacob's life, despite Jacob being a cross purposes with God. When Jacob returns to the land of Canaan, the Angel of God wrestles with him, to impress on him just how much he is in opposition to God. Generally speaking, truth comes to those who legitimately seek it. However, some people simply reject truth when it is revealed to them.

The reason why things are different for Jacob is, he is in the line of promise, and God is going to keep His Word, no matter how much Jacob acts against God. We are in the Church Age right now because the Jewish people rejected their own Messiah. So, that is an example of God revealing Himself to people who, for the most part, turned against Him. Nevertheless, God will honor the people of Israel in the end times.

Given all this information, we cannot assume that, because God revealed Himself to Jacob, and Jacob is in any way worthy; or that Jacob is a spiritual seeker. Maybe he was; maybe he wasn't; but this is not really revealed to us.

Hawker: *Jacob felt surprise, holy fear, gracious assurance, devout meltings of the heart towards God, solemn dedications of the soul, and the warmest thanksgivings.*<sup>133</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *[Jacob's] language and his conduct were alike that of a man whose mind was pervaded by sentiments of solemn awe, of fervent piety, and lively gratitude.*<sup>134</sup>

What I have noticed, in general, is, there are certain commentators who believe that Jacob must somehow deserve this encounter with God. Those commentators pretty much go awry with all that they propose after that.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 28:10–11 Jacob left Beer-sheba, heading toward Charan. He came to a particular place and decided to stop there because the sun had gone down. He took a few stones and used them as a pillow, laying down to sleep there. (Kukis paraphrase)

Hawker: *Perhaps never one apparently more forlorn and friendless, when he lay down. Perhaps never one more blessed, before he rose up.*<sup>135</sup>

Wenstrom compares Jacob to Christ: *At this point in his life, Jacob typifies or foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ who according to Matthew 8:20, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*<sup>136</sup> Although it is quite clear that Jacob is

<sup>132</sup> *Great Texts of the Bible*; Edited by the Rev. James Hastings, D.D.; from e-sword; Genesis 28:16–17

<sup>133</sup> Robert Hawker *The Poor Man's Commentary*; ©1805; from e-sword, Genesis 28:16.

<sup>134</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 28:16.

<sup>135</sup> Robert Hawker *The Poor Man's Commentary*; ©1805; from e-sword, Genesis 28:11.

<sup>136</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:11); accessed May 28, 2017.

experiencing something similar to what Jesus describes, I don't think that warrants enough to be a type.

**Application:** Going with Hawker's idea (which concentrates on how Jacob feels, as Jacob has been greatly blessed for his entire life); what will occur here in this chapter will have little or no affect on Jacob. Why? The spiritual life is not a one-shot deal. We do not have a great spiritual experience, and then, from that point on, life is smooth sailing. We may, from time to time, come to a plateau in our lives; but there is always more life to lead. No believer reaches the place where, taking in doctrine is no longer necessary; no believer reaches the point where he no longer sins (unless he is a few minutes or hours before death). We are to continue advancing in the spiritual life.

Peters (*Early Hebrew Story*) gives a description of where Jacob is: *One of the most singular stone formations west of the Jordan in Palestine is to be seen in the great stonefield a little to the north of the modern town of Beitin, the ancient Bethel.... Huge stones seem to be piled one upon another to make columns nine or ten feet or more in height. In reality these columns are produced by erosion, and the different density of the strata has led to greater erosion in one part than in another, so that they taper and bulge in manifold and various shapes. So strong is the resemblance to construction made by men's hands that I myself have gone to this spot, not once but several times, and examined every stone, to make sure that there could be no mistake in my impression, and I have found that others have done the same thing. It is only after such a careful examination of the site that one convinces one's self that in reality these stone pillars are the work of nature, not of man.... Surely it is a point at which heaven and earth meet. And there stand the pillars which the mighty heroes of antiquity erected.... It was only the giant men of olden times who could set up as memorials of communion with God these mighty stones at this point where heaven and earth are so clearly united.*<sup>137</sup> I was uncertain whether to place this description here, before anything happens; or at the end of v. 22, when Jacob sets up a monument of stones concerning this event which will take place and his vow.

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Before the full revelation of the Word of God, God communicated with His people in dreams and visions. Passages dealing with dreams and visions are found here: Genesis 15:1, 12 20:3, 6–7 37:5–11 40:1–41:57 Num. 12:6 Job. 4:12–21 33:15–16 Dan. 2:1–49 4:1–37 7:1 Matthew 1:20 2:12–13, 19 Hebrews 1:1.<sup>138</sup>

Because this particular verse is so important, we will devote a significant amount of time to it. Interestingly enough, I looked for the example of a chiasm, where this passage falls in the middle, but I could not find one.

**And so he dreams and behold a staircase being fixed [in one place] on earth; and his head reaching the heavens. And behold, messengers of Elohim are ascending and descending in him.**

Genesis  
28:12

**Then Jacob [lit., he] dreamed, and he saw [lit., behold] a staircase [ramp, ladder, elevator?] stationary on the earth; and its top reached [into] the heavens. And he saw [lit., behold] the angels of Elohim ascending and descending on it.**

**While Jacob was dreaming, he saw a staircase stationary on the earth, but its top reaching into the heavens. He watched the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

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<sup>137</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>138</sup> Most of these came out of the Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge (Genesis 28:12).

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he dreams and behold a staircase being fixed [in one place] on earth; and his head reaching the heavens. And behold, messengers of Elohim are ascending and descending in him.
Targum (trans. By Cook)	And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder was fixed in the ground, and the top of it reached to the <u>height of heaven</u> . And, behold, <u>the two angels who went unto Sodom, and who had been expelled from the midst of them, because they had revealed the secrets of the Lord of the world; and being cast forth they had walked till the time that Jakob went out from the house of his father, and had accompanied him with kindness unto Bethel, in that day had ascended to the high heavens, and said, Come, see Jakob the pious, whose likeness is inlaid in the throne of glory, and whom you have so greatly desired to behold. Then the rest of the angels of the holy Lord descended to look upon him.</u>
Jerusalem targum	And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder was fixed in the earth, and the summit of it reached to the <u>height of heaven</u> . And, behold, <u>the angels who had accompanied him from the house of his father, ascended to make known to the angels on high, saying, Come, see Jakob the pious, whose likeness is in the throne of glory, and whom you have been desirous to see! And, behold, the holy angels from before the Lord ascended and descended, and looked upon him.</u>
Latin Vulgate	And he saw in his sleep a ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven: the angels also of God ascending and descending by it.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he dreamed, and behold a ladder was set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.
Septuagint (Greek)	...and dreamed. And behold, a ladder fixed on the earth, whose top reached to heaven, and the angels of God ascended and descended on it.
Significant differences:	The targums appear to add the words <i>the heigh of</i> . In fact, they add quite a bit of text to this particular verse. The phrase <i>and behold</i> (found twice in the Hebrew) is missing from the second sentence in the Latin and Greek.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And he had a dream, and in his dream he saw steps stretching from earth to heaven, and the angels of God were going up and down on them.
Easy English	He dreamed that someone had put up a ladder on the earth. The top of the ladder was in heaven. Jacob saw God's *angels there. They were going up and down on the ladder.
NIRV	In a dream he saw a stairway standing on the earth. Its top reached to heaven. The angels of God were going up and coming down on it.
New Simplified Bible	He had a dream in which he saw a stairway set up on the earth with its top reaching up to heaven. He saw the angels of God going up and coming down on it.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	He dreamed and saw a raised staircase, its foundation on earth and its top touching the sky, and God's messengers were ascending and descending on it.
New Berkeley Version	He dreamed and, behold, a ladder standing on the ground and its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it. A ladder between earth and heaven means that these two sphere are vitally connected; there is travel in between, and the angels were making use of the ladder; so may we.
New Century Version	Jacob dreamed that there was a ladder resting on the earth and reaching up into heaven, and he saw angels of God going up and coming down the ladder.
New Life Version	And he had a dream. He saw steps going up from the earth to heaven. He saw the angels of God going up and down these steps.

New Living Translation      As he slept, he dreamed of a stairway that reached from the earth up to heaven. And he saw the angels of God going up and down the stairway.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible      Well, {Look!} [in the dream] there was a stairway fastened to the ground which reached all the way into the heavens. and the messengers of God were ascending and descending upon it.

International Standard V      He found a stone there, used it for a pillow, and slept there for the night, when he had a dream! He saw a raised highway that had been built with its ending point on earth and its beginning point in heaven. God's angels were ascending and descending on it. A portion of v. 11 is included for context.

New Advent (Knox) Bible      He dreamed that he saw a ladder standing on the earth, with its top reaching up into heaven; a stairway for the angels of God to go up and come down.

Translation for Translators      While he was sleeping, he had a dream, in which he was *surprised to see* a stairway. The bottom of the stairway was on the earth and the top was in the sky. Jacob also saw that God's angels were going up and down the stairway.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation      He was dreaming, and saw a stairway set up on the earth, and its top touched the skies. He also saw Messengers of God ascending and descending on it.

Ferar-Fenton Bible      Then he dreamed and saw a ladder with its foot standing on the ground and its head reaching to the heavens, and there were, MESSENGERS OF GOD ascending and descending it.

H. C. Leupold      And he dreamed and, behold, there was a ladder set upon the earth and its top touched the heavens; and, behold, the angels of God were going up and down on it; and, behold, Yahweh stood above it. V. 13a is included for context.

Urim-Thummim Version      And he dreamed that a ladder stood upright on the land, and the top of it reached to the cosmos, and the angels of Elohim went up and came down on it.

Wikipedia Bible Project      And he dreamed, and here is a ladder planted on the earth, and its top reaches the sky, and on it, see the angels of God, ascend and descend.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community Bible      While Jacob was sleeping, he had a dream in which a ladder stood on the earth with its top reaching to heaven and on it were angels of God going up and coming down.

*This is the Gate to Heaven.* Jacob has seen the heavens open and the angels of God forming a living bridge between heaven and earth: this is an image of the communion with God which people seek in vain with their various religions. These may give us some external knowledge of God and satisfy our religious instincts. Even if we interiorize our search for God, we are sinful people who cannot find his inner presence without being called by him.

The only bridge between God and humankind is Christ: Son of God become man, both God and human. Later, in referring to this text (Jn 1:51) Jesus will declare that he is the Gate to heaven, because in him, God has embraced humanity.

He called it Bethel. Here, as in previous chapters, we find popular legends. Bethel means the house of God and the biblical author attributes to Jacob this naming of the place as well as the custom of paying a tithe to the temple of Bethel. This had been built many centuries before Jacob.

### DREAMS

All of us are impressed by dreams and we try to interpret them. Most of the time they do not foretell anything but simply reveal what is going on within us, in our

subconscious, and disclose something of what we cannot know clearly about our own spirit. Psychologists may use dreams to discover significant experiences or wounds suffered in the past.

Dreams may also indicate and express premonitions and intuitions. The Bible shows us God (or his angels) using dreams to communicate with us. In this, God takes people as they are with the underground part of their soul.

When God intervenes through a dream, we know it by its consequences. Jesus says "The tree is known by its fruits." In such cases, it is God himself who gives the interpretation: we do not need to resort to anyone and God fills us with a sense of complete peace.

People whose faith has been purified and formed cannot attribute to dreams the same importance given them by the primitive people of biblical times. We also know that the Spirit of Darkness can disguise himself as an angel (2 Cor 12:10). When, in our days, large segments of humankind tend to lead their lives according to dreams, it has little to do with faith. In the very Bible itself, besides the condemnations of Deuteronomy 18:10, we can also read in Jeremiah 29:8 his attack directed against those who induce the dreams they wish to have (see also Sir 24:1).

Heritage Bible	And he dreamed, and lo, a ladder was stationed on the earth, and its head reaching to the heavens; and lo, the messengers of God were ascending and descending on it.
New American Bible (2011)	Then he had a dream: a stairway [in Hebrew, <i>sullam</i> , traditionally but inaccurately translated as "ladder." The corresponding verb, <i>salal</i> , means "to heap up" something, such as dirt for a highway or a ramp. The imagery in Jacob's dream may be derived from the Babylonian ziggurat or temple tower, "with its top in the sky" (11:4), and with brick steps leading up to a small temple at the top.] rested on the ground, with its top reaching to the heavens; and God's angels were going up and down on it. Jn 1:51.
New Jerusalem Bible	He had a dream: there was a ladder, planted on the ground with its top reaching to heaven; and God's angels were going up and down on it.
New RSV	And he dreamed that there was a ladder [Or <i>stairway</i> or <i>ramp</i> ] set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	He dreamt that there before him was a ladder resting on the ground with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of ADONAI were going up and down on it.
The Complete Tanach	And he dreamed, and behold! a ladder set up on the ground and its top reached to heaven; and behold, angels of God were ascending and descending upon it.

**ascending and descending:** Ascending first and afterwards descending. The angels who escorted him in the [Holy] Land do not go outside the Land, and they ascended to heaven, and the angels of outside the Holy Land descended to escort him.[From Gen. Rabbah 68:12]

exeGesés companion Bible	...and he dreams, and behold, a ladder stationed on the earth and the top thereof touches the heavens: and behold the angels of Elohim ascending and descending thereon: ...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	He had a dream; a stairway [Or "ramp" others "ladder."] was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and angels of God were going up and down on it.
Kaplan Translation	He had a vision in a dream. A ladder was standing on the ground, and its top reached up toward heaven [The ladder represented all the spiritual levels, which

Orthodox Jewish Bible would now be given to Jacob and his descendants. It was shown to him now, when Jacob was about to start a family.]. *God's angels were going up and down on it. And he had a chalom, and hinei a sullam (ladder, stairway) set up on the ground, and the top of it reached to Shomayim: and hinei the malachim of Elohim ascending and descending on it.*

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible *Jacob dreamed that there was a ·ladder [or stairway; or ramp] resting on the earth and reaching up into heaven, and he saw ·angels [messengers] of God ·going up and coming down [ascending and descending on] ·the ladder [·it; John 1:51].*

The Geneva Bible *And he dreamed, and behold a ladder [Christ is the ladder by which God and man are joined together, and by whom the angels minister to us: all graces are given to us by him, and we ascend to heaven by him.] set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.*

NET Bible® *Then he fell asleep [Heb "lay down."] in that place and had a dream [Heb "and dreamed."]. He saw [Heb "and look." The scene which Jacob witnessed is described in three clauses introduced with הִנֵּה (hinneh). In this way the narrator invites the reader to witness the scene through Jacob's eyes. J. P. Fokkelman points out that the particle goes with a lifted arm and an open mouth: "There, a ladder! Oh, angels! and look, the Lord himself" (Narrative Art in Genesis [SSN], 51-52).] a stairway [The Hebrew noun סֹלָמ (sullam, "ladder, stairway") occurs only here in the OT, but there appears to be an Akkadian cognate simmiltu (with metathesis of the second and third consonants and a feminine ending) which has a specialized meaning of "stairway, ramp." See H. R. Cohen, Biblical Hapax Legomena (SBLDS), 34. For further discussion see C. Houtman, "What Did Jacob See in His Dream at Bethel? Some Remarks on Genesis 28:10-22," VT 27 (1977): 337-52; J. G. Griffiths, "The Celestial Ladder and the Gate of Heaven," ExpTim 76 (1964/65): 229-30; and A. R. Millard, "The Celestial Ladder and the Gate of Heaven," ExpTim 78 (1966/67): 86-87.] erected on the earth with its top reaching to the heavens. The angels of God were going up and coming down it and the Lord stood at its top. Portions of vv. 11 and 13 are included for context.*

The Pulpit Commentary *And he dreamed. This dream, which has been pronounced "beautifully ingenious," "clever" and "philosophical," the work of a later Hebrew poet and not of Jacob (De Wette), was not wonderful considering the state of mind and body in which he must have been—fatigued by travel, saddened by thoughts of home, doubtless meditating on his mother, and more than likely pondering the great benediction of his aged and, to all appearance, dying father. Yet while these circumstances may account for the mental framework of the dream, the dream itself was Divinely sent. And behold a ladder—the rough stones of the mountain appearing to form themselves into vast staircase (Stanley, Bush)—set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven:—symbolically intimating the fact of a real, uninterrupted, and close communication between heaven and earth, and in particular between God in his glory and man in his solitude and sin—and behold the angels of God—literally, the messengers of Elohim, i.e. the angels (Psalm 103:20, Psalm 103:21; Psalm 104:4; Hebrews 1:14)—ascending and descending on it—vide John 1:51, which shows that Christ regarded either the ladder in Jacob's vision as an emblem of himself, the one Mediator between God and man (Calvin, Luther, Ainsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Murphy), or, what is more probable, Jacob himself as type of him, the Son of man, in whom the living intercourse between earth and heaven depicted in the vision of the angel-trodden staircase was completely fulfilled (Hengstenberg, Baumgarten, Lange, Bush).*

The Voice *During the night, God gave him a dream. He saw a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to the heavens. He saw some messengers of God ascending and descending on it.*

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

- Brenner’s Mechanical Trans. ...and he visualized and look, a ladder is standing erect unto the land and his head was touching unto the sky and look, messengers of Elohiym <sup>[Powers]</sup> were going up and going down him,...
- Context Group Version And he dreamed. And look, a stairway set up on the land { or earth }, and the top of it reached to the skies { or heavens }. And look, the messengers of God ascending and descending on it.
- Emphasized Bible And he dreamed, and lo! a stairway, planted earthwards, with, its top, reaching towards the heavens,—and lo! messengers of God, ascending and descending thereon;...
- English Standard Version And 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!
- Green’s Literal Translation And he dreamed. And, behold, a ladder was placed on the earth, its top reaching to the heavens. And, behold, the angels of God were going up and going down on it!
- New King James Version Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.
- Young’s Updated LT And he dreams, and lo, a ladder set up on the earth, and its head is touching the heavens; and lo, messengers of God are going up and coming down by it.

**The gist of this verse:** In a dream, Jacob saw the angels of God going up and down some sort of ladder from earth to heaven.

<b>Genesis 28:12a</b>			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
châlam (חלם) [pronounced khaw-LAHM]	<i>to dream; to be healthy, to be strong</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #2492 BDB #321
There are two different sets of meanings for this verb, both of which are shown above.			
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong’s #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243

## Genesis 28:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>çullâm (סֹלַם) [pronounced sool-LAWM]</p>	<p><i>ladder, staircase; ramp</i></p>	<p>masculine singular noun</p>	<p>Strong's #5551 BDB #700</p>
<p>When this is a part of the narrative, but not a part of what a person is saying, the intent of this word appears to be something which is observed by those in the narrative. Understood in this way, this might be reasonably translated <i>I see, he sees</i>. I have taken some liberties with this word in 1Kings 2:29 and translated this word <i>right now</i>.</p>			
<p>We really do not know what this word means, as it occurs only here. This is similar to the Jewish word for <i>highway, raised way, public road</i>. Jacob is describing the best that he can what it is that he sees (like the Apostle John in the book of Revelation). It is possible that what he sees is different than what we know technologically today (although, it is also possible that <i>staircase</i> or <i>ramp</i> may be good translations of this word.</p>			
<p>nâtsab (בָּצַב) [pronounced naw-TSAH<sup>β</sup>V]</p>	<p><i>being fixed [in one place]; being stationary; having been determined; standing in place</i></p>	<p>Hophal participle</p>	<p>Strong's #5324 BDB #662</p>
<p>'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]</p>	<p><i>earthward (all or a portion thereof), on [toward, upon] the earth; on [upon, toward] the land [territory, country, continent; ground, soil]</i></p>	<p>feminine singular noun with the directional hê</p>	<p>Strong's #776 BDB #75</p>

**Translation:** Then Jacob [lit., *he*] dreamed, and he saw [lit., *behold*] a staircase [ramp, ladder, elevator, escalator?] stationary on the earth;...

God interacted with the patriarchs in a number of different ways. Communicating to them through their dreams was quite common.

**Application:** God no longer contacts us through our dreams, but through His Word.

Robertson attempts to give a naturalistic explanation for Jacob's dreaming: *We know what dreams are. They are strange combinations of our waking thoughts in fanciful forms, and we may trace in Jacob's previous journey the groundwork of his dream. He looked up all day to heaven as he trudged along, the glorious expanse of an Oriental sky was around him, a quivering, trembling, mass of blue; but he was alone, and, when the stars came out, melancholy sensations were his, such as youth frequently feels in the autumn time. Deep questionings beset him. Time he felt was fleeting. Eternity, what was it? Life, what a mystery! And all this took form in his dream. Thus far, all was natural; the supernatural in this dream was the manner in which God impressed it upon his heart.*<sup>139</sup> My problem here is, the idea of Jacob's deep questions, if there were any, and the impact that had on his dream.

Instead of the word *behold*, I have put in *he saw*. It is roughly the same idea.

As we have seen, Jacob has shown no propensity toward spiritual growth. His father Isaac did not either until just recently. God still has a plan and this plan will be enacted even through these two who seem to be so lacking in spiritual maturity. We are about to witness Jacob's famous dream and Jacob's ladder. God communicated to

<sup>139</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:12 (suggestive comments on the verses).

mankind in many ways during Old Testament times. As the writer of Hebrews put it; **God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many times and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in [His] Son.** (Hebrews 1:1–2a) One of these ways was through dreams (since the completion of the written Word of God, God uses it only to speak to His own).

### Genesis 28:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
rô'sh (שָׂאֵר אוֹ שָׂאֵר) [pronounced <i>rohsh</i> ]	<i>head [of a man, city, state, nation, place, family, priest], top [of a mountain]; chief, prince, officer; front, choicest, best; height [of stars]; sum</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7218 BDB #910
nâga' (עָגַב) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHḠ</i> ]	<i>being caused to touch, caused to reach [to anything]; coming to, attaining</i>	Hiphil participle	Strong's #5060 BDB #619
shâmayîm (שָׁמַיִם) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAH-yim</i> ]	<i>heaven, heavens, skies; the visible heavens, as in as abode of the stars or as the visible universe, the sky, atmosphere, etc.; Heaven (as the abode of God)</i>	masculine dual noun with the definite article with the locative hê	Strong's #8064 BDB #1029

When followed by the letter hê (ה), it means *to heaven, heavenward, toward heaven or towards the heavens.*

**Translation:** „,and its top reached [into] the heavens.

Whatever it is that Jacob sees, it goes from the earth up to the heavens. We don't know what he is seeing. Perhaps it looks like an escalator; perhaps it is like a ramp into heaven; perhaps it is a series of glass elevators.

### Genesis 28:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i> ]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, exclamatory particle, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
mal'âkê (מַלְאָכָה) [pronounced <i>mah'-AWK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isaiah 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #4397 BDB #521

## Genesis 28:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʿālâh (אֲלָהִים) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i> ]	<i>those going up, ascending ones, those coming up, ones climbing up</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHD</i> ]	<i>those descending, ones going down, descending ones</i>	masculine plural, Qal participle	Strong's #3381 BDB #432

**Translation:** *And he saw [lit., behold] the angels of Elohim ascending and descending on it.*

On whatever it is that Jacob is seeing, he sees angels going up and down, from heaven to earth and back again.

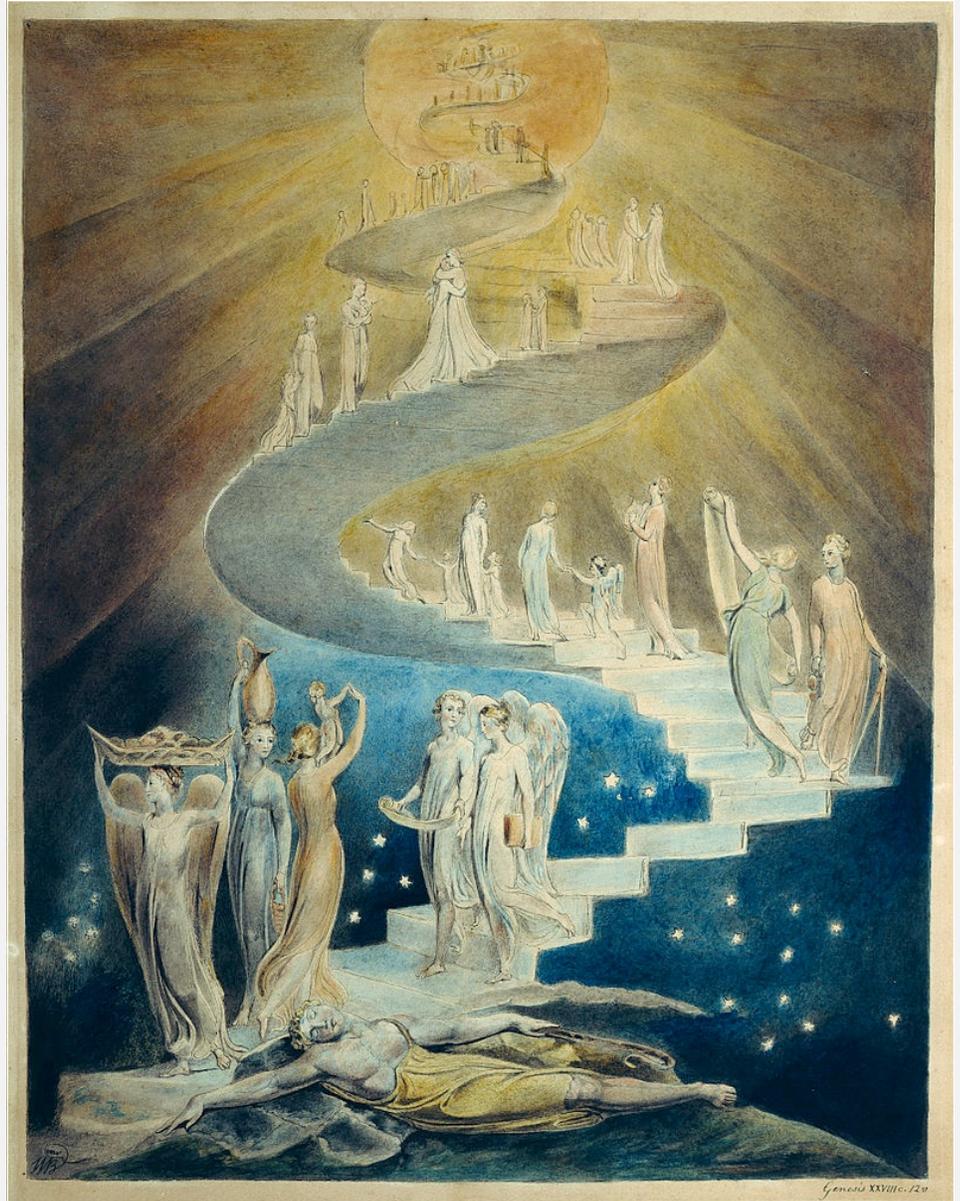
The term *angels of God* is quite rare in Scripture, occurring in the Old Testament only here and Genesis 32:1 (this does occur in the New Testament in Luke 12:8–9 15:10 John 1:51). *Angel of God*, on the other hand, is a much more common phrase in the Old Testament, usually referring to Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form.

### Art Inspired by Jacob's Ladder (a series of graphics)

Picture of the Jacob's Ladder in the original Luther Bibles (of 1534 and also 1545). From [Wikipedia](#); By Soenke Rahn - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0; accessed June 5, 2017.



## Art Inspired by Jacob's Ladder (a series of graphics)

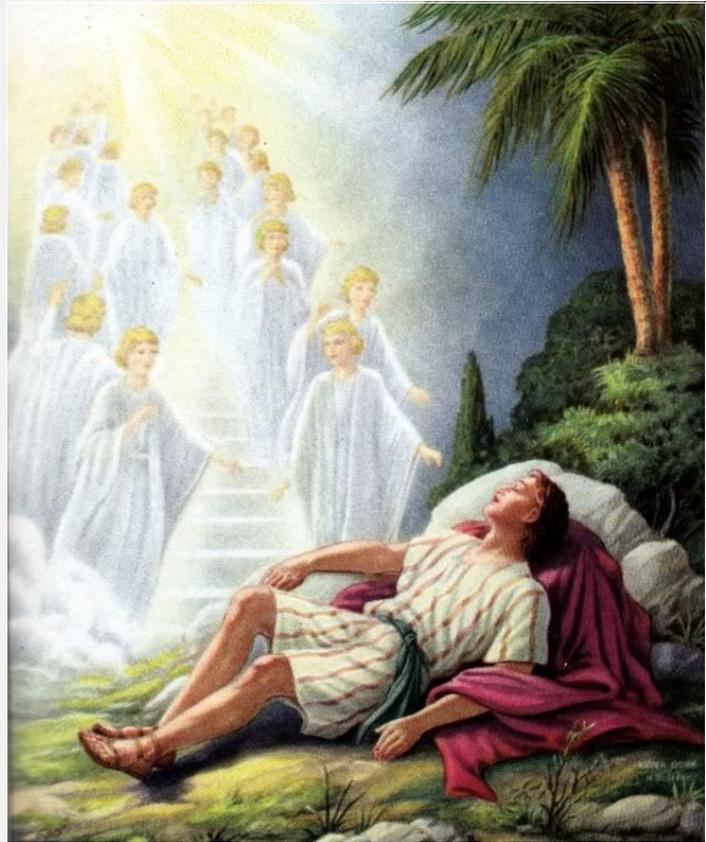


The angels climb Jacob's Ladder on the west front of Bath Abbey. Haukurth (photo) - [Wikipedia](#); accessed June 5, 2017.

Jacob's Dream by William Blake (c. 1805, British Museum, London); from [Wikipedia](#); accessed June 5, 2017.

## Art Inspired by Jacob's Ladder (a series of graphics)

Jacob's Ladder, circa 1925, European Christian illustration by O. A. Stemler and Bess Bruce Cleveland - Standard Bible Story Readers, Book Three; [Wikipedia](#); accessed June 5, 2017.



Jacob's Dream by Richard David Ramsey - Own work, Public Domain, Artwork on the campus of Abilene Christian University.; [Wikipedia](#); accessed June 5, 2017.



## Art Inspired by Jacob's Ladder (a series of graphics)

Jacob's Ladder (by Stiv Wilson) in Saint Helena; from [Into the Willes](#); accessed June 5, 2017.

Image below is Jacobs Ladder. 700 steps, St. Helena; taken from a postcard, found [here](#); also accessed June 5, 2017.



## Art Inspired by Jacob's Ladder (a series of graphics)

Jacob's Ladder, as in Genesis 28:12; illustration from the 1728 *Figures de la Bible*; illustrated by Gerard Hoet (1648-1733) and others, and published by P. de Hondt in The Hague; image courtesy Bizzell Bible Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries. [Wikipedia](#); accessed June 5, 2017.

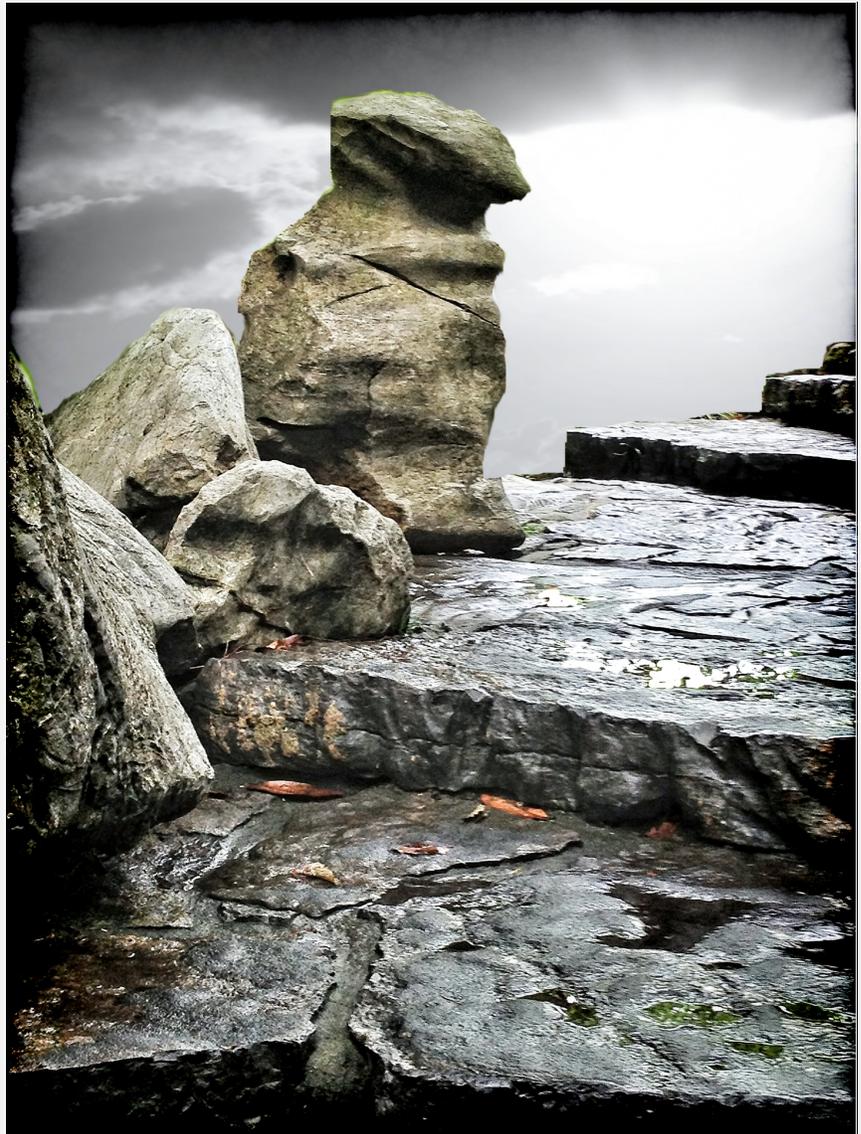


Jacob's Ladder; it is not clear who composed this. From [Ministry Matters](#); accessed June 5, 2017.



## Art Inspired by Jacob's Ladder (a series of graphics)

**Dream to Destiny**; from **Words of Life**; accessed June 5, 2017. Not sure who took this picture or where it is (or if this even computer generated).



Genesis 28:10–17 “Sinner, Heaven is Open to You.” The graphic is from a song on **YouTube**. Accessed June 5, 2017.



## Art Inspired by Jacob's Ladder (a series of graphics)

Genesis 28 Jacob's Dream at Bethel; from [Pinterest](#); accessed June 5, 2017.



Jacob's Dream (painting circa 1691 by Michael Willmann) from [Wikipedia](#), accessed March 7, 2019.



There are many aspects of this ladder to consider.

Genesis 28:12 Then Jacob [lit., *he*] dreamed, and he saw [lit., *behold*] a staircase [ramp, ladder, elevator?] stationary on the earth; and its top reached [into] the heavens. And he saw [lit., *behold*] the angels of Elohim ascending and descending on it. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 28:12 While Jacob was dreaming, he saw a staircase stationary on the earth, but its top reaching into the heavens. He watched the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.

### The Angels of God Ascending and Descending the Ladder (Various Commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *Ascending* refers to angels who tasks have been completed; *descending* refers to angels whose tasks have been assigned.<sup>140</sup>

Gill: *[This vision] may be expressive of the employment of angels in the affairs of Providence, who receive their commission from heaven, and execute it on earth, in which they are diligent, faithful, and constant; and of the ministry of them, both to Christ personal, and to his church and people, even to every particular believer.*

Dr. Peter Pett: *The general message is clear, that the messengers of God are watching over God's purposes in the world, and especially as regards Canaan... We note in passing that there is no idea of these angels as having wings, that is why they need a ramp. In fact angels are never described as having wings. Wings are limited to the cherubim/seraphim.*<sup>141</sup>

Poole: *Literally, and so it represented to Jacob the providence of God, who, though he dwell in heaven, extends his care and government to the earth, and particularly makes use of the angels as ministering spirits for the good of his people. And these angels do not appear idle, or standing still, but always in motion, either ascending to God to receive his commands, or descending to earth for the execution of them.*<sup>142</sup>

Wesley: *This [vision] might represent The providence of God, by which there is a constant correspondence kept up between heaven and earth. The counsels of heaven are executed on earth, and the affairs of this earth are all known in heaven. Providence doth his work gradually and by steps; angels are employed as ministering spirits to serve all the designs of providence, and the wisdom of God is at the upper end of the ladder, directing all the motions of second causes to his glory. The angels are active spirits, continually ascending and descending; they rest not day nor night. They ascend to give account of what they have done, and to receive orders; and descend to execute the orders they have received.*<sup>143</sup>

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

The Expositor's Bible Commentary continues: *[Esau's] fears are met by the vision. This desolate spot, unvisited by sheep or bird, has become busy with life, angels thronging the ample staircase. Here, where he thought himself lonely and outcast, he finds he has come to the very gate of heaven. His fond mother might at that hour, have been visiting his silent tent and shedding ineffectual tears on his abandoned bed, but he finds himself in the very house of God. cared for by angels. As the darkness had revealed to him the stars shining overhead, so, when the deceptive glare of waking life was dulled by sleep, he saw the actual realities which before were hidden. No wonder that a vision which so graphically showed the open communication between earth and heaven should have deeply impressed itself on Jacob's descendants. What more effectual consolation could any poor outcast, who felt he had spoiled his life, require than the memory of this staircase reaching from the pillow of the lonely fugitive from justice up into the very heart of heaven? How could any most desolate soul*

<sup>140</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>141</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>142</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>143</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

feel quite abandoned so long as the memory retained the vision of the angels thronging up and down.<sup>144</sup>

Genesis 28:12 While Jacob was dreaming, he saw a staircase stationary on the earth, but its top reaching into the heavens. He watched the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.

### Clarke's 3-Fold Explanation of Jacob's Ladder

A multitude of fanciful things have been spoken of Jacob's vision of the ladder, and its signification. It might have several designs, as God chooses to accomplish the greatest number of ends by the fewest and simplest means possible.

1. It is very likely that its primary design was to point out the providence of God, by which he watches over and regulates all terrestrial things; for nothing is left to merely natural causes; a heavenly agency pervades, actuates, and directs all. In his present circumstances it was highly necessary that Jacob should have a clear and distinct view of this subject, that he might be the better prepared to meet all occurrences with the conviction that all was working together for his good.
2. It might be intended also to point out the intercourse between heaven and earth, and the connection of both worlds by the means of angelic ministry. That this is fact we learn from many histories in the Old Testament; and it is a doctrine that is unequivocally taught in the New: Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?
3. It was probably a type of Christ, in whom both worlds meet, and in whom the Divine and human nature are conjoined. The Ladder was set up on the Earth, and the Top of it reached to Heaven; for God was manifested in the Flesh, and in him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Nothing could be a more expressive emblem of the incarnation and its effects; Jesus Christ is the grand connecting medium between heaven and earth, and between God and man. By him God comes down to man; through him man ascends to God.

It appears that our Lord applies the vision in this way himself, first, In that remarkable speech to Nathanael, **Hereafter you shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man** (John 1:51). Secondly, in his speech to Thomas, John 14:6 : **I am the Way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.**

Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:12.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 28:12 While Jacob was dreaming, he saw a staircase stationary on the earth, but its top reaching into the heavens. He watched the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.

### Jacob's Ladder (Diverse Descriptions from Various Commentators)

CB Notes: *Hebrew. sullam, from salal, to pile up like terraces; a way cast up, stairway. Occurs only here. Compare Isaiah 35:8–10; Isaiah 57:14; Isaiah 62:10.*<sup>145</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable: *The "ladder" ( Genesis 28:12, Heb. sullam) evidently resembled a stairway or ramp. Some interpreters take it as an allusion to a ziggurat while others believe it refers to the slope or ascent of the mountain of Bethel.*<sup>146</sup>

<sup>144</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll; ©1887-1896; public domain; from e-sword, Genesis 27:41–28:22.

<sup>145</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>146</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

## Jacob's Ladder (Diverse Descriptions from Various Commentators)

Great Texts of the Bible: *The ladder, which was the scenic framework of his vision, may have been but the terraced hillside on which he had been gazing ere he fell asleep. All day long, as he had pursued his journey, the glorious expanse of an Oriental sky.*<sup>147</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Some writers are of opinion that it was not a literal ladder that is meant, as it is impossible to conceive any imagery stranger and more unnatural than that of a ladder, whose base was on earth, while its top reached heaven, without having any thing on which to rest its upper extremity. They suppose that the little heap of stones, on which his head reclined for a pillow, being the miniature model of the object that appeared to his imagination, the latter was a gigantic mountain pile, whose sides, indented in the rock, gave it the appearance of a scaling ladder. There can be no doubt that this use of the original term was common among the early Hebrews; as Josephus, describing the town of Ptolemais (Acre), says it was bounded by a mountain, which, from its projecting sides, was called "the ladder," and the stairs that led down to the city are, in the original, termed a ladder (Nehemiah 3:15) though they were only a flight of steps cut in the side of the rock.*<sup>148</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *The word 'sullam' ('heaped up) suggests a kind of ramp leading upwards. And moving up and down this ramp were angels of God.*<sup>149</sup>

Jacobus: *Whether it was the vision of a common ladder or flight of steps, or whether, as some suppose, it was a pile of mountain terraces, matters little. The flight of steps hewn in the rocky sides of the mountain near Tyre, on the edge of the Mediterranean, is called "the ladder of Tyre."*<sup>150</sup>

Utle: *The term for ladder (found only here in the OT) is from the root "to stack something up" (BDB 700, KB 757). The area is known for its flat stones. Instead of a ladder in the modern sense, it was probably a stair-step arrangement of these large stones. Jesus uses this staircase in John 1:51 to describe Himself.*<sup>151</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *It has been suggested, e.g. by Stanley (Sinai and Palestine, p. 219) that the ledges of rock, one above the other, on the Bethel hill produced an impression on the faculties of Jacob, which took the shape, in his dream, of a flight of steps. By "a ladder," LXX κλίμαξ, Lat. scala, we must not understand a house ladder, with uprights and rung of wood; but, rather, a stairway, or ascent by successive terraces. Possibly, the "ladder" here mentioned resembled the ascent to Babylonian and Assyrian temples, in which the shrine or sanctuary, on the summit, was reached by steps leading through seven terraces, corresponding to the seven planets.*<sup>152</sup>

Whedon: *The vision, manifestly, was that of a lofty passage-way, either a ladder with rounds, or a staircase with steps, or piles of mountains, one upon another, looking like a wondrous highway of passage to the skies. The great thing was an open passage-way between earth and heaven.*<sup>153</sup>

Wenstrom: *[T]he noun sullam...does "not" refer to a ladder but rather to a broad and high flight of stairs since the latter would be better suited for angels ascending to and descending from the third heaven.*<sup>154</sup>

<sup>147</sup> *Great Texts of the Bible*; Edited by the Rev. James Hastings, D.D.; from e-sword; Genesis 28:16–17

<sup>148</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>149</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>150</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>151</sup> Dr. Bob Utle, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 28:12.

<sup>152</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>153</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 28:12.

<sup>154</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:12); accessed May 28, 2017.

## Jacob's Ladder (Diverse Descriptions from Various Commentators)

The NEV commentary: *The idea of a stairway leading into Heaven of course has obvious connections with the ziggurats of those times; the white limestone cliffs or slopes around him merged into a ziggurat in his dreams. But note that those stairways had a temple on the ground immediately where the stairway started, and led up to a temple at the summit. On a human level, Jacob's subconscious was thinking of pagan temple systems. But God turned all this around. For the man Jacob lying there that night, in all his weakness, was a temple, connected by the Angels to Yahweh's Heavenly temple. And we too in all our weaknesses are the temples of God on this earth. Thus his idolatrous dream of a Ziggurat was turned into an assurance of Divine care for him, the shrine which topped Mesopotamian ziggurats being turned by God in the vision into the throne of Yahweh. Indeed, 'Babylon' meant "gate of God", and in thinking that he was at heaven's gates, Jacob was confusing Babylon and the true city of God. But still God worked through all this.<sup>155</sup> Perhaps this should be in a separate category entitled, Jacob's dream.*

James Burton Coffman writes most passionately on this point: *The word here is ladder, not stairway or staircase. It is most reprehensible that critical scholars pervert what is written here by changing ladder to stairway. "The word [~cullum], used only here in the Bible, is well established as meaning ladder. Seeing that what the word means is ladder, why do the critics want to change it? First, why did the Holy Spirit use this word? Surely the word for a terraced staircase was known in those days. And, therefore, we must conclude that this word was chosen to indicate that it was not such a staircase.*

E. A. Spenser (from the Anchor Bible, quoted by Coffman): *It goes without saying that a picture of angels going up and down in a steady stream is hard to reconcile with an ordinary ladder ... The Mesopotamian ziggurats were equipped with a flight of stairs leading to the summit ... Only a stairway can account for Jacob's later description of it as a 'gateway to heaven.*

Coffman continues: *So, there is no textual basis whatever for changing "ladder" to "staircase." The reason lies in the purpose of making this dream purely a human dream without God anywhere visible in it. Note the prejudice here that a "steady stream of angels" (where did he read that) could not go up and down at the same time on an ordinary ladder! Where does this text refer to this ladder as "ordinary"? The word occurs once in the whole Bible.*

Coffman continues: *Also, how does the critic know that angels could not ascend and descend at the same time on the device Jacob dreamed of here? The critic did not tell us where he got all that information about how many angels could stand on the point of a needle! As we have pointed out, the medieval disputants never did solve that problem. Have the modern critics done so? As a matter of faith, changes in the sacred text that are supported solely by the undependable opinions of men should be rejected.*

Coffman concludes: *Once they have made this dream a vision of the stairway of some pagan shrine, they attribute this dream to Jacob's having seen such a ziggurat, of which there is no proof whatever. And God, as the true author of the vision, is left out of it altogether. Such piddlings with the Word of God are not interpretation; they are denials! It is a similar denial to make this vision the result of the steppe-like terrain where Jacob rested.<sup>156</sup> Interesting, but I think that Coffman got much more exercised than anyone ought to have on this particular point.*

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Genesis 28:12 While Jacob was dreaming, he saw a staircase stationary on the earth, but its top reaching into the heavens. He watched the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.

<sup>155</sup> From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen28com.html> accessed June 2, 2017.

<sup>156</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

## How did Jacob's Ladder Benefit Jacob (Several Commentators)

Poole: *[This dream] was a most seasonable vision for Jacob in his sad and sorrowful condition, that he might see that though he was forsaken and persecuted by men, and forced to flee away secretly for fear of his life, yet he neither was, nor should be, neglected or forsaken by God in this whole journey.*<sup>157</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown on the benefits of this vision to Jacob: *But whether the image presented to the mental eye of Jacob were a common ladder, or such a mountain pile as has been described, the design of this vision was to afford comfort, encouragement, and confidence to the lonely fugitive, both in his present circumstances and as to his future prospects. His thoughts during the day must have been painful - he would be his own self-accuser that he had brought exile and privation upon himself - and above all, that though he had obtained the forgiveness of his father, he had much reason to fear lest God might have forsaken him. Solitude affords time for reflection; and it was now that God began to bring Jacob under a course of religious instruction and training. To dispel his fears and allay the inward tumult of his mind, nothing was better fitted than the vision of the gigantic ladder, which reached from himself to heaven, and on which the angels were continually ascending and descending from God Himself on their benevolent errands.*<sup>158</sup>

Wesley: *This vision gave seasonable comfort to Jacob, letting him know that he had both a good guide and good guard; that though he was to wander from his father's house, yet he was the care of Providence, and the charge of the holy angels.*<sup>159</sup>

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Genesis 28:12 While Jacob was dreaming, he saw a staircase stationary on the earth, but its top reaching into the heavens. He watched the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.

## The Possible Significance of Jacob's Ladder (Various Commentators)

The New Berkeley Bible comments: *A ladder between earth and heaven means that these two sphere are vitally connected; there is travel in between, and the angels were making use of the ladder; so may we.*<sup>160</sup>

Wenstrom: *The fact that these angels are ascending to and descending from the throne room of God indicates that these angels had uninterrupted, continuous communication with God. The angels were first of all said to be ascending to God meaning they were coming to God from protecting Jacob. Then, the passage says that they were descending from the throne room of God to Jacob in order to protect him. Therefore, unknown to Jacob was that these elect angels had been with Jacob all the time on this trip.*<sup>161</sup>

The NEV commentary: *It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. The vision of Jacob's ladder showed the Angels coming and going, perhaps meaning that they are sometimes physically present with us, sometimes not.*<sup>162</sup>

<sup>157</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:6.

<sup>158</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>159</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>160</sup> *The Modern Language Bible (The New Berkeley Version)*, Revised Edition; ©1969 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 27 (footnote).

<sup>161</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:12); accessed May 28, 2017.

<sup>162</sup> From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen28com.html> accessed June 3, 2017.

## The Possible Significance of Jacob's Ladder (Various Commentators)

Poole: *Mystically, and so it represents Christ, by whom heaven and earth are united, who is called the way to heaven, which this ladder was, who, as the Head of angels, is perpetually sending them forth either to God or from God to minister to the heirs of salvation, Hebrews 1:14; and this explication or accommodation of this vision, is warranted by our Saviour himself, John 1:51.*<sup>163</sup>

Gill (paraphrased): *The ladder perhaps denotes the providence of God, and the various steps of it, in order to bring about His Own glory and the good of His people. This ladder is steady, firm, and sure, and reaches to all things here on earth; and in an special manner is concerned about the people of God, their protection and safety. This ladder is directed and governed according to the will, counsels, and purposes of God in heaven; a view of which must be very encouraging to Jacob in his present circumstances.*

Gill continues (paraphrased): *In the alternative, this ladder may refer to the incarnation and mediation of Christ, Who in His human nature was to be in the fulness of time on earth, there to live a while, obey, suffer, and die. So it is for this ladder set on earth; with His divine nature on top of it, which reached heaven. Here, the Lord was in that nature before His incarnation, and from there He came. Indeed, here He was in that when on earth; and as man, He ascended on high when He had done his work, and is now higher than the heavens. He may be fitly represented hereby as the Mediator, Who has reconciled things in heaven and things on earth, and has as it were joined and united heaven and earth together: and the various rungs in this ladder, so considered, are Christ's interposition, from eternity past; to His incarnation in time (His being under the law, His obedience to it; His sufferings, the shedding of His blood, and the death of the cross); followed by His resurrection from the dead, His ascension to heaven, and His session at the right hand of God, and intercession on our behalf there.*

Gill continues (paraphrased): *Moreover this vision may point out to us Christ as the way to His Father, of access unto Him, and acceptance with Him, by which He communicates the blessings of His grace to men, and by which they ascend to God with their prayers and praises to Him. This vision represents the way to heaven and eternal happiness; the various steps to which are election in Him, redemption by Him, regeneration by His Spirit and grace, the several graces of His Spirit, faith, hope, and love, the justification by His righteousness, the pardon by His blood, our adoption through Him, and, finally, the resurrection of the dead.*<sup>164</sup>

The NEV commentary: *The stairway or ladder was "set", literally, erected or stood up. The same word is used for how Jacob later at this very same place stood up or erected an altar (Gen. 35:14). A different word is used here in :18. Jacob realized that his altars and sacrifices were ascending to God Himself personally, just as this magnificent staircase led to God, with Angels ascending and descending upon it, between God and himself. This is the power of prayer, of covenant relationship, of sacrifice and fellowship with God. The idea of reaching up to heaven and God reaching down from heaven is meant literally here, but it is also a metaphor meaning that God paid attention to the point of feeling whatever was done on earth (Gen. 11:5; 18:21; 2 Chron. 28:9; Jer. 51:9; Rev. 18:5). This sensitivity of God, and His response, is articulated through the Angels. Jacob was being taught that it is not just the situation at Babel or Sodom which elicits this huge attention; but the state of a lonely fugitive sleeping rough in the semi-desert. He deals directly with individuals. The order "ascending and descending" suggests that our situation is as it were taken up to God in heaven, and then He responds through Angelic means [descending].*<sup>165</sup>

Hawker: *Did not this ladder represent the constancy of the communication kept open between the Lord and his people? The top reaching to heaven, representing the divine nature of Christ; and the bottom resting on the earth, his human nature. And the angels of God ascending and descending, do they not confirm that scripture, Hebrews 1:14?*<sup>166</sup>

The Pulpit Commentary makes 3 points:

<sup>163</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>164</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>165</sup> From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen28com.html> accessed June 2, 2017.

<sup>166</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:13.

## The Possible Significance of Jacob's Ladder (Various Commentators)

- (1) A ladder reaching from earth to heaven; suggesting the thought of an open pathway of communication between God and man, and in particular between the heirs of the promise and their covenant God.
- (2) The angels of God ascending and descending upon it; symbolizing God's providential government of the world by means of the celestial hosts (Psalm 103:20, Psalm 103:21; Psalm 104:4), but especially the ministry of angels towards the heirs of salvation (Psalm 91:11; Hebrews 1:14). A truth henceforward to be exemplified in the experience of Jacob, and afterwards more fully, indeed completely and ideally, realized in Christ.
- (3) Jehovah standing above it. The situation occupied by the symbolic presence of Jehovah was designed to indicate two things: first, that Jehovah was the true and only source whence blessing could descend to man; and, second, that the pathway which had been opened up for sinful man conducted straight into God's immediate presence. Thus it was a visible unveiling of the grace and glory comprehended in the covenant, and now fully revealed by the gospel.<sup>167</sup>

J.F. Montgomery: *The ladder was not a new thing; it had existed always. The vision showed what exists everywhere (2Kings 6:17). The ladder shows the truth which should stamp our lives. God is love, and love means care. This is for all. Not our love that causes it. Our love, trust, life spring from that truth. The living God is close to us. His hand touches our life at every point. How is it that we are unconscious of this?*

Montgomery continues: *Jacob was startled to find him near. Because year by year the world goes on as before, unbelievers deny God's active presence, worldly men think not of it, and even godly men sometimes forget, for we cannot see the top of the ladder. But God, there, directs all.*<sup>168</sup>

The Geneva Bible: *Christ is the ladder by which God and man are joined together, and by whom the angels minister to us: all graces are given to us by him, and we ascend to heaven by Him.*<sup>169</sup>

Wesley: *The [ladder represents the] mediation of Christ. He is this ladder: the foot on earth in his human nature, the top in heaven in his divine nature; or the former is his humiliation, the latter is his exaltation. All the intercourse between heaven and earth since the fall is by this ladder. Christ is the way: all God's favours come to us, and all our services come to him, by Christ. If God dwell with us, and we with him, it is by Christ: we have no way of getting to heaven but by this ladder; for the kind offices the angels do us, are all owing to Christ, who hath reconciled things on earth and things in heaven, Colossians 1:20.*<sup>170</sup>

<sup>167</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 28:10–22 (homiletics).

<sup>168</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 28:15 (Homilies by J.f. Montgomery).

<sup>169</sup> Geneva Bible Translation Notes; 1599, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>170</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

## The Possible Significance of Jacob's Ladder (Various Commentators)

Robert Dean: *Jacob in his dream is looking at the fact there is earth and there is heaven. God is at the top of the ladder. He as the representative of the people who will come from him is at the bottom of the ladder. Ascending and descending on the ladder are the angels and we have to fit that within the structure of what angels do. Angels are involved in the administration of God's plan for history. The administration of God's plan for history is a ladder that comes to Bethel on the earth, to the land that God has promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This ladder is coming right to Jacob. He is the individual that is the focal point of the plan of God for human history and the plan of God's blessing for human history at that point in time. But Jacob as the seed is only a foreshadowing of the ultimate seed who is the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is the Lord Jesus Christ who is the seed through whom all nations will be blessed. So the fulfillment of the type that is seen there in Jacob's ladder is that this stairway is replaced by the true mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy 2:5, 6, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." It is Jesus Christ as someone who is true humanity that takes this place and takes a stand between man and God. The word "mediator" is the translation of the Greek word MESITES [mesothj], one who unites parties or who mediates for peace. He is the go-between. He must have something that relates to both sides, He is trusted by both and He stands between God and man. This relates to His high-priestly ministry. In the Old Testament typology this is grounded in the Abrahamic covenant, which is the basis for this imagery in Genesis chapter 28.*<sup>171</sup>

A.D. Davidson's summary of this verse is clearly the best, as it is so direct and succinct: *From this glimpse into the secrets of the unseen world, it appears: (1) that the angels are interested in the well-being of God's people; (2) that heaven is a place of activity; (3) that there is a way of communication open between heaven and earth. This way represents the mediation of Christ.*<sup>172</sup>

I believe that Davidson nails the significance of this vision.

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Genesis 28:12 While Jacob was dreaming, he saw a staircase stationary on the earth, but its top reaching into the heavens. He watched the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.

### James Burton Coffman Explains the Ladder

But that night, God appeared to him in a dream. As the author of Hebrews said (Hebrews 1:1), God spoke to the fathers "in various ways." In this instance, it was by a dream. God reassured Jacob of his love and protection, confirmed to him the Abrahamic covenant, and promised him heavenly protection until he should return to that land again. God told him of his ultimate destiny as the head of the Chosen Nation. But what was the meaning of that fantastic ladder, reaching all the way to heaven (not to the summit of a Babylonian ziggurat)?

Many dreams are not even remembered the next morning, and in rare cases any longer than a few days, but this one has haunted the imaginations of men for millenniums of time. The Son of God himself spoke of it! Why? Because this dream did not derive from physical or environmental conditions that are sometimes received as a cause of dreams. This one was from God. It was not merely intended to bless Jacob, but all subsequent generations of mankind as well. Among the great teachings that are inherent in it are the following:

1. The continual interest of God in his human creation is evident. Earth is not isolated from God or from heaven. There is a line of communication. Countless angels are busy as divine servants "doing service for them that shall be the heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:14)

<sup>171</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed June 2, 2017.

<sup>172</sup> *The Sermon Bible Commentary*; ©1888-1893; in the Public Domain; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll, M.A., LL.D., from e-sword, Genesis 28:10-15.

## James Burton Coffman Explains the Ladder

2. The omnipresence of God, called also His ubiquitousness, was also shown in this dream. Jacob was away from home, in a strange land, and fleeing from the wrath of a brother, but one cannot flee beyond the watchful eye of the Lord. No more could Jacob than Jonah, run away from God. Every man must discover (soon or late) that "Surely God is in this place (every place)" whether men know it or not.
3. The ladder is also a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The ladder was "the way" between earth and heaven; and Christ affirmed that he is indeed "The Way" (John 14:6); and, as Jacob saw the angels of God ascending and descending upon that ladder, Jesus affirmed to Nathaniel that he would "see angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John 1:51). The ladder is therefore a perfect representation of Christ in that in him God came down to men, and in him men themselves may go up to God and be in heaven with him forever. Christ is the only avenue of communication between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5), just as this ladder in the dream was the only way to God's presence. To miss this significance of the ladder is to lose the most important thing in the chapter.

From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

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Genesis 28:12 While Jacob was dreaming, he saw a staircase stationary on the earth, but its top reaching into the heavens. He watched the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. (Kukis paraphrase)

Jesus, in John 1:51, references this incident.

John 1:45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

John 1:46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

John 1:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"

John 1:48 Nathanael said to Him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

John 1:49 Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

John 1:50–51 Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (ESV; capitalized)

## Explaining John 1:51 (Various Commentators)

Wenstrom: *The Lord Jesus uses this incident with Jacob in John 1:51 as an illustration of the fact that the believer has access to the Father through Him (See John 14:6; Acts 4:12). John 1:51 And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."*

Wenstrom continues: *Therefore, the Lord Jesus is telling Nathaniel that He is the high and broad staircase that extends from earth to heaven, which implies that He is the "Mediator" between heaven and earth or in other words, between God and man. 1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*<sup>173</sup>

<sup>173</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:12); accessed May 29, 2017.

## Explaining John 1:51 (Various Commentators)

The Pulpit Commentary: *John 1:51...shows that Christ regarded either the ladder in Jacob's vision as an emblem of himself, the one Mediator between God and man (Calvin, Luther, Ainsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Murphy), or, what is more probable, Jacob himself as type of Him, the Son of man, in Whom the living intercourse between earth and heaven depicted in the vision of the angel-trodden staircase was completely fulfilled (Hengstenberg, Baumgarten, Lange, Bush).*<sup>174</sup>

J. Vernon McGee: *The vision that God gave to him in the dream was of a ladder that reached up to heaven. What does that ladder mean? Well, the Lord Jesus interpreted it when He called Nathanael, as recorded in John 1:45-51 . By the way, Nathanael was a wiseacre, and when he heard of Jesus, he said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Our Lord dealt with this fellow. Nathanael asked, "How in the world do you know me like that?" And Jesus said, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael's response was, "**Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.**" He was pretty easy to convince, although he was a skeptic at the beginning. Let me give you the exact quote: "**Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe this? You will see greater things than these. And he says unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter you [all] will see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man**" ( John 1:50-51 ).*

McGee continues: *What is that ladder? That ladder is Christ. The angels were ascending and descending upon the Son of man. The angels ministered to Him; they were subject to His command. Nathanael will hear from the top of that ladder the voice of God, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." My friend, God is speaking to mankind through Christ in our day. We cannot come to the Father directly. Every now and then I hear someone say in a testimony, "When I was converted, I came directly to God. I have access to God." We do not, my friend. We come through Christ; we have access to the Father through Christ. That is the only way we can get into God's presence. The Lord Jesus said, "**... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me**" ( John 14:6 ). The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the ladder — not one that we can climb but one that we can trust.*

McGee concludes: *This truth was given first to Jacob, the usurper. To Nathanael our Lord said, "**You are an Israelite in whom there is no guile**" — that is, no Jacob. Nathanael was a wiseacre, a humorist, but he was not a trickster like Jacob. But this man, Jacob — God is going to have to deal with him. God has given him this wonderful, glorious promise, but, oh, Jacob has so much to learn.*<sup>175</sup>

Robert Dean provides, I believe, the best explanation: *This is called Jacob's ladder. The Hebrew word that is translated "ladder," sullam, is more accurately translated and understood to be a stairway. So this is a stairway to heaven. What is going on here? He has this vision and then God is going to speak to him. In the next chapter he meets Leah and Rachel. After that when he tries to get away from Laban we have this whole episode where he makes this deal about the striped and spotted animals. We see God blessing him, and then he comes back with all of his wives and children and concubines and there is the episode at Bethel where God appears him again, and where he wrestles with the angel of God. God strikes him on the hip so that he is crippled at that point and he receives a new name, Israel, prince with God, because he wrestles with God. So what are these events all about? The Holy Spirit is not just giving us stories, He is demonstrating certain things about God and the outworking of His plan in these episodes. To give us a clue as to what this is all about we need to turn to the New Testament. There is a direct allusion to this episode, Jacob's ladder, given in John chapter one.*

<sup>174</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 28:12.

<sup>175</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) (Genesis 28); accessed June 4, 2017 (slightly edited).

## Explaining John 1:51 (Various Commentators)

Dean continues: *In John chapter one John is introducing us to the Lord Jesus Christ. He begins at the beginning of the chapter by introducing Him at the eternal LOGOS [logoj]: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Then in verse 14 we are told: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Interwoven with the introduction of the LOGOS and the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ we have the introduction of the primary witness, John the Baptist. Then we find that John has a couple of disciples and they are with him when Jesus comes down to the Jordan to be baptized. It is at that point that John the Baptist announces: "Behold the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." Immediately these two disciples, one of whom is John the apostle, leave and follow Jesus. A couple of days later Jesus departs to go to Galilee and there he discovers another disciple, Philip—v. 43. Verse 44: "Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter." And then Philip went to find his friend, Nathanael. He found Nathanael and said to him: "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." He is identifying Jesus as the Messiah. Verse 46: "And Nathanael said to him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, Come and see." Verse 47: "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" This is a statement that related to the personal integrity of Nathanael, that this is someone who is truly seeking the Messiah and has been studying the Word. Verses 48, 49: "Nathanael saith unto him, How do you know me? Jesus answered and said to him, Before that Philip called thee, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. This indicates the omniscience of Jesus Christ. This is the Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity utilizing His divine attributes—not for the purpose of solving His own human problems but in order to demonstrate that He is who He claims to be, the eternal second person of the Trinity. Nathanael answered and said to him, Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." Verse 50: "Jesus answered and said to him, Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, you believe? you will see greater things than these."*

Dean continues: *What was Nathanael doing under the fig tree? Nathanael it seems is either reading or he is meditating and thinking about a particular incident in Scripture, and the Scripture that he is focused on and trying to wrestle with and understand is the episode of Jacob's ladder in Genesis chapter twenty-eight. We know that because it is the only thing that can make sense of the next statement from Jesus. "And he said to him, Verily, verily, I say to you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Notice the similarity between Genesis 28 and this verse. The only difference is that Jacob in his dream saw the angels ascending and descending on a ladder. What replaces the ladder in Jesus' statement is Himself as the Son of Man. Son of Man is a title for the Messiah that comes out of Daniel chapter seven. It is clearly a messianic title. In Daniel chapter 7 we see the historic flow of the kingdoms of man in their bestiality. Then the Son of man comes in the end times and He destroys the kingdom of man and establishes His kingdom. So Son of Man is this messianic title. But it is the Son of Man now who is the mediator, the go-between, between earth and heaven that replaces the ladder of Jacob.<sup>176</sup>*

Because of Dean's comments, I realize that Jacob's dreams tend to have the most complex and interesting imagery. I am not sure exactly what that means. My guess is, the dream is truly Jacob's, but God is somehow able to enter into that dream, yet He allows for Jacob's personal imagery.

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We are in the midst of the angelic conflict, and both fallen and elect angels are found on this earth among us. We do not necessarily see them in this dispensation (although I am not sure if the Bible is clear on this point?). In any case, I will not be scouring the faces of strangers trying to figure out who is an angel and who is a regular person. I would figure on them being regular people all the time.

We learn from this dream (and from many other passages) that angels travel freely between earth and the third heaven. To Jacob, it appeared as though they were ascending and descending upon a ladder. The mode of transportation is unknown to us even today and perhaps today it might look to us like an escalator. What is

<sup>176</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed June 2, 2017.

important is the free, unhampered access which angels have to both heaven and earth. We know from Job that Satan goes to heaven and accuses us with information which he got on earth and that God does listen to this and then dismisses it on the basis of Christ's death on the cross.

77% of adult Americans believe in angels, according to a [December 2011 Associated Press-GfK poll](#). I must admit this surprised me; but it is also good to know, in general, that 77% of adult Americans believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, according to a 2012 [Rasmussen poll](#).

### The Abbreviated Doctrine of Angels (Angelology)

1. As previously discussed, these are 2 angels who have come with our Lord to Abraham. However, it is not clear at this point that Abraham knows that this is Jehovah Elohim or that these are angels. Their purpose seems to be tied more to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah than it is to meeting Abraham. Genesis 18:1–2, 16, 22 19:1, 12–13
2. Our word for *angel* is a transliteration from the Greek word *aggelos* (ἄγγελος) [pronounced *AHN-geh-loss*], which means *messenger, envoy, one who is sent, angel, a messenger from God*. Strong's #32. Although this word is often translated *angel* (Matthew 2:19 28:2, 5 Luke 1:13–19 2:9–10), it is not used exclusively for *angels* (Matthew 11:10).
3. The existence of angels is clearly taught in the Bible, as they are found over 100 times in the Old Testament alone. However, this did not mean that people encountered angels all of the time. In Genesis 6, apparently every person had some kind of contact with fallen angels; but after that point, their appearance to man was rare; and since the completion of the canon of Scripture, it is not clear that any contact is allowed between man and angels.
4. Angels were created before man; and man is clearly inferior to angels (although this, apparently, will change). Psalm 148:2–5 Hebrews 2:6–9 2Peter 2:11
5. There are both fallen and elect angels. Elect angels have never sinned; fallen angels have followed Satan (which is about a third of the angels—Revelation 12:4). Fallen angels are also called demons in Scripture. Psalm 103:20 Matthew 24:41 Mark 8:38 2Corinthians 12:7 Jude 6 Revelation 12:7–12
6. Although I have heard discussion by many theologians about the redemption of angels, I have not come across any evidence that an angel can sin against God and then later be redeemed.
7. Angels apparently have an ability to adopt a physical, human form which functions just as our bodies function. They are able to eat, they are able to grab, and, in the case of Genesis 6, able to copulate with and impregnate human women. Genesis 6 18:8 19:16 Hebrews 13:2
8. However, angels appear to have bodies of light which are not governed by the same laws of physics that we are. Daniel 9:21 10:5–6 Matthew 28:2–4 Colossians 1:16 Hebrews 1:7, 14
9. Although angels are powerful beings, they cannot stand between you and God; they cannot take your salvation from you. Romans 8:38
10. We appear to be an object lesson for angels, who spend much of their time observing mankind. Eccl 5:6 Daniel 4:13, 17, 23 1Cor 4:9 Eph 3:10 1Timothy 5:21 Hebrews 12:1. This is not too different from our obsession with watching movies.

Some of this material came from:

Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., The. D.; *Systematic Theology*; Kregel Publications; ©1976 Dallas Theological Seminary; Vol. 7, pp. 13–15.

Robert Dean's Notes, [Genesis Lesson #98](#), 7/19/2005; accessed April 17, 2012.

<http://christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-t005.html> accessed April 17, 2012.

For additional study, try:

<http://ichthys.com/2A-Angelo.htm>

<http://biblestudyplanet.com/angels-and-demons/>

<http://bible.org/article/angelology-doctrine-angels>

<http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/angels.html>

As an aside, I mention the poll about believing that Christ rose from the dead, because this is directly related to our preservation as a nation; one of the lessons that we will learn in Genesis 18.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 28:12 While Jacob was dreaming, he saw a staircase stationary on the earth, but its top reaching into the heavens. He watched the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.

### Commentators on Angels

Wenstrom: *We have seen in our past studies in the book of Genesis that the elect angels are employed by God to guard (Genesis 3:24), to communicate with God's people (Genesis 18:1) and to protect God's people (Genesis 19:1-22). Hebrews 1:14, "Are not all angels servant spirits who are divinely commissioned and repeatedly dispatched for service on behalf of those who are destined to inherit salvation."*

Wenstrom continues: *Therefore, the presence of these elect angels would suggest to Jacob that the preincarnate Christ who appeared to him in this dream at Bethel would also be present with him through these elect angels. This revelation would be a great encouragement to Jacob as he made his way into exile.<sup>177</sup>*

Whedon comments: *What notion of angels Jacob may have had before we know not, but here was a sudden and glorious revelation of the numerous host of ministering spirits of the heirs of salvation. Hebrews 1:14. Strangely have certain Rationalistic critics supposed that the Israelites first derived their ideas of angels and spirits during their Babylonian exile.<sup>178</sup>*

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 28:12 And he dreamed. And behold! A ladder was 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!

Genesis 28:12 While Jacob was dreaming, he saw a staircase stationary on the earth, but its top reaching into the heavens. He watched the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. (Kukis paraphrase)

Twice we have the word *behold*. This is the demonstrative particle hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*], which means, *lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out*. Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243. When this is a part of the narrative, but not a part of what a person is saying, the intent of this word appears to be something which is observed by those in the narrative. Understood in this way, this might be reasonably translated *I see, he sees*.

I should point out that, on occasion, when explaining something from the Hebrew, I don't always take this from a particular Hebrew source (although I have many reference books on the Hebrew language and its usage). Sometimes my observations are from seeing this or that word used over and over again in a particular way. In this case, what we are doing, in part, is looking at an updated way of understanding this particle. After all, who in your acquaintance, when they want you to know something important that they saw, says, *and behold!?* Therefore, I attempt to update some words into a current vocabulary, and yet still maintain the word's intent and/or meaning. Jacob saw these things in his dream; they struck him as being rather dramatic. In conveying this dream, he tries to put the reader into the midst of this vision. Jacob wants us to be able to see what he saw; but this is not some place at sunset that he can drag us to and say, "Whoa, check this out!" Instead, he says *and behold!* But, all Jacob is doing is telling us what he saw, with an emphasis upon the *wow factor* of it. I realize that translating this *and he sees* loses the wow factor of it all; but it is the best I can come up with so far (apart from, *and suddenly he saw*). This gives us:

<sup>177</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:12); accessed May 28, 2017.

<sup>178</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 28:12.

**Genesis 28:12** And he dreamed. And he sees a ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven! And he [also] sees the angels of God ascending and descending on it!

As a part of divine revelation, God allowed men to see some forms of reality in their dreams. God spoke to some men in their dreams. In a previous lesson, I alluded to angels who observe us. These are the angels who are constantly going between heaven and earth. We read in Job 1:6–7 **Now there was a day when the sons of God [= angels] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."** (ESV). So angels, fallen and elect, have the ability to go between heaven and earth. Angels have the ability to go about the earth, traveling as they so choose, as God has allowed. We have no idea how fast angels can travel. It seems from heaven to earth is not a big deal (as per this vision; and the angels spoken of in Scripture); but we do not know how quickly an angel can travel of New York to California.

On some isolated occasions, God allows these angels to be seen (we have the example of the two angels who went to Sodom and rescued Lot in Genesis 19—they were seen by everyone, but not perceived to be angels).

Here, Jacob is seeing a bit of this reality—something which most people will never see during their lives on earth. However, there is no need for such revelation in this era, because we have the complete Living Word of God. We do not need to see visions of angels; we have been informed in Scripture of their existence and their purpose.

As believers, we are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. We all have the same assets that Jesus Christ had in His humanity. Therefore, we do not need God whispering in our ears, “Up ahead, I want you to make a left turn, and then at the stop light, make a right.” This is *why* Peter tells us to *follow in His steps* (1Peter 2:21; see also John 13:15 1Corinthians 11:1). What we do is based upon understanding the Word of God and not upon constant direction from on high.

Jesus Christ accomplished many things when He walked this earth. He fulfilled both the Law and the Prophets. Then He died for our sins, redeeming us. But he also *test-drove* the spiritual life for believers today. The life that He led, empowered by God the Holy Spirit, is the same life that we Christians live today. In His humanity, He grew spiritually. The Bible tells us that He did (Luke 2:52). He relied upon God the Holy Spirit; the Bible tells us that He did (Isaiah 11:1–3). He accomplished the plan of God for His life without constantly requiring from God the Father whether he should make a left or a right turn up ahead. Another thing that Jesus did in the 1<sup>st</sup> advent was to fulfill the many Old Testament types which pointed towards Him (such as, Abraham offering up his son Isaac to God).

As His children, we have received His spiritual life as our blessing. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we are given a full set of spiritual blessings. Therefore, we do not require dreams or visions to move us along. Such things are not needed to accomplish the will of God; such things are not necessary to grow spiritually.

Back to our verse:

**Genesis 28:12a** Then Jacob [lit., *he*] dreamed, and he saw [lit., *behold*] a staircase [ramp, ladder, elevator?] stationary on the earth;...

There are two unusual words found here. The first is çullâm (סֻלָּם) [pronounced *sool-LAWM*]. We really do not know what this word means, as it occurs only here. This is similar to the Jewish word for *highway, raised way, public road*. Jacob is describing the best that he can what it is that he sees (like the Apostle John in the book of Revelation). It is possible that what he sees is different than what we know technologically today (although, it is also possible that *staircase* or *ramp* may be good translations of this word).

The next unusual verb is the Hophal participle of nâtsab (נָצַב) [pronounced *naw-TSAH<sup>B</sup>V*], which means, *being fixed [in one place]; being stationary; having been determined; standing in place*. These are meanings specific to the Hophal participle. Here, the participle functions as an adjective. Strong's #5324 BDB #662.

Jacob, with a vocabulary out of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C., describes the best way that he can what it is that he is seeing here. There is a way for angels to go from earth to God in the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven. Whether this is a wormhole, an elevator or a DeLorean fitted with a flux capacitor, we do not know. We do know that angels are constantly moving between heaven and earth. We don't know if what Jacob sees is representative of this movement, or if he actually observed the means by which angels move between heaven and earth.

**Genesis 28:12a** Then Jacob [lit., *he*] dreamed, and he saw [lit., *behold*] a staircase [ramp, ladder, elevator, escalator?] stationary on the earth; and its top reached [into] the heavens.

The word for *top* is a very common Hebrew word: rō'sh (ראש or שׂאָר) [pronounced *rohsh*]; and it means, *head [of a man, city, state, nation, place, family, priest], top [of a mountain]; chief, prince, officer; front, choicest, best; height [of stars]; sum*. Strong's #7218 BDB #910. The verb here is nâga' (עָגַג) [pronounced *naw-GAHG*], which is a Hiphil participle that means, *being caused to touch, caused to reach [to anything]; coming to, attaining*. Again, these meanings are particular to this stem and verbal type. Strong's #5060 BDB #619. So, whatever it is the Jacob sees, the top of it reaches into the heavens, into the domain of God.

A question which occurs to me: *why this particular vision? Why does God let Jacob see the passage of angels between the earth and the heavens?* Let me suggest that God is exposing Jacob to the fact that there is a lot more going on in life than his simple life. There is a lot more at stake than what Jacob gets or doesn't get.

Let me repeat what A.D. Davidson's said: *From this glimpse into the secrets of the unseen world, it appears: (1) that the angels are interested in the well-being of God's people; (2) that heaven is a place of activity; (3) that there is a way of communication open between heaven and earth. This way represents the mediation of Christ.*<sup>179</sup>

Jacob is a man who is completely out for himself; he will deceive his own father, if it is in his own best interest. God is telling Jacob that there is more going on than the blessings which he desires.

David Guzik: *Jacob now knew God was closer than ever and there was real access and interaction between heaven and earth.*<sup>180</sup>

Furthermore, once Jacob arrives in Paddan-aram, he will meet his uncle who will be every bit the con man that Jacob is—but to what purpose? What does his uncle receive by conning Jacob that he would not receive from the hand of God?

Jesus explained it in this way: "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? (Luke 12:22b–26) Jesus told the disciples, "What exactly are you going to accomplish for yourselves by worrying or by being anxious? Doesn't God know about your needs?" This is true of Jacob as well.

Jacob was making his way through life by lying and deceiving in or to better his station in life. Not only is this inappropriate for a man of God, but God could and would take care of blessing Jacob. God did not need Jacob's help.

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So Jacob is getting many things from this field trip:

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<sup>179</sup> *The Sermon Bible Commentary*; ©1888-1893; in the Public Domain; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll, M.A., LL.D., from e-sword, Genesis 28:10–15.

<sup>180</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 28:10–12.

### What Jacob Gets from this Field Trip

1. He will find out that being dishonest and conning other people does not necessarily improve your own station in life.
2. Jacob will learn that there are people who are much better at scheming and deceiving than he is.
3. He finds out here that there is much more going on in life than what he actually sees. There is a whole other thing going on (the Angelic Conflict) which is significant.
4. And Jacob will meet the love of his life.
5. He will sire the children who will make up the Jewish people.
6. He will see that God can bless him greatly, no matter what his station in life, and without Jacob being a con-man.
7. Jacob will work hard for his remuneration.
8. None of what occurs will require Jacob to be dishonest.

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**Genesis 28:12** Then Jacob [lit., *he*] dreamed, and he saw [lit., *behold*] a staircase [ramp, ladder, elevator, escalator?] stationary on the earth; and its top reached [into] the heavens. And he saw [lit., *behold*] the angels of Elohim ascending and descending on it.

So, in his dream, Jacob sees some kind of a vertical passageway starting here on earth and going up into the heavens. That vertical passageway is populated by angels.

Angels observe what is going on, on this earth; and they also interact with God. And they travel from one place to the other, according to God's plan. We may think about this angel or that; or this or that incident that is recorded in the Bible (like the two angels that rescued Lot and his family and then destroyed Sodom in Genesis 19); but there is a lot more going on with the angels than that.

Part of what they do—and I am referring to fallen and elect angels both—is they observe us. Sometimes a live play, where the theater venue is small, will place you into the middle of the action, from time to time. I saw the play *Marat-Sade* many years ago in a small theater, and underneath the raised seats where we sat was a passageway for the actors, that we could see. So, for those in the middle rows, there were actors in costume, in character—inmates of the asylum—wandering about behind you in this passageway, as well as acting on the stage in front of you. So, you felt as if you were right in the middle of the everything. That is what is going on with the angels who observe us. It is as if they are in the middle of this great morality play—one which reveals clearly the character and essence of God—and they are able to view our actions and reactions; our relationship to the Word of God and the plan of God; and there are some believers who live a life that has great impact and there are others who are simply marking time between now and eternity.

And just in case these angels do not get it, they have access to God, where the things that they observe are discussed. Think of it as you and a group of friends discussing the morality of a movie that you have just seen.

The angels that Jacob is observing continually travel between the throne room of God and to this earth; and they observe us on this earth in our day-to-day existence. In many ways, we bring the Word of God to life in what we do.

We find this exact same thing in the book of Job.

**Job 1:6–7** Now there was a day when the sons of God [= *angels*] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." (ESV)

There are regular meetings in heaven between the angels (fallen and elect) and God, and there is interaction between them. What is discussed, is often the behavior of individuals. In the example above, Job will be discussed. Job is a man of God, one who has believed in God and one who tries to obey the will of God. And Satan asks God, “Give Job over to me—I’ll make him squeal and I will make him reject You.” God speaks to them about what they have observed.

You may recall that Jesus told Simon Peter: **“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;...”** (Luke 22:31; NASB) Satan asked for permission to wreak havoc in the life of Job; and 2000 or so years later, he asks to do the same to Peter. Fallen angels do not want to simply observe what is going on; they want to interact with mankind (Genesis 6 Job 1–2 Jude 1:6). Whenever given permission, they want to harm us. It is possible that some people are delivered over to fallen angels in order to face the **sin unto death**.

We have already studied Genesis 6 and how angels were allowed to cohabit with man; and the result was a corrupted race of men, who were the product of fallen angels and fallen man—whose exploits have been recorded in nearly every people’s mythology.

Jude describes the fate of these angels in Jude 1:6 **And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, He [God] has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—** (ESV)

The angels of Genesis 6 were removed by God and placed in chains under gloomy darkness until the day of judgment.

In Job 1–2, Satan is given the opportunity to harm Job, and Satan unloads both barrels, wreaking as much damage and devastation to Job’s life as we could imagine.

So Jacob, in his sleep, has this vision, and he sees angels being conveyed from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth—a concept which is consistent with what we have already studied as the Angelic Conflict. The Angelic Conflict is an invisible war which is taking place which involves God, the elect angels and the fallen angels. Man was created to resolve the Angelic Conflict. See the **Angelic Conflict** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

We have been studying Jacob’s dream in Bethel, where he observes angels going between heaven and earth.

There is a remarkable consistency throughout Scripture regarding the nature and function of angelic creatures. If the Scriptures are simply the recorded thoughts and actions and myths of men, collected over a period of 2000 years, with some arbitrary council deciding, what stays in and what is thrown out, the idea that there is a prehistoric race of creatures who are far superior to man, whose existence and function can be studied and conclusions drawn, how exactly did this happen? How do you have 40 or so authors writing over a period of 3000<sup>181</sup> years come up with a fairly consistent view of creatures that so few men have ever seen? The Bible critic would allege that angels do not even exist and that no one has ever seen an angel (except someone who has hallucinated). So that makes a consistent description in narrative form even more difficult to achieve. The Bible critic would say, *it is all made up*. How do a dozen or more authors just make up the concept of angels and somehow come up with a consistent function and understanding of these made-up creatures? After all, if there are contradictions in the Harry Potter series, the notion of one author (or in the Buffy the Vampire Slayer series; the creation of primarily one person), how do a dozen or so authors—most of whom have never interacted with one another—manage to keep their story straight on created beings that 99.99% of us have never seen?

This will be an extensive tangent, but we learn a great deal about Christian doctrine from a study like this.

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<sup>181</sup> This is my opinion; most scholars believe the Bible to be written over a period of 1500 years. In include the oral tradition of Genesis to be a part of the composition of the Bible.

The Bible critic alleges that, "The Bible is filled with contradictions." The contradictions which follow are the first 20 listed on the website [evilbible.com](http://evilbible.com). We have already studied the first 5 in a previous lesson. Since this website groups and classified these contradictions, we will also look at the first 5 or so from each classification (in the next lesson).

One would hope that they will have given their best in the first 10 *contradictions*, in order to engage the reader.

### So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<b><i>Theological Doctrines:</i></b>	
<p>God is satisfied with his works. Gen 1:31</p>	<p>What God has designed is good; but God also created man and angels with free will. This free will is allowed by God to have real effects on His creation.</p>
<p>God is dissatisfied with his works. Genesis 6:6</p>	<p>Here's an analogous situation. A builder builds a house and it looks great; and he is very satisfied with his work. However, some night, a bunch of kids break into this newly-built house and cause all kinds of damage to it. The damage might be so great that he is even unhappy that he built this house in the first place. So, the builder on one day is very satisfied with his work; on the next day, he is unhappy that he built the house in the first place. There is no contradiction in this illustration.</p>
<p>God dwells in chosen temples. 2Chronicles 7:12,16</p>	<p>God can choose to manifest Himself in specific places for specific reasons. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is an example of this. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, living among mankind (John 1:1-3, 14). However, God's actual essence is spirit, which we cannot see, hear, feel or touch. Just as our souls are immaterial, so is God. But God is able to make Himself manifest. If God is able to create the universe, then it reasonably follows that He can interact with His creatures in this universe. That requires an infinite God to manifest Himself in a specific place and time.</p>
<p>God dwells not in temples. Acts 7:48</p>	<p>The Temple is of particular interest, because the original Tabernacle (a very large tent which could be moved) represents Jesus Christ in the flesh in His <b>1<sup>st</sup> Advent</b>; and the later Temple represents Jesus Christ on earth when He will rule over the earth in the Millennium. Therefore, we would expect God to specially manifest Himself both within the Tabernacle and later within the Temple. God voluntarily localized His Presence in both.</p>
<p>God dwells in light. 1Timothy 6:16</p> <p>God dwells in darkness. 1Kings 8:12 Psalm 18:11 97:2</p>	<p>God is light and in Him is no darkness. However, because God is omniscient and omnipresent, he is able to be everywhere simultaneously.</p> <p>Would you allege that it is a contradiction for God to be able to see in the dark?</p>

### So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>God is seen and heard. Exodus 33:23, 11 Genesis 3:9–10 32:30 Isaiah 6:1 Exodus 24:9-11</p>	<p>As already discussed, God is a spirit, which cannot be apprehended by the 5 senses. However, as God, He can choose make Himself manifest; He can choose to make Himself visible.</p>
<p>God is invisible and cannot be heard. John 1:18 5:37 Exodus 33:20 1Tim 6:16</p>	<p>Many new parents have a baby monitor, so that they are in one room of the house, and, through the living room, and down the hall is the baby’s room. The parents may be sleeping and the baby wakes up and begins to cry. Immediately, one of the parents—who was previously unseen and could not be heard by the baby—suddenly appears and sees to the needs of the baby. For a few hours, the baby cannot see or hear his parents; and, suddenly, he can both hear and see his parents. There is no contradiction in this.</p>
<p>God is tired and rests. Exodus 31:17</p> <p>God is never tired and never rests. Isaiah 40:28</p>	<p>Many of the <i>contradictions</i> are based upon anthropopathisms and anthropomorphisms. An anthropopathism is the assignment of human feelings, passions or characteristics to God, attributing to Him feelings or characteristics which He does not actually possess. This often helps to explain God’s actions in human terms. For more information, see <a href="#">Bible Doctrine Resource</a> on this topic.</p>
<p>Let’s look at Exodus 31:17, where God is speaking to Moses: “It is a sign forever between Me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.” (ESV; capitalized) The Hebrew word for <i>to rest</i> is shâbath (שָׁבַת) [pronounced <i>shaw-BAHTH</i>], and it means, <i>to rest, to keep a day of rest, to celebrate the Sabbath; to sit down [still]; to cease, to desist, to leave off, to discontinue</i>. You may recognize this word as related to the word for <i>Sabbath</i>. God did not <i>rest</i> because He was tired; He <i>ceased</i> because He was finished.</p>	
<p>The second word in question is nâphash (נָפַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-FAHSH</i>], which means, <i>to breath, to take a breath, to refresh oneself; to cease from working</i>. Now, God does not take a breath. Again, He stopped working because He was finished.</p>	
<p>God is everywhere present, sees and knows all things. Prov. 15:3 Psalm 139:7-10 Job 34:22,21</p>	<p>God is omniscient (He sees everything); He is omnipresent (He is everywhere). Generally speaking, when God appears not to be omniscient and He has to suddenly leave His throne and go down to earth and find out what is going on and then sort things out—that is an anthropopathism—assigning to God thoughts, feelings and characteristics which He does not actually have in order to better explain His actions and/or policies.</p>
<p>God is not everywhere present, neither sees nor knows all things. Genesis 3:8 11:5 18:20–21</p>	<p>God can bring to pass any policy, punishment, correction or reward with a snap of His fingers. However, there is an audience for the progression of the human race—and that is the audience of fallen and elect angels. They watch us; they see our sins, failures and successes; and they see how God works in us, through us, and often <i>against</i> us (with divine discipline).</p>
<p>I have misstated two things here. God does not actually have fingers; He does not snap His fingers. That is an anthropomorphism. God’s divine discipline actually works in our favor, much the same way that we spank our own children. We don’t spank them to get our anger out; we spank them to correct them and guide them in the right way. From the child’s point of view, it may appear as if we are working against him; and when we are disciplined, it may appear to us as if God is working against us.</p>	

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Have you ever had a child say, "Dad is mad at me" after receiving a whipping? His father delivers the whipping not because the father is mad but because the father loves his son. Saying, "Dad is mad at me" is somewhat of an anthropathism. It assigns to the boy's father emotions which he may not possess, but emotions which explain the father's behavior to the boy.</p>	
<p>Let's look at these 3 references specifically which suggest that <i>God is not everywhere present, neither sees nor knows all things</i> (although we have already studied them). Genesis 3:8 11:5 18:20–21</p>	
<p>Gen. 3:7–9 <i>Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"</i> (ESV) Believe it or not, God actually knew where Adam and the woman were. They are on earth and hiding from God in the Garden of Eden. God knew where to be to call out to them so that they could hear Him. This becomes a consistent occurrence in Scripture where people sin, and then God first speaks to them with a question—often a question which requires them to name the sin that they committed. God localizes His presence in order to interact with His creatures.</p>	
<p>Gen 11:4–7 <i>Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech."</i> (ESV). In this example, God will actually do something miraculous among the people. They have been told to spread out across the earth, and yet they refuse to do so. The narrative here explains to angels what is going on and why God is doing this thing. Angels are not omniscient; so, from time to time, God will gather most angels to one particular place, to one particular person or incident, so that they can all view with their own eyes what is going on and what God will do about it.</p>	
<p>Genesis 18:20–21 <i>Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."</i> (ESV) This refers to Sodom and Gomorrah. God knows what is going on there. However, He brings with Him many angels in order for them to see and understand what He is doing and why He is doing that. As before, this is an anthropathism. The cry of the victims reaches heaven (which simply means, God hears their cries); and therefore, God must go down there and sort it all out. God could snap His fingers and destroy Sodom in an instant. However, like the Tower of Babel above, God uses man's sin and His Own actions in order to teach divine truth. This is being observed by angels and what will happen to Sodom will be a spiritual lesson for all time. See <b>Genesis 18</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p>	
<p>God knows the hearts of men. Acts 1:24 Psalm 139:2–3</p>	<p>The first assertion is accurate. God knows the hearts of minds of all men. We have recently studied the emotions of man and emotional revolt of the soul. As we progress spiritually, God is constantly observing us, noting our spiritual growth and even touting it to the angels (see Job 1).</p>
<p>God tries [= tests] men to find out what is in their heart. Deut. 13:3 8:2 Genesis 22:12</p>	<p>God knows what we are capable of individually. We do not know this nor do angels. Therefore, this is shown—our growth or lack thereof is put to the test.</p> <p>The testing which we receive is for our benefit. This is also a testimony to the angels as well.</p>

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>As a teacher, I pushed my students as much as I possibly could. Some of them learned and achieved things that they themselves did not realize that they were capable of. Testing as well as one-on-one interaction helped to facilitate this. The testing allowed the student to see for himself what he was capable of doing. This is analogous to God's interaction with us in the spiritual life.</p>	
<p>God is all powerful. Jer. 32:27 Matthew 19:26</p>	<p>God is all powerful (omnipotent), and yet we read in Judges 1:19 <b>And the LORD was with Judah, and he took possession of the hill country, but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain because they had chariots of iron.</b> (ESV). God is with Judah, but that does not mean that God would drive out all of their enemies. Judges 2:19–22 gives the general explanation as to why God did not remove all of Israel's enemies from the land: <b>But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways. So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he said, "Because this people has transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the LORD as their fathers did, or not."</b> It was not that God was not powerful enough to destroy Judah's enemies; God simply allowed for Judah's enemies to remain in the land, to be used to discipline the Jews when they needed it.</p>
<p>God is not all powerful. Judges 1:19</p>	<p>God's essence is immutable (unchangeable). However, God is said to change because He is responding to various actions of man. Again, this is an anthropopathism, something you would think these atheist webpage gurus would, at some point, figure out (I am sure that they receive emails and comments).</p>
<p>God is unchangeable. James 1:17 Mal. 3:6 Ezek. 24:14 Num. 23:19</p>	<p>Jonah 3:10 <b>When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.</b> God's actions are related to the behavior of man. As unbelievers, the Assyrians deserved eternal judgment; as believers in the Revealed God, they had been redeemed from that judgment. Jonah came and warned them of the judgment of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, and the Assyrians believed in his God.</p>
<p>God is changeable. Gen 6:6 Jonah 3:10 1Sam 2:30–31 2Kings 20:1, 4–6 Exodus 33:1, 3, 17, 14</p>	<p>Many of the <i>contradictions</i> are based upon this fundamental principle: our relationship to the God of the Universe affects our perception of God. God's character and essence did not change; the people of Assyria changed, resulting in God changing His policy toward them (God would not destroy them).</p>

### So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>God is just and impartial.                      Psalm 92:15 Genesis 18:25 Deut. 32:4 Rom. 2:11 Ezek. 18:25</p>	<p>God is perfectly just and impartial. However, when He blesses a believer or takes care of a believer, it may appear to the person on the outside that God is favoring that person. When a person has rejected God’s grace or the offer of God’s salvation, then they may find God’s judgment upon them. God’s justice remains the same throughout.</p>
<p>God is unjust and partial.                      Gen. 9:25 Ex. 20:5 Romans 9:11-13 Matthew 13:12</p>	<p>We do not condemn a judge because on one day, he sets a man free and on the next day, he sentences another man to death, do we? We do not comment, “That judge is inconsistent!” The judge is ideally taking the same principles of law and applying them to different circumstances.</p> <p>Let’s take a look at two of these passages individually.</p>
<p>Gen. 9:24–27 <i>When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant."</i> Because of Ham’s impertinence, Noah pronounced a curse upon his son, Canaan. This curse against Canaan would be carried out because Canaan gets his values from Ham his father; and he passes along those values to his own sons, which makes them cursed by God.</p>	
<p>Matt. 13:11–12 <i>And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."</i> (ESV) As believers in Jesus Christ, despite our own physical infirmities, we are all given an equal shot. Any one of us can be as great as the Apostle Paul—greater in fact. As a person moves forward in the Christian life, God gives that person greater grace (James 4:6). If you, as a believer, have chosen to fritter your life away, God may take you out of this life by means of the sin unto death. This is not arbitrary but in accordance with the plan of God and our relationship to God. There is no great contradiction that God disciplines some of His children and blesses others.</p>	
<p>God is the author of evil.                      Lam. 3:38 Jer. 18:11 Isa. 45:7 Amos 3:6 Ezekiel 20:25</p>	<p>God creates man and angels with free will. God allows for the function of free will, which means the ability to choose against God. In this sense, even though God does not sponsor evil, creatures created by God with true volition might do evil things.</p>
<p>God is not the author of evil.                      1Cor 14:33 Deut 32:4 James 1:13</p>	<p>Have you ever heard two parents, and one of them says, “He did not learn that from me”? Most parents try to bring up their children with values and a sense of right and wrong; but that does not mean that the child will always obey them. They may intend that their child does not wreak havoc on earth, but every child has free will, which means some children do some very distasteful things. Children do act out and they do evil things which they have not seen done before.</p>

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>God gives freely to those who ask James 1:5 Luke 11:10</p> <p>God withholds his blessings and prevents men from receiving them John 12:40 Joshua 11:20 Isaiah 63:17</p>	<p>God obviously makes Himself available to mankind. Paul, in one of his messages, said: "And He [God] made every nation of men of one blood, to live on all the face of the earth, ordaining fore-appointed seasons and boundaries of their dwelling, to seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him, though indeed He not being far from each one of us." (Acts 17:26–27; Green's literal translation)</p> <p>However, man does have the ability to reject God. God allows man to say <i>no</i>. The second group of passages will be examined below:</p>
<p>John 12:37–40 <b>Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them."</b> (ESV; Isaiah 53:1 6:10) Some people simply reject truth. The human soul is designed so, there is a point at which a <i>hardening of the heart</i> begins to occur, where the soul develops scar tissue regarding the truth. They go from a point of simply hearing and rejecting truth, to reenforcing their own rejection of the truth. How does this work?</p>	
<p>Many of the miracles which Jesus did were undeniable. He would cure those who had suffered illnesses and disabilities for years and some for a lifetime. However, some people would reject Him anyway. Such negative volition needs to be strengthened into resolve, so such people will search out other explanations for what they just saw. One of those explanations during that time was, Jesus healed by the power of Beelzebub (<i>the prince of dung</i>; a name for Satan). See Matthew 12:22–37.</p>	
<p>Today, people may initially reject Jesus Christ; but often, then will seek out others who have rejected Him or they will seek out books by famous atheists, and this helps to strengthen their resolve—in other words, this helps to build scar tissue on their souls. The Doctrine of <b>Scar Tissue</b>.</p>	
<p>Joshua 11:18–20 <b>And Joshua made war many days with all those kings. There was not a city that made peace with the sons of Israel except the Hivites, ones living in Gibeon. They took all in battle. For it was of Jehovah to harden their hearts, so that they should come against Israel in battle, so that they might be destroyed, so that they might have no favor, but that He might destroy them, as Jehovah commanded Moses.</b> (Green's literal translation) God set up the function of the soul. Believers are designed so that we can strengthen our souls through the study of the Word of God; however, the parallel function in the unbeliever would be to allow him to strengthen his resolve against God as well through similar means.</p>	
<p>We see this with the souls of modern-day Palestinians, many of whom absolutely abhor the Jews and they built up and strengthen this hatred which they learn in their youth. One would think that, when a Palestinian child grows into an adult, he might begin to question the idea of Jews <b>evolving from apes and pigs</b>.</p>	
<p>Now, whether God is actively involved in strengthening one's negative volition, is a whole other topic which I am not ready to embark on as of yet. However, in any situation where God is said to harden the heart of a person, they harden their own hearts first—sometimes many times. The Pharaoh of the exodus is a good example of this. In Exodus 5, he demonstrates his negative volition toward God and God's people over and over again by his successive actions.</p>	

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Isa. 63:17–19 O LORD, why do You make us wander from Your ways and harden our heart, so that we fear You not? Return for the sake of Your servants, the tribes of Your heritage. Your holy people held possession for a little while; our adversaries have trampled down Your sanctuary. We have become like those over whom You have never ruled, like those who are not called by Your name. (ESV; capitalized)</p> <p>Israel, in the time of Isaiah, had been turning away from God. This is simply negative volition on the part of the people there against their God. Isaiah is bemoaning this state of affairs. God is not with Israel because they have first rejected Him.</p>	
<p>God is to be found by those who seek him Matt 7:8 Prov 8:17</p>	<p>The context of Proverbs 1:28 is, God made Himself known, He made Himself available, and yet this people rejected Him. Proverbs 1:24–28 <b>Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out My hand and no one has heeded, because you have ignored all My counsel and would have none of My reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when terror strikes you, when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call upon Me, but I will not answer; they will seek Me diligently but will not find Me.</b></p>
<p>God is not to be found by those who seek him Prov. 1:28</p>	<p>Putting aside, for the moment, the anthropopathism of God laughing, we all face eternal judgment and God allows us to believe in Him—something which is free and takes mere moments to do—and this little bit of faith saves us from eternal damnation.</p>
<p>God is warlike Ex. 15:3 Isa. 51:15</p> <p>God is peaceful Rom 15:33 1Corinthians 14:33</p>	<p>This is like saying, our military is warlike and our military is peaceful—and that this is a fundamental contradiction of some sort. We have had troops stationed in South Korea for many decades now, and, for the most part, these troops have been peaceful. However, their general demeanor depends upon what happens in North Korea.</p>
<p>God is cruel, unmerciful, destructive, and ferocious Jer. 13:14 Deut. 7:16 1Sam. 15:2,3 1Samuel 6:19</p>	<p>The explanation here is very much what it is above. When a people has become very negative toward God (which, in the ancient world, was often expressed by its relationship to the people of God), God dealt with those people in what may seem cruel to us today. When we execute a murderer today—what that murderer did might have been extremely cruel and heartless—but even those who completely support the death penalty can feel a tinge of sadness at the state-induced death of such a person.</p>
<p>God is kind, merciful, and good James 5:11 Lam. 3:33 1Chronicles 16:34 Ezekiel 18:32 Psalm 145:9 1Tim. 2:4 1John 4:16 Psalm 25:8</p>	<p>As we read in 1Sam. 2:30 <b>Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before Me forever,' but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from Me, for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.'</b> (ESV; capitalized)</p> <p>There are two sides in this world—there is Satan and there is God; and God's attitude toward us depends upon which one draws our allegiance.</p>

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>God's anger is fierce and endures long Num. 32:13 25:4 Jer. 17:4</p>	<p>First of all, <i>the anger of God</i> is an anthropomorphism. It represents God's judgment or His discipline (when directed toward a believer). The application of his judgment and discipline depends upon the situation. God overlooked King David's many wives for a fairly long period of time; however, when King David took the wife of a soldier and then had that soldier killed, God put intensive discipline upon David for his actions.</p>
<p>God's anger is slow and endures but for a minute Psalm 103:8 30:5</p>	<p>For those who have raised children, you certainly do not bring the exact same judgment and discipline down upon them for each and every offense.</p>
<p>God commands, approves of, and delights in burnt offerings, sacrifices, and holy days Ex 29:18, 36 Leviticus 1:9 23:27</p>	<p>The burnt offerings, sacrifices and holy days looked forward to the Messiah and revealed truths about the coming Messiah. Israel was given the responsibility of preserving these ceremonies as a testimony to Jesus Christ.</p>
<p>God disapproves of and has no pleasure in burnt offerings, sacrifices, and holy days. Jer. 7:22 6:20 Psalm 50:13,4 Isaiah 1:13, 11, 12</p>	<p>However, there were two ways that the Jews could break their bond with the God Who made them: (1) they could reject the God of their youth, but continue with these sacrifices and offerings as unbelievers. Or (2) they could participate in these ceremonies in uncleanness. This might be ceremonial uncleanness, but it would be likely the uncleanness of their own souls (that is, they have unconfessed sins in their lives).</p>
<p>God accepts human sacrifices 2Sam 2:8, 9, 14 Genesis 22:2 Judges 11:30-32, 34, 38, 39</p>	<p>I have no idea what the references of 2Samuel are about. However, God asked Abraham to offer up his uniquely-born son to God; and Abraham would begin to comply with this. This particular incident confuses unbelievers greatly because they confuse God's request and Abraham's willingness to offer up his son as being the same as a human sacrifice. God stopped Abraham from offering up Isaac. This offering was to represent the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins and is discussed in great detail in <b>Genesis 22</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p>
<p>God forbids human sacrifice Deut 12:30, 31</p>	<p>Ceremonies and rituals have no meaning if they are separated from the truth that they represent.</p>
<p>In the second example of Judges 11, Jephthah does not offer up his daughter as a human sacrifice. She does, however, remain separated to the Lord for the rest of her life in an unmarried state. This is discussed in more detail in <b>Judges 11</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>)</p>	
<p>God tempts men Genesis 22:1 2Samuel 24:1 Jer. 20:7 Matt. 6:13</p>	<p>There is tempting and there is testing and the word in the Greek is the same word. God promises us that: <b>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.</b> (1Co 10:13; ESV; capitalized) So, we are all tested by God from time to time; but we have the inner resources to pass the test and resist whatever temptation is involved.</p>
<p>God tempts no man James 1:13</p>	<p>However, God does not simply place us in situations where we are going to fail and give in to temptation.</p>

So-Called Bible Contradictions	
Contradictions	Explanation
God cannot lie Heb 6:18	God allows man and angels in this world, and He allows them to exercise their free will (within some reasonable constraints). As a result, men will lie or stretch the truth, or present lies in such a way that they appear to be the truth.
God lies by proxy; he sends forth lying spirits to deceive 2Thess. 2:11 1Kings 22:23 Ezekiel 14:9	God also allows some men to reveal all that is in their heart, which sometimes comes out in the way that they respond to that which is false.  We all have a choice. We can choose to pursue the truth, as God has revealed Himself in Scripture; or we can pursue after those who speak against God.
<a href="#">Chapter Outline</a>	<a href="#">Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines</a>

A study like this can help to clarify many passages that you may not have understood before.

**Evil Bible** breaks up its contradictions categorically. So let me hand the first few *contradictions* from each category.

Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible	
Contradictions	Explanation
These next 10 or so few come from the category of <i>moral precepts</i> . Unless otherwise noted, the ESV (capitalized) translation will be used.	
Robbery commanded Ex. 3:21–22 12:35–36	The Jews had been enslaved by the Egyptians, and God required payment for their centuries of work (Exodus 3:21–22 12:35–36). It is very likely that the person or persons who oversee the <i>evilbible</i> website believe in some form of reparations for American slaves—to them and to their children at the very least; and yet, somehow, post this as if it is a contradiction to <i>you will not steal</i> (Exodus 20:15). They are not stealing, they are being remunerated for work which they have done.
Robbery forbidden Lev 19:13 Ex 20:15	This is one of the many examples of the disingenuousness of many Bible skeptics. They probably believe in the principles taught in both passages, <i>in context</i> , and yet they act as if some this is some great contradiction.

## Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Lying approved and sanctioned Joshua 2:4-6 James 2:25 Exodus 1:18-20 1Kings 22:21,22</p>	<p>In war, lying by those on the side of God is allowed. If a soldier is caught and being tortured, and being asked to give the position of his comrades so that they might be found and killed, do you really think that God requires this person—if he is a Christian—to tell the truth about where his fellow soldiers are? In the example of Joshua 2:4–6 James 2:25, Rahab the prostitute chose to ally herself with Israel and with Joshua.</p> <p>In the second example of Exodus 1:18–20, Egyptian midwives lied to Pharaoh when they did not kill Hebrew children. In the military, when a soldier is given a bad order (to kill, for instance a village of women and children), that soldier has a duty to <i>disobey</i> that order. Do you really think that if some government official—even the president—ordered you to kill some of God’s people without cause, that it is your duty to do so? We are to obey our leaders, but there are also reasonable limits to this obedience (which limits are clearly taught in Scripture).</p> <p>In 1Kings 22:21–22, Ahab is an evil king. God has sent prophets to him that spoke the truth to him. He rejected them and even persecuted these prophets. So God allowed <i>Ahab’s personal prophets</i> to lie to him—and Ahab believed the lie.</p>
<p>Lying forbidden Ex. 20:16 Prov. 12:22 Rev. 21:8</p>	
<p>Hatred to the Edomite sanctioned 2Kings 14:7 (evilbible inexplicably cites v. 3; but forgets to cite 1Chronicles 18)</p>	<p>2Kings 14 is about a better than average king, Amaziah, who did good, but he came up short because of things that he did or did not do. He did not tear down all of the high places (the places of idolatry—2Kings 14:4); and he killed 10,000 Edomites (2Kings 14:7). These are given as examples of his shortcomings.</p> <p>The relationship between the Edomites and the Jews is tricky, however, because they are all descended from Abraham; so they are cousins, as it were. Because of Abraham, God set aside an area for the Edomites; however, when the Edomites became cattywampus with the Jews, they were to be dealt with. We have an example of that in 1Chronicles 18:11–13. In any case, <i>hatred</i> is not mentioned regarding David or Amaziah.</p>
<p>Hatred to the Edomite forbidden Deut 23:7</p>	
<p>Killing commanded Ex 32:27</p>	<p>This ought not to be a difficult concept. Killing in war and executing a criminal is not the same as killing an innocent person. The Bible makes such a distinction; my guess is, the folks at evilbible make such distinctions as well. If a criminal was threatening your family with harm, do you really think God wants you to allow this to happen?</p>
<p>Killing forbidden Ex 20:13</p>	<p>See the <b>Doctrine of Murder</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p>
<p>The blood-shedder must die Gen 9:5,6 The blood-shedder must not die Gen 4:15</p>	<p>There is a time frame here. In Genesis 4, there has been no commandment from God to execute murderers. The first commandment from God for man to execute murderers is given in Genesis 9. It is at this point that man is given that responsibility to execute murderers. In Genesis 4:15, Cain was punished, but this punishment was banishment from society.</p>

Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible	
Contradictions	Explanation
<p>The making of images forbidden Ex 20:4</p>	<p>God has always forbidden the making in images with the intent of using them to worship or as a part of worship.</p> <p>There was sort of an exception to this. In constructing the Ark of God, two cherubim were carved and placed on both sides of the seat of mercy (which sat upon the Ark). The Ark itself is made out of acacia wood (representing the humanity of Jesus Christ) and overlaid with gold (representing the deity of Jesus Christ).</p> <p>No one, in general, was to see this Ark<sup>182</sup> (most of the time, it was within the Holy of Holies and the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies once a year on the great Day of Atonement to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat (representing the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ for our sins). The cherubim represent the angels of God—the fallen and the elect angels—who observe man and the things which occur here on earth—the most important event being the offering of Jesus Christ for our sins. No one was ever encouraged to worship the Ark.</p>
<p>The making of images commanded Ex 25:18, 20</p>	<p>See the <b>Ark of God</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>)</p>
<p>Slavery and oppression ordained Gen 9:25 Leviticus 25:45,46 Joel 3:8</p>	<p>Slavery has been a part of man’s history from the very beginning until now. What few people seem to realize is, there are different forms of slavery found in Scripture—some are allowed and some are forbidden. A person can place himself into slavery in order to pay off a debt—however, there are time limits to this by the Mosaic Law, so that a debtor does not become a lifelong slave. Also, when a country is conquered, the people could be taken as slaves. Israel did not just go out willy nilly conquering countries. God had them conquer countries where there was great idolatry (like the offering up of their own children to Baal or to Molech).</p>
<p>Slavery and oppression forbidden Isa. 58:6 Ex. 22:21 21:16 Matt. 23:10 (this passage in Matthew is not actually a reference to slavery)</p>	<p>There was a specific form of slavery which was forbidden: you could not just go into a country and capture 1000 or so men and force them into slavery. This was against the Mosaic Law. I believe the KJV refers to this as <i>man-stealing</i>.</p> <p>See the <b>Doctrine of Slavery</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p>

<sup>182</sup> The Ark was used by God’s direction in one battle. The Jews hauled it out of the Tabernacle to illegitimately use it on another occasions, and they were disciplined for it.

## Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
Improvidence enjoyed Matt 6:28–34	<p>I must admit that I did not know what improvidence meant. This makes me think Evil Bible copied this from elsewhere. Jesus is telling His disciples in Matthew 6:28–34 not to be concerned about how they will eat or be clothed, as God will see to their needs. In this passage, Jesus is speaking to His disciples (Matthew 5:1–2), and He was both preparing them for the kingdom that He was promising and preparing them to go out and spread this message of the <i>Kingdom of God is at hand!</i> The Jews rejected this message, so we did not proceed from the 1<sup>st</sup> advent of Jesus Christ directly into the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent. Jesus' disciples were not being excused from work; they were being excused from menial work during the much of the time that they were with Jesus. Jesus public ministry was very short and the disciples were to concentrate on this ministry.</p>
Improvidence condemned 1Tim 5:8	<p>1Tim. 5:8 <b>But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.</b> God does not excuse the believer from work—work is one of the divine institutions. Work was a part of Adam's life <i>before</i> he sinned (as well as after). We are not encouraged anywhere in the Bible to be layabouts.</p>
Improvidence enjoyed Luke 6:30, 35	<p>Luke 6:30, 35 <b>Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.</b> Jesus is speaking directly to His disciples (Luke 6:20) preparing them for their very short and intense ministry under Jesus Christ. A specific time and a specific purpose.</p>
Improvidence condemned Prov. 13:22	<p>Prov. 13:22 <b>A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous.</b> This passage is to be understood in two ways. First of all, it is normal and honorable to provide more for your children by your own life of hard work. Secondly, the book of Proverbs is all about wisdom—so one of the items that you leave for your children as an inheritance is wisdom.</p>
<p>There is more to be taken from Luke 6:35 than Jesus simply preparing His disciples. Our lives are not simply about the material and what is right before our face. It is possible to provide for your family, now and in the future, and still not be consumed by materialism.</p>	
<p>Luke 12:3 <b>Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.</b> This passage was included by Evil Bible for the topic above, but I am not sure why. Perhaps they meant to include Jesus teaching His disciples to not make a great display of public prayers?</p>	
Anger approved Eph. 4:26	<p>Eccles. 7:9 <b>Don't let your spirit rush to be angry, for anger abides in the heart of fools.</b> Generally speaking, the believer is not to allow himself to become angry. When we do, then we rebound this sin (we tell God that we were angry), and we are cleansed of our unrighteousness. 1John 1:9</p> <p>Ephesians 4:26 requires more explanation (see below):</p>
Anger disapproved Eccl. 7:9 Prov. 22:24 James 1:20	

## Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible

### Contradictions

### Explanation

Eph. 4:26–27 **"Be angry but do not sin;" do not let the sun go down on your wrath**, LXX-Psalms 4:4; MT-Psalms 4:5 **nor give place to the Devil**. (Green's literal translation) This first passage is a little tricky. Paul is quoting Psalm 4:4, which reads: **Tremble and do not sin**. (Green's literal translation) The word *tremble* is *râgaz* (רָגַז) [pronounced *rawg-GAHZ*], which means, *to be agitated, to quiver, to quake, to become excited, perturbed, disquieted*. Strong's #7264 BDB #919. The KJV translates this *stand in awe*. So, where many translations of the New Testament sound as if Paul is putting a fine point on anger, the passage that he is quoting is really putting a fine point on the first word that is used, limiting the means which may be used. Psalm 4:3 reads: **But know that Jehovah has set apart the godly for Himself. Jehovah hears when I call to Him**. (Green's literal translation) Then the psalmist tells the hearer, "Stand in awe! Quiver, quake; become excited." This is because the psalmist has invoked God Himself.

In Paul's context, he is referring back to this passage, but he is using it in a different way (which sometimes causes the common reader of Scripture some consternation). Paul is speaking in a different context than the psalmist. Clarke interprets Paul as saying this: *If you are angry, and if you think that you have cause to be angry; do not let your disaffection carry you to acts of rebellion against both God and your king. Consider the subject deeply before you attempt to act. Do nothing rashly; do not justify one evil act by another: sleep on the business; think about this using Bible doctrine upon your bed; consult your pillow.*<sup>183</sup> In other words, sleep on it before you act; and, if need be, name that sin to God.

The other option is, name that sin of anger to God, and do that soon (before you sleep).

Good works to be seen of men Matt 5:16

Good works not to be seen of men Matt 6:1

The pharisees made a big show of religious function. When they prayed, it was aloud in public. They were showing off their religiosity. Most unbelievers ought to be able to understand that this is not a good thing. On the other hand, the believer who is filled with the Spirit, who acts in accordance with doctrine, will exhibit behavior and works which are commendable.

Again, this is an example of something had those who post these contradictions read and reread, would understand that the false and phony religiosity is to be avoided; but that a believer in Jesus Christ will act in a way that is undeniably honorable (when he is filled with the Spirit and acting in accordance with the Word of God). Are these critics really saying, "I don't understand what the Bible means when it tells me not to be a religious phony"? This is not a deep concept where Jesus tells His followers not to be religious phonies; and He also tells them, their faith ought to mean something to those in their periphery.

These things are posted—the stuff that they know can be explained along with the more difficult passages—with the intent of shaking the faith of a believer. The saying is, throw enough mud against a wall, and some of it will stick. It does not matter to them how legitimate or illegitimate their *contradictions* are. They need to have a lot of mud. They cannot post simply 10 well thought-out contradictions. They must post dozens in order to have the desired affect.

<sup>183</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 4:4 (edited).

## Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
Judging of others forbidden Matt 7:1–2	<p>The confusion here is, the passage which Jesus tells His disciples, <i>do not judge or you will be judged</i>, has been distorted and misunderstood. It has come to mean, <i>do not judge any sort of behavior, do not judge any set of standards different from yours</i>. But that is not what Jesus said. Jesus said, you do not impute a sin to someone where there is some uncertainty. Further, you do not become overly concerned about the sins of others in a self-righteous way. Do not say to yourself, “My sins are more refined and less easy to spot than Charley Brown’s sins, so I am a better person.”</p> <p>However, the believer is to be discerning. The believer has to make value judgments from time to time—about friends and activities. Much of the book of Proverbs is aimed toward the young person, warning him not to become involved with the wrong crowd; not to become involved in criminal activity. For a young person to decide not to hang out with Charley Brown because he is a drinker or he uses drugs or he sells drugs—that is discernment, and the Bible encourages that. This sort of <i>judging</i> is encouraged by Scripture.</p>
Judging of others approved 1Cor. 6:2-4 5:12	
Christ taught non-resistance Matt. 5:39 26:52	<p>All of this could be summed up with the words <i>time and place</i>. Jesus did not teach situational ethics, but different circumstances call for different actions. The ability to worship God, whether rich or poor, was being infringed upon by the religious hierarchy, and Jesus put a temporary stop to that when He cleansed the Temple. This paralleled His words, “<i>Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.</i>” (Matthew 11:28). Jesus spoke these words to all mankind, rich or poor.</p>
Christ taught and practiced physical resistance John 2:15	<p>The passages in Matthew will be discussed below.</p>
<p>Matt. 5:39 <i>But I tell you, don't resist an evildoer. On the contrary, if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.</i> In this first passage, Jesus was preparing His disciples for a very intense, 3 or 4 year ministry, and they were not to get bogged down by petty disputes. “You have a specific mission to accomplish, and that is to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Do not allow yourselves to become side-tracked from this.”</p>	
<p>Matt. 26:50b–52 <i>Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword."</i> In the second passage, Jesus was being seized to be taken to the cross. The reason that Jesus came to this earth was to die for our sins. Therefore, He is not going to resist the initial steps which take Him to the cross. If we were being tried and witness after witness stood up and lied about us, there would be a point at which we would stand up and shout, “Can they just lie about me in court?” Jesus, although dozens of witnesses (or more) stood up before the court and lied about Him, what He said and what He did, He did not object; He did not say a word (Isaiah 53:7). All of this had to be fulfilled, so that He would be crucified.</p>	
<p>Luke 22:35–36 <i>And He said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one."</i> This passage was also referenced by Evil Bible. The disciples were facing two sets of missions, but with different marching orders. The first mission was at the beginning of our Lord’s public ministry, and this was short and intense. After the crucifixion, their mission would be long and intense.</p>	

This next group is from [Evil Bible](#) listed under the heading **historical facts**:

### Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Man was created after the other animals Gen 1:25–27</p> <p>Man was created before the other animals Gen 2:18,19</p>	<p>Some of these <i>contradictions</i> are so simple to explain, it amazes me that they show up again and again on various websites and in various books. Gen 2:18–19 <b>Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.</b> (ESV) The only order which is clearly found here in the Hebrew is, God first formed the animals and then He brought them to the man to see what he would call them. This passage does <i>not</i> say, "God first created man; then God created the animals, and then God brought the animals to the man." The order in which animals and man were created is found in Genesis 1.</p>
<p>Seed time and harvest were never to cease Gen 8:22</p> <p>Seed time and harvest did cease for seven years Gen 41:54,56 45:6</p>	<p>Generally speaking, throughout the earth, we have seasons; and plants, trees and various crops grow according to these seasons. I don't think many people can argue with that. Furthermore, this continued from Genesis 8 until today. I don't think that anyone will argue with that.</p> <p>However, in some particular areas, during some periods of time, there is a withholding of the rain, which makes crop production nearly non-existent. I fail to see a contradiction.</p>
<p>God hardened Pharaoh's heart Ex 4:21 9:12</p> <p>Pharaoh hardened his own heart Ex 8:15</p>	<p>Most of these <i>contradictions</i> were simply copied from another website or from other reference material. Evilbible cites Exodus 4:21 <i>and</i> Ed 9:12 (which book does not exist; there is no book of Ed).</p> <p>This is one of the more difficult sections of Scripture but, it is not contradictory for pharaoh to harden his own heart and for God to harden his heart as well, as this process occurred several times. Obviously, two forces can act upon the same object—simultaneously or at different times.</p>
<p>All the cattle and horses in Egypt died Ex. 9:3–6</p> <p>All the horses of Egypt did not die Ex. 14:9</p>	<p>There is no contradiction here. God says that he would destroy all the Egyptian livestock in Exodus 9:3; but then, pharaoh's soldiers mount up on horses a few chapters later and chase after the Israelites. Now, read <i>all</i> of the words in Exodus 9:3, and see if you can see why no contradiction exists: <b>Behold, the hand of the LORD will fall with a very severe plague upon your livestock <b>that are in the field</b>, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks.</b> (ESV; emphasis mine)</p>

## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
Moses feared Pharaoh Ex 2:14, 15, 23 4:19	Moses, being a normal person, was apprehensive of Pharaoh. He recognized Pharaoh's power and ruthlessness. Therefore, he was reasonably afraid of pharaoh. Now, there are different kinds of fear. Some people are paralyzed by fear, where they cannot act. This was <i>not</i> Moses. God built up Moses in the faith, while Pharaoh simultaneously became more and more recalcitrant (hardened) toward God. Therefore, we read in Hebrews 11:27 <b>By faith he [Moses] left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing Him Who is invisible.</b> (ESV; capitalized) In the end, God told Moses to lead the children out of Egypt, and he did that. Did Moses fear Pharaoh in the beginning? Of course he did. However, Moses' faith was strengthened with each meeting that he took with Pharaoh.
Moses did not fear Pharaoh Heb 11:27	
There died of the plague twenty-four thousand Num 25:9	In both the Hebrew and the Greek Old Testament, 24,000 were said to die in all. The Hebrew allows for this to read: <b>And those that died in [or, during] the plague were twenty-four thousand.</b> (Num. 25:9).
There died of the plague but twenty-three thousand 1 Cor 10:8	Note what Paul writes does not contradict this: <b>Nor let us commit fornication, just as some of them fornicated, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;...</b> (ESV; emphasis mine) Although it is not clear how long the plague lasted, most of the people died on one day. No contradiction. Carefully reading the text explains the alleged contradiction away.
John the Baptist was Elias Matt 11:14	Elijah the prophet is to return in the final days during the Great Tribulation. Malachi 4:5–6 <b>"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."</b> (ESV). There is time frame set up in the Old Testament: the 1 <sup>st</sup> advent of the Messiah; the 2 <sup>nd</sup> advent of the Messiah (the Tribulation); followed by the Millennium. In the Old Testament, there is no clear distinction made between the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> advents of the Messiah. See the <b>Doctrine of Intercalation (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)</b> . However, this is based upon God's people accepting and trusting in God's Messiah, Jesus Christ.
John the Baptist was not Elias John 1:21	If God's people accepted Jesus Christ, then Elijah would come and proclaim Him during the Tribulation. However, because God's people did not accept Jesus Christ (as a whole), there is a period of time <i>inserted</i> (or, <i>intercalated</i> ) between the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> advents of Jesus Christ. Jesus explains: <b>"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."</b> (Mat 11:12–15; ESV)
	Because the Jews were not willing to accept Jesus as their Messiah, John the Baptizer is not Elijah.

## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>The father of Joseph, Mary's husband was Jacob Matt 1:16</p> <p>The father of Mary's husband was Heli Luke 3:23</p>	<p>There are two lines to Jesus Christ; one through Mary (who is actually the mother of the humanity of Jesus Christ—Luke 1:28–37) and one through Joseph, the legal but not physical father of Jesus (Matthew 1:1–16). These lines intersect back with King David (Matthew 1:6 Luke 3:23–38).</p> <p>So, <i>Jesus</i> is the son of (or, <i>descendant of</i>) Heli (Mary's father) in Luke 3:23—not Joseph.</p>
<p>The study of these two lines is fascinating. From the very beginning, the Messiah has been known as the <i>Seed of the Woman</i> (Genesis 3:15); because the sin nature is transmitted by means of the father (this is because Adam sinned knowingly and the woman was deceived). This is the reason for the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14).</p>	
<p>We have already studied the <b>Coniah Curse</b> back in <b>Lessons 265–266</b>. (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>). Coniah is in the line of Joseph, which is cut off before coming to Jesus (because Joseph is the legal, but not genetic father of Jesus). Coniah was told he would be cut off because of his evil. Coniah is a real historical figure but he is also a type which represents the sin nature. See the <b>Coniah Curse</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p>	
<p>The father of Salah was Arphaxad Gen 11:12</p> <p>The father of Salah was Cainan Luke 3:35,36</p>	<p>There is a missing name in the Hebrew Bible. Cainan's name has dropped out of the text (there are some textual errors in the manuscripts which we have). His name is found in the <b>Greek Old Testament</b> and in the New Testament. This is examined in detail in <b>Genesis 11</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p> <p>Furthermore, the phrase <i>the father of</i> can mean <i>the ancestor of</i>.</p>
<p>There were 14 generations from Abraham to David Matt 1:17</p> <p>There were but 13 generations from Abraham to David Matt 1:2-6</p>	<p>Matt. 1:17a <b>So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations,...</b></p> <p>Matthew 1:2–6: Abraham ⇒ Isaac ⇒ Jacob ⇒ Judah ⇒ Perez ⇒ Hezron ⇒ Ram ⇒ Amminadab ⇒ Nahshon ⇒ Salmon ⇒ Boaz ⇒ Obed ⇒ Jesse ⇒ David the king. I count 14 generations, which include Abraham and David.</p>
<p>There were fourteen generations from the Babylonian captivity to Christ. Matt 1:17</p> <p>There were but thirteen generations from the Babylonian captivity to Christ Matt 1:12-16</p>	<p>Mat 1:17b <b>...and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations,...</b></p> <p>Matthew 1:12–16: And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah ⇒ Shealtiel ⇒ Zerubbabel ⇒ Abiud ⇒ Eliakim ⇒ Azor ⇒ Zadok ⇒ Achim ⇒ Eliud ⇒ Eleazar ⇒ Matthan ⇒ Jacob ⇒ <b>Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ</b>. There are 14 generations, including Jeconiah and Jesus.</p> <p>These are both memory tools—14 generations = 14 names.</p>

## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>The infant Christ was taken into Egypt Matt 2:14, 15, 19, 21, 23</p>	<p>Luke 2:22–23, 39 <b>And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord")</b> But Matt. 2:14–15a reads: <b>And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod.</b></p>
<p>The infant Christ was not taken into Egypt Luke 2:22, 39</p>	<p>From <i>Cleaned-up Contradictions in the Bible</i>: <i>These are complementary accounts of Jesus' early life, and not contradictory at all. It is clear that it would take some time for Herod to realize that he had been outsmarted by the magi. Matthew's Gospel says that he killed all the baby boys that were two years old and under in Bethlehem and its vicinity. That would be enough time to allow Joseph and Mary the opportunity to do their rituals at the temple in Jerusalem and then return to Nazareth in Galilee, from where they went to Egypt, and then returned after the death of Herod.</i><sup>184</sup></p>
<p>Christ was tempted in the wilderness Mark 1:12–13</p>	<p>Mark 1:12–13 <b>The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.</b> John 2:1 <b>On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.</b> The <i>third day</i> likely refers to the third day of our Lord's public ministry (being tested/tempted by Satan is not a part of His public ministry).</p>
<p>Christ was not tempted in the wilderness John 2:1–2</p>	
<p>Christ preached his first sermon on the mount Matt 5:1, 2</p>	<p>These are different sermons with very similar content. In Matthew 5, Jesus actually moves away from the crowds, gathers His disciples to Him, and teaches them. In Luke 6, Jesus is teaching a much larger group of disciples (read the first few verses of each chapter to confirm this). There is no contradiction for Jesus to teach the same or similar material at different times. Have you never heard a pastor teach the same material? Have you never heard a pastor repeat a story, a doctrine, the teaching of a particular passage?</p>
<p>Christ preached his first sermon on the plain Luke 6:17, 20</p>	
<p>John was in prison when Jesus went into Galilee Mark 1:14</p>	<p>Jesus did not just go to Galilee once. He was raised up in the Galilee district; this is where much of His ministry took place. Galilee is mentioned nearly 60 times in the gospels alone. For this to be a contradiction, we would essentially have to confine Jesus to <i>one</i> trip to Galilee.</p>
<p>John was not in prison when Jesus went into Galilee John 1:43 3:22-24</p>	<p>The book of John was very different from the other gospels. I would guess that John read the other gospels and did not want to write an historical account that really added nothing to the history of Jesus. Therefore, in his gospel, John primarily covered incidents and perspectives not found in the other gospels; and he wrote from a perspective of many decades later.</p>

<sup>184</sup> From *101 Cleared-Up Contradictions in the Bible* by Jay Smith, Alex Chowdhry, Toby Jepson, James Schaeffer. From e-sword; Matthew 2:14.

## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Christ's disciples were commanded to go forth with a staff and sandals Mark 6:8–9</p> <p>Christ's disciples were commanded to go forth with neither staffs nor sandals. Matt. 10:9–10</p>	<p>Mark 6:8–9 <b>He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff--no bread, no bag, no money in their belts--but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.</b> Matthew 10:9–10 <b>Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, for the laborer deserves his food.</b> The key is the placement of <i>sandals</i> and <i>staff</i> in Matthew. In the Greek, this can indicate that they are not to take <i>two pairs of sandals</i> or <i>two staffs</i>. Some translations give us the gist of Matthew 10:10 <b>Don't carry a bag. Take for your trip only the clothes and shoes you are wearing. Don't take a walking stick. A worker should be given the things he needs. (ERV) Don't take a traveling bag for the trip, a change of clothes, sandals, or a walking stick. After all, the worker deserves to have his needs met. (God's Word™)</b></p>
<p>A woman of Canaan besought Jesus Matt. 15:22</p> <p>It was a Greek woman who besought Him Mark 7:26</p>	<p>Matthew 15:22 <b>Just then a Canaanite woman came out of that area</b> [Note: Mark 7:26 calls her a Syrophoenician Gentile], <b>crying, "O Lord, son of David, have pity on me. My daughter is seriously troubled by an evil spirit."</b> (AUV–NT) Mark 7:26 <b>Now the woman was a Greek [i.e., a Gentile], a Syrophoenician by nationality.</b> [Note: This was a region just north of Galilee and consisted of Syria and Phoenicia]. <b>She begged Him to drive out the evil spirit from her daughter.</b> (AUV–NT) Nearly everyone is identified by where they are born and by where they are raised and by where they live. It is not a contradiction if someone calls me a Texan (where I have lived for decades) and if someone else calls me a Californian (where I was raised).</p>
<p>Two blind men besought Jesus Matt 20:30</p> <p>Only one blind man besought Him Luke 18:35, 38</p>	<p>Matthew was physically at most of the events which are recorded in Scripture. Luke was not at any of them. Luke pulled together information from eyewitnesses and from existing documents (I think he referred to Mark and Matthew). Whoever Luke interviewed, remembered one blind man in particular; Matthew saw and remembered both blind men. This is not a contradiction nor is Luke's narrative inaccurate. Missing a detail does not make a recollection inaccurate.</p>
<p>Here is another reason we know that these contradictions are copied from somewhere else. Do you really think the person or persons behind the website <i>Evil Bible</i> use the word <i>besought</i> in their day-to-day conversations?</p>	
<p>Christ was crucified at the third hour Mark 15:25</p> <p>Christ was not crucified until the sixth hour John 19:14, 15</p>	<p>Mark calculates time according to Jewish time; John uses Roman time. John's gospel was written long, long after the other 3 gospels; and John had become more <i>Roman-ized</i> over the years. Therefore, Mark recorded his gospel using Jewish time and John, many decades later, writes his gospel using Roman time.</p>

## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>When Critics Ask: <i>According to Roman time, the day ran from midnight to midnight. The Jewish 24 hour period began in the evening at 6 p.m. and the morning of that day began at 6 a.m. Therefore, when Mark asserts that at the third hour Christ was crucified, this was about 9 a.m. John stated that Christ’s trial was about the sixth hour. This would place the trial before the crucifixion and this would not negate any testimony of the Gospel writers. This fits with John’s other references to time. For example, he speaks about Jesus being weary from His journey from His trip from Judea to Samaria at the “sixth hour” and asking for water from the woman at the well. Considering the length of His trip, His weariness, and the normal evening time when people come to the well to drink and to water their animals, this fits better with 6 p.m., which is “the sixth hour” of the night by Roman time reckoning. The same is true of John’s reference to the tenth hour in John 1:39, which would be 10 a.m., a more likely time to be out preaching than 4 a.m.</i><sup>185</sup></p>	
<p>The two thieves reviled Christ.                      Matt 27:44 Mark 15:32                      Only one of the thieves reviled Christ                      Luke 23:39,40</p>	<p>Both of these men are hardened criminals, and it is likely that both men cursed an insulted Jesus at the beginning. However, one of the men changed his mind about Jesus Christ while on the cross—his impending death looming large in his own eyes. When Critics Ask suggest that, when the second criminal heard Jesus forgive His enemies, that may have begun to change his thinking.</p>
<p style="color: red;">One of the criminals who were hanged railed at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ [= Messiah]? Save Yourself and us!"                      But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into your kingdom."                      And He said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:39–43) This sounds very much like a man who has spent a few hours in agony reconsidering his life and his deeds.</p>	

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This final group of alleged contradictions from **Evil Bible** is listed under the heading **Speculative Doctrines:**

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Christ is equal with God                      John 10:30 Phil 2:5</p>	<p>Jesus is fully God and fully man; this is known theologically as the Hypostatic Union. In His humanity, He is equal to man and tested in all points as we are; in His Deity, He is equal to God in every respect. In this way, Jesus is a True Mediator, as He is equal to both parties (man and God) in the mediation.                      John 14:6 1Timothy 2:5</p>
<p>Christ is not equal with God                      John 14:28 Matthew 24:36</p>	<p>Therefore, when speaking from His humanity, Jesus is not equal to God, but is subject to the same natural forces as we are. Jesus is able to be thirsty and hungry, for instance. However, in His Deity, He is completely equal to God. When Jesus says, <b>“Before Abraham, I am”</b>, He is speaking from His Deity. When He says, <b>“I thirst”</b>, He is speaking from His humanity. When He says, <b>“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life”</b>, He is speaking from His Hypostatic Union.</p>

<sup>185</sup> Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask*; Victor Books; taken from e-Sword, Mark 15:25.

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Jesus was all-powerful Matt 28:18 John 3:35</p> <p>Jesus was not all-powerful Mark 6:5</p>	<p>This apparent contradiction is explained by the doctrines referred to above. The is the <b>Doctrine of the Hypostatic Union</b> (<i>In the person of the incarnate Christ are two natures, divine and human, inseparably united without mixture or loss of separate identity, without loss or transfer of properties or attributes, the union being personal and eternal.</i><sup>186</sup>) and the <b>Doctrine of Kenosis</b>. <i>During the dispensation of the hypostatic union, our Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily restricted the independent use of His divine attributes in compliance with the Father's plan for the Incarnation and the First Advent. This means that Jesus Christ did not use the attributes of His divine nature to benefit Himself, to provide for Himself, to glorify Himself, to act independently of the future protocol plan of God for the Church Age by the compromise of the prototype spiritual life.</i><sup>187</sup> This so-called contradiction is key to the Person and work of Jesus Christ.</p>
<p>Jesus put Himself completely within the will of God the Father during His ministry on earth. He voluntarily gave up the free exercise of His Deity when fulfilling the plan of God on earth as a man. Over and over in the gospels we read about Jesus not doing His will but God's will (referring to God the Father). Over and over again, Jesus refers to doing miracles by means of the Holy Spirit (which would mean, He is not using His Deity to perform these miracles). Jesus, in His humanity, obeys God the Father in all things. Jesus, in His humanity, does not depend upon His own power (the doctrine of kenosis), but He depends upon the power of the Holy Spirit.</p>	
<p>Functioning in this way, Jesus accomplishes two objectives: (1) He lives His life legitimately as a man, subject to the same physical limitations that we have; and the same temptations that we face. In addition to this (2) Jesus <i>test-drove</i> the Christian life for believers today.</p>	
<p>The law was superseded by the Christian dispensation Luke 16:16 Eph 2:15 Romans 7:6</p> <p>The law was not superseded by the Christian dispensation Matt 5:17-19</p>	<p>Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. He acted in accordance with the Mosaic Law, fulfilling all of its standards perfectly, and without sin. He also fulfilled the prophecies found in Old Testament, prophesying His coming. Jesus said: "<b>Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.</b>" (Matthew 5:17–19; ESV) Jesus accomplished all that was in the Law and the Prophets. What the Law required of Him, He performed; what the prophecies said about Him, He fulfilled.</p>
<p>In the new dispensation, called here the <i>Christian dispensation</i>; and also known as the <b>Church Age</b>, the Mosaic Law is set aside (although most of its principles are <i>not</i> set aside). God no longer works through nation Israel, but God works through the church, which is made up of all of those who have believed in Jesus Christ, Jews or gentiles. See the <b>Doctrine of Dispensations (HTML) (PDF)</b> for more information.</p>	
<p>Most of us have seen a '57 Chevy and some of us have even driven one. Chevrolet (that is, GM) set that product aside in subsequent years. It no longer produces 1957 Chevrolets. A 2014 Chevy Camaro Coupe is not the same as a '57 Chevy, but it still uses many of the principles of the '57 Chevy.</p>	
<p>There were portions of the Mosaic Law which were completely set aside—like the animal sacrifices, which pointed forward to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Once the reality came, there was no longer a need for that which was <i>typical</i> of the reality.</p>	

<sup>186</sup> From [http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=187](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=187) accessed November 25, 2014.

<sup>187</sup> From [http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=3054](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=3054) accessed November 25, 2014.

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
	<p>Heb 10:1–4 explains this: For since the law has but a <b>shadow</b> of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (ESV) The Law, being <i>a shadow of the good things to come</i>, is another way of saying that the animal sacrifices (along with the Tabernacle, the various holy days, etc.) are <i>typical</i> of the Lord Jesus Christ and the crucifixion. They point toward Him and His work.</p>
<p>Christ's mission was peace Luke 2:13–14</p>	<p>Jesus has come to establish <i>peace between man and God</i>. That is the reason we have phrases in the New Testament like <i>the gospel of peace</i> (Ephesians 6:5). Paul is not talking about establishing world peace or peace between 2 or 3 nations, but peace between God and man. <b>For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.</b> (1Tim. 2:5–6; ESV; capitalized) It is the peace between God and man which is of primary importance to mankind. It is this that is meant by, "<b>Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!</b>" (Luke 2:14) Jesus did not come to establish peace between nations or even between individuals in the same family (Matthew 10:34 24:6), but between man and God.</p>
<p>Christ's mission was not peace Matt 10:34</p>	
<p>Christ received not testimony from man John 5:33–34</p>	<p>John 5:33–34 <b>"You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved."</b> In context, Jesus is talking about those who are witnesses to Who He is, and He includes John the Baptizer in that list (who is a man). Unregenerate man and the religious types of His day would not be witnesses to His Hypostatic Union.</p>
<p>Christ did receive testimony from man John 15:27</p>	<p>John 15:27 reads: <b>"And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning."</b> (ESV) Jesus, in preparing His disciples to carry on after He is crucified, resurrected and then taken up into heaven, tells them that they will be His witness from that time forward. Again, there is no real contradiction here.</p>
<p>Christ's witness of himself is true. John 8:18,14</p>	<p>John 5:30–33 <b>"I can do nothing on My Own. As I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I seek not My Own will but the will of Him Who sent Me. If I alone bear witness about Myself, My testimony is not deemed true. There is another who bears witness about Me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about Me is true. You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth."</b> You will note the passive voice: <i>My testimony is not deemed true</i>. The Law requires 2 or 3 witnesses, so that is what Jesus is providing (Deut. 17:6 Matthew 18:16). Jesus is not saying that He is lying; He is saying that the Law requires at least one more witness.</p>
<p>Christ's witness of himself is not true. John 5:31</p>	

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Christ laid down His life for his friends. John 15:13 10:11</p>	<p>Jesus Christ died for all mankind. We are all inherently His enemies, because we all have Adam’s original sin imputed to us and we have committed personal sins and we all have sin natures. Despite that, Jesus Christ died for us. Rom. 5:8 <b>God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.</b></p>
<p>Christ laid down His life for his enemies. Rom. 5:10</p>	<p>Some believers will achieve a state of friendship with God (like Abraham in James 2:23); and Jesus Christ died for them.</p>
<p>It was lawful for the Jews to put Christ to death. John 19:7</p>	<p>John 19:6–7 <b>When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made Himself the Son of God."</b> The Jews knew that they were not allowed to execute anyone apart from Roman law, otherwise they would never have involved Pilate or anyone else of the Roman empire. There is nothing in the Old Testament about penalty for someone who claims to be God. There is probably nothing in the Jewish religious customs about this either (although I have not researched that).</p>
<p>It was not lawful for the Jews to put Christ to death. John 18:31</p>	<p>Often, the evil thinking of the parents is passed along to their children. These children, with their parents’ anti-God thinking, are also punished—but they are punished for their own viewpoint which they have taken up from their parents. God holds us responsible for the things that we do and the things that we think—whether they come from our parents or not.</p> <p>Now, there are also natural results from actions that parents take. Our government is building up an horrendous amount of debt, and this will affect our children and grandchildren. The inflation and the economic chaos that will result are natural consequences.</p>
<p>Children are punished for the sins of the parents Ex. 20:5</p>	<p>Obviously, there are ways a parent can harm his children, and this harm continues for decades or longer.</p>
<p>Children are not punished for the sins of the parents Ezek. 18:20</p>	<p>There are at least 2 forms of justification: (1) Justification by faith alone in Christ alone (for salvation). (2) Justification by works: a believer in time by his actions glorifies God.</p> <p>The word here is dikaiōō (δικαίόω) [pronounced <i>dik-ah-YOH-oh</i>], which means, <i>to render righteous; to show, exhibit, evince, one to be righteous; to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous, or such as he ought to be.</i> Thayer definition only. Strong’s #1344. In salvation, we are positionally pronounced righteous. In our life subsequent to salvation, we can produce divine righteousness by our actions.</p>
<p>Man is justified by faith alone Rom. 3:20 Gal 2:16 Gal 3:11–12 Romans 4:2</p>	<p>If Paul, in the same letter (the Epistle to the Romans), speaks of justification in two ways, then it ought to be clear that there is no contradiction involved.</p>
<p>Man is not justified by faith alone James 2:21,24 Romans 2:13</p>	

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
It is impossible to fall from grace. John 10:28 Romans 8:38,39	All believers have eternal security. Once we have believed in Jesus Christ, we cannot lose our salvation, no matter how sorry our subsequent lives are. This is because our salvation stands upon the finished work of Jesus Christ, and not upon our own works. See the <b>Doctrine of Eternal Security</b> (external links). <a href="#">Robert Dean</a> , <a href="#">Grace Notes</a> , or <a href="#">Verse by Verse</a> (click on <i>printed doctrines</i> and then go to <i>Eternal Security</i> ).
It is possible to fall from grace. Ezek. 18:24 Hebrews 6:4-6 2Peter 2:20–21	Believers who sin can lose their lives under the sin unto death (as per Ezekiel 18:24), but this is a loss of physical life; not a loss of salvation.

The final two passages noted are difficult passages, so we will handle them separately.

Heb. 6:1–6 **Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding Him up to contempt.** The context of this verse (Hebrews 5:12–14) is there were many Hebrews who had believed in Jesus Christ, but were not spiritually progressing as they should. There are a set of basic principles (listed above) that the Hebrew believers ought to understand, but they did not. They reveal that they do not understand these basic principles (represented by the word *repentance*) because they continue to offer animal sacrifices (Hebrews 7:27–28 9:25). As long as they continued to observe the various Hebrew rituals, they could not be *restored* to these basic principles. By engaging in animal sacrifices, they are continuing to *crucify the Son of God over and over again, holding Him up to contempt*. They could not grow spiritually as long as they continue to do that. If they kept offering up animal sacrifices, they could not be renewed to the fundamental principles of Bible doctrine.

2Peter 2:19–22 **They [false teachers] promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."** In life, the unbeliever is not a child of God, and therefore, not subject to God's discipline. He is subject to the consequences of his own actions. However, once a person believes in Jesus Christ, then God becomes his Father, and he is subject to the discipline of God. God's discipline while on earth can be quite severe. Furthermore a person's own bad decisions can also have a very negative impact on his life.

A dog who returns to his vomit has vomited up something which does not agree with him. But yet, he goes back and sifts through this rejected vomit to see if maybe there was something good still there. When you believe in the truth, you also reject things which are against God. However, as a believer, you may later reject the truth; which means you may often go back and try again things you were once smart enough to reject (like the dog returning to his vomit). So, as a believer, you may believe in Jesus Christ; but later, reject some doctrine that you hear (the Angelic Conflict or whatever) and find yourself rejecting Jesus Christ for that reason. Then you return to the vomit of your past life—that is, you return to doing and thinking things that you were smart enough to reject at one time. In time, your life will be worse than it was before. Eternity is a different matter; but Peter is speaking of the entanglements of life.

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>No man is without sin. 1Kings 8:46 Proverbs 20:9 Eccles. 7:20 Romans 3:10</p> <p>Christians are sinless. 1John 3:9,6,8</p>	<p>If you know any Christians at all, then you know that Christians are not sinless.</p> <p>We do have periods of time when we are sinless. When we have named our sins to God, and are filled with the Holy Spirit (1John 1:9—the context), the believer then enjoys a period of sinlessness (that is, until he sins again). This period of time might be a few minutes, a few hours or even a day or so. That is what 1John 3 is all about.</p>
<p>There is to be a resurrection of the dead. 1Cor 15:52 Revelation 20:12,13 Luke 20:37 1Corinthians 15:16</p>	<p>The correct understanding is, believers will be resurrected.</p> <p>Job says: "Remember that my life is a breath; my eye will never again see good. The eye of him who sees me will behold me no more; while your eyes are on me, I shall be gone. As the cloud fades and vanishes, so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up; he returns no more to his house, nor does his place know him anymore." (Job 7:7–10) There is the sense that, when a person dies, they never return to their life again. There will be a point of time in all of our lives that, we die and we will never walk through the front door of our house ever again. Eccles. 9:5 reads: <i>For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.</i> There is a distinct separation between those on earth living life and those who have died.</p>
<p>There is to be no resurrection of the dead. Job 7:9 Eccles. 9:5 Isaiah 26:14</p>	<p>Isaiah 26:14 is speaking of the unbeliever (see v. 10); and Isaiah 26:19 reads: <i>Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise.</i> So Isaiah is teaching resurrection for the righteous.</p>
<p>Reward and punishment to be bestowed in this world Prov. 11:31 Reward and punishment to be bestowed in the next world Rev. 20:12 Matthew 16:27 2Corinthians 5:10</p>	<p>Is this really a difficult <i>contradiction</i> to figure out? Does God not deal with us in time and in eternity; do we not receive blessings from God now and in eternity? Why does one necessarily contradict the other?</p> <p>There are exceptions to this: some believers will receive great blessing in heaven because they endured so much difficulty here in time on earth.</p>
<p>Annihilation the portion of all mankind Job 3:11,13-17,19-22 Eccles. 9:5,10 3:19–20 Endless misery the portion of all mankind Matt. 25:46 Revelation 20:10,15 14:11 Daniel 12:2</p>	<p>The Job passage does not speak of annihilation of mankind. See <b>Job 3</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p> <p>Eccles. 9:5, 10 <i>For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.</i> Ecclesiastes simply speaks of a complete separation from life.</p>

When Critics Ask: [Solomon in Ecclesiastes 9:5) affirmed also that the dead do not know what is going on "under the sun" ( 9:6 ). But while they do not know what is happening on earth, they certainly do know what is going on in heaven (cf. Rev. 6:9 ). In short, these texts refer simply to man in relation to this present life —they say nothing about the life to come immediately after this one.<sup>188</sup>

<sup>188</sup> From Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask*; Victor Books; taken from e-Sword, Eccles. 9:5.

This completes our study of some of the alleged contradictions. For each section, I took the first 10, 15 or 20 so-called contradictions listed by [evilbible.com](http://evilbible.com) (a fairly well-known anti-Bible site, which I accessed October 14, 2014 and several times since then) and explained them. No contradiction was left out; I simply did not cover the entire list for each section.

For most of the contradictions which I read, I can answer them without a web search and without having to search out the answer from my considerable personal resources. Sometimes they did not understand things like anthropopathism or the Hypostatic Union; and sometimes they simply ignore this or that phrase within the context which explains the apparent contradiction. Of their *contradictions*, only 2 or 3 were difficult to explain.

What will *never* happen is, one of these websites will read an explanation (such as, “although God is a Spirit, He can choose to manifest Himself in a way that He might be seen”), and then say, “Oh, I get it now. I see how this can be explained.” And then remove the *contradiction*. They don’t do that. They will *never* do that. These websites will not remove any of their contradictions, even when the explanation is quite simple. They are not in the business of disseminating honest information; they are in the business of persuading you that the Bible is not the Word of God. So every contradiction on their webpage will stand forever more, as if etched in stone.

These anti-Bible websites need to have a long list of *contradictions*. A webpage of contradictions is not very impressive if it only lists 3 or 4 contradictions.<sup>189</sup> However, if they list 50 contradictions, and, from the outset, ban **any classification of explanation that they do not like** (like saying, *you may not explain this using the word anthropopathism*), it appears to be impressive and well thought out (although most of these contradictions were found elsewhere and put in this website—usually without attribution).

Most of these websites do not allow for discussion of their list.

On the other hand, I make every attempt to make my translation and interpretation of Scripture error-free. When I come across a mistake that I make (and I certainly do make them), I endeavor to go back and fix this error of mine. I do not need to protect my own ego.

I have several books on the topic of the Bible being evil or filled with contradictions. I recall with a smile one author who promises that he would make the Bible a thing of the past—he is, by the way, an author you have *never* heard of. The Bible is here and he is a thing of the past.

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The progression of this study is as follows. Jacob observes angels; and I made the observation that quite a number of Biblical authors make reference to angels without contradiction. To the Bible critic, there is no such thing as angels. So, how can a dozen authors writing individually come up with a consistent picture of angelic creation—particularly, if such creatures do not exist? How exactly is agreement reached among a variety of writers over hundreds of years time—writers who have never met or consulted with one another—regarding something which skeptics do not even believe exists?

This led us to examine a few so-called Bible contradictions. We had examined a few of them before, but we studied a great deal more of them.

And this leads to a short study of the remarkable collection of the books of the Bible.

<sup>189</sup> In these long lists of contradictions, there were perhaps 2 or 3 which required actual research on my part, beyond opening the Bible to the passages cited.

The Bible is quite a remarkable book or set of books. We should not be able to take a collection of ancient writings, by shepherds, kings, nomads, doctors, tax collectors and generals and end up with an authoritative delineation of the nature of God, of the plan of God, and the history of mankind. That defies human logic. Such a collection should seem disjointed, pointless, contradictory, and filled with a variety of opinions and myths (those who do not believe in the Bible believe that is a good description of the Bible). However, in reality, the Bible comes across as a cohesive whole, as if its writing had been directed by One Person.

### The Uniqueness of the Bible

1. Conservative Christians usually see the span of time for the writing of the Bible as 1500 years (from the writings of Moses to last words penned by John on the Island of Patmos). Liberal Christians and critics shorten that time to maybe a 1000 years or so, having all kinds of weird theories about the authorship. I believe that the greater part of Genesis was originally written by believers who actually experienced those events (the writing of Jacob in Genesis is intensely personal and filled with details). So I believe that the Bible was written over a period of 2000–4000 years, the writing of Genesis and Job being originally preserved by memorization, when man's mind was much greater in its capacity than it is today.
2. From time of Moses to Jesus, there are about 50 generations. So the Bible was written over a period of greater than 50 generations. There are about 56 generations from Abraham to Jesus. What other book has been composed by so many different generations? I am not aware of any—not a single one. Is there even a book written over a period of 10 generations? Again, I am not aware of any. Wouldn't people writing 500 or 1000 years later dismiss what has come before as outdated or primitive? That is how critics try to portray the Bible today—but no writer of Scripture 500 or 1000 years later ever besmirches or corrects any previous writer. Once Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, some portions of the Law were set aside—but only because He had fulfilled them. Those portions of the Law looked forward to Jesus, and were fulfilled in Him and by Him. They could be set aside not because there was anything wrong with them, but because they had been fulfilled.
3. The authors of the Bible include nomadic shepherds (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob); a man trained and educated to assume the throne of Egypt (Moses); a military general (Joshua); a priest/prophet given over to God (Samuel); a poet, musician, writer and king (David); a highly educated philosopher, engineer, builder and king (Solomon); a prime minister (Daniel); a tax collector (Matthew); a physician and historian (Luke); fishermen (Peter and John); a man who barely spoke the language in which he wrote (John) and a rabbi turned believer (Paul).
4. The Bible is also unique in its perspective of the key figures of human history. Most people who know anything about the Bible or about the Jewish race know Abraham; and some know a few things about him. Although Abraham was a very successful businessman, he was not a king—he was a wandering shepherd, and yet we know about him—but who could name a king from this same era? While Abraham was alive, there was no nation Israel. And yet we know about Abraham.
5. The Bible is unique in the perspective presented by its human authors. King David had about 10 wives and 10 mistresses and King Solomon had 600 wives and 300 mistresses. Both of them had errant sons. It is human nature to try to rationalize what you have done in your own life. So, in reading Proverbs or the Psalms, we might expect to read many diatribes against errant sons or some justification for having more than one wife. However, when it comes to young people, the emphasis of Proverbs is upon the importance of the good teaching of the father. When it comes to marriage, monogamy is always presented as the standard (which is, of course, true throughout the Bible). There is nowhere in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or Song of Solomon where one might find justification for polygamy.
6. We find this honest approach to one's own character over and over again in various books of the Bible. Elijah whines about being the only faithful man remaining, and God upbraids him for this. Jonah expresses his distinct disapprobation for the Assyrians that God sends him to evangelize—and God corrects him for his wrong notions (even though the Assyrians are generally not spoken of favorably in other passages of Scripture). The Apostle Paul, in the book of Acts, compromises the clarity of the gospel message in order to get a hearing with the Jews of Jerusalem—and he is disciplined by God for this. King David takes the wife of a soldier and then has that soldier killed. He is put under pressure/discipline by God for 10 years for doing these evil things. There is no question in our minds that what David did was wrong. The mistakes and wrongdoing of the saints are never glossed over or excused or rationalized.

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7. The Bible was written under a variety of circumstances: Genesis 24 is clearly a bedtime story for children, recounted either by the children's mother or by the slave of their grandfather; some portions were written under the stars as a shepherd (David; possibly Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob); some portions in the palace as a king (David and Solomon); in the desert on a 40 year march (Moses); during or following a military campaign to control the land of Canaan (Joshua); in a dungeon (Jeremiah); within a Roman prison (Paul); while isolated on the Isle of Patmos (John); and while traveling on a missionary tour (Luke).
8. The mental and emotional states of the writers varied dramatically. King David wrote during times of great pain and suffering; as well as during times of great happiness (as is so apparent in the Psalms). Solomon wrote while suffering great pangs of old age; he wrote as a younger man, confused by his pursuit of human excellence; he wrote as a man clearly understanding the importance of his father's teachings; he wrote about his pursuit of and rebuff by a woman. Moses wrote while being very frustrated with the people of Israel who saw many signs and wonders and yet, they still acted like a bunch of idiots. Paul wrote letters to churches and individuals when suffering from a physical ailment, when under the pressure and threat of death, when in jail, and as a man fully confident of his theological approach (which was a dramatic departure from the current stripe of Judaism of that time).
9. The Bible was written in West Asia, Africa, and Europe.
10. The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek; and in a variety of styles of each language. The most elementary Greek student can pick up the work of Luke and of John and note a striking difference in vocabulary, cadence, thought, and even intention.
11. There is a 400 year gap between the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament was in constant and general use at the time that Jesus walked the earth. It had been translated into Greek by this time and was written about extensively by the Jewish religious class (although, they primarily distorted the meaning of Old Testament Scripture).
12. The topics of Scripture have been very controversial: the existence and character of God; the function of the free will of individuals; the function and purpose of civil government and the response to the function of civil government. The Bible discusses family, children, war, peace, discipline, slavery, capitol punishment, and the concept of right and wrong in society. Any one of these topics could start an extensive argument on the internet, yet, there is a moral agreement throughout Scripture. Our American society today does not agree with our society 50 years ago (the strongly anti-Communist and fiscally conservative Democrat John Kennedy of 1960 would find no place in the Democrat party today), and yet, there is a consistent God and a uniform morality throughout Scripture, though written over a period of thousands of years.
13. Probably the most controversial subject is man's relationship to God; and the Bible has a unique approach to this, which not found in any other religious book.
  - 1) God's love cannot overrule His justice and righteousness; so, because we are all guilty of sin, God must condemn us. However, He took upon Himself the burden of our sin (Isaiah 53:4-5, 11-12 Galatians 3:13 Hebrews 9:28 1Peter 2:24 3:18).
  - 2) Our relationship with God is established by faith in Him (Genesis 15:6 Psalm 106:31 John 3:16, 18, 36 Galatians 3:6-14 Ephesians 2:8-9 Titus 3:5). It is a free and undeserved gift, accessible to any man, no matter how sinful.
  - 3) Every other religion has a series of steps or requirements which must be met in order for a man to be saved. None of them address man's inherent sinfulness and the sins that he has already committed. These things seem to magically disappear in these other religions when man starts fulfilling the conditions of that religion.
  - 4) However, the Bible remains consistent throughout regarding God; God's love, righteousness and justice; man's basic nature; and God's relationship to man.
14. F. F. Bruce<sup>1</sup> (The Books and the Parchments, Fleming H. Revell) observes that: "Any part of the human body can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body. And any part of the Bible can only be properly explained in reference to the whole Bible." Bruce continues: "The Bible, at first sight, appears to be a collection of literature --- mainly Jewish. If we inquire into the circumstances under which the various Biblical documents were written, we find that they were written at intervals over a space of nearly 1400 years. The writer wrote in various lands, from Italy in the west, to Mesopotamia and possibly Persia

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in the east. The writers themselves were a diverse group of people, not only separated from each other by hundreds of years and hundreds of miles, but belonging to the most different walks of life. In their ranks we have kings, herdsman, soldiers, legislators, fishermen, statesmen, courtiers, priests, and prophets, a tentmaker, a Rabbi and gentile physician, not to speak of others of whom we know nothing, apart from the writings they have left us. The writings themselves belong to a great variety of literary types. They include history, law (civil, criminal, ethical, ritual, sanitary), religious poetry, didactic treatises, lyric poetry, parable and allegory, biography, personal correspondence, personal memoirs and diaries, in addition to the distinctively Biblical types of prophecy and apocalyptic. For all that, the Bible is not simply a collection of writings, or anthology; there is a unity which binds the whole together. An anthology is compiled by an anthologist, but no anthologist compiled the Bible."

15. McDowell: *If you took 10 authors, all from one walk of life, one generation, one place, one time, one mood, one continent, one language, and just one controversial subject (the Bible speaks on hundreds of subjects in harmony and agreement). Would the authors agree? No! You would have a conglomeration!*
16. This quotation is found **many places** on the internet without attribution: *Imagine that a book began to be written during the time of the Roman Empire, continued down through the Middle Ages, and was completed in this 20th century, with many different writers contributing. What result would you anticipate if the writers were as diverse in their occupations as soldiers, kings, priests, fishermen, herdsman, and doctors? Would you expect the book to be harmonious and coherent? 'Hardly!' you may say. Well, the Bible was written under these circumstances. Yet, it is harmonious in its entirety, not just in overall concepts but in minute details too.*
17. Do you know what the #1 selling book last month was? Well, you won't find it listed that way anywhere, but it was the Bible. How about the month before that? The Bible. The best selling book 3 months ago? The Bible. Since the invention of the printing press, the Bible has been the #1 bestseller, month after month, year after year. The critic may claim, *well, that does not prove it is the Word of God!* And it doesn't; but this does prove that the Bible is unique and above all other books.
18. Of course the Bible is translated and paraphrased into more languages than any other book in human history; and it was probably the first book or one of the first books translated into another language. The entire Old Testament was translated into Greek circa 200 B.C.
19. The Bible is unique in its survival.
  - 1) McDowell: *Written on materials that perishes easily, having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, did not diminish it's style, correctness nor existence.*
  - 2) Bernard Ramm: *Jews preserved it as no other manuscript has ever been preserved. They kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word, and paragraph. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity ---- scribes, lawyers, massoreetes. Who ever counted the letters and syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle? Cicero or Seneca? <sup>2</sup>*
  - 3) John Lea, in *The Greatest Book in the World*, compared the Bible to the more recent writings of Shakespear: *In an article in the North American Review, a writer made some interesting comparisons between the writings of Shakespeare and the Scriptures which shows how much greater care must have been bestowed upon the Biblical manuscripts than upon any other writings, even when there was so much more opportunity of preserving the correct text by means of the printed copy than when all the copies had to be made by hand. He said: "It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred and eight, should be far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New Testament, now over eighteen centuries old. During nearly fifteen of which it existed only as a manuscript ... with perhaps a dozen or so exceptions, the text of every verse in the New Testament may be said to be so far settled by general consent of scholars, that any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretation of the words than any doubts as to the words themselves. But in every one of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur."*<sup>3</sup>
20. The Persecution of the Scriptures:

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- 1) Tens of thousands of men (or more) have attacked the Bible in a variety of ways. There are a huge number of books designed to *end the Bible*. I own one which promised to do so, by an author you have never heard of. Voltaire, an influential French infidel, said that, within a 100 years of his death, the Bible would be swept out of existence. 50 years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society used Voltaire's press and house to produce copies of the Bible.
  - 2) In A.D. 303, an edict was issued by Diocletian to destroy all Christian churches, to burn all their Scriptures, and to persecute all professing Christians. 25 years later, Constantinople, his successor, called for 50 copies of the Scriptures to be prepared at the expense of the government.
  - 3) Interestingly enough, some of the greatest attacks upon Scripture came from the Catholic church. At some point in time, popes decided that it was not a good idea for the common people to have copies of Scripture in a language that they understood. So the Catholic church actually went out of its way to keep this from happening—even persecuting those who tried to disseminate copies of Scripture. This period of time in human history is known very appropriately as the Dark Ages.
21. The Bible has survived, despite intense criticism.
- 1) Bernard Ramm<sup>4</sup> adds that: *A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put. No other book has been so chopped, knifed, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology or belles letters of classical or modern times has been subject to such a mass attack as the Bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line and tenet? The Bible is still loved by millions, read by millions, and studied by millions.*
  - 2) Christians theologians and those posing as Christian theologians came up with a preposterous notion known as documentary hypothesis or the JPED theory. They begin with the assumption that nobody was writing stuff down during the time of Moses, and therefore, developed very unusual theories about the authorship of Scripture, based upon that assumption. Well, now we know that assumption is false, but this theory is still taught as fact in hundreds of seminaries all over the United States and elsewhere. So we might say that the Bible is also attacked by those within the tent as well as by those without. See **Documentary Hypothesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).
  - 3) If you search *Bible*, *Bible contradictions*, *Bible problems* or whatever on [Amazon](#), you will find hundreds of books dedicated to taking down the Bible. Many of them will profess that they will be the author to remove the Bible from its lofty perch. One generation passes away, and so does that author and usually his book. The Bible always remains.
22. No one in the Bible is presented as sinless; not the patriarchs, not the kings of Israel, not the prophets or priests of God, not even the disciples of our Lord. Even the great Apostle Paul in the book of Acts reveals some serious shortcomings in at least one of the important decisions which he made (to offer a vow in order to get a hearing by the Jews). Only one man is presented as sinless, and that man is Christ Jesus.
23. Science and the Bible. The Bible is primarily an historical work, but there are principles of science found throughout Scripture which are quite remarkable.
- 1) From George DeHoff's [Why We Believe in the Bible](#) (accessed December 2, 2014): *Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) first announced that there are only five "manifestations of the unknowable" in existence--time, force, action, space and matter and that all else is based on these fundamentals.* Interestingly enough, Genesis 1:1 reads: *In the beginning* [time], *God* [force] *created* [action] *the heavens* [space] *and the earth* [matter].
  - 2) Along the same lines, an apologist/evangelist points out that matter, space and time must begin simultaneously; that these things cannot exist separate from one another. Again, Genesis 1:1 reads: *In the beginning* [time], *God created the heavens* [space] *and the earth* [matter]. How did some ignorant shepherd know to put that all together in the first verse of Genesis?
  - 3) The creation of the heavens and the earth appear to parallel the concept of the Big Bang theory, which would make sense. The creation of the heavens and the earth in Genesis 1:1 is not the same as the restoration of the earth which follows in vv. 3–31.
  - 4) In Genesis, the earth appears to have been around a lot longer than man.

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- 5) In the restoration of the earth, there is at least the suggestion that the earth was packed in ice. The Holy Spirit *broods* over the earth.
- 6) Also from **DeHoff**: *All men once held with Sir Isaac Newton the idea that light is an emanation from the sun and other luminous bodies, but in recent years men think they have proved that light existed before the sun. There are many theories concerning light but all scientists are apparently agreed that light existed before the sun was made its governor.* In Genesis 1:3, we have light (on the first day); and in Genesis 1:14–16 (on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day), we have the sun and stars being made.
- 7) God spends a full day making the atmosphere for the earth; yet the concept of atmosphere man has only begun to appreciate in the past few hundred years. God creates the atmosphere before He creates plants, animals or people. You might say, “Well of course—you cannot have plants, animals or people without atmosphere.” And you are right. But how did some uneducated and superstitious shepherd know this millennia before any scientist did?
- 8) From **DeHoff**: *Scientists now teach that there are three great kingdoms mineral, vegetable and animal. This scientific division is a comparatively recent innovation. Neither the cuneiform records of Babylon and Assyria nor the hieroglyphics of Egypt reveal that the ancients knew of such a division. It is thought that Linnaeus was the first to recognize these three kingdoms and he made his announcement in A.D. 1735.* In Genesis 1, the first 10 verses are about the mineral material kingdom, the next nine verses are about the vegetation, and the remainder of the chapter is devoted to the animal kingdom (which includes man).
- 9) The body of man is made out of the chemicals of the earth—not really an intuitive concept. However, life must be breathed into us. Even today, we don’t know how this happens. We cannot give life to something which has no life. We cannot take non-living chemicals from the earth and turn them into living organisms.
- 10) God makes Eve by means of modified cloning. I did not understand how God could take a rib and use the genetic material to make the woman when I first read this passage 40 years ago. Today, we actually understand theoretically and to a limited degree what this process is.
- 11) God compares the stars of the sky to the sands of the sea in number. Until the past hundred or so years, this would have seemed to be a preposterous comparison. From **DeHoff**: *The ancients believed that there were only a very few stars in the heavens. In 150 B.C. Hipparchus said that there were less than three thousand. In A.D. 150 Ptolemy said there were not more than three thousand. This was considered a high estimate.* But, 2000 years before that, God suggested that there were billions upon billions of stars by comparing the stars of the heavens to the sands of the sea.
- 12) The earth is said to be a circle or a sphere in the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 40:22).
  - (1) From **Answers.com** (accessed December 2, 2014): *“The shape of the earth”. The “Encyclopedia Americana” said: “The earliest known image that men had of the earth was that it was a flat, rigid platform at the center of the universe. ... The concept of a spherical earth was not widely accepted until the Renaissance.” Some early navigators even feared that they might sail off the edge of the flat earth. But then the introduction of the compass and other advancements made possible longer ocean voyages. These “voyages of discovery,” another encyclopedia explains, “showed that the world was round, not flat as most people had believed.”*
  - (2) When Jesus describes the coming of the Son of Man, it is an event which is sudden (Luke 17:24), and yet happens to some people in the daytime (Luke 17:31, 35) and others at night (Luke 17:34). This requires a spherical earth.
- 13) And God is said to hang the earth upon nothing (Job 26:7). There were ancient theories from ancient times: *Some believed that the earth was supported by four elephants standing on a big sea turtle. Aristotle, a Greek philosopher and scientist of the fourth century BCE, taught that the earth could never hang in empty space. Instead, he taught that the heavenly bodies were fixed to the surface of solid, transparent spheres, with each sphere nested within another sphere. Supposedly the earth was on the innermost sphere, and the outermost sphere held the stars...The Bible’s accurate statement predated Aristotle by over 1,100 years. Yet, Aristotle’s views continued to be*

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taught as fact for some 2,000 years after his death! Finally, in 1687 C.E., Sir Isaac Newton published his findings that the earth was held in space in relation to other heavenly objects by mutual attraction, that is, gravity. But that was close to 3,200 years after the Bible had stated with elegant simplicity that God hangs the earth upon nothing. Quotations are from [Answers.com](http://Answers.com) accessed December 2, 2014.

- 14) Isaiah 40:22 God is enthroned above the circle of the earth; its inhabitants are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like thin cloth and spreads them out like a tent to live in. (HCSB) Isaiah is describing the atmosphere which is stretched out over the earth like a thin cloth (it is both very thin and you can see through it). The atmosphere is absolutely required in order for us to live on the earth. Compared to the mass of the earth, the Troposphere is like a thin layer stretched out over the earth—like a thin cloth, if you will, just as Isaiah described. Most of the atmosphere is within 10 miles of the surface of the earth—an earth which has about an 8000 mile diameter—so Isaiah describes quite well the atmosphere of the earth, in 700 B.C., long before man knew that there even was an atmosphere.
  - 15) From [DeHoff](http://DeHoff.com): In March, 1919, the government of the United States launched its first concrete ship at San Francisco. The dimensions were 300 feet, by 50 feet, by 30 feet. This is the same proportion as the ark which Noah built. Even with all our modern development in shipbuilding we still hold to approximately the same proportions as those used by Noah in building his boat. Who taught Noah how to build ships? How did he know what proportions to make his ark?
  - 16) From [DeHoff](http://DeHoff.com): Matthew Fontaine Maury, "the pathfinder of the seas", and the founder of the science of Oceanography, was a firm believer in and a close student of the Bible. His teaching caused the Annapolis Academy to be founded and his memory is honored and respected throughout the world. On monument row in Richmond, Virginia, is a statue of the great scientist sitting with the Bible in one hand and his charts of the sea in the other. Behind him is a globe of the earth which he helped to explore. Before Matthew Fontaine Maury lived there were no sailing lanes and no charts of the sea. One day, when he was ill, his son read to him from the eighth Psalm. He read that God put under man "...the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea." "Read that again," he said. Upon hearing it the second time, the venerable scientist said, "If the Word of God says there are paths in the sea, they must be there. I will find them." Within a few years he had charted the principal lanes or paths of the sea and these are followed by oceangoing vessels to this day. How did David know of these paths of the sea?
  - 17) There are dozens of examples of how the Scriptures lines up with modern science, even though the writers of Scripture were not scientists.
24. Modern Historians:
- 1) The historian Phillip Schaff vividly describes the uniqueness of the Savior of the Bible: *This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and pronounced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times.*<sup>5</sup>
  - 2) From the unbeliever historian Will Durant: *The discoveries here summarize have restored considerable credit to those chapters of Genesis that record the early traditions of the Jews. In its outlines, and barring supernatural incidents, the story of the Jews as unfolded in the Old Testament has stood the test of criticism and archeology; every year add corroboration from documents, monuments, or excavations... We must accept the Biblical account provisionally until it is disproved.*<sup>6</sup> Durant has written one of the greatest set of volumes on Ancient History. He rejects anything supernatural, and yet confirms that the historicity of Genesis is, so far, unimpeachable.
25. Ancient Historians and Jesus. I have read and listened to people who dogmatically assert that Jesus is a made-up character. Since Jesus is the heart of the Bible, it is reasonable to ask, are there any historical references to Jesus Christ outside of the Bible? These references are from [Everystudent.com](http://Everystudent.com)

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- 1) Cornelius Tacitus (A.D. 55-120), an historian of first-century Rome, is considered one of the most accurate historians of the ancient world. An excerpt from Tacitus tells us that the Roman emperor Nero "inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class...called Christians. ...Christus [Christ], from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus..."<sup>7</sup> How do you have Christians without Christ?
  - 2) Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian (A.D. 38-100), wrote about Jesus in his Jewish Antiquities. From Josephus, "we learn that Jesus was a wise man who did surprising feats, taught many, won over followers from among Jews and Greeks, was believed to be the Messiah, was accused by the Jewish leaders, was condemned to be crucified by Pilate, and was considered to be resurrected."<sup>8</sup>
  - 3) Suetonius, Pliny the Younger, and Thallus also wrote about Christian worship and persecution that is consistent with New Testament accounts.
  - 4) Even the Jewish Talmud, certainly not biased toward Jesus, concurs about the major events of his life. From the Talmud, "we learn that Jesus was conceived out of wedlock, gathered disciples, made blasphemous claims about himself, and worked miracles, but these miracles are attributed to sorcery and not to God."<sup>9</sup>
  - 5) The author of this [Every Student](#) article concludes: *This is remarkable information considering that most ancient historians focused on political and military leaders, not on obscure rabbis from distant provinces of the Roman Empire. Yet ancient historians (Jews, Greeks and Romans) confirm the major events that are presented in the New Testament, even though they were not believers themselves.*
26. Jesus spoke of false prophets, using the well-known phrase, **"By their fruits, you will know them."** (Matthew 7:16).
- 1) Have you ever heard the testimony, "I used to steal, lie, drink, use and sell drugs, abuse my family, cheat on my wife; but then I came across these books on atheism, and now, I have paid all of my debts, I no longer drink or use drugs, and have patched things up with my family." Of course not! We hear a testimony like this from someone who has believed in Jesus Christ. Paraphrased from [DeHoff](#).
  - 2) From [DeHoff](#): *In the days of the Old Testament all nations, except the Hebrews, were built on slavery. The Hebrew nation, even when it permitted slavery surrounded it with many alleviations and held no one in servitude more than seven years. The Roman nation with a population of about one hundred and twenty-five million held more than sixty million in the basest sort of slavery. Overworked, underfed and killed at the pleasure of their owners, these slaves were indeed "without God and without hope" in the world. But lo, the Christ came and died, and from the very beginning slaves were received into the churches of Christ on the same basis as their masters. The New Testament teaches the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. Where Christianity has gone, slavery has either retreated or been destroyed. While Mohammedanism has enslaved millions, Christianity has freed millions.*
  - 3) From [DeHoff](#) concerning the place of women in society: *In ancient times women held a degraded place among all nations except the Hebrews. In Rome a man might put his wife to death without a trial; in Greece the women who ministered to the lowest passions were highly honored. The Hebrews honored their wives and sisters. Who has not heard of Rebekah and Rachel, Ruth and Hannah, and Deborah and Esther? And time would fail us to tell of the woman who was once the virgin Mary, Mary and Martha of Bethany, Mary Magdalene, Dorcas, Lydia, Priscilla and a host of women who are highly honored in the Bible. The position of women in many eastern countries today is lower than that of the Hebrew women in 1,000 B.C. It is only in Christian lands that men and women stand side by side in doing the work which the Heavenly Father gave them to do.*
27. One could also look at the concept of type and how Jesus fulfilled the many Old Testament types which are found. See [Typology \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).
28. We could have also examined fulfilled prophecies of Scripture. Although I have not carefully examined this page, [100 Prophecies](#) might do a good job on this. Also examine [Jesus in the Old and New Testaments \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

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29. There is a great deal more which can be done on this topic. Josh McDowell's books are among the best in this realm. George DeHoff's [book](#), (available online) is also excellent.

The quotations from *answers.com* (and other similar sites) obviously came from someone's book as opposed to having been written by someone who simply sat down and answered the question to the best of his own ability. However, these exact quotes are spread so far and wide across the internet, I don't know who to properly attribute them to.

There is an interesting contrast between the written Word of God and the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ. Jesus did not write anything down, nor did He instruct anyone to write anything down. His public ministry was quite short—3 or 4 years. It is so short that we should not know anything about Him. The ground that He walked upon was quite limited. Primarily He walked between Galilee and Jerusalem, covering a distance of less than 100 miles north to south. He was struck down in the prime of His youth. Of all the known religious figures of history, His public ministry was the shortest, the amount of material that he wrote down was the least, and the area where He proclaimed His message was the smallest. We should not even know that Jesus exists. However, most Christian scholars agree that the material which makes up the New Testament was all composed by the people who are said to have composed it during the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

Regarding the 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians who wrote the New Testament and who evangelized the world—they were not rewarded for their efforts. They were not held in high esteem throughout the Roman empire. Although respected in the churches that they founded, they were persecuted, jailed, executed, martyred, and banished from society. We know this through their own words, through historical records, and by tradition. These men *knew* whether or not the information they were writing about was true or not. They *knew* whether or not they saw the risen Christ. They *knew* their own writings to be the truth or stuff that they just made up. And yet, to a man, they all suffered for what they wrote and publically taught. 11 of the 12 Apostles were put to death for their testimony of the Lord. Any one of them could have recanted his testimony or his writings when facing certain death—again, things they *knew* were true or false. And yet, in this period of great prolific writing, we have nothing to indicate that these men backed down from their testimony of speaking with the Risen Christ (and, guaranteed, in that anti-Christian atmosphere, had a disciple recanted his testimony, it would have been recorded).

People die as religious martyrs all the time; people die for things that they believe in all the time; but how often do people willingly die for things they *know* to be false? Fundamental to the testimony of the Apostles was, every one of them had seen the risen Christ on several occasions. Remember that Thomas, hearing this testimony from the others, still doubted them—until he saw Jesus with his own eyes. All of that has to be the truth or a load of lies—and yet, every Apostle was willing to suffer persecution and to eventually die for this testimony. They did not die simply for what they believed to be true; they died for what they actually witnessed and knew to be true.

Remember how the disciples behaved when Jesus was taken into custody in the Garden of Gethsemene? What did they do? The scattered like sheep; they ran for their lives. That is how the disciples of Jesus responded, even after spending 3 years with Him teaching; even after spending 3 years observing His miracles. They still ran to preserve their own lives. John remained for the crucifixion, and Peter remained until he denied the Lord thrice, and then he left, experiencing personal disgust for himself. Yet, one week later, the acts of the disciples revealed remarkable bravery, which continued throughout their lives. What happened? According to the Bible, there was something that happened. They all saw the Risen Christ.

The basic points were taken from Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict Volume I*; Here's Life Publishers; ©1979 Campus Crusade for Christ; pp. 14–24. Many were expanded upon.

<sup>1</sup> Cut and paste from <http://home.surewest.net/dfrench/evidence/unique.htm> accessed October 14, 2014; but I originally read this in *Evidence That Demands a Verdict Volume I*; p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> From above, but originally from Bernard Ramm; *Protestant Christian References*; Moody Press; 1957; pp. 230–231.

<sup>3</sup> Cut and paste from above. McDowell's book, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict Volume I*, pp. 19–20.

<sup>4</sup> Cut and paste from above, but originally from Bernard Ramm; *Protestant Christian References*; Moody Press; 1957; pp. 232–233.

<sup>5</sup> Cut and paste from above, but originally from Philip Schaff *The Person of Christ*; American Tract Society, 1913; quoted by McDowell in *Evidence*.

<sup>6</sup> *The Story of Civilization; 1. Our Oriental Heritage*, by Will Durant; MJF Books, ©1963; p. 300 (footnote).

Footnotes 7–9 are from <http://www.everystudent.com/features/bible.html> accessed October 15, 2014. Their references are noted below:

<sup>7</sup> Tacitus, A. 15.44.

<sup>8</sup> Wilkins, Michael J. & Moreland, J.P. *Jesus Under Fire* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

This passage in Genesis reads: Genesis 28:10–12 **Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And 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. And 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! (ESV)**

Jesus makes mention of this in John 1:48–51 **Nathanael said to Him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (ESV; capitalized)** Although many commentators suggest that Jesus is speaking metaphorically here, I would lean toward a more literal understanding of what Jesus said, based upon what we have read here in Genesis. This is what Jacob saw. Now, whether Nathanael saw this while he was alive, we do not know, as there is no record of it—but angels are continually moving between heaven and earth. God has chosen, for the most part, to teach us this, but not to let us see a vision of it. Some understand this to mean that, Jesus is presenting Himself as the only Way to heaven, as the bridge/ladder between God and man.

Genesis 28:12 **While Jacob was dreaming, he saw a staircase stationary on the earth, but its top reaching into the heavens. He watched the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.**

John 1:48–51 **Nathanael said to Him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (ESV; capitalized)**

## Jesus Speaks of this Vision to Nathanael in John 1:51 (Various Commentators)

Trapp: *Our Saviour offers us another explanation in John 1:51, applying Jacob's vision to Himself, the True Ladder of Life...He that will go up any other way must, as the emperor once said, erect a ladder and go up alone (which is certainly not possible). Our Lord touched heaven, in his Deity; earth, in His humanity; and joined earth to heaven, by reconciling man to God...Christ...joined heaven and earth together, as with a bridge; being the only true...bridge-maker. Heaven is now open and obvious, to them that acknowledge Him their sole Mediator, and lay hold, by the hand of faith, based upon His merits, as the rungs of this heavenly ladder: these only ascend,...drawing us out from the depths of despair, and put into heaven, as it were, by pardon, and peace with God, to rest sweetly in his bosom, calling him, Abba, Father, and to have the holy angels ascending to report their needs, and descending, as messengers of mercies.*<sup>190</sup>

Expositor's Bible Commentary: *In the New Testament we meet with an instance of the familiarity with this vision which true Israelites enjoyed. Our Lord, in addressing Nathanael, makes use of it in a way that proves this familiarity. Under his fig-tree, whose broad leaves were used in every Jewish garden as a screen from observation, and whose branches were trained down so as to form an open-air oratory, where secret prayer might be indulged in undisturbed, Nathanael had been declaring to the Father his ways, his weaknesses, his hopes. And scarcely more astonished was Jacob when he found himself the object of this angelic ministry on the lonely hill-side, than was Nathanael when he found how one eye penetrated the leafy screen, and had read his thoughts and wishes. Apparently he had been encouraging himself with this vision, for our Lord, reading his thoughts, says: "Because I said unto thee, When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these-thou shalt see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."*

The Expositor's Bible Commentary continues: *This, then, is a vision for us even more than for Jacob. It has its fulfilment in the times after the Incarnation more manifestly than in previous times. The true staircase by which heavenly messengers ascend and descend is the Son of man. It is He who really bridges the interval between heaven and earth, God and man. In His person these two are united. You cannot tell whether Christ is more Divine or human, more God or man-solidly based on earth, as this massive staircase, by His real humanity, by His thirty-three years' engagement in all human functions and all experiences of this life, He is yet familiar with eternity, His name is "He that came down from heaven," and if your eye follows step by step to the heights of His person, it rests at last on what you recognise as Divine. His love it is that is wide enough to embrace God on the one hand, and the lowest sinner on the other. Truly He is the way, the stair, leading from the lowest depth of earth to the highest height of heaven. In Him you find a love that embraces you as you are, in whatever condition, however cast down and defeated, however embittered and polluted—a love that stoops tenderly to you and hopefully, and gives you once more a hold upon holiness and life, and in that very love unfolds to you the highest glory of heaven and of God.*<sup>191</sup>

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

I read one commentary where a minister said, *God will often give us a divine encounter in order to strengthen us for the journey that lies ahead.*<sup>192</sup> This is wrong. That is not what this means. That is not the correct way to understand this passage. Jacob did not have this visit with God, and then suddenly his life was turned around and he lived this great, powerful spiritual life. God appeared to some believers at various times for various reasons. Jacob is the line of promise, which promise included the land of Canaan—and Jacob was now leaving Canaan. God will speak to Jacob and reiterate the promise that his father made to him. However, this does not mean that God is going to appear to you; nor does this mean that God is going to give you some kind of a divine encounter.

<sup>190</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 28:12 (paraphrased).

<sup>191</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll; ©1887-1896; public domain; from e-sword, Genesis 27:41–28:22.

<sup>192</sup> Gary H. Everett *Gary Everett's Bible Commentary*; ©1981-2013; from e-sword, Genesis 28:1–5.

Why is that not the correct way to understand this passage? First of all, you are not Jacob, in the line of promise; the line of the Jews. Secondly, no one has promised you the land of Canaan. Thirdly, you are not leaving Canaan and what God has promised you. And, most importantly, Jacob did not have the Word of God—at most he had about half or more of the book of Genesis and the book of Job. That is at best. We have the entire Bible. We can *choose* to encounter God anytime that we want. We have His Word; and we have access to excellent teaching by men who have studied His Word for decades. Do you want to have a divine encounter? Then go to church; go to the church of a man who teaches many times a week (3 or 4 hour-long sessions); who teaches verse-by-verse, chapter-by-chapter.

**Application:** You do not read a half chapter in the Bible and then decide, *I am going to try to replicate that half chapter in my walk with the Lord*. There are things which apply specifically to us in this day and time; and there are things which don't. You are not, for instance, going to follow someone through the middle of the sea while it parts and there are Egyptian soldiers following behind you. That is not going to be a part of your Christian experience. Or, you are not going to walk into a church on Pentecost and speak in foreign languages which you did not know previously. No one is going to look at you, who speaks that language, and say, "Hey, that guy is a Galilean; how does he know my language? He barely speaks his own dialect."

**Application:** God has a walk for the believer today; God has a walk for the believer in the Church Age. There are mandates for you to follow; there are spiritual skills for you to develop and employ. You are not ushered at age 2 into a factory that builds products for the home and put to work. First you learn to walk, you learn a language, you learn authority orientation, and you learn how to interact with people in a social setting. At some point, you are trained in the skills needed to build these home products. At that point, you have the skills to be productive. It is the same thing for the spiritual life. The moment you are saved, you don't go out there and do *great things for God*. You lack the training; you lack the skills. Those things must be developed first in order for you to be productive.

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[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

## God's Promises to Jacob

### A Review of Genesis 28:10–12:

Returning to our narrative:

**Genesis 28:10–11** Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And 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. (ESV)

You will recall that Jacob deceived his father Isaac and received a blessing meant for Esau, his twin brother. Esau became so angry, he was ready to kill Jacob; so Rebekah, their mother, believed it best if Isaac leave town for awhile. In fact, he was going to leave Canaan.

Rebekah could not reveal that she knew about Jacob deceiving Isaac, because she put him up to it. So, the cover story was, Jacob needed a wife—not a Canaanite or a Hittite—so he was sent back east to find one from their stock. This was not racial purity; this was religious purity. See the **Doctrine of Racial Intermarriage** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Neither Rebekah nor Jacob had any idea how long Jacob would be gone or what would transpire. He will be gone from the land for 20 years. It appears that Rebekah will die before he returns as we will not hear from her again.

Also, there is perhaps one recorded meeting between father and son (between Isaac and Jacob) in Genesis 35:27. There is no indication that Jacob returned to the Land of Promise and then tried to find his parents.

At this point in our narrative, Jacob is still in the Land of Promise. He has only begun his journey to head east; he has only traveled a short distance north.

**Genesis 28:12** Then Jacob [lit., *he*] dreamed, and he saw [lit., *behold*] a staircase [ramp, ladder, elevator, escalator?] stationary on the earth; and its top reached [into] the heavens. And he saw [lit., *behold*] the angels of Elohim ascending and descending on it.

But the key to all of this is the plan of God. Angels are just as much a part of God's plan as we are. They are not peripheral beings, floating about on clouds playing harps, as they have been falsely portrayed. They are clearly participants in this earthly life, but we are given very little by way of particulars on this (in Genesis 32, we will look at the functions of angels).

So Jacob, in a dream, sees angels, going up into heaven, and returning back to earth. Jesus will make reference to this phenomenon in John 1:51. He has called Nathaniel as a disciple and Nathaniel recognizes that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus then tells Nathaniel: "**Point of doctrine: I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending toward the Son of Man.**" As an aside, this is one of the many times that Jesus affirms His Deity. He is the Son of Man, and here He told Nathaniel that the angels of God (elect angels) will ascend and descend toward Him. Now, Who is standing at that top of this staircase (ladder, escalator, elevator)?

**And behold, Y<sup>e</sup>howah standing over him. And so He says, "I [am] Y<sup>e</sup>howah, Elohim of Abraham your father and Elohim of Isaac. The land which you are laying upon her, to you I will give her; and to your seed. And has been your seed as dust of the earth and you have scatted westward and eastward and northward and southward; and have been blessed by you all families of the ground and by your seed.**

Genesis  
28:13–14

**And he saw [lit., *behold*] [that] Y<sup>e</sup>howah is standing over it. Then He said, "I [am] Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the Elohim of your father Abraham and the Elohim of Isaac. The ground upon which you are laying, I will give to you and to your descendants. Furthermore your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, east, north and south; and all of the families of the earth will be blessed by you and by your Seed.**

**And he saw Jehovah standing over these stairs. Then Jehovah said, "I am Jehovah, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give the ground upon which you are lying to you and to your descendants after you. Furthermore, your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will be scattered all over the earth, to the west, east, north and south. Also all of the families of the earth will be blessed by you and by your Seed.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And behold, Y<sup>e</sup>howah standing over him. And so He says, "I [am] Y<sup>e</sup>howah, Elohim of Abraham your father and Elohim of Isaac. The land which you are laying upon her, to you I will give her; and to your seed. And has been your seed as dust of the earth and you have scatted westward and eastward and northward and southward; and have been blessed by you all families of the ground and by your seed.

Jerusalem targum

And, behold, the Glory of the Lord stood above him, and He said to him, I am the Lord the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Izhak, The land on which thou art lying I will give to thee and to thy sons. And thy sons shall be many as the dust

of the earth, and shall become strong on the west and on the east, on the north and on the south: and all the kindreds of the earth shall through thy righteousness and the righteousness of thy sons be blessed.

Latin Vulgate And the Lord leaning upon the ladder saying to him: I am the Lord God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac: The land, wherein you sleep, I will give to you and to your seed. And your seed will be as the dust of the earth: you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and IN You and your seed, all the tribes of the earth Will BE BLESSED.

Peshitta (Syriac) And, behold, the LORD stood above it and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon you are lying, I will give to you and to your descendants; And your descendants shall be as numerous as the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the east and to the west and to the north and to the south; and in you and through your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Septuagint (Greek) And the Lord stood upon it, and said, I am the God of your father Abraham, and the God of Isaac; fear not, the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your seed. And your seed shall be as the sand of the earth; and it shall spread abroad to the sea, and the south, and the north, and to the east; and in you and in your seed shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed.

Significant differences: The targum adds the words *glory of the* to the first phrase. The Latin as God *leaning upon the ladder* rather than being *above it [him]*. After introducing Himself, the Greek adds the words *fear not*. The targum adds some additional text at the end.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Easy English The \*Lord stood above it. And he said, `I am the \*Lord. I am the God of your father Abraham and I am the God of Isaac. I will give the land on which you are lying to you and your \*descendants. There are very many bits of dust on the earth. And you will have quite as many \*descendants. They will spread out to the west, east, north and south. I will \*bless all the families on the earth because of you and your \*descendants.

Easy-to-Read Version And then Jacob saw the Lord standing by the ladder. The Lord said, "I am the Lord, the God of your grandfather Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. I will give you the land that you are lying on now. I will give this land to you and to your children. You will have many, many descendants [A person's children and their future families.]. They will be as many as the pieces of dust on earth. They will spread east and west, north and south. All the families on earth will be blessed because of you and your descendants.

Good News Bible (TEV) And there was the LORD standing beside him. "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham and Isaac," he said. "I will give to you and to your descendants this land on which you are lying. They will be as numerous as the specks of dust on the earth. They will extend their territory in all directions, and through you and your descendants I will bless all the nations..

*The Message* Then GOD was right before him, saying, "I am GOD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. I'm giving the ground on which you are sleeping to you and to your descendants. Your descendants will be as the dust of the Earth; they'll stretch from west to east and from north to south. All the families of the Earth will bless themselves in you and your descendants.

NIRV The Lord stood above the stairway. He said, "I am the Lord. I am the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your children after you the land on which you are lying. They will be like the dust of the earth that can't be counted. They will spread out to the west and to the east. They will spread out

to the north and to the south. All nations on earth will be blessed because of you and your children after you.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Suddenly the Lord was standing on it [Or beside it or beside him] and saying, "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. Your descendants will become like the dust of the earth; you will spread out to the west, east, north, and south. Every family of earth will be blessed because of you and your descendants.
Contemporary English V.	The LORD was standing beside the ladder and said: I am the LORD God who was worshiped by Abraham and Isaac. I will give to you and your family the land on which you are now sleeping. Your descendants will spread over the earth in all directions and will become as numerous as the specks of dust. Your family will be a blessing to all people.
New Berkeley Version	And behold, the LORD stood above it, who said: I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham, and the God of Isaac. The land on which you are lying I will give you and your descendants; your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth; you will enlarge westward and eastward, northward and southward and in you, and in your offspring all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
New Century Version	Then Jacob saw the Lord standing above the ladder, and he said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your grandfather, and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are now sleeping. Your descendants will be as many as the dust of the earth. They will spread west and east, north and south, and all the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants.
New Living Translation	At the top of the stairway stood the Lord, and he said, "I am the Lord, the God of your grandfather Abraham, and the God of your father, Isaac. The ground you are lying on belongs to you. I am giving it to you and your descendants. Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will spread out in all directions-to the west and the east, to the north and the south. And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then [he saw] Jehovah standing at the top of it, and He said: 'I am the God of your father AbraHam and the God of IsaAc. Don't be afraid, for I will give the land where you're now lying to you and to your seed. Your seed will become like sand on the ground. they will spread from the sea to the north, to the south, and on to the east. And through you and your seed, all the tribes of the earth will be blest.
Christian Community Bible	And Yahweh was standing there near him and said, "I am Yahweh, the God of your father, Abraham, and the God of Isaac. The land on which you sleep, I give to you and your descendants. Your descendants will be numerous like the specks of dust of the earth and you will spread out to the west and the east, to the north and the south. Through you and your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed.
God's Word™	The LORD was standing above it, saying, "I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give the land on which you are lying to you and your descendants. Your descendants will be like the dust on the earth. You will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. Through you and through your descendant every family on earth will be blessed.
International Standard V	And there was the LORD, standing above it and telling Jacob, "I am the LORD God of your grandfather Abraham. I'm Isaac's God, too. I'm giving you and your descendants the ground on which you're sleeping. 14Your descendants are going to become like the dust of the earth and spread out to the west, east, north, and

	south. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Over this ladder the Lord himself leaned down, and spoke to Jacob, I am the Lord, he said, the God of thy father Abraham, the God of Isaac; this ground on which thou liest sleeping is my gift to thee and to thy posterity. Thy race shall be countless as the dust of the earth; to west and east, to north and south thou shalt overflow thy frontiers, till all the families on earth find a blessing in thee, and in this race of thine.
Translation for Translators	And he was <i>surprised</i> to see Yahweh standing at the top of the stairway, saying "I am Yahweh God, whom your grandfather Abraham worshiped, and whom Isaac worships. I will give to you and to your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be as numerous as the particles of dust/dirt that are on the earth, and their territory will be very large. It will extend in all directions, to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south. And people of all people-groups on earth will receive blessings because of <i>what happens</i> to you and to your descendants.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Behold, Yahweh stationed over it saying, "I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac: I give to you and your seed the land over which you lay. Your seed will be as the dust of the land bursting to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: You will bless all the families of the earth by your seed.
Conservapedia Translation	Then as he watched, the LORD was standing [The verb rendered "to stand" means "to keep station," not "to assume a standing position from a sitting position." ] on it, and saying, "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. The land that you are lying on, I will give it to you, and to your descendants. Your descendants will be like the soil of the land, and you will spread abroad toward the sea [The sea is the western boundary; thus "west" isn't sufficient; it should read "to the sea" to illustrate that the proper boundaries of Israel extend to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. ], and to the east, the north, and the southern rim. In you and in your Descendant will all the families of the earth be blessed."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	And he saw the Ever-living stationed above it, Who said ; " I am the EVER-LIVING GOD of your father Abraham, and the God of Isaac, - the land which you now lie upon I will give to you and your race ; and your race shall be like the dust of the earth, and shall spread West and East, and North and South, and all the Nations of the world shall be benefited by you and your Heir.
Urim-Thummim Version	YHWH stood above it and spoke, I am YHWH Elohim of Abraham your father, and the Elohim of Isaac, the land where you are lodging will be given to you and to your offspring. And your offspring will be as the dust of the land, and you will spread abroad to the West, East, North, and to the South, and in you and in your offspring will all the families of the earth be blessed.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And behold Yahweh is standing by him, and says, "I am Yahweh the god of Abraham your father, and the god of Isaac; the land which you are lying upon, to you I will give, and to your seed. And your seed will be as the dust particles on the Earth, and you expanded westward and eastward and northward and southward; and all the families of the Earth will be blessed in you and in your seed.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Heritage Bible	And behold, Jehovah was stationed over it, and said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham, your father, and the God of Isaac; I will give the land on which you lie to you and to your seed; And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall
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break out to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and toward the Negev; and all families of the earth shall be blessed in you, and in your seed.

New American Bible (2002)	And there was the LORD standing beside him and saying: "I, the LORD, am the God of your forefather Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you are lying I will give to you and your descendants. These shall be as plentiful as the dust of the earth, and through them you shall spread out east and west, north and south. In you and your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing.
New English Bible	The LORD was standing beside him <sup>[Or on it or by it]</sup> and said, 'I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. This land on which you are lying I will give to you and your descendants. They shall be countless as the dust upon the earth, and you shall spread far and wide, to north and south, to east and west. All the families of the earth shall pray to be blessed as you and your descendants are blessed.
New Jerusalem Bible	And there was Yahweh, standing beside him and saying, 'I, Yahweh, am the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. The ground on which you are lying I shall give to you and your descendants. Your descendants will be as plentiful as the dust on the ground; you will spread out to west and east, to north and south, and all clans on earth will bless themselves by you and your descendants.
Revised English Bible	The LORD was standing beside him saying, 'I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. This land on which you are lying I shall give to you and your descendants. They will be countless as the specks of dust on the ground, and you will spread far and wide, to west and east, to north and south. All the families of the earth will wish to be blessed as you and your descendants are blessed.
New RSV	And the Lord stood beside him [Or <i>stood above it</i> ] 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; and your 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 all the families of the earth shall be blessed [Or <i>shall bless themselves</i> ] in you and in your offspring.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Then suddenly ADONAI was standing there next to him; and he said, "I am ADONAI, the God of Avraham your [grand]father and the God of Yitz'chak. The land on which you are lying I will give to you and to your descendants. Your descendants will be as numerous as the grains of dust on the earth. You will expand to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. By you and your descendants all the families of the earth will be blessed.
The Complete Tanach	And behold, the Lord was standing over him, and He said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac; the land upon which you are lying to you I will give it and to your seed.

**And behold**, the Lord was standing over him: to guard him.

**and the God of Isaac:** Although we do not find in Scripture that the Holy One, blessed be He, associates His name with that of the righteous during their lifetimes by writing "the God of so-and-so," for it is said (Job 15:15): "Lo! He does not believe in His holy ones," [i.e., God does not consider even His holy ones as righteous until after their deaths, when they are no longer subject to the evil inclination,] nevertheless, here He associated His name with Isaac because his eyes had become dim, and he was confined in the house, and he was like a dead person, the evil inclination having ceased from him (Tanchuma Toledoth 7).

**upon which you are lying:** (Chullin ad loc.) The Holy One, blessed be He,

folded the entire Land of Israel under him. He hinted to him that it would be as easily conquered by his children (as four cubits, which represent the area a person takes up [when lying down]). [From Chullin 91b]

And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall gain strength westward and eastward and northward and southward; and through you shall be blessed all the families of the earth and through your seed.

**and you shall gain strength:** Heb. וְתִצְרַפּוּ, as in וְתִצְרַפּוּ, "and so did they gain strength" (Exod. 1:12). [after targumim]

exeGeses companion Bible

...and behold,  
Yah Veh stations himself above it and says,  
I - Yah Veh Elohim of Abraham your father  
and Elohim of Yischaq:  
I give the land whereon you lie  
to you and to your seed;  
and your seed becomes as the dust of the earth  
and you break forth to the sea and to the east  
and to the north and to the south:  
and in you and in your seed  
all the families of the soil become blessed.

Kaplan Translation

Suddenly he saw God standing over [(Saadia). Or, 'near him' (cf. Exodus 18:13). Or, 'on top of it (the ladder)' (Bereshith Rabbah 69). See note on Deuteronomy 27:12.] him.

[God] said, 'I am God, Lord of Abraham your father, and Lord of Isaac. I will give to you and your descendants the land upon which you are lying.

Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth [See Genesis 13:16, 15:5, 22:17.]. You shall spread out to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south. All the families on earth will be blessed through you and your descendants [Genesis 12:3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4.].

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And, hinei, Hashem stood above it, and said, I am Hashem Elohei Avraham thy av, and Elohei Yitzchak; ha'aretz whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy zera; And thy zera shall be as the dust of ha'aretz, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy zera shall kol hamishpochot haadamah be blessed.

*The Scriptures* 1998

And see, הוהי stood above it and said, "I am הוהי Elohim of Abraham your father and the Elohim of Yitshaq. The land on which you are lying, I give it to you and your seed. "And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall break forth to the west and to the east, to the north and the south. And all the clans of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your seed.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible*

And behold, the Lord stood over and beside him and said, I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father [forefather] and the God of Isaac; I will give to you and to your descendants the land on which you are lying. And your offspring shall be as [countless as] the dust or sand of the ground, and you shall spread abroad to the west and the east and the north and the south; and by you and your Offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed and bless themselves. "There is an open way between heaven and earth for each of us. The movement of the tide and the circulation of the blood are not more regular than the intercommunication between heaven and earth. Jacob may have thought that God was local; now he found Him to be omnipresent. Every lonely spot was His house, filled with angels" (F. B. Meyer, Through the Bible Day by Day). When Jacob found God in his own heart, he found Him everywhere.

## The Expanded Bible

Then Jacob saw the Lord standing above the ladder [28:12], and he said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your grandfather, and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants [-seed] the land [ground] on which you are now sleeping [lying; 12:1-3]. Your descendants [-seed] will be as many as the dust of the earth [13:16]. They will spread west and east, north and south, and all the families [clans] of the earth will be blessed [or bless themselves] through you and your descendants [seed].

## Kretzmann's Commentary

And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. This was a wonderful revelation of God, together with a confirmation of the Messianic promise given through the mouth of Isaac. The entire picture shows the uninterrupted communication, the intimate communion between God and the believers on earth. The angels of God accompany the believers and protect them in all their ways, and represent them in their difficulties and tribulations, bringing God's help and protection down from heaven in return. The ladder stood on the earth, where Jacob lay, apparently all alone and forsaken, with not a foot of ground to call his own, but at its top stood the almighty God, whose promises never fail. It was in one of his first speeches that Jesus referred to this vision of Jacob, John 1:51. In the person of Jesus Christ heaven and earth, God and man, are united in a singular and most marvelous manner, and through Christ, the incarnate Son of God, we enter into communion with God.

## NET Bible®

The angels of God were going up and coming down it 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 [Heb "the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac." The Hebrew word for "father" can typically be used in a broader sense than the English word, in this case referring to Abraham (who was Jacob's grandfather). For stylistic reasons and for clarity, the words "your father" are supplied with "Isaac" in the translation.]. I will give you and your descendants the ground [The Hebrew term אֶרֶץ ('erets) can mean "[the] earth," "land," "region," "piece of ground," or "ground" depending on the context. Here the term specifically refers to the plot of ground on which Jacob was lying, but at the same time this stands by metonymy for the entire land of Canaan.] you are lying on. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth [This is the same Hebrew word translated "ground" in the preceding verse.], and you will spread out [The verb is singular in the Hebrew; Jacob is addressed as the representative of his descendants.] to the west, east, north, and south. All the families of the earth will pronounce blessings on one another [Theoretically the Niphal stem can be translated either as passive or reflexive/reciprocal. (The Niphal of "bless" is only used in formulations of the Abrahamic covenant. See Gen 12:2; 18:18; 28:14.) Traditionally the verb is taken as passive here, as if Jacob were going to be a channel or source of blessing. But in other formulations of the Abrahamic covenant (see Gen 22:18; 26:4) the Hitpael replaces this Niphal form, suggesting a translation "will bless (i.e., pronounce blessings upon) themselves/one another." The Hitpael of "bless" is used with a reflexive/reciprocal sense in Deut 29:18; Ps 72:17; Isa 65:16; Jer 4:2. Gen 28:14 predicts that Jacob will be held up as a paradigm of divine blessing and that people will use his name in their blessing formulae (see Gen 12:2 and 18:18 as well, where Abram/Abraham receives this promise). For examples of blessing formulae utilizing an individual as an example of blessing see Gen 48:20 and Ruth 4:11.] using your name and that of your descendants [Heb "and they will pronounce blessings by you, all the families of the earth, and by your offspring."]. A portion of v. 12 is included for context.

## The Pulpit Commentary

And, behold,—"the dream—vision is so glorious that the narrator represents it by a threefold הָגָה (Lange)—the Lord stood above it,—the change in the Divine name is not to be explained by assigning Genesis 28:13–16 to the Jehovistic editor (Tuch, Bleek) or to a subsequent redactor (Davidson), since without it the Elohist document would be abrupt, if not incomplete (Kalisch), but by recalling the fact that it is not the general providence of the Deity over his creature man, but the special superintendence of the God of Abraham and of Isaac over his chosen people, that the symbolic ladder was intended to depict (Hengstenberg)—and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac:—thus not simply proclaiming his personal name Jehovah, but announcing himself as the Elohim who had solemnly entered into covenant with his ancestors, and who had now come, in virtue of that covenant, to renew to him the promises he had previously given them—the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed—given to Abraham, Genesis 13:15; to Isaac, Genesis 26:3.

And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth,—promised to Abraham, Genesis 13:16; to Isaac, under a different emblem, Genesis 26:4—and thou shalt spread abroad (literally, break forth) to the west, and to the east, to the north, and to the south:—(cf. Genesis 13:14; Deut. 12:20). In its ultimate significance this points to the world—wide universality of the kingdom of Christ (Murphy)—and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed (vide Genesis 12:3; Genesis 18:18; Genesis 22:18 (Abraham); Genesis 26:4 (Isaac).

## The Voice

At the very top stood the Eternal One.

**Eternal One:** I am the Eternal One, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you are now lying is the land I have promised to give to you and your descendants. Your descendants will be as many as there are specks of dust on the earth. You will spread out to the west, east, north, and south. Through your descendants, all the families of the earth will find true blessing. Know I am with you, and I will watch over you no matter where you go. One day I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done all I have promised you. V. 15 is included for context.

Dreams are a bit mysterious. There are many theories about what dreams are and why we dream, but no one knows for sure. What is sure is that at times in the Scriptures God uses dreams to reveal Himself to His covenant partners. Certainly not everyone has revelatory dreams, and not all dreams are revelatory. But sometimes, on special occasions, when it suits God's purposes, dreams can be a vehicle to see, hear, and experience reality as God knows it. It happens here with Jacob, who has not yet fully embraced the Eternal as his God; and it continues to happen in both testaments with Joseph, Daniel, Peter, and others.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and look, YHWH <sup>[He Exists]</sup> is standing erect upon him and he said, I am YHWH <sup>[He Exists]</sup> of the powers of Avraham <sup>[Father lifted]</sup> your father and the powers of Yits'hhaq <sup>[He laughs]</sup>, the land which you are laying down upon I will give her to you and to your seed, and your seed will exist like the powder of the land and you will break out unto the sea and unto the east and unto the north and unto the south country and all the families of the ground will be respected with you and with your seed,...

## Concordant Literal Version

And behold! Yahweh is stationed on it. And saying is He, "I am Yahweh, the Elohim of Abraham, your forefather, and the Elohim of Isaac. Do not fear. The land on which you are lying, to you will I give it, and to your seed. And become shall your seed as the soil of the land. And breach forth will you seaward and eastward and northward and toward the south-rim. And blessed, in you, are all the families of the ground, and in your seed.

Context Group Version	And, look, YHWH stood above it, and said, I am YHWH, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. The land { or earth } whereon you lie, to you I will give it, and to your seed. And your seed shall be as the dust of the land { or 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 in your seed shall all the families of the land { or earth } be esteemed.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	...and lo! Yahweh, standing by him,—and he said, I, am Yahweh, God of Abraham thy father and God of Isaac,—The land whereon, thou, art lying, to thee, will I give it and to thy seed; And thy seed shall become as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt break forth westward and eastward, and northward and southward,—And all the families of the ground shall be blessed in thee and in thy seed.
New King James Version	And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
Third Millennium Bible	And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father and the God of Isaac: The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east, and to the north and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	And, look, Yahweh stood above it, and said, I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, to you I will give it, and to your seed. And your seed will be as the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in you and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.
Young's Updated LT	...and lo, Jehovah is standing upon it, and He says, "I am Jehovah, God of Abraham your father, and God of Isaac; the land on which you are lying, to you I give it, and to your seed; and your seed has been as the dust of the land, and you have broken forth westward, and eastward, and northward, and southward, and all families of the ground have been blessed in you and in your seed.

**The gist of this verse:** God, in this dream, promises Jacob that he will be blessed with many descendants; given this land that he is leaving, as well as all of the land around it; and the all peoples of the earth would be blessed through Jacob and his seed.

13-14

### Genesis 28:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i> ]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

## Genesis 28:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâtsab (נָצַב) [pronounced naw-TSAH <sup>B</sup> V]	<i>stationed, left standing, stationing oneself, taking one's stand; standing [at the ready, firm]</i>	Niphal participle	Strong's #5324 BDB #662
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

**Translation:** And he saw [lit., behold] [that] Y<sup>e</sup>howah is standing over it.

Jacob is dreaming and he sees the great staircase going up to heaven, with angels going up and going down on it; and God is standing over it.

An appearance of the Lord is called a theophany or a Christophany. These refer to visual (or even auditory) appearances of Jesus Christ prior to His incarnation. These appearances may occur when the observer is asleep or awake; they can occur day or night. The vision of the LORD during this dream is as much of a theophany as the Burning Bush that Moses observes. What is actually seen can vary from person to person; or from one occurrence to the next.

Jesus Christ is the observable member of the Trinity; and in the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent, people could actually touch Him (or be touched by Him). In a Christophany, the Lord is heard or seen. For more information, see the **Doctrine of Christophanies/Theophanies of Jesus Christ** at [Bible Doctrine Resource](#).

**Genesis 28:13a** And behold! Jehovah stood above it [the staircase, the ladder],...

Here, Y<sup>e</sup>howah (Jehovah) stands over this place; and in John 1:51, Jesus promises Nathaniel that he will see Jesus stand there.

Wenstrom: *In Genesis 28:12-13, the interjection hinneh...marks out three images in Jacob's dream: (1) A stairway touching heaven and earth (2) Angels ascending and descending on the ladder (3) The Lord as Master.*<sup>193</sup>

For some reason, there are critics who think that this is some great contradiction that Jacob sees God and yet Jesus said, "God is a Spirit and no man has seen God at any time." God the Son makes Himself manifest in a variety of ways since the beginning of time. Adam and the woman spoke with God and, in that form, He walked through the Garden of Eden. Abraham had met God on many occasions—this would be God the Son, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Trinity, the Revealed God (or the Revealed Lord). We know Him as Jesus, but He was known by many other names prior to the incarnation.

Jesus said that "God is a Spirit" while people were looking at Him. He was speaking of God the Father; but not of His manifestation on earth as the God-man (which manifestation was real and perceived by all the sense of man).

<sup>193</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:12); accessed May 28, 2017.

God has already given the terms of the covenant to Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3) and to Isaac (Genesis 26:2–5). Here, he gives the terms of the covenant to Jacob, who appears at this time to be the least deserving of the 3 patriarchs.

**Application:** We live and prosper based upon grace; our lives on earth and our lives in eternity are all about God's grace.

<b>Genesis 28:13b</b>			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'ânîy (אָנִי) [pronounced <i>aw-NEE</i> ]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun, construct form	Strong's #430 BDB #43
'Ab <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אָבְרָהָם) [pronounced <i>ahb<sup>ve</sup>-raw-HAWM</i> ]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
'âb (אָב) [pronounced <i>aw<sup>b</sup>v</i> ]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun, construct form	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Yis <sup>e</sup> châq (יִשְׁחַק) [pronounced <i>yih<sup>s</sup>-KHAWK</i> ]	<i>he laughs; laughing; transliterated Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850

**Translation:** Then He said, "I [am] Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the Elohim of your father Abraham and the Elohim of Isaac.

God had appeared many times to Abraham. My recollection is, He appeared but once to Isaac. When it comes to spiritual growth, we may reasonably conclude that Isaac and Jacob were nowhere near as spiritually advanced as Abraham. So this will be the time that God appears to Jacob.

In the Old Testament, God often proclaimed Himself as the God of Abraham; or later, as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Genesis 26:24 31:42 32:9 46:3 Exodus 3:6, 15–16. This would be analogous to us today, in the Church Age, calling Him Jesus Christ.

*According to the NEV commentary, God identifies Himself as "the God of Israel" (201 times) or "the God of Jacob" (25 times) infinitely more times than anyone else's God is proof enough that God saw His relationship with Jacob as very special. "God of Abraham" occurs 17 times; "God of Isaac" 8 times; "God of David" 4 times. Remember that whenever we read "Israel", we are reading of the man Jacob and his children.<sup>194</sup>*

We know what sort of man Jacob (Israel) is. It is quite amazing to me that God speaks of Himself as the *God of Jacob* more times that He calls Himself the *God of Abraham*. That is grace! To say that Jacob is an imperfect man is an understatement. To understand that Jacob is not only saved but immortalized is grace and ought to give us confidence in the faithfulness and graciousness of God.

**Application:** There are men in the Bible like Abraham, like Moses, David and Paul whose spiritual lives are amazing. Their stories have been an inspiration and stepping stones of growth for all of us. But, when he stack up our own spiritual life next to Paul's, for instance, we come up wanting. Obviously, Paul sinned and made mistakes; but how can we compare ourselves to Paul? We simply can't. But Jacob, on the other hand—the man from whom came all the Jews—he gives me confidence. He screwed up so many times, it is hard to find a place where he gets it exactly right. But, God, in His grace, and because Jacob believed in Him, blessed Jacob; and refers to Himself as *the God of Jacob*. That gives me confidence!

Even though this is a divine vision, notice some of the elements of a dream which we find here. Jacob has this overall picture of angels transported to and from heaven; and God is above it all. Then God speaks, and He is speaking to Jacob, and Jacob can hear Him. In a dream, this sort of thing—suddenly changing position with regards to something in your dream—occurs quite naturally. Most of the time in a dream, you do not think, "I was here, and now suddenly, I am over here." It just takes place. I daresay that none of us have had a dream quite like this; but we have had dreams where there is a sudden change of place without any necessary intermediary steps.

This is the God spoken about by Isaac in Genesis 28:3–4 (when blessing Jacob): *"And God the Almighty will bless you, and He will make you fruitful and multiply you into a great assembly of peoples. He will give all of the blessings of Abraham to you and to your own sons and daughters. All this ground which you have traveled on will be yours—just as God had promised to Abraham."* God Himself is confirming the blessing that Isaac gave to Jacob.

We all have free will and we all have sin natures. We have observed Jacob's sin nature in action throughout much of the past couple of chapters of Genesis. He recognized the importance of his spiritual heritage, but he continually tried to obtain it through the efforts of the flesh (through duplicity). It is God who grants these blessings, and we cannot trick God into blessing us; nor can we obtain these blessings by means of some sort of fraud. God had determined in eternity past that the line of promise would go through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; so what Jacob did, did not result in more blessing or a transferred blessing. In fact, Jacob is going to find out what it is like to be deceived himself. He will appear to be given the woman that he loves as his wife, but when he peels back the veil, he will find out it is not her, but her sister, whom he did not desire. Exactly as he deceived his own father, so will Jacob be deceived.

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<sup>194</sup> From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen28com.html> accessed June 3, 2017.

Jacob thought he met the master manipulator and deceiver in his mother, Rebekah; but he is about to meet her brother (and possibly her teacher), Laban.

Jacob's relationship to Abraham is deemed more important than his relationship to Isaac; this is why God calls Abraham his father (ancestor might be a better translation).

Trapp: *Behold the goodness of God, stooping so low as to style himself "the God of Abraham"; and Abraham again, "the friend of God."*<sup>195</sup>

Genesis 28:13 **And he saw Jehovah standing over these stairs. Then Jehovah said, "I am Jehovah, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac.**

### The Theophany of Genesis 28:13 (Wenstrom)

As Jacob laid his head to rest on the stones of Bethel, the Lord appeared to him in a "theophany," or "Christophany," which are theological terms used to refer to either a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26). This theophany or Christophany was in the form of a dream, which was one of the means by which the Lord appeared to His people prior to His 1st Advent.

Hebrews 1:1 2 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

The Lord identifies Himself to Jacob as "the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac" in order to reassure Jacob that he will be protected by Him.

From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:13); accessed May 29, 2017.

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### Genesis 28:13c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	<i>you (often, the verb to be is implied)</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61

<sup>195</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 28:13.

Genesis 28:13c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâkab (שָׁכַב) [pronounced shaw-KAH <sup>BV</sup> ]	<i>lying down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; relaxing</i>	Qal active participle	#7901 BDB #1011
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced gah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
zera' (זֶרַע) [pronounced ZEH-rahg']	<i>a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282

**Translation:** The ground upon which you are laying, I will give to you and to your descendants.

Jacob is still in the land, and God appears to him to make him realize that this is the plot of ground where God wants him to be. Always in the back of Jacob's mind will be the idea that God is giving him this piece of land and not the land to the east. At some time, the empire will extend that far; but it will begin as a seed in that area which we traditionally associate with the Jews.

Jacob is running away from Esau, and he will leave the land. These are his last few nights or weeks in the promised land. God tells him that this land has been given to him and to his descendants. We find this promise throughout the Bible. Genesis 12:7 13:15 28:4 35:12 Psalm 105:11 Ezekiel 37:24–25 Acts 7:5.

In the relatively near future, God will give all of the land of Canaan to the descendants of Jacob; they will be led to the land by Moses; and they will take the land under Joshua. In the far future, God will give the land to the Jews and He will rule them, as David's Greater Son.

*Wenstrom: This military conquest of the land of Canaan was accomplished to a certain extent in Israel's history under Joshua. But it will find its ultimate fulfillment when the Lord Jesus Christ at His 2nd Advent who at that time will destroy anti-Christ, the false prophet, and the Gentile armies surrounding Israel during the Tribulation period (aka Daniel's 70th week) and will establish His millennial reign.<sup>196</sup>*

<sup>196</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:14); accessed May 29, 2017.

**Genesis 28:13** And behold! Jehovah stood above it [the staircase, the ladder], and said, "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac! The land on which you lay, I will give to you and to your seed.

Genesis 28:13 And he saw [lit., *behold*] [that] Y<sup>e</sup>howah is standing over it. Then He said, "I [am] Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the Elohim of your father Abraham and the Elohim of Isaac. The ground upon which you are laying, I will give to you and to your descendants. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

God is standing above this escalator (or elevator or bank carrier tube or whatever), with angels going up and down. And God speaks to Jacob.

In this era, God spoke to some people through dreams. Now, simply because something has happened in the past, that does not mean that is how things will be done forevermore. Moses will turn water into blood and Jesus will turn water into wine, but that does not mean that Christians do that today. I have never seen water turned into blood or into wine; nor do I expect to (I did see a clear liquid turned pink when another clear liquid was added, in Mr. Smedberg's class, using the principle of precipitation). It is not that I doubt the power of God to do this; I simply recognize that is not His modus operandi for the Church Age.

God's promise here to Jacob is not based upon Jacob outsmarting his father Isaac. God's promises are not based upon Esau selling him his birthright. God promises are based upon God's plan. God continues the promise to Jacob that He originally gave to Abraham (Genesis 13:14b–16, which reads: "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted."—ESV) God made a similar promise to Isaac in Genesis 26:3–4. Now God makes a similar promise to Jacob, despite his acts of deception.

Robert Dean: *Genesis 28:13, "And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD [Yahweh, the name of God that is closely associated with His covenant, the Mosaic covenant specifically between Himself and Israel] God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed." The reiteration of the Abrahamic covenant to Isaac and Jacob is the foundation for the history of Israel, so right away we see that this is a foundational event for the nation.*<sup>197</sup>

### Genesis 28:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
zera' (עָרָא) [pronounced <i>ZEH-rahg'</i> ]	<i>a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453

<sup>197</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed June 2, 2017.

## Genesis 28:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾâphâr (אֲפָאֵר) [pronounced <i>gaw-FAWR</i> ]	<i>dry earth, dust, powder, ashes, earth, ground, mortar, rubbish; dry or loose earth; debris; mortar; ore</i>	masculine singular substantive; construct form	Strong's #6083 BDB #779
ʾerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75

**Translation:** Furthermore your descendants will be like the dust of the earth,...

I used the plural *descendants*, and that is a reasonable understand of this portion of v. 14; but the word is a masculine singular noun. It can have a singular meaning and a collective meaning. A similar word in the English would be *seed* or *offspring*. They are singular nouns, but can take on a collective meaning (that is, they can be singular nouns which stand in for singular or plural things).

**Genesis 28:14a** And your seed will be like the dust of the earth,...

So far, there have been 3 patriarchs, and Abraham, the eldest, is dead; and Isaac is near death (or so he thinks). Jacob is not married; therefore, he has no children. But God tells him that his seed will be like the dust of the earth. The amount of dust on the earth is impossible to even fathom, but this is both hyperbole and illustrative. Hyperbole means that there will not be a one-to-one relationship between the number of Jews and the number of dust particles on the earth. There will simply be a lot of them. Furthermore, the illustrative aspect is that the Jews will cover the earth just as dust covers the earth.

These promises that these few men would have descendants like the dust of the earth, is a mainstay of the Old Testament. Genesis 13:16 22:17 26:4 32:12 35:11–12 Num. 23:10.

*Wenstrom: The prophecy that Jacob's descendants would be as the dust of the earth in a "near" sense was fulfilled in the days of Solomon (see 1 Kings 4:20) and will be fulfilled in a "far" sense during the millennial reign of Christ (see Hosea 1:10).<sup>198</sup>*

## Genesis 28:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

<sup>198</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:14); accessed May 29, 2017.

## Genesis 28:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pârats (פָּרַץ) [pronounced paw-RATS]	<i>to break, to break down, to destroy; to break asunder, to scatter, to disperse, to spread abroad; to break forth upon, to produce by breaking through; to act violently; to break through</i> [negative volition, a bad attitude, a mindset, or whatever]; <i>to spread, to distribute</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6555 BDB #829
yâm (יָם) [pronounced yawm]	<i>sea, lake, river, seaward, west, westward</i>	masculine singular noun with the hê local	Strong's #3220 BDB #410
<p>The directional hê is the <i>âh</i> (ה) ending to a noun, usually found after a verb of motion. This is called the <i>directive hê</i> or the <i>hê locale</i>, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question <i>where?</i> The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun <i>heaven</i> and the most literal rendering in the English would be <i>heavenward</i>. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions <i>to</i> or <i>toward</i>.</p>			
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
qêdem (קֵדֶם) [pronounced KAY-dem]	<i>east, antiquity, front, that which is before, aforeside; in front, mount of the East; ancient time, aforeside, ancient, from of old, earliest time; anciently, of old; beginning; eastward, to or toward the east</i>	noun/adverb; with the hê local	Strong's #6924 BDB #869 & #870

**Translation:** ...and you will spread abroad to the west, east,...

So some degree, God gives the boundaries of the Jews and this land to Jacob. Going to the west often referred to the Mediterranean Sea—in Hebrew, the same word can be used to refer to either thing. That will be the western boundary of future Israel.

When the Jews thought about the east, it was all about the area that their fathers came from. The future Israel will stretch westward to the fertile crescent as well.

## Genesis 28:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## Genesis 28:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
tsâphôwn (צפון) [pronounced <i>tsaw-FOHN</i> ]	<i>north</i>	feminine singular noun with the hê local	Strong's #6828 BDB #860
With the directional hê, this means <i>northward</i> .			
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
negeb (נגב) [pronounced <i>ne-GHE<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>south, south-country; southern portion of Judah, southern district of Palestine; often transliterated Negev or Negeb</i>	masculine singular noun with the hê local	Strong's #5045 BDB #616

**Translation:** ...north and south;...

Although the word for *north* appears to be non-specific, the word for south is *negeb*, and it actually refers to a very specific area in southern Judah (actually, this extends further south than any of the boards of Israel in the past).

I think that we have a double meaning here. In the near future (in the next 1000 years), nation Israel would occur on the land which God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Where Jacob is, and going north, east, south and west, we take in all the land of Canaan—which land God is giving to Israel. However, further into the future, God will place Jews all over the world, in every land and kingdom; and it will be that way prior to the rapture of the church.

## Genesis 28:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bârak <sup>e</sup> (ברך) [pronounced <i>baw-RAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to be blessed, to bless oneself</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Niphal perfect	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88
kôl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i> ]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
mish <sup>e</sup> pâchâh (משפחה) [pronounced <i>mish-paw-KHAWH</i> ]	<i>family, clan, tribe, sub-tribe, class (of people), species [genus, kind] [of animals], or sort (of things)</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #4940 BDB #1046

## Genesis 28:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾādāmâh (אָדָמָה) [pronounced <i>uh-daw-MAWH</i> ]	<i>ground, soil, dirt, earth, tillable earth, land, surface of the earth</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #127 BDB #9
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
zera <sup>c</sup> (זֵרָא) [pronounced <i>ZEH-rahg</i> ]	<i>a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282

**Translation:** ...and all of the families of the earth will be blessed by you and by your Seed.

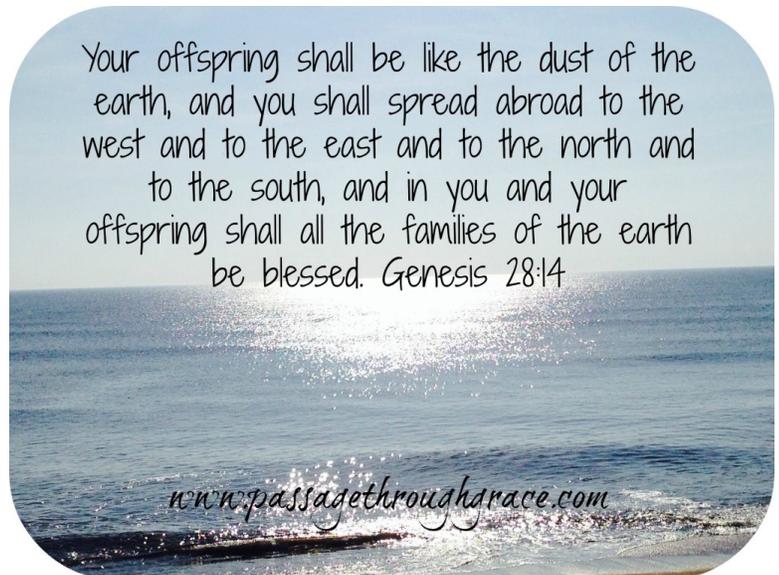
The simple existence of the Jews on earth will be a blessing to all mankind. There will be direct blessing, insofar as, those who bless the Jews will be blessed. There will be indirect blessing, inasmuch as God will bless the Jews, and those near to them will receive the overflow of blessings. And finally, the Greatest Blessing is Jesus Christ; because of Him, all mankind can potentially be saved.

This is the same promise that God made several times to Abraham. Even the promises made to Isaac were made **to** Abraham because Abraham was spiritually mature. However, here we find a very immature Jacob—one who is barely saved and not much else—and God communicates to him again His promises.

**Genesis 28:14** (a graphic); from **Mary Geisen**; accessed June 3, 2017.

That the Jews in general; and Jesus Christ in particular, would bless the world is a promise often repeated. Genesis 12:3 18:18 22:18 26:4 Psalm 72:17 Acts 3:25 Galatians 3:8, 16. No one is excluded from the blessings of God unless they choose to exclude themselves.<sup>199</sup>

*Wenstrom: The promise "in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed" should be translated "in your Seed or Descendant all the families of the earth shall be blessed" since the word for "descendants" in the Hebrew text is in the singular making the promise Messianic. This promise is a "reconfirmation" of the "universal" promise the Lord made to Abraham, which is recorded in Genesis 22:18.<sup>200</sup>*



<sup>199</sup> Paraphrased from John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 28:14.

<sup>200</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:14); accessed May 29, 2017.

**Genesis 28:14** And your seed will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in you and in your Seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.

You will note that the word *seed* is in the lower case at the beginning of this verse, but capitalized near the end. There is actually no difference between the words in the Hebrew. The word is found in the singular nearly always (always as far as I recall), yet can be translated *seed*, *Seed* or *descendants*.

Gill: *Messiah, in Whom some of all nations should [believe]...[will] be blessed with all spiritual blessings, as redemption, peace, pardon, justification, adoption, and eternal life.*<sup>201</sup>

When the Bible refers to *seed* as in many, then we know that we are talking about the *descendants* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But the final phrase reads: **And in you and in your Seed will all the families of the earth be blessed**. This has a double-meaning. It certainly refers to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and wherever Jews are made welcome, in whatever nation, that nation is always prospered. This also refers to Abraham's *Seed*, Who is Jesus Christ; and all who believe in Him are blessed as well. All families who have exercised faith in Christ are greatly blessed.

Robert Dean: *Genesis 28:14, "And your seed shall be as 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 in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." So there is a prophecy here that not only relates to them in the land but also long-range to the scattering of the Jews throughout the world. According to Genesis chapter three the ultimate meaning of that word "seed" in the singular is in the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is in the Lord Jesus Christ that all nations are blessed because He is the one who dies on the cross and pays the penalties for the sins of the world. It is through the Jews that all the nations will be blessed. So what God is doing here is separating out this new people through whom He will give His revelation, through whom His revelation will be preserved, and through whom the ultimate revelation in the Lord Jesus Christ will be given.*<sup>202</sup>

**Genesis 28:14** And your seed will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in you and in your Seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 28:14 Furthermore your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, east, north and south; and all of the families of the earth will be blessed by you and by your Seed. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

God appears to repeat this blessing to Jacob, which is almost the same blessing He had given to Abraham and to Isaac. However, God adds that the Jews (those who descend from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) would be spread throughout the world. And this is the case today—there are Jews spread across the world in nearly every nation (as far as I know, Jews can be found in every nation).

There are even Jews in Muslim nations, although Muslims are doing their best to keep the Jews out, and to kill those who are living in their nations. There are Jews among the Palestinians today, although they are there covertly. There are Jews in every Muslim nation, although many of them keep their heritage a secret. There are some Jewish children in these Muslim nations that do not find out that they are Jewish until they become of age. This information is kept from them in order to protect them (throughout history, when Jews have been persecuted, some have **hidden their identities** as Jews).<sup>203</sup>

Because it is God's plan for Jews to be found in every nation, obviously we would expect some nations to try to *cleanse* themselves of Jews, either **by killing them or driving them away**.

<sup>201</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:14 (slightly edited).

<sup>202</sup> From **Dean Bible Ministries**; accessed June 2, 2017.

<sup>203</sup> The fact of hidden Jews within a society has been distorted by antisemitic groups to suggest that they are **secretly in control of everything** or that they are behind various evil movements, like **modern-day slave trade**.

And Jews are clearly found throughout Europe, **Asia** and the Americas. This is God's plan; and the nation that is the most welcoming, is the nation that is the most blessed. At one time, this was Great Britain; today, this is the United States. Tomorrow, it might be **South Korea** or **China** (large Christian populations always provide a haven for Jews).

This explains the great movements in human history to destroy the Jews. God's plan is stated above—to have Jews throughout the world, to the west, east, north and south of where Jacob lay. So what would Satan's plan be? To do just the opposite. Therefore, wherever Satan has the most influence, that is where we would expect Jews to be persecuted the most. That is where we would expect Jews to be expelled. And the religion which worships Satan is going to be the most vigorous religion when it comes to persecuting the Jews.

Ideally speaking, Satan would like to concentrate the Jews into one area and then to destroy that area. This is why there are so many Middle Easterners who are appalled at the Jewish settlement in Israel, despite the fact that Israel is approximately 0.2% of the Middle East.

The Jewish people are emblematic of believers (either in the Revealed God of the Old Testament or of Jesus Christ in the New). God sends believers to all nations and to all peoples to evangelize them.

The United States made a great many mistakes in Iraq, but the greatest mistake of them all was not allowing soldiers to evangelize the people there. If the army wanted to require them to do this on their own time using their own funds, fine; but being antagonistic toward evangelizing the Iraqis was a big mistake.

President Bush, who was hoping to make two Islamic nations democratic did not realize that, the key to a nation's greatness is not democracy but Christianity and Christian values. In today's world, if those are implanted first, a democratic government will often grow out of that.

We evangelized the people of Japan, Germany and South Korea, and, as a result, these are strong, free and prosperous nations today—and they are our allies. Whereas General Douglas MacArthur encouraged evangelizing, asking for Bibles and missionaries; our official military policy in Iraq was against evangelizing the people. This is one of the reasons Iraq is in chaos today (I write this in the years 2013–2017<sup>204</sup>).

Genesis 28:13–14 *And he saw [lit., behold] [that] Y<sup>e</sup>howah is standing over it. Then He said, "I [am] Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the Elohim of your father Abraham and the Elohim of Isaac. The ground upon which you are laying, I will give to you and to your descendants. Furthermore your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, east, north and south; and all of the families of the earth will be blessed by you and by your Seed. (Kukis mostly literal translation)*

Genesis 28:13–14 *And he saw Jehovah standing over these stairs. Then Jehovah said, "I am Jehovah, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give the ground upon which you are lying to you and to your descendants after you. Furthermore, your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will be scattered all over the earth, to the west, east, north and south. Also all of the families of the earth will be blessed by you and by your Seed. (Kukis paraphrase)*

Genesis 28:13–14 *And he saw Jehovah standing over these stairs. Then Jehovah said, "I am Jehovah, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give the ground upon which you are lying to you and to your descendants after you. Furthermore, your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will be scattered all over the earth, to the west, east, north and south. Also all of the families of the earth will be blessed by you and by your Seed.*

<sup>204</sup> Exegeting an entire chapter of the Bible is a multi-step process for me. From beginning to end, the average chapter takes me about a month or two, if I do not move on to another project.

## God's Three Promises to Jacob

1. The land of Canaan would belong to Jacob and his descendants; which was the ground that Jacob lay upon.
2. Jacob's descendants (both racial Jews and believing gentiles) will be like the dust of the earth, and scattered all over the earth.
3. The people of the earth would be blessed by Jacob and by his Seed, Who is Jesus Christ.

Dr. Peter Pett on these promises: *Jacob...sees a vision of God in a dream, and God speaks to him directly as the God of his fathers. He confirms the promises made in the covenant. The land is to belong to their children, they will become countless as the dust of the earth, they will spread abroad widely in all directions, and through them the whole world will be blessed. The final purpose of God is always universal blessing. Jacob is now formally accepted as the seed through whom the promises would be fulfilled.*<sup>205</sup>

This blessing by God is the important blessing; it cannot be retracted. However, I doubt that Jacob truly appreciates what is occurring here.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

**And behold I [am] with you and I have kept you in all where you go. And I have brought you back unto the land the this for I will not leave as far as which if I have done which I have spoken to you."**

Genesis  
28:15

**Listen, I [am] with you and have kept you wherever you have gone. Furthermore, I will bring you back to this land, for I have not deserted you until now; listen, I will do [that] which I have proclaimed to you."**

**Listen, I am with you and I have guarded you wherever you have gone. Furthermore, I will bring you back to this land, because I have not deserted you even until now. Recognize, therefore, that I have done exactly that which I have proclaimed to you."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And behold I [am] with you and I have kept you in all where you go. And I have brought you back unto the land the this for I will not leave as far as which if I have done which I have spoken to you."
Targum (trans. By Cook)	And, behold, <u>My Word is for thy help</u> , and will keep thee in every place where thou shalt go, and will bring thee (again) to this land; for I will not leave thee until the time when I have performed all that I have told thee.
Latin Vulgate	And I will be your keeper wherever you go, and will bring you back into this land: neither will I leave you, till I will have accomplished all that I have said.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And, behold, 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 the thing of which I have spoken to you.
Septuagint (Greek)	And behold, I am with you, to preserve you continually wherever you shall go; and I will bring you back to this land; for I will not desert you, until I have done all that I have said to you.

<sup>205</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 28:13–14.

Significant differences: The targum has *My Word is for thy help* rather than *I am with you*. The Latin leaves this phrase out altogether.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And truly, I will be with you, and will keep you wherever you go, guiding you back again to this land; and I will not give you up till I have done what I have said to you.
Easy English	Look! I am with you. I will protect you wherever you go. And I will bring you back to this country. I will do what I have told you. I will not leave you until I have done it.'
Easy-to-Read Version	"I am with you, and I will protect you every place you go. And I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I promised."
<i>The Message</i>	Yes. I'll stay with you, I'll protect you wherever you go, and I'll bring you back to this very ground. I'll stick with you until I've done everything I promised you."

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	I am with you now, I will protect you everywhere you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done everything that I have promised you."
Contemporary English V.	Wherever you go, I will watch over you, then later I will bring you back to this land. I won't leave you--I will do all I have promised.
New Berkeley Version	See now, I am with you and I will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this country; for I shall not forsake you until I have done everything I have mentioned to you. That is, He would never, never forsake him
New Life Version	See, I am with you. I will care for you everywhere you go. And I will bring you again to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done all the things I promised you."
New Living Translation	What's more, I am with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. One day I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have finished giving you everything I have promised you."

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Look; I am with you. [I will] always keep you safe, no matter where you may go, and then I will return you to this land! I will never leave you until I've done everything that I said I will do for you.'
Beck's American Translation	You see I am with you and watch over you everywhere you go and will bring you back to this country because I will not leave you till I do what I promised you."
International Standard V	Now pay attention! I'm here with you, and I'm going to be watching over you wherever you go. I'm going to bring you back to this land, because I won't ever leave you until I've accomplished what I've promised about you."
New Advent (Knox) Bible	I myself will watch over thee wherever thou goest, and bring thee back to this land again; before I have done with thee, all my promises to thee shall be fulfilled.
Translation for Translators	I will help you and protect you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you; I will continue to do for you all that I have promised to do."

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	I <i>am</i> here with you to keep you in all you goings, and to return you to this earth. For I <i>will</i> not forsake you until I do what I speak."
Conservapedia Translation	"And take heed: I am with you, and will keep you in all places where you go, and I will bring you back to this land, and will not forsake you, until I have done the things I told you about."

Ferar-Fenton Bible

Be assured also that I am with you, and will guard you wherever you go, and I will give you a quiet return to this country, for I will not forsake you until I have accomplished what I have promised to you."

NIV, ©2011

I am with you [S Ge 21:20] and will watch over you [ver 20; Ps 121:5, 7-8] wherever you go [ver 22; Ge 35:3], and I will bring you back to this land [ver 21; S Ge 15:16; 30:25; 31:30]. I will not leave you [Dt 31:6, 8; Jos 1:5; Ne 4:14; Ps 9:10] until I have done what I have promised you [Lev 26:42]." Ps 105:10

Urim-Thummim Version

I will guard you in all places where you go, and will return you to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done for you what I have spoken.

**Genesis 28:15 (NIV)** (a graphic); from [Pinterest](#); accessed June 3, 2017.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Heritage Bible

And behold, I am with you, and will hedge you about in all places where you walk, and will return you to this land, because I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.

New American Bible (2011)

I am with you and will protect you wherever you go, and bring you back to this land. I will never leave you until I have done what I promised you. Gn 31:3.

New English Bible

I will be with you, and I will protect you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done all that I have promised.'

New Jerusalem Bible

Be sure, I am with you; I shall keep you safe wherever you go, and bring you back to this country, for I shall never desert you until I have done what I have promised you.'

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

Look, I am with you. I will guard you wherever you go, and I will bring you back into this land, because I won't leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

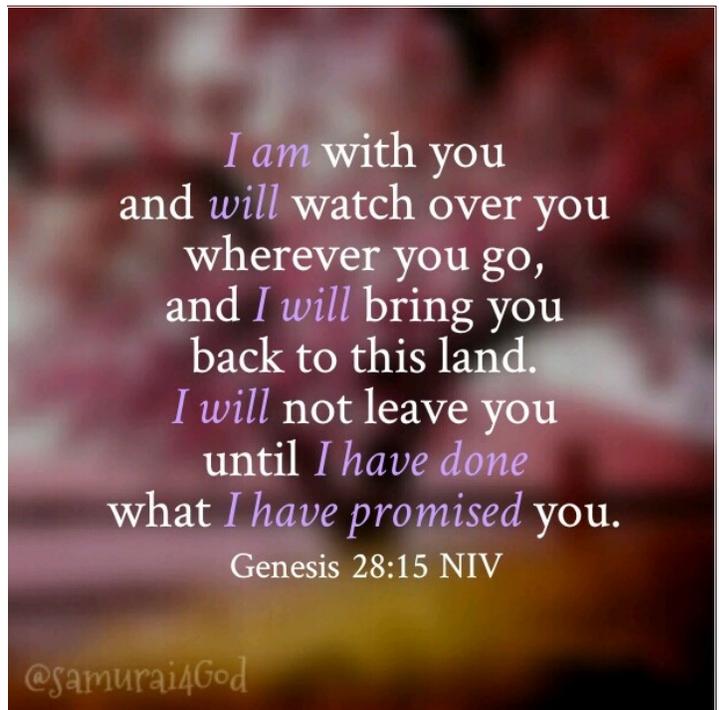
The Complete Tanach

And behold, I am with you, and I will guard you wherever you go, and I will restore you to this land, for I will not forsake you until I have done what I have spoken concerning you."

**And behold, I am with you:** [God promised Jacob this] because he was afraid of Esau and Laban.

**until I have done:** אֲנִי is used in the sense of אֲנִי, [meaning that].

**I have spoken concerning you:** Heb. לְ, for your benefit and concerning you. What I promised to Abraham concerning his seed, I promised in reference to you and not in reference to Esau, for I did not say to him, "for Isaac will be called your seed," [which would signify that all of Isaac's descendants would be



regarded as Abraham's] but "for in Isaac," [meaning part of Isaac's descendants] but not all [the descendants] of Isaac (Nedarim 31a). Likewise, wherever וְלִי, וְלִי, לְ, and וְלִי are used in conjunction with a form of the verb "speaking" (דַּבֵּר) they are used in the sense of "concerning." This [verse] proves it, because heretofore, He had not spoken to Jacob.

exeGesese companion Bible	And behold, I am with you and guard you everywhere you go; and return you into this soil; for I leave you not until I work what I word to you.
Kaplan Translation	I am with you. I will protect you wherever you go and bring you back to this soil. I will not turn aside from you until I have fully kept this promise to you.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And, hinei, I am with thee, and will be shomer over thee in all places where thou goest, and will bring thee back into haadamah hazot; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have promised thee.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And behold, I am with you and will keep (watch over you with care, take notice of) you wherever you may go, and I will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done all of which I have told you.
The Expanded Bible	I am with you and will protect [guard] you everywhere you go and will bring you back to this land. I will not leave [abandon; forsake] you until I have done what I have promised you."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places where thou goest, and will bring thee again in to this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. In addition to the Messianic promise, which ever afterward was the greatest comfort of Jacob, just as it is the hope of all believers, the Lord gave him an assurance concerning his own personal welfare on his journeys. Jacob was able to rely upon the definite, infallible fulfillment of the Lord's promises, which are just as certain today as they were then and therefore require the same unquestioning acceptance.
NET Bible®	I am with you [Heb "Look, I [am] with you." The clause is a nominal clause; the verb to be supplied could be present (as in the translation) or future, "Look, I [will be] with you" (cf. NEB).] 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!"
The Pulpit Commentary	And, behold, I am with thee,—spoken to Isaac (cf. Genesis 26:24); again to Jacob (Genesis 31:3); afterwards to Christ's disciples (Matthew 28:20)—and will keep thee in all places where thou goest,—literally, in all thou goest—in all thy goings (cf. Genesis 48:16; Psalm 121:5, Psalm 121:7, Psalm 121:8)—and will bring thee again into this land;—equivalent to an intimation that his present journey to Padan-aram was not without the Divine sanction, though apparently it had been against the will of God that Isaac should leave the promised land (vide Genesis 14:6, Genesis 14:8)—for I will not leave thee,—a promise afterwards repeated to Israel (Deut. 31:6, Deut. 31:8), to Joshua (Genesis 1:5), to Solomon (1Chronicles 28:20), to the poor and needy (Isaiah 41:17), to Christians (Hebrews 13:7)—until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of—cf. Balaam's testimony to the Divine faithfulness (Num. 23:19), and Joshua's (Genesis 21:1–34:45), and Solomon's (1Kings 8:56). It is impossible, in connection with this sublime theophany granted to Jacob at Bethel, not to recall the similar Divine manifestation vouchsafed to Abraham beneath the starry firmament at Hebron (vide Genesis 15:1).
The Voice	Know I am with you, and I will watch over you no matter where you go. One day I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done all I have promised you.

Dreams are a bit mysterious. There are many theories about what dreams are and why we dream, but no one knows for sure. What is sure is that at times in the Scriptures God uses dreams to reveal Himself to His covenant partners. Certainly not everyone has revelatory dreams, and not all dreams are revelatory. But sometimes, on special occasions, when it suits God's purposes, dreams can be a vehicle to see, hear, and experience reality as God knows it. It happens here with Jacob, who has not yet fully embraced the Eternal as his God; and it continues to happen in both testaments with Joseph, Daniel, Peter, and others.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

**Genesis 28:15 (NKJV)** (a graphic); from [Hebrews12Endurance](#); accessed June 3, 2017.

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and look, I am with you and will guard you in all where you will walk and I will return you to this ground given that I will not leave you until I do which I spoke to you,...

Concordant Literal Version And behold! I am with you, and keep you in every way which you shall go, and will restore you to this ground, for not forsake you will I, till I should do all which I have spoken to you.

Context Group Version And, look, I am with you, and will keep you, wherever you go, and will bring you again into this land { or earth }. For I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken to you of.

*Emphasized updated Bible* Lo! then, I, am with you, so will I keep you in every place wherever you may go, and will bring you back unto this soil,—For I will not forsake you until I have done that of which I have spoken to you.

English Revised Version Behold, 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."

Green's Literal Translation And, behold, I *will* be with you and will guard you in every *place* in which you may go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not forsake you until I have surely done that which I have spoken to you.

Webster's updated Bible And behold, I [am] with you, and will keep you in all [places] where you go, and will bring you again into this land: for I will not leave you, until I have done [that] which I have declared to you.

Young's Updated LT And lo, I am with you, and have kept you wheresoever you go, and have caused you to turn back unto this ground; for I leave you not till that I have surely done that which I have spoken to you."

### The gist of this verse:

God would stay with Jacob, protecting him, and bring him back to this land. God would not desert Jacob (or His seed) until He has accomplished all which He has promised.



*Behold, 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 spoken to you.*

- Genesis 28:15 (NKJV)

[www.hebrews12endurance.com](http://www.hebrews12endurance.com)

## Genesis 28:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i> ]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
There is very possibly a good translation for these two particles.			
'ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i> ]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
'îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

**Translation:** Listen, I [am] with you...

Now God speaks directly to Jacob, speaking personally. God points out that he has always been with Jacob. God has been with Jacob in eternity past; God has been with him from the womb; God is with Jacob right at this moment. This is true for all believers, new, mature, growing or retrogressing.

God's promises to be with the patriarchs or with other believers is found throughout the Bible: Genesis 26:24, Genesis 31:3 39:2, 21 46:4 Exodus 3:12 Deut. 31:6 Joshua 1:5 Judges 6:16 Psalm 46:7, 11 1Kings 8:57 Isaiah 7:14 (*Immanuel* means *God with us*), 8:10 41:10 43:2 Jer. 1:19 Matthew 18:20 28:20 Romans 8:31–32 Hebrews 13:5–6. What this means is, they are in God's geographical will and God is acknowledging that. Because God is omniscient, obviously He is everywhere all the time; so when He says, "I am with you," that is saying more than, "I am omniscient." Jacob is leaving the Land of Promise; and God is still with him and Jacob is still the line of promise. So, Jacob is in the plan of God and in the geographic will of God.

Regarding Jacob, in particular: he has been with his parents and twin brother for 77 years<sup>206</sup> and now he is separate from them. God will remain with him the entire time. Even though there is the association with this people, with the land and with God; God will be with Jacob, even outside of the Land of Promise.

These promises which God is making to Jacob are unconditional. God does *not* upbraid Jacob and say, "Look, you have been behaving like a cretin over the past 70 years, so we are going to begin with a fresh start, and this is what I expect of you. As long as you go along with my program, then, here are my guarantees:..." God's promises to Jacob do not take into account his failures or his future actions. God simply tells Jacob what He is going to do.

At the end of this chapter, it will appear that Jacob does not fully appreciate what God is saying to him. At the end, God more or less quotes back God, and says, "Okay, you do these things, and I will tithe." God is not looking for a vow from Jacob; there is no implication that that is what God wants from him.

<sup>206</sup> By many estimates.

Dr. Thomas Constable: *Jacob was the second person in the Bible to hear the assurance "I am with you" ( Genesis 28:15). Isaac was the first (cf. Genesis 26:3; Genesis 26:24). This was a promise that God later repeated to Moses (Exodus 3:12); Joshua (Joshua 1:5), Gideon (Judges 6:16), regarding Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23), and to all Christians (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5).*<sup>207</sup>

### Genesis 28:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAR</i> ]	<i>to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8104 BDB #1036
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i> ]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, kôl ʾăsher mean <i>all which, all whom, all that [which]; whomever, whatever, all whose, all where, wherever.</i>			
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

**Translation:** ...and have kept you wherever you have gone.

God has been with Jacob no matter where he has been. Wherever Jacob has gone, and no matter what he has done, God has been with him.

Twice Jacob will leave the land (Genesis 28:10 45:26–46:1); and twice God will give him assurances of Divine company prior to leaving the land (Genesis 28:15 46:2–4).

Let's try to relate this to the vision which Jacob saw, where angels are going up and down some sort of staircase between heaven and earth. This means that angels are sometimes with us and sometimes they are in heaven. In contrast to that, God is with us (and with Jacob) always.

Jacob will be exposed to wild beasts, to difficult climatic conditions, to fatigue, to potential thieves, to unfriendly towns and villages; yet God will be with him at every step.

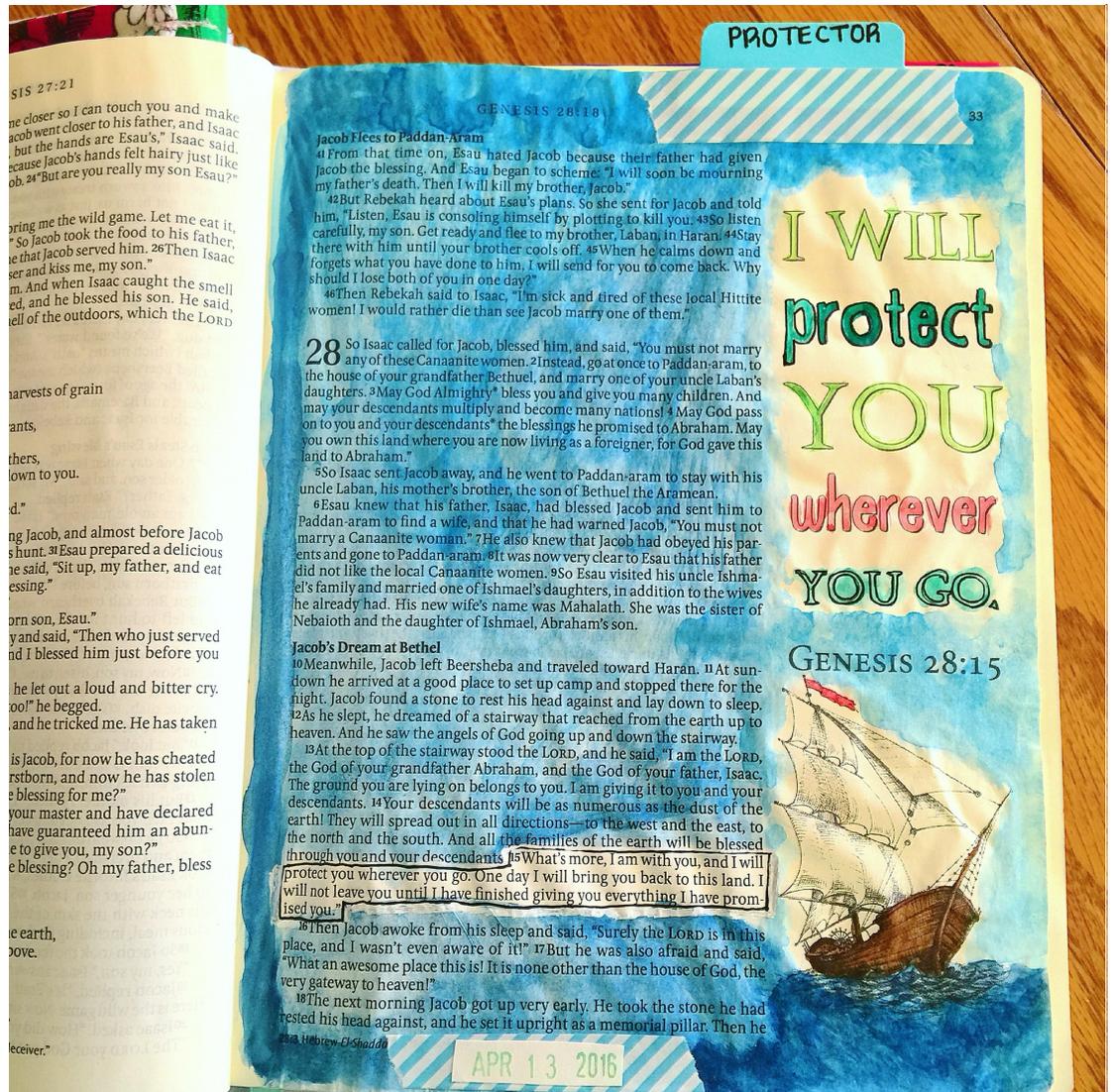
God's promise to Jacob goes for us also. "I will never leave you or forsake you." God has spoken to this to Jacob, a conniving so-and-so; an immature believer. God is with all of us and He will not forsake any of us. This does not mean that He is sentimental and compromising. Even though God never leaves us or forsakes us, He sometimes disciplines us heavily.

<sup>207</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

Furthermore, God seems to accept Jacob leaving the land. You may recall that Isaac was once ready to leave the land of Canaan because of a famine in the land. God instead guided Isaac to another area in Canaan where he prospered economically. That does not occur here. Jacob will journey outside of the land and God does not say, "No, you need to remain here." Given all that will happen, Jacob is still inside God's geographical will during this trip. Jacob will marry, and he will return with 11 children who will make up 12 tribes of Israel.<sup>208</sup>

**"I will protect you wherever you go"** (Genesis 28:15) (a graphic); from [Pinterest](#); accessed June 5, 2017.

God, speaking to Jacob, said, "Listen, I [am] with you and have kept you wherever you have gone." Moses said this to Israel: **"Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."** (Deut. 31:6; ESV) God spoke similar words to Joshua, when he took over for Moses: **"No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you."** (Joshua 1:5; ESV) King David, when talking to his son, Solomon, about building the Temple: Then David said to Solomon his son, **"Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the LORD God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is finished."** (1Chronicles 28:20; ESV) The writer of Hebrews warned the Jewish Christians in the 1<sup>st</sup> century: Heb. 13:5–6 **Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"** (ESV; includes Joshua 1:5 Psalm 118:6)



<sup>208</sup> Joseph, the youngest son, will account for two of the tribes of Israel. A younger son born later will be the 13<sup>th</sup> tribe of Israel. I realize that this is confusing; and you may even be tempted to look on a map to recount the tribes. 12 tribes are given a land inheritance; but the tribe of Levi is not given a land inheritance.

Genesis 28:15c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shûwb (שוב) [pronounced <i>shoo<sup>b</sup>v</i> ]	<i>to cause to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to send back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, to be caused to return</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
'el (אל) [pronounced <i>eh</i> ]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'ādāmāh (אדמָה) [pronounced <i>uh-daw-MAWH</i> ]	<i>ground, soil, dirt, earth, tillable earth, land, surface of the earth</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #127 BDB #9
zō'th (זֹת) [pronounced <i>zoth</i> ]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	feminine of singular zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb	Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260

**Translation:** Furthermore, I will bring you back to this land,...

God knows that Jacob is leaving this land. God knows that this is necessary; because Esau is ready to kill Jacob. So God does not tell Jacob, "Stop right there, and get your butt back into the land." Jacob is about to leave the Land of Promise; and God does not stop him.

The land of Canaan is tied by divine pronouncement to the people of Abraham. So, this promise made to Jacob is a promise to the Jews for all time. The Jews in the land at this time are a testimony to this; and this is why every Satanic force in the world wants to destroy the Jews in Israel today. At the same time, it is not God's will for the Jews to all be regathered today into the land. God will do that, in the future, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent. At this point in time, it is God's will for Jews to be **scattered** throughout all the nations (Deuteronomy 28:64 Ezekiel 6:8 36:19 James 1:1 1Peter 1:1).

Jacob is going to be outside of the land for 20+ years; but God will bring him back to the land. During this time, Jacob will be with a man who is even a greater con and chiseler than Jacob is. In fact, this man will even outdo Jacob's mother, Rebekah.

Genesis 28:15d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

## Genesis 28:15d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לא or לוּל) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
'âzab (עָזַב) [pronounced 'gaw-ZA <sup>BV</sup> ]	<i>to loosen ones bands; to let go [one from being in bonds]; to leave [forsake, desert]; to leave off, to cease from [anything]</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5800 BDB #736
'ad (עַד) [pronounced 'gahd]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
kôh (כֵּן) [pronounced koh]	<i>so, thus, here, hence; now; in the meantime</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462

Together, these two particles mean *as far as here, yonder; hitherto, until now, until then; meanwhile*.

**Translation:** ...for I have not deserted you until now;...

There are two phrases here (v. 15d and 15e), and in the middle are 3 particles. Either these 3 particles mean something together; or they separate this into two thoughts (which is the way I have approached the translation).

Given all that Jacob has done; and given his many mistakes, God has remained with Jacob. Jacob is in the line of promise and therefore, God will stay with him; and He tells Jacob, "I have not deserted to you until now."

Jacob has failed, on many occasions—several of which have been recorded in Scripture. And now, because as a grown man, he succumbed to the schemes of his mother and deceived his father, he finds himself leaving the land of Canaan for a land Jacob had never been before. But, despite his leaving the land in this way, that does not end God's relationship with him. God does not look down and think, "Leaving the land? Well, goodbye to you, then!" God has remained with Jacob, despite his schemes and his shortcomings; and God will remain with Jacob, even though he is leaving the Land of Promise.

## Genesis 28:15e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'îm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49

The particle 'îm (אִם) can be used as a demonstrative (*lo, behold*), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle (*if, though*); an indication of a wish or desire (*oh that, if only*; this is a rare usage).

These 3 particles probably mean something when used together. And it is possible that the hypothetical particle brings in a new or additional thought. Many translations understand these 3 particles together to mean *until* (examples to follow).

Genesis 28:15e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i> ]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
’êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
’âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, they mean <i>how, that which, what, whatever; whom, whomever.</i>			
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR</i> ]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** ...listen, I will do [that] which I have proclaimed to you.”

Then we have the hypothetical particle, which can also be used as a demonstrative; therefore, I have translated it, *behold, look, listen*. This is what God has proclaimed to Jacob; this is what God has promised Jacob. God has done exactly what He has promised Jacob.

It sounds here as if God made promises to Israel 20 or 30 years ago, and God made them come to pass. But that is not how we should understand this phrase. God just made these promises to Jacob, but these have been God’s promises to Jacob since eternity past. And God, in eternity past, fulfilled these promises in His plan. Jacob is just now hearing these promises given to him audibly by God; but they have already been fulfilled. Jacob is the line of promise; so he can hold onto that in times of difficulty, for assurance.

Wenstrom: *The Lord’s promise “for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” does “not” mean that God’s protection of Jacob will end some day but rather that the Lord’s presence and protection will outlast Jacob’s exile in Paddan Aram since the promises given to Jacob are eternal in nature.*<sup>209</sup>

**Two ways to translate the end of Genesis 28:15:** It is possible that v. 15d&e belong together as one phrase, as most have translated them:

English Revised Version	For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."
Green’s Literal Translation	...for I will not forsake you until I have surely done that which I have spoken to you.

<sup>209</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:15); accessed May 31, 2017.

Webster's updated Bible

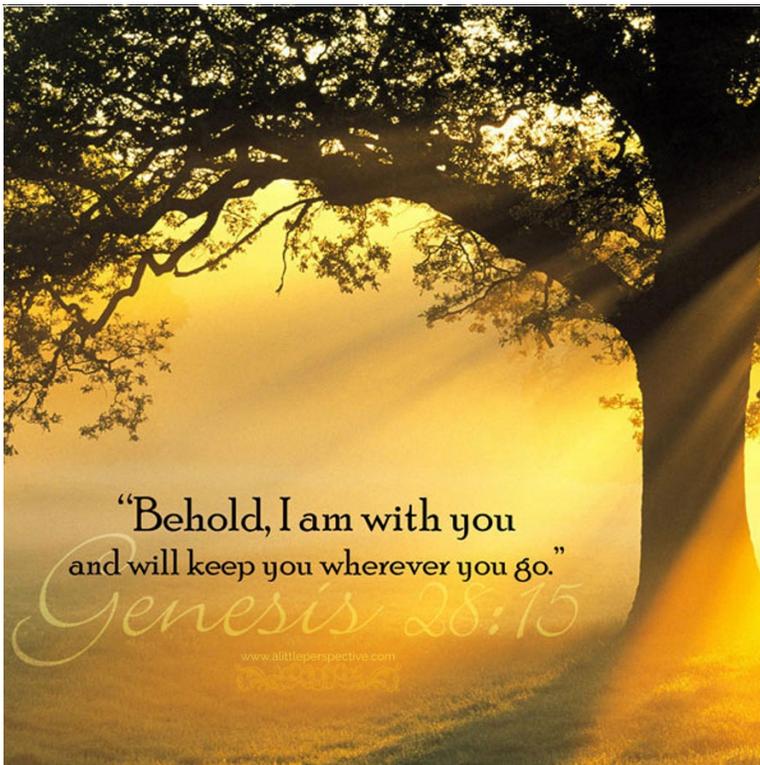
|...for I will not leave you, until I have done [that] which I have declared to you.

I appear to be standing in a field alone on this one. I split this into two phrases, separating the 3 particles; however, I cannot find another translation which does the same (I did not go through all of them). "...for I have not deserted you until now; listen, I will do [that] which I have proclaimed to you." Every translation I have gone back and reviewed takes these 3 particles and translates them *until*, giving us: "...for I will not desert you until I have done [that] which I have promised to you." The differences between interpreting and applying this passage are not great. The underlying assurance that God will do all that He has proclaimed He will do, remains; regardless of how we translate the end of v. 15.

We should not take the implication from this that, at some point, God will desert us (once He has done what He has promised to do). God has promised: "...fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10; ESV; capitalized). "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19–20; ESV).

**Genesis 28:15** (a graphic); from [Pinterest](#); accessed June 3, 2017.

Although logically, one might think that these words provided great assurance to Jacob, let me suggest that they provided him with some assurance, but Jacob's thinking and behavior often stood in his way when it came to enjoying his place in the plan of God.



Robert Dean: *Genesis 28:15, "And, behold, I am with you, and will keep you in all places where you go, and will bring you again into this land; for I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken to you of." The word "behold" in the Hebrew is *hinne*, and it is an attention-grabbing word. Pay attention, now I am going to say something important. What is going on here? Jacob is leaving the land, the land that God gave to Abraham, the land God reconfirmed to Isaac, the land He has just promised to Jacob, and He says wherever you go I am with you and will bring you back to this land. "I am with you," indicating His presence, His guidance. "I will keep you" is the Hebrew word which has the idea of guard, keep, watch, observe, watch over. And He will bring him back to this land. God is faithful, he is going to fulfill His promise. He is going to do for Jacob exactly what He promised.<sup>210</sup>*

Genesis 28:15 [God is speaking to Jacob in his dream] "Listen, I am with you and I have guarded you wherever you have gone. Furthermore, I will bring you back to this land, because I have not deserted you even until now. Recognize, therefore, that I have done exactly that which I have proclaimed to you."

<sup>210</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed June 2, 2017.

Robert Dean: *So the first vision at Bethel is on his way out of the land. And what is God doing here? God is reiterating the Abrahamic covenant to him but He is specifically saying, "I am going to be with you wherever you go. You are headed out of the land. It is okay for you to go and I am going to be with you wherever you go, and I will bring you back."*

Then Dean adds: *The second experience like this occurs when he comes back into the land at Penuel. As he comes back into the land God appears to him again and reiterates the covenant to him and the fact that He is going to protect him, even in this confrontation with Esau.*<sup>211</sup>

Genesis 28:15 [God is speaking to Jacob in his dream] *"Listen, I am with you and I have guarded you wherever you have gone. Furthermore, I will bring you back to this land, because I have not deserted you even until now. Recognize, therefore, that I have done exactly that which I have proclaimed to you."*

Genesis 28:15 Listen, I [am] with you and have kept you wherever you have gone. Furthermore, I will bring you back to this land, for I have not deserted you until now; listen, I will do [that] which I have proclaimed to you." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Trapp on God's promises to Jacob: *[H]ere is a fourfold comfort, as Pererius well observes, a plaster as broad as the sore, and sovereign for it. (1.) Against the loss of his friends, "I will be with you": (2.) Of his country; "I will give you this land": (3.) Against his poverty; "You will spread abroad, to the east, west," &c. (4.) His solitariness and aloneness; angels will attend you, and "your seed will be as the dust," &c. And "who can count the dust of Jacob?"*<sup>212</sup>

**Application:** You may say to yourself, *If I received those kind of assurances from God, I'd be able to make the right decisions for my life.* If you think that, then you are confused. You have these assurances already; so why have you not made all the right decisions? When God says, *"I will never leave you or forsake you;"* that is Him speaking to you (and to me, of course). God's promises to us are quite extensive and apply to nearly every circumstance in life. Jacob could have inferred from what his father and grandfather told him these promises from God; and here, he receives them from God directly. But we have these promises and many more, from God, from God's Word.

Already listed and updated in 2Samuel 7 and 1Chronicles 17; these are sites where one can go for God's promises, this is a worthwhile chart to repeat.

Lists of the Promises of God	
Site	Commentary
<a href="http://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/gods-promises-verses-in-the-bible/">http://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/gods-promises-verses-in-the-bible/</a>	This particular website I expect will be around for awhile.
<a href="http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/topics/bible-promises">http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/topics/bible-promises</a>	This site breaks the promises down into 14 different categories.
<a href="https://www.amazingfacts.org/bible-study/gods-promises">https://www.amazingfacts.org/bible-study/gods-promises</a>	This site also breaks down God's promises into categories, but they are quite different from the categories above.
<a href="http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/the-promises-of-god-10-powerful-bible-verses-1/">http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/the-promises-of-god-10-powerful-bible-verses-1/</a>	10 different passages of promises.

<sup>211</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed June 2, 2017.

<sup>212</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 28:14–15 (slightly edited).

## Lists of the Promises of God

Site	Commentary
<a href="http://bible.christiansunite.com/Torreys_Topical_Textbook/ttt454.shtml">http://bible.christiansunite.com/Torreys_Topical_Textbook/ttt454.shtml</a>	Here, you can read God's promises in 7 different translations.
<a href="http://www.365promises.com/">http://www.365promises.com/</a>	A new promise every day. Learning a new promise every day would be great for the believer.
<a href="http://www.whatsaiththescriture.com/Promises/Clarkes_Bible_Promises.html">http://www.whatsaiththescriture.com/Promises/Clarkes_Bible_Promises.html</a>	This is actually the text of a very old book, which is nothing but a classification and listing of a huge number or promises from the Word of God. The links are down a ways on this page.

The original list of promises are mostly dead links at this time. So I have revised it in 2017.

Let me make it clear that I do not necessarily endorse any of these sites or whatever else may be found on these sites. However, it is hard to screw up, "here is the topic and here is what God has promised about that topic."

I have, on another occasion, come across a site with a greater listing of promises, but I cannot seem to find it now.

The best place to put these promises are in your soul. Memorize the ones which you find pertinent to your life and then, when a circumstance occurs requiring a promise, then demand to God in prayer that He stand by His promise to you.

Remember, *it is impossible for God to lie* (Hebrews 6:18). Remember also: *God is not a man that He should lie, or a son of man that He should repent. Has He said, and shall He not do it? And has He spoken, and shall He not make it good?* (Num 23:19; Green's LT) And recall the words of Jesus: *The heaven and the earth will pass away, but My Words will not pass away, never!* (Mat 24:35; Green's LT)

My point in this list is, we have what Jacob did not have—the full and complete Word of God with all of His promises. Along with these promises, there are dozens of excellent doctrinal teachers to be found throughout the United States (many of whom have internet ministries for those unable to attend personally). See **The List** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 28:15 (God is speaking to Jacob): "Listen, I am with you and I have guarded you wherever you have gone. Furthermore, I will bring you back to this land, because I have not deserted you even until now. Recognize, therefore, that I have done exactly that which I have proclaimed to you."

### Jacob and God's Grace (Various Commentators)

Arno Gaebelein asks: *Here again is Sovereign Mercy. What did Jacob do to merit all this? Why should God meet him thus? Did he think of the Lord and call on Him for mercy before he slept on the stone? Nothing whatever. And [yet] Jehovah kept His promise and did all He had promised.*<sup>213</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *God's sovereign purpose in Jacob is revealed. It is not because Jacob is worthy but because God purposes it. Yet there is in Jacob that which will respond, and indeed has responded, and while his behaviour leaves much to be desired God will work on him to make him what he ought to be. Thus God will be with him and will keep and guard him, and will bring about His purpose through him. Jacob is Yahweh's personal concern.*

<sup>213</sup> Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:1–22 (slightly edited).

## Jacob and God's Grace (Various Commentators)

Pett continues: *We too may feel unworthy in our walk with God, but it is not our sense of worthiness that matters but the fact that God is at work on our lives and we are responsive. If we are His He will work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philip. 2:13).*<sup>214</sup>

L. M. Grant: *Consistently therefore, Jacob's seed would be "as the dust of the earth" (v.14), not "as the stars of heaven" (ch.26:4), which was a promise to Isaac because he is a type of Christ in connection with the church, the bride, as typified in Rebekah. The Lord further emphasizes the earthly character of Jacob's blessing in saying that his descendants would spread "to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south." There are no such directions in heaven. More than this, in Jacob and his seed all the families of the earth will be blessed. Israel will be the center of blessing on earth in the coming day of millennial glory, and in identification with Israel all the Gentile nations will be blessed. This is a firm, absolute declaration.*

L. M. Grant continues: *Added to this is the Lord's promise to Jacob personally, that he would be with him and keep him everywhere he went, and would bring him back to the land of promise (v.15). He would not leave him till his promises were fulfilled completely. This promise is totally unconditional. This is all the more striking when we consider that Jacob was not enjoying a good state of soul. Nothing therefore depended on Jacob's faithfulness.*<sup>215</sup>

Whedon: *A complex nature of manifold elements was that of Jacob. His cunning, and disposition to supplant and overreach, have been twice shown. Deceitfulness was a quality so conspicuous in his character as to have put him under the condemnation of all after time.*<sup>216</sup> Whedon later talks about how Jacob will reveal that he has many qualities or talents that Esau does not—but I do not know that the Bible clearly shows this.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 28:15 Listen, I am with you and I have guarded you wherever you have gone. Furthermore, I will bring you back to this land, because I have not deserted you even until now. Recognize, therefore, that I have done exactly that which I have proclaimed to you." (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 28:15 And, behold, I am with you, and will keep you in every place where you go, and will bring you again into this land. For I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken of to you."

The Cambridge Bible: *The personal promise to Jacob consists of (1) Divine Presence (with you): (2) Divine preservation (keep you): (3) Divine restoration (bring again): (4) Divine fulfilment of promise (until I have done).*<sup>217</sup>

It is apparent that God's geographical will for Jacob is to leave the land of his fathers and to go east (recall that God stopped Isaac from leaving the Land of Promise in Genesis 26:1–6). God would be with Jacob outside of the land and God would again bring Jacob back to this land.

Jacob, although he has not been what we would consider to be a great servant of God, is in God's geographical will. God does *not* tell him, "Look, Jacob, I am blessing you and your seed with this land—so you need to stay here." Instead, God says, "Listen, I am with you, and I will keep you in every place where you go, and I will bring you again into this land." Jacob has made a mess of things—something which most of us are quite capable of

<sup>214</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 28:15.

<sup>215</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-28.html> accessed June 3, 2017.

<sup>216</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 28:15.

<sup>217</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:15 (slightly edited).

doing in our own lives—and God tells Jacob, “I have got it covered. I am with you wherever you go, even if you are back in the land of Padan-aram. When it is time, I will bring you back to Canaan.”

God could have easily added, “Jacob, I have been with you everywhere you have gone; and I will continue to be with you, even outside of the Land of Promise. But you are one sorry believer and there are times when you just make Me sad.”

Jacob might be thought to, in this way, to represent the dispersion of the Jews. God has allowed His people to spread across the world, and at some point in the future, He will regather them to the land (Ezekiel 37:12 Isaiah 11:10–12 Jer. 30:3–4).

God would remain with Jacob until God brought Jacob back to this land where he was. As God told Jacob: “**For I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken of to you.**” We find a similar promise generalized in both the Old and New Testaments. **Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”** (Hebrews 13:5; Deut. 31:6b, 8b; ESV; capitalized) See also Joshua 1:5 1Chronicles 28:20. We can certainly understand God saying this to Abraham or to Moses; these men were spiritual greats. But God says this to Jacob, and that is grace!

God said to Jacob, “**For I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken of to you.**” That which God spoke to Jacob are the promises which He has now made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**Genesis 28:14–15** (a graphic); from [Pinsdaddy](#); accessed June 5, 2017.

### Chapter Outline

#### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 28:13–15 **And he saw Jehovah standing over these stairs. Then Jehovah said, “I am Jehovah, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give the ground upon which you are lying to you and to your descendants after you. Furthermore, your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will be scattered all over the earth, to the west, east, north and south. Also all of the families of the earth will be blessed by you and by your Seed. Listen, I am with you and I have guarded you wherever you have gone. Furthermore, I will bring you back to this land, because I have not deserted you even until now. Recognize, therefore, that I have done exactly that**

**which I have proclaimed to you.”** Although, we have **speculated** on Jacob’s feelings at this time, we do not know for certain how he felt. But, I am sure that he felt some regret or misgivings about having deceived his father, and then, before he leaves the land of Canaan, to have his father bless him again knowingly, without reproach. Sometimes knowing what you have done is wrong, and not having that person make certain that you know what is wrong—that on occasion can make a person feel even more guilty and inadequate. Yet, despite whatever feelings that Jacob has at this time, about his deception, about having to leave the Land of Promise, God still comes to him and God gives him this tremendous undeserved set of promises.

Jacob will return to the Land of Promise, 20 years hence, with 11 of the sons who will become the tribes of Israel. Also, sometime later, due to circumstances beyond his control, Jacob will have to leave the land again (Genesis 45:17–28); and God will again reassure him right before he leaves the land (Genesis 46:1–4).



There is no question that this vision and the words of God had a good effect on Jacob. This would have given him some confidence; this would have bolstered his inner strength to move forward toward Paddan-aram. However, we are not designed to have an experience or two and to live off of those experiences for any amount of time. Some people have had near-death experiences, and they prayed and they promised God, and God delivered them out of those circumstances—and for a few days or even a few weeks, this made an impression on their minds—and maybe even they did many of the things they promised God. (“I will go to church every Sunday from now on!”) But, I can guarantee you that, it wears off; whatever amazing experience that you have had, it goes away after awhile, even if you still remember it.

As we will later find out, Jacob is no spiritual giant in Haran; and there are many times in his later life that we will study where Jacob is less than admirable. What give Jacob any strength or any confidence at all? God’s words and God’s promises *when he believes them*. Seeing the angels and seeing a vision of God above the *ladder* is quite amazing, but that gives Jacob very limited confidence. Could he have not awakened the next morning and said, “Wow, now that was quite a weird dream!” God gave Jacob two things: (1) an amazing vision and (2) words. What gives Jacob some spiritual growth and some confidence? The words! Genesis 28:13–15 *And behold, 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. Your 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. Behold, 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."* (ESV; capitalized) It cannot be just the words alone; Jacob has to hear them, understand them and believe them. At the very least, Jacob remembers what he saw and remembers what God said; and he kept this in his head.

**Application:** When I have any doubts at all, there are dozens of things which come to my mind immediately. I may not like the circumstances I am in; but I have no logical choice but to trust in the God of Abraham. I know too much about the God of the Bible to doubt Him for any length of time.

**Application:** Along the same lines, when I am suffering some difficulties or problems; I also know the God Who I believe in. So I know that I have to place my trust in Him, even when things are difficult. I have no other logical choice. One of the other choices is, *it is all random and anything can happen; and it may all be for the worst!* But then I have to consider to God Who I trust in; I have to consider His Word; I have to consider the phenomenon that is the Bible. This does not mean that I pass every test; this does not mean that I always do the right thing. But, when I choose to, God is right there for me to trust in. But the key to having any trust in God is knowing Him through His Word.

The Bible has many examples of experiences not being quite enough for many sets of believers and unbelievers. Tens of thousands of people likely encountered Jesus Christ; and thousands, at least, saw miracles which He did. Still, the Jewish people were willing to see Him crucified, despite seeing these great miracles. Moses performed incredible miracles (with the power of God, of course—Moses did not do anything much more than point to what God has done or would do). We would think that, Pharaoh and the people of Egypt would have responded by saying, “Look, there is no question about it; God is with you. Whatever you want to do, go ahead and do.” But they did not do this. Pharaoh continues to resist Moses. Not only that, but the children of Israel, who followed Moses, rebelled against him over and over and over again. They also saw those miracles and more. Yet, they were still able to reject God and to rebel against God. My point being, a wonderful, miraculous experience is not enough. What is enough? Truth and you must be willing to believe it.

I have known many unbelievers in my life. People do not believe because they *choose* not to believe. Faith in Christ is a simple choice; and that simple choice is the difference between eternal life or eternal condemnation.

You could see Jesus heal a man who has been blind all of his life; you could witness Jesus turn water into wine. This does not guarantee that you will believe in Him. It just does not happen that way. If amazing experiences were required, then nearly every person in Judæa would have believed in Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. However, a large number of people rejected Him.

In short, the key is never a miraculous experience; the key is never a sign or a miracle; the key is always the truth and our response to it.

Jacob receives 3 blessings all within a week's time and it is worthwhile to set these blessings side-by-side.

Jacob first deceives his father, making him think that he is Esau; and Isaac gives him the blessing designed for Esau. Then, before Jacob is sent to the east, Isaac blesses him again, knowing who it is. Finally, as Jacob begins to travel out of the Land of Promise, God blesses and assures him. The prologue, the blessing, then the aftermath will be listed. The ESV; capitalized is used below:

### The Three Blessings of Jacob

A Deceived Isaac Blesses Him	Isaac, with Knowledge, Blesses	God's Blessing to Jacob
<p>Gen 27:26–27a Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near and kiss me, my son." So he came near and kissed him.</p>	<p>Gen 28:1 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, "You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women.</p>	<p>Gen 28:10–12 Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And 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. And 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!</p>
<p>Jacob, at the urging of his mother, has disguised himself as Esau in order to receive Esau's blessing from Isaac, their father. Both Jacob and his mother Rebekah believed that Esau would receive the superior blessing, as Isaac favored him.</p>	<p>Esau was so upset over his blessing being stolen that he was threatening Jacob's life. Their mother hears and manipulates Isaac into sending Jacob east to find a suitable wife.</p>	<p>Jacob suddenly finds himself on a journey towards the east, where some of his family lives. Jacob has never been on a trip like this before and this appears to be the first time he is away from his family. He is not a child; many people think him to be about 77 years old.</p>
<p>Genesis 27:27b–29 And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed! May God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!"</p>	<p>Gen 28:2–4 Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!"</p>	<p>Gen 28:13–15 And behold, 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. Your 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. Behold, 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."</p>

### The Three Blessings of Jacob

A Deceived Isaac Blesses Him	Isaac, with Knowledge, Blesses	God's Blessing to Jacob
<p>Although this is never stated outright, for some men of spiritual note, what they said at their death by way of blessing, was also considered to be prophetic.</p>	<p>In this second blessing, given by Isaac to Jacob—Isaac knows that Jacob deceived him on the previous day and that Jacob received Esau's blessing. Isaac seems to have accepted that.</p>	<p>It ought to be obvious that, whatever promises and assurances are given by God, they will be fulfilled.</p>
<p>Isaac's blessing called for (1) God to give Jacob prosperity and material blessings; (2) for the people to be subservient to Jacob; and (3) for those who cursed Jacob to be cursed; and those who blessed Jacob to be blessed.</p>	<p>In this second blessing, Isaac calls (1) for Jacob to be blessed with many descendants; (2) for the blessings of Abraham to be transferred to Jacob and his descendants; and (3) and that the land of Canaan be the possession of Jacob and his descendants.</p>	<p>God identifies Himself and promises the following: (1) the land of Canaan would be given to Jacob and his descendants; (2) Jacob's descendants would be spread in all directions; (3) all the families of the earth would be blessed by Jacob and his Seed; and (4) God would remain with Jacob until He had fulfilled all of His promises.</p>
<p>Regarding these first blessings by Isaac, James Burton Coffman writes: <i>The difference between this blessing and the one that Isaac mistakenly conferred upon Jacob earlier is rather striking. In the first, there was no mention of the Abrahamic promise, but here Isaac apparently made an effort to go all the way in conferring the covenant blessing. But even in this there could have been a deficiency, a lack supplied by God Himself in the vision that came as a sequel, that being the fact that "all the families of the earth" would be blessed in his seed. Nevertheless, even as it stood, the blessing seemed to convey the impression that Isaac had repented of his sinful effort to convey the birthright to Esau.</i><sup>218</sup></p>		
<p>Gen 27:30–31 As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his hunting. He also prepared delicious food and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me."</p>	<p>Gen 28:5 Thus Isaac sent Jacob away. And he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.</p>	<p>Gen 28:16–19 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." And 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." So 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. He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first.</p>
<p>Isaac finds out almost immediately that Jacob had deceived him. He recognizes that he cannot give Esau a superior blessing.</p>	<p>Isaac appears to have accepted the circumstances; and is amenable to sending Jacob east to find a suitable wife. It appears that Isaac was guided to that decision by his wife.</p>	<p>Jacob is amazed at the experience of God speaking to him and the great vision. On the negative side, Jacob will attempt to seal the deal with a vow.</p>

The blessings which God gave to Jacob are quite similar to those delivered to Abraham (Genesis 12:2-3, 7, 13:14-18, 15:1-6, 18, 17:1-8 and 22:17) and to Isaac (Genesis 26:3-4, 23–25).

<sup>218</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**God's Unconditional Promises and Covenant Theology:** Just as an aside, most of these promises are unconditional. God simply said, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that this is what He would give them. There are so many promises made to all 3 men; along with the blessings above which Isaac gave to Jacob. Do you think it is reasonable that God simply withdrew all of those blessings? Do you think that God simply reached a point with the people of Israel and said, "Okay, that's it; that's just going too far; I have had it. I am out of this relationship." ?

We have all of these promises of God; and we have many promises of what God would do to the descendants of Israel when they rejected Him—and those things have also come to pass. It is logical and reasonable to assume that God's promises to Israel—both those that we read about and those which are warnings of discipline—are promises which God will bring to pass. God made those promises to Israel knowing all future events. Nothing that happened has caught God by surprise. Again, do you think God said, "Well, I knew that you descendants of Jacob would be lousy, from time to time; but I have no idea you would be this lousy!" ? Does that make any sort of theological sense?

I say this, because there is a whole theology based upon this thinking about God and His promises. It is called Covenant Theology or Replacement Theology (the church replaces nation Israel). Let me assure you that God, in eternity past, knew what the sons of Israel would do. He knew exactly how they would behave as a nation. He knew that they would reject His Son. Yet, even though God knew these things in eternity past, He also made these promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Does Jacob deserve any of these promises? No, of course not (neither does Abraham or Isaac). We do not deserve God's promises or salvation. We fail repeatedly (every time that we sin, that is failure); yet we stand upon the perfect Christ, Who died for our sins. We are not condemned because God the Father cannot reject His Son. He raised His Son from the dead—and this is why we know that we are accepted in the Beloved (along with many verses which tell us exactly the same thing).

Genesis 28:13–15 And he saw Jehovah standing over these stairs. Then Jehovah said, "I am Jehovah, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give the ground upon which you are lying to you and to your descendants after you. Furthermore, your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will be scattered all over the earth, to the west, east, north and south. Also all of the families of the earth will be blessed by you and by your Seed. Listen, I am with you and I have guarded you wherever you have gone. Furthermore, I will bring you back to this land, because I have not deserted you even until now. Recognize, therefore, that I have done exactly that which I have proclaimed to you."

### Jacob and God's Geographical Will

1. Although some have suggested that Jacob, by leaving the land of Canaan, is somehow out of God's geographical will, we actually have no evidence of that. During this vision, while God is speaking to Jacob, He could have said, "Oh, by the way, I don't want you leaving Canaan. If you want to live as far from Esau as possible, that is fine; but do not leave Canaan." But God did not say that.
2. Abraham was insistent upon his son Isaac remaining in the Land of Promise. Even when it came to fetching a wife, Abraham did not allow Isaac to go east, but sent a servant instead. Isaac was about to go down to Egypt during a drought, and God redirected him, to keep him in Canaan. However, this is not what is happening with Jacob.
3. Jacob will leave the land on two occasions, and on both occasions God speaks with Jacob and God does not tell him to turn back.
4. Logically, would it not make sense that, if Jacob is about to get out of God's geographic will, and if God is making a point to speak to Jacob at that very point, would God not mention this to Jacob?
5. Secondly, I believe that Jacob represents nation Israel; and is typical of what would happen in Israel's

## Jacob and God's Geographical Will

future. The people of Israel would be removed from the land in 586 B.C. temporarily (the northern portion of Israel had already been removed). Jacob will return to the Land of Promise, just as the nation of Israel would return to the land. However, the second time Jacob leaves the Land of Promise, there is no quick return; in fact, he will not return until he has died; and his body is returned to bury in Canaan. Similarly, the second time that Israel is completely removed from the land, A.D. 70, it will not be until God regathers Israel when all of the Jews return to the land (the few Jews living in the land today does not constitute a regathering of the people by God).

6. Logically, if Jacob should not leave Canaan now; does it make sense that he leaves Canaan with his entire family to move to Egypt? That will happen; and nary a word will suggest that Jacob is doing wrong.
7. Throughout his life, Jacob will be in and out of fellowship; he will resist God and sometimes he will obey God—very much like nation Israel will be. All that happened with the sons of Jacob—their moving to Egypt (which will take place near the end of the book of Genesis) falls under God's geographic will.
- 8.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Jacob, despite some of his future failures, appears to have a fairly reasonable memory of what happened. Do you realize that in a period of less than a week, Jacob heard promises from his father based upon Jacob deceiving his father; Jacob heard promises made by his father when there was no deception occurring; and then Jacob heard promises from God, seemingly out of nowhere. These promises were all quite similar; and yet Jacob was able to remember them and to keep them separate in his mind. Did he write these things down when traveling? We do not have any evidence of him doing that; but it is reasonable to assume that he placed this information into his brain and kept it there; and eventually repeated this information to his sons, along with the rest of the book of Genesis which came before.

I know that what Jacob did here was a remarkable feat. The few times when I would teach the same class 3x in the same day, it would be quite difficult for me to keep it straight in my mind exactly what I told the 3 different classes and what points I emphasized. Since I taught mathematics, I rarely used any notes. But teaching the same thing 3x in one day was more difficult for me (2x in a day was much easier; but I most enjoyed teaching 5 different courses; I could compartmentalize those much easier). My point is, Jacob has 3 similar but distinct set of promises delivered to him; and he keeps them all properly separate (which indicates that he had an excellent mind and memory).

Genesis 28:10–15 Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. Your seed shall also be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with you, and will keep you where ever 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." (Snider's translation)

### Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 28:10–15

1. vs 10 gives a summary of the events which are going to be detailed through 29:1.
2. vs 11-22 deal specifically with one incident which occurred on the trip to Haran.
3. The place is not specifically named for us initially, but we later find out that its name was previously Luz, but will become known by the name Bethel.

### Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 28:10–15

4. Jacob, although he was chosen by God to inherit the covenant blessings, has become an alien and a castaway from his own family.
5. All of this has not entirely been his fault, but he is not without blame.
6. As he journeys alone and most likely somewhat concerned about the turn his life has taken, the sun goes down that evening.
7. The distance from Beersheba to Bethel is some 70 miles, so it is highly unlikely that this occurred the first evening, but more likely the second or the third night.
8. He has had sufficient time to ponder his choices and the present state of affairs.
9. He is lonely and in a strange place, and probably wonders if he has made the right choices, and if Isaac's blessing really meant anything.
10. He uses a stone which he found in the area and placed it under his head as a pillow of sorts.
11. He falls asleep and has a dream which arouses continual surprise in him, as noted by the three beholds of vs 12-13.
12. Dreams were one way that God used to communicate His plan to believers before the completion of the canon.
13. Once the canon was complete Divine revelation is no longer necessary and inspired dreams are no longer a reality.
14. No one, however pious and well-meaning they may be, has had a dream which is on a par with the WORD OF GOD.
15. God provides a dream in which he gives Jacob a visual picture as well as verbal encouragement.
16. The picture is a ladder, which is set upon the earth and which extended high above into Heaven.
17. The ladder was filled with angels ascending to heaven from the earth and angels descending to the earth from heaven.
18. The Lord, the second person of the Godhead, stood above the ladder, and while it is not stated, obviously would have been in the path of the ascending and descending angels.
19. This position is to illustrate the fact that the Lord controls the events of history, exercising authority over even the angels.
20. The ladder serves to illustrate that which joins Heaven and earth, none other than the God/Man, Jesus Christ. Jn. 1:51
21. The angels are the ministering spirits sent out by God to aid those who are positive. Heb. 1:14
22. They get their orders from God, and come to the planet to execute His commands, and then return when their job is finished.
23. They perform the following functions:
  - 1) Protect and deliver believers. Gen. 19:11; Matt 4:11
  - 2) Struggle against fallen angels. Dan. 10:12-13; Rev. 12:7
  - 3) Execute God's judgments. Gen. 19:12; Rev. 8,16
  - 4) Escort believers into Ph3. Lk. 16:22
24. Certain functions which angels performed in the past are no longer necessary, such as interpreting the WOG and delivering the WOG, as in the case of Moses. Dan. 7:16; Gal. 3:19
25. While angels are superior in every way to man, they are busily engaged in supporting believers in the AC.
26. This is the message to Jacob, God is not only supporting him, He administers all the resources of Heaven as well.
27. The Lord identifies Himself as the God of Jacob's grandfather Abraham, and now for the first time as the God of Isaac, who has made the MAJG.
28. He promises Jacob the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, to allay any fears that God is not for him.
29. Among the specific things He promises are:
  - 1) the land on which he is lying.
  - 2) innumerable physical descendants.
  - 3) the Messianic clause.
  - 4) God's personal presence and protection.
  - 5) Final restoration to the land of Canaan.

### Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 28:10–15

30. The earthly seed, the Jews will become so numerous, that the land will not contain them, they will expand in all four directions.
31. Since God has unconditionally committed Himself to fulfill the promises to Abraham, Jacob as the next in line falls under all this blessing by association.
32. God makes no secret about the fact that His ultimate plan is for Jacob to return to the land, although God was aware that he was set on leaving.
33. God guarantees His personal presence with Jacob, which is designed to allay any fears about his future.
34. Beyond this He promises personal protection as long as he is out of the land of Canaan.
35. This does not mean that He will not continue to protect Him once he returns, but that he is for all intents absolutely
36. All this is done to comfort and encourage Jacob so the Lord grants him the support of His grace.
37. The Lord promises even more here than Isaac blessed him with in Genesis 27, validating the blessing with Divine approval.

From [Makarios Bible Church](#); will open up in Word or WP; accessed June 1, 2017.

#### Chapter Outline

#### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 28:10–15 Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of [from the] the stones of the place and put it under [around] his head, and lay down in that place. He had a dream, and behold, a ladder [stairway] was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, 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." (Ballinger's translation)

### Jack M. Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 28:10–15

1. Jacob leaves Isaac's base at Beersheba for the long journey to Haran (v.10).
2. Some days out Jacob arrives at Bethel the place where Abraham built an altar (12:8) shortly after his arrival in the land and there he called on the name of the LORD.
3. It was in this same high country that Abraham returned after his trip to Egypt and here the LORD appeared to him after his separation from Lot (Gen. 13:3-4; 14-17).
4. Jacob's actions in verse 11 are thought to be that he simply found a suitable stone and used it as a pillow (cf. KJV, NIV, NAS); contrast the NKJ which reads "[he took one of the stones of the place and put it at his head...](#)"
5. The Hebrew reads: "and he took from the stones of the place" suggesting that he used more than one stone.
6. The noun "at the head" (mera-ashoth) is used on 1Sam. 26:11-12 and 1Kgs. 19:6 for an object found at the head of a person rather than under the head of the person lying down.
7. It has been suggested that Jacob laid a barrier of stones around his head for protection.
8. Jacob's dream contains three main features: (a) a ladder/stairway between earth and heaven; (b) angels ascending and descending; (c) a theophany of Yahweh standing at the top of the stairway.
9. The significance of this vision was to encourage Jacob with respect to supernatural protection during his exile from the land of promise.
10. This angelic traffic shows that angels are under the direction of God and in His service on behalf of believers and the advancement of the plan.
11. Those moving upward enter the third heaven where they are given their new assignments.
12. Those descending are those who are on assignment.

### Jack M. Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 28:10–15

13. This interpretation of the significance of the movement of angels on a great stairway is supported by the verbal assurances given to Jacob in verses. 13-16.
14. At the top of the stairway stands Yahweh who appears as the sovereign director of angelic operations depicted her in their movements to and from planet earth (see Pss. 78:25, 49; 91:11; 103:20).
15. The One at the head of the stairway speaks to the sleeping/dreaming Jacob introducing Himself as "**the LORD God of Abraham and the God of Isaac...**"
16. This particular formulation of the deity is to be found only here in the OT.
17. The use of Yahweh as the God of Abraham and Isaac teaches that the God known to the patriarchs was the same God who revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:6-17; 6:2-8).
18. The divine reference to both the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac implies that the promises granted to them anticipate the confirmation of the covenant with the 3rd generation, that being represented by Jacob.
19. The reiterated promise "**the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants**" (v. 13) closely resembles 13:15 "**for all the land which you see, I will give to you and to your descendants forever.**"
20. The geographical setting in Genesis 13:14-16 is the in same general area where Jacob spent the night under the stars.
21. It was in the vicinity of Bethel that Abraham received this installment of the covenant after his separation from Lot.
22. The innumerable descendants promise of verse 14 also closely resembles the one found in chap. 13 verse 16 which reads "I shall make your descendants like the dust of the earth."
23. In v. 14 we also have a promise of Israelite occupation of the land in the words "you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south..."
24. This mimics Gen. 13:14: "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are—northward and southward and eastward and westward."
25. Other articulations of the covenant contain the promise of land and descendants but the one that most closely matches this one is the one in Gen. 13:14ff.
26. And finally, the messianic promise given in v. 14c "and in you and in your seed/descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed" is exactly like what we find in 12:3.
27. Jacob like his grandfather was one of the progenitors of the line of Christ (the "in you").
28. "In you" refers to the individual progenitor and "in your seed" refers to the final stage the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
29. Jacob is reassured that he is in the chosen line even though he is going away from the land.
30. Jacob is not told to go back to his home but is allowed to go to his relatives in Haran.
31. On a very personal note Jacob is promised divine protection "**I am with you wherever you go**" and that in time God "**will bring [him] back to [the] land.**"
32. The promise of the divine presence for Jacob is seen here and in 31:3 and 46:4.
33. The closing words of Yahweh "**I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you**" do not refer to a time in the future when God would abandon His servant.
34. The promises granted to the patriarchs extend beyond their lifetimes and includes their existence as resurrected saints enjoying the blessing of the eternal kingdom of God.
35. The reassurances and promises granted Jacob in this dream could not be more clear.
36. He would have divine protection while in flight and while in exile and someday in the future God would direct him back to Canaan from which he was fleeing.
37. Whatever the future holds God promised Jacob categorical protection and provision.
38. Jacob has nothing to fear no matter what untoward circumstances he might encounter.
39. Now he is challenged to apply these promises in the face of all threats.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen28.htm> accessed May 27, 2017.

## Jacob's Response to God and the Vision

### A Review of Genesis 28: 10–15:

So far, this is what we have studied:

Genesis 28:10–11 Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And 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. (ESV)

Jacob has made his twin brother Esau so upset, that Esau was ready to kill him.

Gen 28:12 And 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! (ESV)

Jacob, while still in the Land of Promise, dreams of angels ascending into heaven and descending back to the earth. We studied how angels have a real involvement in world affairs, even though we do not see them (or, if we see them, we do not know that they are angels—Hebrews 13:2).

Gen 28:13–15 And behold, 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. Your 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. Behold, 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." (ESV)

Isaac, Jacob's father, gave Jacob a real blessing when he was leaving—without being duped. And here, God blesses Jacob as well, despite the fact that Jacob is quite duplicitous.

**And so wakes up Jacob from his sleep and so he says, "Surely [is] Y<sup>e</sup>howah in this place and I [even I] did not know [it]."**

Genesis  
28:16

**Jacob then awoke from his sleep and said, "Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] surely in this place [and] yet I [even I] did not know [it]."**

**Jacob awoke from his sleep and remarked, "Jehovah is surely in this place, yet I had no idea."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so wakes up Jacob from his sleep and so he says, "Surely [is] Y <sup>e</sup> howah in this place and I [even I] did not know [it]."
Targum (trans. By Cook)	And Jakob awoke from his sleep, and said, Verily <u>the Glory of the Lord's Shekinah</u> dwells in this place, and I knew it not.
Latin Vulgate	And when Jacob awaked out of sleep, he said: Indeed the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob awoke from his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I did not know it.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and said, The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.

Significant differences: There are additional words in the targum. The Greek lacks *surely*.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Jacob, awaking from his sleep, said, Truly, the Lord is in this place and I was not conscious of it.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "I know that the Lord is in this place. But I did not know he was here until I slept."
God's Word™	Then Jacob woke up from his sleep and exclaimed, "Certainly, the LORD is in this place, and I didn't know it!"
Good News Bible (TEV)	Jacob woke up and said, "The LORD is here! He is in this place, and I didn't know it!"
The Message	Jacob woke up from his sleep. He said, "GOD is in this place--truly. And I didn't even know it!"

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	When Jacob woke from his sleep, he thought to himself, The Lord is definitely in this place, but I didn't know it.
Contemporary English V.	Jacob woke up suddenly and thought, "The LORD is in this place, and I didn't even know it."
New Berkeley Version	When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, "Amen, the LORD is in this place and I did not know it."

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And when Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said: 'Jehovah is here and I didn't realize it.'
International Standard V	<b>Jacob Worships God in Bethel</b> Jacob woke up during the night [Lit. woke from his sleep] and told himself [The Heb. lacks to himself], "Surely, the LORD is in this place and I never knew it!"
New Advent (Knox) Bible	When he awoke from his dream, Jacob said to himself, Why, this is the Lord's dwelling-place, and I slept here unaware of it!
Today's NIV	When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it."
Translation for Translators	<i>During the night</i> , when Jacob woke up from sleeping, he thought, "Surely Yahweh is in this place, and until now I was not aware of it!"

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Jacob woke from his sleep, and he said, "Surely Yahweh exists in this place! I never knew <i>it</i> ."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then Jacob awoke from his sleep, and exclaimed; "The Ever-living is certainly in this place, and I knew it not;..."
Urim-Thummim Version	Jacob then woke up from sleeping and said, truly YHWH was standing here and I did not know it.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Jacob awoke from his sleep, and said, so in fact Yahweh is within this place, and I did not this know.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Heritage Bible	And Jacob awoke out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know by seeing it.
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New American Bible (2002) When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he exclaimed, "Truly, the LORD is in this spot, although I did not know it!"

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible Ya'akov awoke from his sleep and said, "Truly, ADONAI is in this place - and I didn't know it!"

The Complete Tanach And Jacob awakened from his sleep, and he said, "Indeed, the Lord is in this place, and I did not know [it]."

**and I did not know [it]:** For had I known, I would not have slept in such a holy place. [from Bereishith Rabbathi, attributed to Rabbi Moshe Hadarshan]

exeGesés companion Bible And Yaaqov wakens from his sleep, and he says, Surely Yah Veh is in this place; and I know it not.

JPS (Tanakh—1985) Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is present in this place, and I did not know it!"

Kaplan Translation Jacob awoke from his sleep. 'God is truly in this place,' he said, 'but I did not know it.'

Orthodox Jewish Bible And Ya'akov awoke out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Hashem is in this place! And I had no da'as of it.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

Kretzmann's Commentary Jacob's Vow  
And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. The presence of God was in this place, remote as it was from the spot where the true worship of God was fostered, namely, in his father's house, and he had had no knowledge of it. Jehovah in His merciful grace was near to him, surrounded him even at this distance from his home with His kindness.

NET Bible® Then Jacob woke up [Heb "woke up from his sleep." This has been simplified in the translation for stylistic reasons.] and thought [Heb "said."], "Surely the Lord is in this place, but I did not realize it!"

The Pulpit Commentary And Jacob awaked out of his sleep (during which he had seen and talked with Jehovah), and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. Jacob does not here learn the doctrine of the Divine omnipresence for the first time (Knobel), but now discovers that the covenant God of Abraham revealed himself at other than consecrated places (Rosenmüller, Keil, Lange, Murphy); or perhaps simply gives expression to his astonishment at finding that whereas he fancied himself alone, he was in reality in the company of God—so plus adeptum ease quam sperare ausus fuisset (Calvin).

The Voice *The dream ended, and Jacob woke up from his sleep.*  
**Jacob (to himself):** There is no doubt in my mind that the Eternal One is in this place—and I didn't even know it!

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> awoke from his snooze and he said, surely YHWH <sup>[He Exists]</sup> is in this place and I did not know,...

Concordant Literal Version And waking is Jacob from his sleep and saying, "Surely, forsooth, Yahweh is in this place, and I knew it not."

Context Group Version And Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, Surely YHWH is in this place. And I didn't know it.

Darby Translation And Jacob awoke from his sleep, and said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew [it] not.

World English Bible

Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, "Surely Yahweh is in this place, and I didn't know it."

Young's Updated LT

And Jacob awakes out of his sleep, and says, "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew not;"

**The gist of this verse:**When Jacob awakes, he says, "Y<sup>e</sup>howah is surely here and I was unaware of it."**Genesis 28:16a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâqats (יָקַט) [pronounced <i>yaw-BAHTS</i> ]	<i>to become awake, to awaken; to become active</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3364 BDB #429
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
sh <sup>e</sup> nath (שְׁנַת) [pronounced <i>sh<sup>e</sup>nahth</i> ]	<i>sleep; a state of sleep</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8153 (= #8142?) BDB #446

The spelling above appears to be for Strong's #8153; spellings for Strong's #8142: shênâh (שְׁנָה) [pronounced *shay-NAW*] and shênâ' (שְׁנָה') [pronounced *shay-NAW*]; and there may be some other forms. They all appear to be either the same word; or at the very least, synonyms. There is some disagreement upon the vowel points and this appears to be in the construct form, although that does not fit in with the rest of the sentence.

**Translation:** *Jacob then awoke from his sleep...*

This was quite the amazing dream that Jacob had, and God clearly communicated to him; but there was a point at which he would awaken.

Now, how will he view the dream which he had?

**Genesis 28:16b**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Genesis 28:16b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'âkên (אָכֵן) [pronounced aw-KAYN]	<i>surely, truly</i>	adverb	Strong's #403 BDB #38
yêsh (יֵשׁ) [pronounced yaysh]	<i>being, substance, existence; used as a substitute for to be (without reference to number or tense); there [is, are]; to be present, to be ready, to exist</i>	substantive	Strong's #3426 BDB #441
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mâqôwm (מִקּוֹמ) [pronounced maw-KOHHM]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
hûw' (אוּ) [pronounced hoo]	<i>that; this; same</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

**Translation:** ...and said, “Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] surely in this place...

Jacob remarks with amazement that God is in that place.

This observation by Jacob does not mean that he did or did not understand the **immanence and transcendence** of God. Believers in the Old Testament could certainly have experiences or see things which indicate to them that God has manifested Himself before them. Acknowledging that specialized manifestation (such as, in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle or Temple) does not mean that these believers thought that God was somehow limited to that particular place.

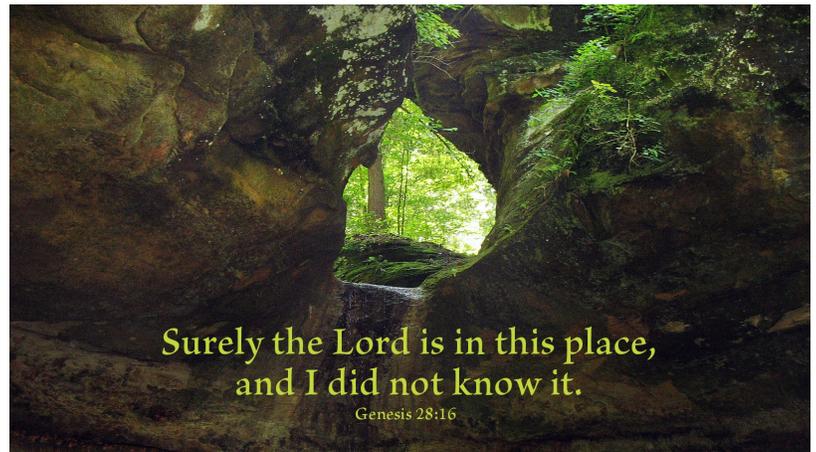
Here, given Jacob's general spiritual state, we do not know what he knew or understood about God. We do not tend to view him as being a spiritual giant at this time (I don't know a single commentator who would make that argument<sup>219</sup>). So Jacob may have understood that God is not confined to any physical space and he may not have thought about that at anytime before in his life. All we know for certain is, Jacob recognizes that God specially manifested Himself here to him.

<sup>219</sup> Several would argue, *well, he's better than Esau!*

Genesis 28:16c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i> ]	<i>I, me;</i> (sometimes a verb is implied)	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
lô' (לא or לוֹל) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâda' (יָדָע) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHG</i> ]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect; pausal form	Strong's #3045 BDB #393

**Translation:** ...[and] yet I [even I] did not know it[.]”

Jacob admits that he had no clue. It is likely that Jacob had heard about God all of his life, but had never had a personal encounter with Him; and suddenly it happens and he had no idea that it was going on. Here, I believe what Jacob is saying is, when he arrived to this place originally, and laid his head down to rest, at no point did he think, “I am in a holy place.” This dream and this vision of God (we do not know exactly what Jacob saw) caught him completely by surprise. This was unexpected in the extreme.



**Genesis 28:16** (a graphic); from [Theodidacti](#); accessed June 3, 2017.

**Jacob's Clarifying Moment:** Jacob then awoke from his sleep and said, “Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] surely in this place [and] yet I [even I] did not know [it].” (Genesis 28:16) This might be understood as Jacob's *clarifying moment*. That is, at least for a time, Jacob has some specific spiritual understanding. He certainly does not have a full and complete knowledge of the plan of God and his place in it; but he does recognize that God is always with him.

Robert Dean describes this: *The first point in comparison is that Jacob has life-changing events when he is confronted with the plan of God for his life. This is what happens with people and why they sometimes think of it as a "religious experience." Frequently it is a time when God simply takes out a 2 x 4 and hits us over the head. We get our bell rung with divine discipline and God confronts us with the fact that He has a plan for our life, and it can be an overpowering experience. It can just happen one day when you are sitting in Bible class taking notes and all of a sudden you realize, "This is talking about me. God really does have a plan for my life. This is serious, and what I am hearing is that I have*

*to make doctrine my life." There are no flashing lights, suddenly you realize that this is all about you and your spiritual life. It happens in different ways with different people. With some people it is more of a crisis than in others. But in most people's life they just reach that point where they realize that this really is God's plan for my life and they need to do something about it because the consequences are serious. That is what happened to Jacob at Bethel.<sup>220</sup>*

This does not mean that there is an experience, and then, from thereon in, everything is smooth sailing. It means that, for a moment (or longer), you recognize that you are in the plan of God; that you are in a plan bigger than yourself; and that there is more to life than the simple, day-to-day things that consume most lives. This realization mixed with a daily intake of Bible doctrine can move a person forward, spiritually; but this realization, if not coupled with divine truth, will fade into the distance.

Some commentators get this completely wrong. The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary writes: *He is altogether a changed man now, and gives proof that he had passed through a great spiritual crisis by acknowledging God in all His ways.<sup>221</sup>*

What is key to this narrative is that Jacob is *not* a completely changed man. He no doubt got some encouragement from God speaking to him, and some of the words that God said, Jacob took into his soul; but his spiritual advancement was pretty much limited to the things that God said that Jacob believed and took into his heart (thinking).

After Jacob has been in Paddan-aram for a few years, it is clear that his Uncle Laban takes advantage of him and cheats him. After 14 years, Laban offers him what appears to be a reasonable payment for his work, but then he changes it and changes it again. Rather than appeal to the God Who is always there (something which Jacob appears to understand here), Jacob devises a goofy (and unscientific) scheme of breeding to counteract Laban's dishonest dealings.

My point is, you cannot grow from a single experience. This experience allows Jacob to put together some important information, but he does not appear to advance much from this point.

**Application:** There are believers today who are looking for a one-shot experience to turn the tide in their spiritual lives. In the previous century, people who were saved would go to evangelistic meetings and come forward, hoping that this time, it would work (the first time they believed in Jesus Christ, it worked). Others, in the previous century and in this one, seek out *the second blessing*, believing that to be the jump start that they need in their spiritual lives. These singular experiences do not exist. Our spiritual lives are the result of day-by-day spiritual growth.

This experience of Jacob's is a singular experience and it will give him some orientation to the plan of God and some forward momentum. But, it is not the end-all, be-all of his spiritual life. Now, I realize that this is a pretty radical thing which I have just said—this appearance to Jacob by God is quite an amazing event, but, *if* it is not coupled with Bible doctrine and positive volition toward that doctrine in Jacob's soul, its effect on Jacob's overall life will be quite transitory.

The NEV commentary states it in this way: *This [chapter] is an essay in the titanic difference between knowledge and belief.<sup>222</sup>*

<sup>220</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed June 2, 2017.

<sup>221</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 29:1–14 (main homiletics).

<sup>222</sup> From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen28com.html> accessed June 3, 2017. The NEV commentary later states that coming to faith is a *lifelong struggle*; but it is not. It is a *lifetime choice*.

God has given Jacob information which he ought to believe; but he apparently does not believe it all. The fact that God appeared to Jacob is significant; but what God told Jacob is far more important. Those words we still have today.

**Genesis 28:16** And Jacob awakened from his sleep. And he said, "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know."

Genesis 28:16 Jacob then awoke from his sleep and said, "Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] surely in this place [and] yet I [even I] did not know [it]." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jacob has given very little thought to God. If he knew, understood and believed the promises that God made to his father and grandfather, none of this would have happened. He would not have gotten Esau to sell his birthright to him—he would not have needed to do that; and he would not have cheated Esau out of the blessing from Jacob. All of this is unnecessary. These sorts of things are not a part of God's plan; and they call into question the character of His people. Jacob only needed to study and learn the Word of God; and allow life to simply unfold.

It appears that his mother, Rebekah, had some understanding of the blessing that would come from Isaac, but she believed that duplicity was needed in order to secure it.

**Genesis 28:16** After waking up, Jacob said, "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know."

You may not realize it, but this is quite an impressive statement for Jacob to make. How did he use God's name before? He was putting one over on his own father, pretending to be Esau, and Isaac asked him, "How did you track and kill wild game so quickly?" And Jacob answered, "Y<sup>e</sup>howah granted me success!" He lies using God's personal name! He was lying to his father and trying to manipulate his father, and he used God's name in order to do this. Do you see what a no-account Jacob has been? And now God has spoken to Jacob and this turns Jacob and his attitude around quite a bit. However, Jacob is going to be much different from Abraham. Abraham made some mistakes and had stumbled now and again, but he steadily moved forward—he learned more and he began to trust God more. Jacob will be up and down, up and down. He will say and do things which suggest spiritual progress, and then he will revert back to the same old so-and-so that he has always been.

Gen 28:15–16 [God is speaking to Jacob in his dream/vision:] "Behold, 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." Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." (ESV)

### The *Where* of Jacob's Encounter with God (with Commentators)

Jacob has not has a great many meetings with God.<sup>223</sup> This is the first, in fact. He has heard about the God of Abraham and Isaac, but has not encountered Him until now. Jacob had no doubt heard at least Rebekah speak of Y<sup>e</sup>howah Elohim, and possibly his father as well. We do not have any interaction recorded between Abraham and Jacob, so we do not know if he learned anything from Abraham.

At least two commentators suggest that Jacob is quite impressed that God meets with him here, in this specific place.

<sup>223</sup> I believe that Jacob has around 5 encounters with God.

## The Where of Jacob's Encounter with God (with Commentators)

Keil and Delitzsch: *Jacob gave utterance to the impression made by this vision as soon as he awoke from sleep, in the words, "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not." Not that the omnipresence of God was unknown to him; but that Jehovah in His condescending mercy should be near to him even here, far away from his father's house and from the places consecrated to His worship-it was this which he did not know or imagine.*<sup>224</sup>

Gill: *God is everywhere, in a general way, upholding all things by his power, as he is immense and omnipresent; but here he was in a special sense, by some signal token of his presence; by a stream of light and glory darting from the heavens, hence Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it, "the glory of the Lord, and the glory of the majesty of the Lord;" and by the appearance of angels, and by the communications of his mind and will, and grace to Jacob, and that communion he had with him in his dream, of which he was very sensible: for, when he says, "I knew it not", the meaning is, he did not think or expect to meet with God in such a place.*<sup>225</sup>

These commentators, who are usually quite insightful, seem to think that every time Isaac turned around, there was God and they had a chat. Isaac was no doubt aware of his father's encounters with God; but how many times did Isaac speak with God? There are only two times that I am aware of: Genesis 26:2-4, 23-24. God also spoke to Rebekah, one time (Genesis 25:22-23).

Similarly, the Cambridge Bible suggests<sup>226</sup> that he is astonished to speak with God away from his home; but I don't know that there is any evidence at all that Jacob ever spoke with God near his home at any previous times. And, as we observed, God spoke to Rebekah before the children were born; and to Isaac twice after they were born. Jacob may have known about that; and certainly knew about his grandfather's actual interactions with God as well.

Sometimes commentators miss the forest for the trees. Too often, we look back on Bible times as God appearing to every Tom, Dick and Harry on a regular basis. That is a complete misperception. After Noah and the time of the flood, and until Abraham, how many men can you recall God appearing to? Off the top of my head, I cannot recall any; and that is over a period of perhaps 500 years (Noah appears to have died while Abraham was alive<sup>227</sup>). I would think that Jacob is no doubt astonished, but he is astonished at the vision and hearing God in the first place. I don't think that the location plays any more of a part, than Jacob desiring to commemorate where this is occurring.

Poole offers up what *should* have been Jacob's response: *Surely the Lord is in this place, [Poole speaks for the thinking of Jacob here] by His special and gracious presence, and the manifestation of His mind and will to me; and I little expected to meet with such a revelation out of my father's house, much less in this desert and doleful state and place, when I thought myself rejected by God, as well as abandoned by men.*<sup>228</sup>

I believe that Poole is somewhat closer to the truth; but what he writes assumes a slightly more spiritually perceptive Jacob than I think existed at that time.

Quite obviously, Jacob was quite amazed at the event and he attached some meaning to the location of this encounter. I do not think that Jacob fully appreciated or understood God's meeting with him or God's words to him. There is a description in the book of Job which is probably accurate: *For God speaks in one way, and in two, though man does not perceive it.* (Job 33:14; ESV) It is possible that Jacob better understood his relationship with God and this encounter when he was much older (there are some indications<sup>229</sup> of some spiritual maturity on Jacob's part when he later lived in Egypt).

<sup>224</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 28:16-17.

<sup>225</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:16.

<sup>226</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:16.

<sup>227</sup> Most of Noah's descendants died while Abraham was alive.

<sup>228</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:16.

<sup>229</sup> Finding clear evidence of spiritual maturity on the part of Jacob is more difficult to find.

## The Where of Jacob's Encounter with God (with Commentators)

There are only a few times where believers in the Bible admitted to their ignorance. Asaph writes: *When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward You. Nevertheless, I am continually with You; You hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory.* (Psalm 73:21–24; ESV; capitalized) Agur writes: *Surely I am too stupid to be a man. I have not the understanding of a man. I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.* (Pro 30:2–3; ESV)

Jacob, in his life, is very self-involved and self-centered; he is not necessarily self-aware.

Wesley remarks: *God's manifestations of himself to his people carry their own evidence along with them. God can give undeniable demonstrations of his presence, such as give abundant satisfaction to the souls of the faithful, that God is with them of a truth; satisfaction not communicable to others, but convincing to themselves. We sometimes meet with God there, where we little thought of meeting with him. He is there where we did not think he had been, is found there where we asked not for him.*<sup>230</sup>

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 28:16 *Jacob awoke from his sleep and remarked, "Jehovah is surely in this place, yet I had no idea."*

## Jacob's Response to God After Waking Up (Various Commentators)

Barnes describes Jacob's new attitude: *[Jacob] knew of God's omnipresence; but he did not expect a special manifestation of the Lord in this place, far from the sanctuaries of his father. He is filled with solemn awe, when he finds himself in the house of God and at the gate of heaven.*<sup>231</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob awakes, still filled with the dread and awe that his experience has aroused in him. It is possible that he takes what he has seen literally and thinks that this is literally the place where heaven and earth conjoin and where there is a gate (in the sense of a city gate) through which angels can pass. But more likely he sees it as temporary. Yahweh is here, even though he had not been aware of it. And the place has thus become for the time being the dwelling-place of Yahweh, 'the house of God' (beth elohim) and the gateway to heaven.*

Pett continues, indicating that, if Jacob was overwhelmed and confused by this experience, he soon understood that this place was not unique or restricting of God: *All this must not be over-pressed. Jacob is aware that Yahweh has revealed Himself in a number of places, for example, at Shechem (Genesis 12:6), in various unnamed places (Genesis 15:1 on; Genesis 17:1 on) and in Beersheba (Genesis 26:24). Each is in its own way as sacred as Bethel. And worship of Yahweh is not confined to Palestine (Genesis 24:26; Genesis 24:48; Genesis 24:52. See also Genesis 29:32; Genesis 29:35 which demonstrate that Jacob has introduced his wives to the worship of Yahweh). The fact that Yahweh will be with him wherever he goes, and will not leave him, is a guarantee of that. But for him Bethel will always be special, for here was where he first met God personally and heard His voice speaking to him.*<sup>232</sup>

Whedon: *Jacob had gone to sleep without any thought that there, alone and sorrowful and anxious, he was specially cared for and watched by Abraham's God. No such open revelation had ever come to him before, and he was taken by surprise.*<sup>233</sup>

Too many commentators appear to give Jacob far too much credit for this encounter.

<sup>230</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 28:16.

<sup>231</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:18–19 (slightly edited).

<sup>232</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 28:16.

<sup>233</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 28:16.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 28:16 **Jacob awoke from his sleep and remarked, "Jehovah is surely in this place, yet I had no idea."** (Kukis paraphrase)

Clarke, I believe, gives Jacob too much credit: *Jacob might have supposed that this place had been consecrated to God. And it has already been supposed that, his mind having been brought into a humble frame, he was prepared to hold communion with his Maker.*<sup>234</sup> Based upon the end of this chapter, it does not appear to me that Jacob fully appreciated what God did and said to him.

The NEV commentary: *We all grow up with some concept of God. This is as true for those with atheist or apostate backgrounds as it is for those steeped in Sunday School from the cradle. That concept of God which we have in our youth tends to stay with us, and in some ways dogs us for much of our lives. Growth towards a real, personal knowledge of the true God, our Father, is a lifelong process. Jacob grew up in the most spiritual home on earth at the time (although some of the goings on would have made the neighbours doubt this). He was brought up 'in the Truth', we could say. And yet his conception of God was woefully immature for many years. His struggle towards the true knowledge of God is not only fascinating; because Jacob's spiritual growth really is intended as our model. Nathaniel thought he really believed in the Lord Jesus. The Lord commented: "You shall see (usually used in John concerning faith and spiritual perception) **greater things than these... you will see heaven opened, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man**" (Jn. 1:51 RSV). It was Jacob who saw Heaven opened and the Angels ascending and descending. And the Lord's comment that Nathaniel was "an Israelite (Jacob-ite) indeed, in whom is no guile" (i.e. Jacob without his guileful side) is a reference to Jacob's name change. It confirms that Nathaniel was to follow Jacob's path of spiritual growth; he thought he believed, he thought he saw Christ clearly; but like Jacob, he was to comprehend far greater things.*<sup>235</sup>

Genesis 28:16 **Jacob awoke from his sleep and remarked, "Jehovah is surely in this place, yet I had no idea."** Some commentators suggest<sup>236</sup> that this is the time of Jacob's conversion. Whereas, I quite agree that Jacob responds to this incident with some amount of faith, that does not mean that he had not believed in the Revealed God until now. God makes quite a number of promises to Jacob, and even though God is omniscient, and knows the future just as He knows the past, it strikes me as odd that God would be making promises to an unbeliever (or even to a brand new believer). I don't doubt that Jacob (and Esau) believed in the Revealed God from an early age; but had simply exhibited very little spiritual growth over these many years.

There was one thing, however, that was quite amazing about this family line: God had now spoken to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All of these men had encounters with God; this experience being the first one for Jacob.

Jacob's spiritual life is much different than our own. First off, he has almost no spiritual life, this being his first *religious experience* (and don't misunderstand me; I am not saying that having some sort of *religious experience* is necessary for the believer).

In any case, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have all spoken to God; and more importantly, God spoke to them. That is a lot different than believers today. I speak to God, but I do not hear an audible voice—not a loud booming one or almost indiscernible voice. Only a tiny percentage of Christians make such a claim to hear God, and all of those who do are nutballs.<sup>237</sup>

<sup>234</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:16.

<sup>235</sup> From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen28com.html> accessed June 2, 2017.

<sup>236</sup> B. H. Carroll, *An interpretation of the English Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:10-31:55.

<sup>237</sup> There is one person—a child-pastor (which ought to be a contradiction in terms) at one time—who made the claim to have been in heaven and engaged in splash fights with Jesus at the River Jordan (or some such goofy scene).

The fact that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all interacted with God, and that fact that you and I will never interact with God while we are still alive on earth, should suggest to you that things are different now.

Benson writes: *God can give undeniable demonstrations of his presence, such as give abundant satisfaction to the souls of the faithful, that God is with them of a truth; satisfaction not communicable to others.*<sup>238</sup>

It ought to be noted that, even though there were times when God manifested Himself to various people in various ways (such as, this vision to Jacob, as the Burning Bush to Moses, through the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, circa A.D. 33); there are no New Testament guarantees that you will *feel/know by feeling* the presence of God. Our lives are much more powerful, as we have the complete Word of God and the power of God the Holy Spirit residing within us. Heb. 1:1–3a **Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the Heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of his power.** (ESV; capitalized; emphasis mine) You will notice that there is no emphasis upon miracles of Jesus here.

We are really comparing spirituality between those of the Age of Israel and believers in the Church Age (this is the time frame during which we are living).

<b>The Spiritual Life—Old and New Testament</b>	
<b>Old Testament</b>	<b>New Testament Church Age</b>
The Word of God is still being written. As a result, God contacted some believers and spoke directly to them. This was a part of assembling the Word of God.	The Word of God is complete. Because God’s Word is complete, God does not need to contact any one of us individually to give us guidance or truth. All of that is found in the Bible already.
Spiritual revelation is still being given in a variety of ways—and it is designed both for the person who receives this revelation, as well as for us today.	There is no new revelation given to believers today. There is no cult somewhere where some really holy guy gets his marching orders from God each day (or month or year). No one is recording new personal interaction with God. Anyone who is, is suffering from some kind of mental disease.
There are two possible options here for us in the Church Age. If a person claims to have interaction with God, either what he teaches lines up with the Bible or it does not. If it lines up with the Bible, then why would God need to talk to him? If such a person says things which contradict the Bible, then we know him to be a false prophet/teacher (and, obviously, is not really talking to God).	
Believers depended upon the laws of divine establishment and the Scripture which existed at that time. Nation Israel followed the laws of divine establishment, which was a big part of the Mosaic Law.	We have the complete Word of God to study. The laws of divine establishment, which have been shown to work historically, are designed for believers and unbelievers.
See the <b>Laws of Divine Establishment</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).	

<sup>238</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:16.

## The Spiritual Life—Old and New Testament

### Old Testament

### New Testament Church Age

Believers in the Old Testament also grew spiritually and learned from the Word of God, as it existed. Many of the citizens of Israel simply learned and obeyed the laws of divine establishment. The made Israel a great nation.

Primarily, believers grow today within a local church. A pastor-teacher, who has been trained in the Word of God, teaches the Word of God; as well as the mechanics found in the Word of God, and we grow by that (and by, of course, the application of our volition). Believing what we hear is a necessary part of our spiritual growth.

See the **Grace Apparatus for Perception** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Believers in the Age of Israel obey the Mosaic Law, which involved animal sacrifices. Animal sacrifices look forward to the cross of Christ.

Believers in the Church Age look back to the cross. We do this in our own thoughts, when it is taught to us, or in communion, which represents our Lord and His work on the cross. Luke 22:19 1Corinthians 11:23–25

Believers in the Age of Israel observe special days and follow various dietary laws. The days spoke of future events; the dietary laws preserved Israel during a time of no refrigeration. These laws preserved the people of Israel.

Believers in the Church Age do not follow any set of days or dietary laws. Colossians 2:16

There were a limited number of men who had the potential for spiritual greatness.

The potential for greatness exists in all Church Age believers. All believers possess a spiritual gift (or gifts). 1Corinthians 12:20–22

Only some believers had the Holy Spirit and it could be lost due to excessive carnality. Psalm 51:11

All believers have the Holy Spirit during the Church Age. We lose the filling of the Spirit when we sin, but never the indwelling. 1Corinthians 12:13 Ephesians 5:22

The Holy Spirit is given to some believers for some specific tasks. See 2Samuel 23:2 Matthew 22:43 Luke 1:15, 41 2Peter 1:21.

The Holy Spirit is given to all believers; every believer has a purpose in the Church Age. 1Corinthians 12:15

Specific believers have been chosen by God to do specific things.

All believers have the potential of spiritual greatness. For many, this will sound blasphemous, but *you can be as great as the Apostle Paul* (and that statement is not blasphemous). In fact, you can be greater than Paul (or Peter or John).

Believers during the Old Testament had little or no access to God’s Word. This is because writing materials were quite ephemeral and reproducing Scripture was an arduous task.

In many countries, believers have complete access to the full Word of God in a variety of translations and languages. It is both ubiquitous in written and digital form. Where there is positive volition, there is greater access to God’s Word.

The teaching of God’s Word was limited and we know very little about it, apart from the synagogues, where God’s Word was read.

Today, teaching can be found on the radio, television and the internet (although the quality of teaching can vary dramatically). Despite the variety of outlets, the believer is still to grow as a part of a local church.

## The Spiritual Life—Old and New Testament

### Old Testament

### New Testament Church Age

God worked through nation Israel. Israel stood as a witness to God. Isaiah 43:10

God works through the local church. The local church is designed for the building up of believers (a person is often evangelized outside of the church). Ephesians 4:10–13

Israel, as a nation, had an impact; but this is less true of individual believers.

Today, *any person* can have a dramatic impact in his spiritual life. Your impact is your choice. How public that impact is depends upon your gift and your volition; but the function of the spiritual life in the church age glorifies Jesus Christ, which will be rewardable. 2Corinthians 5:10

The average person had limited spiritual impact. Not all believers had the Holy Spirit; not all believers had access to the Holy Scriptures (as they existed).

Believers today have the same spiritual life that Jesus Christ test-drove. We have all of the assets that He had. You might be confused at this point and wonder, *well, then, why can't I walk into a hospital a cure everyone there?* You have that question because you are mixed up about God's plan. Jesus Christ healed many people, but He did not heal everyone of their illnesses (although, He could have). His healing was His credit card. This is one way that the people in that time period knew that Jesus is the Messiah. *You* are not the Messiah; *you* do not need a credit card to show that you are a believer. You have the power of God the Holy Spirit, you have the divine operating assets, and you have the Word of God.

The life of most believers of Israel was limited to living according to the laws of divine establishment, as were outlined for client nation Israel in the Law of Moses. These actions preserved the Jewish people and preserved nation Israel. This is why you know a number of Jewish people today and why you do not know any Assyrians or Hittites.

Some of you cannot get over the concept of miracles, even though you have probably witnessed some of the greatest spiritual awakenings in the history of man. I have seen an evangelist speak at the school on many occasions where I taught, and his ability to grab and hold the attention of these young people (often in messages given before lunch) was a sight to behold. Personally, I had trouble on occasion, keeping order in a classroom of 20–30 students. I saw this man stand up in front of 600–700 students and they were transfixed (most of the times he spoke). Even right before their lunch.

If you are my age, then you are aware of the Billy Graham crusades. Billy Graham would travel throughout the country and hold meetings in auditoriums and in stadiums (this is Billy Graham the evangelist, not the wrestler). Many times, there would be thousands in attendance; but there was often a television audience of millions. I recall one of my friends sitting on a couch watching Billy Graham—and he rejected Jesus Christ as his Savior (insofar as I know). During that era of the 1950's and early 1960's, Billy Graham would hold a series of **evangelistic meetings**, and they would be carried on live television on one of the 3 networks during prime time, without commercials. And millions would watch. That is powerful. That is the power of God the Holy Spirit reaching out to the unbeliever.

Can you imagine this today? Can you imagine mid-week, prime time television on one of the main channels where the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is proclaimed—with millions of Americans watching? If the hunger was there for a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, then we would be seeing those shows. I don't care how secular the networks are, if there was positive volition, then the message of Jesus Christ would be available.

Now, my point in all of this is, Billy Graham was a man through whom God worked. God took this ordinary man and spoke to millions of people through him. Having a significant ministry is available to every believer. I don't mean significant in numbers, because there is not always a great deal of positive volition. Sometimes we have to experience a world war—sometimes we have to see with our own eyes just how much evil is in the world—in order for us as a nation to turn to God. I don't think that we are in a period of time when that is happening. But whatever gift (or gifts) God has given you can function and bring great glory to God through its function.

The function and importance of your gift does not depend upon the positive volition of those around you. The church in Ephesus may have been very positive toward Paul's teachings, but the church in Corinth resisted him on many issues.

God has given you great access to Him through prayer, it is possible that not even 10 people know your name and that none of them even know what God does through you. God's power is great, not only in time of great positive volition, but during the times when man rejects Him as well. We studied Sodom and Gomorrah. There was great degeneracy; there was negative volition throughout. Was God's power weakened? Of course not! Was the spiritual impact of Abraham lessened because he lived up the road from Sodom and Sodom was filled with degeneracy? Of course not!

In the Church Age, you can live on this earth 70 or 80 years and have a marvelous ministry, and it is possible that no one knows what the ministry is; and that no one recognizes the great impact that you have for Jesus Christ in your life. Your impact is not dependent upon the positive volition of those around you; or upon their negative volition either. Your impact is your spiritual life which is lived in accordance with the example of Jesus Christ.

In case you are ever confused about *why* God has so greatly blessed the United States with peace and prosperity, it is because millions upon millions of people believed in Jesus Christ. They heard the gospel and they believed that Jesus died for their sins. Many of those people are still alive and God honors and blesses their faith, even today.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

We have been on a bit of a tangent. We have Jacob seeing the angels going between heaven and earth and then hearing God. Therefore, it was important to understand the differences between the spiritual life of the believers in the Old Testament compared to our spiritual lives today. After all, you are not going to see what Jacob has seen here. You are not going to witness thousands of angels ascending and descending into heaven while in your earthly body.

Let's return to Jacob after he awakens from this dream (he woke up in v. 16 and we are still in that stage of the narrative).

**And so he is afraid; and so he says, "How awesome the place the this! Not this for though a house of Elohim? And this a gate of the [two] heavens?"**

Genesis  
28:17

**Therefore, he was afraid, and he remarked, "How awesome is this place! [Is] this not the house of Elohim? And [is] this [not] the gate of heaven?"**

**Therefore, Jacob was afraid and he remarked, "This place is awesome! Is this not the house of God? Is this not the gate to heaven?"**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he is afraid; and so he says, "How awesome the place the this! Not this for though a house of Elohim? And this a gate of the [two] heavens?"
Targum (trans. By Cook)	And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful <u>and glorious</u> is this place! This place is not <u>common</u> , but the sanctuary <u>of the Name</u> of the Lord, the proper spot for prayer, set forth before the gate of heaven and founded beneath the throne of glory.
Latin Vulgate	And trembling, he said: How <u>terrible</u> is this place? this is no other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob was exceedingly fearful, and he said, How <u>sacred</u> is this place today! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he was afraid, and said, How fearful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

Significant differences: The additional words in the targum (*and glorious*) might simply be an attempt to better translate the original Hebrew word. The translations we read in the Latin (*terrible*) and the Syriac (*sacred*) don't really match well with that Hebrew word.

Later in the verse, the targum adds a bunch of unneeded words.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And fear came on him, and he said, This is a holy place; this is nothing less than the house of God and the doorway of heaven.
Easy English	Jacob was afraid. And he said, `This place is very holy. This is truly God's house and it is the gate of heaven.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Jacob was afraid. He said, "This is a very great place. This is the house of God. This is the gate to heaven."
God's Word™	Filled with awe, he said, "How awe-inspiring this place is! Certainly, this is the house of God and the gateway to heaven!"
Good News Bible (TEV)	He was afraid and said, "What a terrifying place this is! It must be the house of God; it must be the gate that opens into heaven."
The Message	He was terrified. He whispered in awe, "Incredible. Wonderful. Holy. This is God's House. This is the Gate of Heaven."
NIRV	Jacob was afraid. He said, "How holy this place is! This must be the house of God. This is the gate of heaven."
New Simplified Bible	He was filled with reverence. He said: »This is an awesome place! Certainly, this is the house of God and the gateway to the heavens!«

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	He was terrified and thought, This sacred place is awesome. It's none other than God's house and the entrance to heaven.
Contemporary English V.	Then Jacob became frightened and said, "This is a fearsome place! It must be the house of God and the ladder to heaven."
New Life Version	He was afraid and said, "This place is so different! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Beck's American Translation	A feeling of awe came over him, and he said, "How awesome this place is! This is nothing less than God's temple. This is the gateway to heaven!"
International Standard V	In mounting terror, he cried out, "How scary this place is! This is nothing less than God's house and the gateway to heaven!"
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And he shuddered; What a fearsome place is this! said he. This can be nothing other than the house of God; this is the gate of Heaven.

Translation for Translators He was afraid, and he said, "This place is very awesome! This is surely the place where God lives, and this is the entrance to heaven!"

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear He feared and said, "Why fear this place? This is nothing but the house of God, and this, a gate of heaven."

Conservapedia Translation He was afraid, and said, "How fearsome is this place! This is nothing else than the house of God, and this is the gateway of the heavens!"

Ferar-Fenton Bible ...so he was afraid and said; " How terrible this place is! Is not this truly the House of God ? and this the Gate of Heaven ?

NET Bible® 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!"

NIV, ©2011 He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place [Ex 3:5; 19:21; Jos 5:15; Ps 68:24, 35]! This is none other than the house of God [ver 22; Ge 32:2; 1Ch 22:1; 2Ch 3:1]; this is the gate of heaven."

H. C. Leupold And he was afraid and said: How aweinspiring is this place! This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven.

Urim-Thummim Version Then he was afraid and said, how honored is this Standing Place! This is none other but the House of Elohim, and this is the star gate of the cosmos. Jacob got up at sunrise and took the stone that he had put for his headrest, and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.

Wikipedia Bible Project And he became awestruck, and said, "How awesome is this place: it is nothing other than the house of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven."

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community Bible He was afraid and said, "How full of awe is this place! It is nothing less than a *House of God*; it is the Gate to Heaven!"

Heritage Bible And he feared, and said, How fearful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of the heavens.

New American Bible (2002) In solemn wonder he cried out: "How awesome is this shrine! This is nothing else but an abode of God, and that is the gateway to heaven!" This: the stone Jacob used as a headrest; cf ⇒ Genesis 28:22. That: the stairway Jacob saw in his dream.

New American Bible (2011) He was afraid and said: "How awesome this place is! This is nothing else but the house of God, the gateway to heaven!"

New Jerusalem Bible He was afraid and said, 'How awe-inspiring this place is! This is nothing less than the abode of God, and this is the gate of heaven!'

Revised English Bible He was awestruck and said, 'How awesome is this place ! This is none other than the house of God; it is the gateway to heaven.'

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible Then he became afraid and said, "This place is fearsome! This has to be the house of God! This is the gate of heaven!"

The Complete Tanach And he was frightened, and he said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

**than the house of God:** Said Rabbi Eleazar in the name of Rabbi Jose ben Zimra: This ladder stood in Beer-sheba and the middle of its incline reached opposite the Temple, for Beer-sheba is situated in the south of Judah, and Jerusalem [is situated] in its north, on the boundary between Judah and Benjamin, and Beth-el was in the north of the territory of Benjamin, on the boundary between Benjamin and the sons of Joseph. Consequently, a ladder whose foot is in Beer-sheba and whose top is in Beth-el-the middle of its slant is

opposite Jerusalem. This accords with what our Sages said, that the Holy One, blessed be He, said, "This righteous man has come to My lodging place [i.e., the Temple Mount]. Shall he leave without lodging?" And furthermore, they said: Jacob called Jerusalem Beth-el. But this place [which he called Beth-el] was Luz, and not Jerusalem. So, from where did they learn to say this? [i.e., that Luz was Jerusalem.] I believe that Mount Moriah was uprooted from its place, and it came here, [to Luz, i.e., at that time, Luz, Jerusalem and Beth-el were all in the same place], and this is the "springing of the earth" mentioned in Tractate Chullin, i.e., that the [site of the] Temple came towards him until Beth-el. This is the meaning of מוקמב עגפיו "And he met the place." Now if you ask, "When Jacob passed by the Temple, why did He not detain him there?" [The answer is:] If he did not put his mind to pray in the place where his forefathers had prayed, should they detain him from heaven? He went as far as Haran, as it is stated in the chapter entitled, "Gid HaNasheh" (Hullin 91b), and the text, "and he went to Haran" (verse 10) supports this. When he arrived in Haran, he said, "Is it possible that I have passed the place where my forefathers prayed, and I did not pray there?" He decided to return, and he went back as far as Beth-El, and the earth "sprang toward him." [This Beth-El is not the one near Ai, but the one near Jerusalem, and because it was the city of God, he called it Beth-El, the house of God, and that is Mount Moriah where Abraham prayed, and that is the field where Isaac prayed, and so did they say in Sotah (sic.) (Pes.88a) [concerning the verse] (Micah 4:2): "Come, let us go up to the Mount of the Lord, to the House of God of Jacob." [It is] not [called] as did Abraham, who called it a mountain, and not as did Isaac, who called it a field, but as did Jacob, who called it the House of God. An exact edition of Rashi.

**How awesome:** The Targum renders: How awesome (וּלְיָרֵךְ) is this place! וּלְיָרֵךְ is a noun, as in (Targum Exodus 31:3): "understanding" וּנְתַלְכִּינִי; (below verse 20): "a garment (וּקְנִי) to wear."

**and this is the gate of heaven:** A place of prayer, where their prayers ascend to heaven (Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer , ch. 35). And its midrashic interpretation is that the Heavenly Temple is directed exactly towards the earthly Temple. [From Gen. Rabbah 69:7]

exeGesés companion Bible	And he awes and says, How awesome this place! this is none other but Beth Elohim and this is the portal of the heavens.
Kaplan Translation	He was frightened. 'How awe-inspiring this place is!' he exclaimed. 'It must be God's temple. It is the gate to heaven!'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he was afraid, and said, How nora (awesome) is this place! This is none other than the Beis Elohim, and this is the Sha'ar HaShomayim.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He was afraid and said, How to be feared and revered is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gateway to heaven! "There is an open way between heaven and earth for each of us. The movement of the tide and the circulation of the blood are not more regular than the intercommunication between heaven and earth. Jacob may have thought that God was local; now he found Him to be omnipresent. Every lonely spot was His house, filled with angels" (F. B. Meyer, Through the Bible Day by Day). When Jacob found God in his own heart, he found Him everywhere.
The Expanded Bible	He was afraid and said, "This place frightens me! It is surely the house of God and the gate of heaven."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And he was afraid, filled with reverent awe, and said, How dreadful is this place! Cf Exodus 3:5. The associations of this place would ever afterward fill his mind with

that holy fear and reverence which sinful creatures are bound to feel in the presence of God. **This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.** Where God reveals Himself, whether in a vision or in His Word, there is the place of His habitation, there His grace opens heaven itself to the sinner seeking only His mercy.

Syndein/Thieme

**And he was afraid, and said, "How awe-inspiring is this place! This is none other than the house of 'Elohim/Godhead, and this is the gate of heaven."**

The Pulpit Commentary

**And he was afraid**,—so were Moses (Exodus 20:18, Exodus 20:19), Job (Genesis 42:5, Genesis 42:6), Isaiah (Genesis 6:5), Peter (Luke 5:8), John (Revelation 1:17, Revelation 1:18), at similar discoveries of the Divine presence—**and said, How dreadful is this place!**—i.e. how to be feared! how awe—inspiring! φοβερὸς (LXX.), *terribilis* (Vulgate)—**this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.** Not literally, but figuratively, the place where God dwells, and the entrance to his glorious abode (Keil); the idea that Jacob was "made aware by the dream that he had slept on one of those favored spots singled out for a future sanctuary, and was fearful that he had sinned by employing it for a profane purpose" (Kalisch), being fanciful.

The Voice

*But even as he said this, a bit of fear came over him.*

**Jacob:** This place is absolutely awesome! It can be none other than the house of God and the gateway into heaven!

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.

...and he feared and he said, what is being feared of this place this is nothing except the house of Elohiym <sup>[Powers]</sup> and this is the gate of the sky,...

English Standard Version

And 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."

Green’s Literal Translation

And he was afraid, and said, How fearful *is* this place! This *is* nothing except the house of God, and this *is* the door to Heaven.

Young’s Updated LT

And he fears, and says, "How fearful is this place; this is nothing but a house of God, and this a gate of the heavens."

**The gist of this verse:**

Jacob becomes fearful and proclaims this place to be a gate to heaven.

Genesis 28:17a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
yârê' (יָרֵא) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	to fear, to be afraid; to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #3372 BDB #431

**Translation:** Therefore, he was afraid,...

What Jacob had experienced was quite unexpected. Unlike his grandfather Abraham, Jacob did not have the experience of seeing and speaking to God on several occasions. This is his first encounter with God, and it was totally unexpected.

Fearing God is not unusual or abnormal. Exodus 3:6 Judges 13:22 Matthew 17:6 Luke 2:9 8:35 Revelation 1:17.

Genesis 28:17a **Therefore, he was afraid,...**

### Jacob's Fear (A Discussion Including Several Commentators)

There are several forms of fear; and some of sinful and some are not. There is a fear when you understand your sinfulness and your shortcomings in the sight of God; and your concentration is upon God. That is not a sinful fear. It is not clear that Jacob had a reverential fear. What seems to have happened is, Jacob realizes, after the fact, just what happened, and this shook him up a bit. Men in battle sometimes experience this, where they act according to their training when in battle, but afterwards, and very shaken up. Some people experience this after having some accident where they are not as injured as they should have been.

On the other hand, there are some commentators who get this entirely wrong. Gill writes: *Not with a servile but filial fear; not with a fear of the wrath and displeasure of God, but with a fear of his grace and goodness; not with a fear of distrust of it, of which he had just had such a comfortable assurance; but with an awe of the greatness and glory of God, being conscious of his own unworthiness to receive such favours from him.*<sup>239</sup> On the one hand, it is clearly true that Jacob is unworthy of God's grace; but there is no evidence that Jacob really understood this.

Wenstrom suggested the same thing: *The Hebrew term translated "fear" and "awesome" is the verb yare (יָרֵא) (yaw-ray), which denotes the concept of worshipping God and does "not" refer to being afraid as a result of a threat to one's life but rather it means, "to have reverence and respect" for the Lord and to be in "awe" of Him and expresses Jacob's "wonder" towards Him. Therefore, we see that Jacob is responding to the theophany and divine promises by having "reverence" and "respect" for God and is in "awe" of Him and is expressing his "wonder" towards Him. These four English words, "reverence," "respect," "awe," and "wonder" convey the idea behind the verb yare in Genesis 28:17 and also express the concept of worshipping the Lord. Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun "reverence": "A feeling or attitude of deep respect tinged with awe; veneration."*

And if we were talking about Abraham, I would quite agree; but this is Jacob. Is he filled with respect and awe or is he afraid. I don't quite have the confidence of these two that it is strictly a religious awe.

Wenstrom continues: *Therefore, paraphrasing this definition we would say that Jacob's response to the theophany and divine promises was to possess an attitude of deep respect and awe for the Lord...Jacob's response to the theophany and divine promises was to esteem the excellence of the Person of God as manifested through His personal qualities or attributes such as love, faithfulness, mercy, compassion, justice, righteousness, truth, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, immutability, and sovereignty.*

Wenstrom continues: *Jacob's response to the theophany and divine promises was to possess an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration for the Lord, which was produced by the vision of angels and theophany and divine promises in his dream...Jacob's response to the theophany and divine promises was one of being filled with admiration, amazement and awe.*

<sup>239</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:17.

## Jacob's Fear (A Discussion Including Several Commentators)

Wenstrom continues: Warren Wiersbe writes, "True wonder reaches right into your heart and mind and shakes you up. It not only has depth, it has value; it enriches your life. Wonder is not cheap amusement that brings a smile to your face. It is an encounter with reality, with God, which brings awe to your heart. You're overwhelmed with an emotion that is a mixture of gratitude, adoration, reverence, fear-and love. You're not looking for explanations; you're lost in the wonder of God" (Real Worship, page 43, Baker Books). Therefore, paraphrasing this comment by Wiersbe on wonder we would say that Jacob's response to the theophany and divine promises reached right into his heart and shook him up and enriched his life. Jacob's encounter with the Lord brought awe to his heart and overwhelmed him with an emotion that was a mixture of gratitude, adoration, reverence, fear and love for the God of his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac. Jacob wasn't looking for explanations since he was lost in the wonder of God.<sup>240</sup>

Admittedly, Jacob does not appear to be frozen with fear; he seems to be functioning and reasoning quite well. On the other hand, how much Jacob understands about God is somewhat of an unknown. I believe that, at some point, Jacob did know the book of Genesis up to his time and then added his own story. Did he realize that "The History of God and Man" was divinely inspired? I believe that he did, but with less theological precision than we understand those things today. When he began to add his own words, did he see himself as adding to the Word of God? I think that what Jacob wrote was quite organic, picking up with where his father left off, and adding his words to that.

Jacob, although there is much written about him (by his own hand, more than likely), is certain an enigma. Does he understand God and fight against Him? How much does Jacob resist God and how much is this based upon his knowledge and how much is based upon his lack of knowledge about God?

Have you ever been in an accident, and after the fact, you shudder? Is Jacob fearing God out of reverence or out of fear; or could there be elements of both?

Psalm 68:35 **Awesome is God from his sanctuary; the God of Israel—he is the one who gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!**

Psalm 128:1 **Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways!**

[Chapter Outline](#)

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Jacob takes this same verb, *to fear*, and then uses a form of it to describe the place where he is. The Niphal participle of *yârê'* (יָרַע) [pronounced *yaw-RAY*] is used to characterize where Jacob is:

### Genesis 28:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

<sup>240</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:15); accessed May 31, 2017.

## Genesis 28:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mâh (מַה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why; what [thing]; anything, something, whatever</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle; indefinite pronoun; relative pronoun	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
<p>(1) Mâh can also be used as an exclamatory adverb <i>how</i>; as in “<a href="#">How incredible is this place!</a>” (Genesis 28:17b).            (2) Mâh can also be used as an interrogatory adverb <i>how</i> to express that which is impossible, as in “<a href="#">How shall we justify ourselves?</a>” (Genesis 44:16b). These two uses are often followed by an adjective or verb. (3) Mâh can also be used as an adverb of interrogation, meaning <i>why, wherefore</i>.</p>			
yârê' (אַרְיָ) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	<i>to be feared, to be respected, to be reverence; terrible, dreadful, awesome; venerable, August; stupendous, admirable</i>	Niphal participle	Strong's #3372 BDB #431
<p>The Cambridge Bible on the KJV translation of this word: <i>This adjective is rendered unsuitable by colloquial usage [of “dreadful”]. The sense would be better given by “awesome”</i><sup>241</sup></p>			
<p>Gill makes similar remarks, although he appears to go somewhat overboard: <i>[This does not mean] terrible and horrible, being not like Mount Sinai, but like Sion; not as the suburbs of hell, but as the gate of heaven majestic and venerable, because of the glory of God that appeared in it, whose name is holy and reverend and because of the holy angels here present.</i><sup>242</sup> I actually cut out half of Gill's remarks.</p>			
mâqôwm (מִקוֹמ) [pronounced maw-KOHM]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

**Translation:** ...and he remarked, “[How awesome is this place!](#)”

This was a once in a lifetime experience for Jacob; and what he saw in his dream impacted his thinking dramatically. He calls the place where he is *dreadful, fearful, awesome*. Jacob is still the same old Jacob; but let me suggest that he experienced some spiritual growth at this point, simply from hearing and concentrating on the words of God.

Jacob has never experienced anything like this before. Let me suggest that he does not know exactly how to respond to that which just happened to him. Our response to such a situation is mixing in Bible doctrine with the situation that we find ourselves in. It is quite questionable how much doctrine was in Jacob's soul at the time of this experience.

<sup>241</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:17.

<sup>242</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:17.

Clarke: *The appearance of the ladder, the angels, and the Divine glory at the top of the ladder, must have left deep, solemn, and even awful impressions on the mind of Jacob; and hence the exclamation in the text, How dreadful is this place!*<sup>243</sup>

Robert Dean: *So when we look at Genesis 28 and we see Jacob's response he is afraid. He realizes the power of God and he says, "How awesome is this place." These two words that relate to the fear and awe of God are connected together here as they are in many other passages in Scripture.*<sup>244</sup>

Let me point out the obvious: Jacob is speaking (although this could mean that Jacob is thinking; the expressions used appear as if done by someone speaking out loud). *To whom* is he speaking?

### Genesis 28:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'êyn (אין) [pronounced ān]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; [there is] no [none, not one, no one, not]</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation	Strong's #369 BDB #34
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'îm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
<p>The particle 'îm (אִם) can be used as a demonstrative (<i>lo, behold</i>), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle (<i>if, though</i>); an indication of a wish or desire (<i>oh that, if only</i>; this is a rare usage).</p>			
<p>Owen translates these words as <i>this is none other than</i>; the KJV: <i>this is none other but</i>; the CLV: <i>but is not this rather</i>; Green's literal: <i>This [is] nothing except</i>.</p>			
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

<sup>243</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:17.

<sup>244</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed June 2, 2017.

### Genesis 28:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>The Cambridge Bible: <i>Heb. bêth Elohim, i.e. "a dwelling-place of the Divine Being." This clause contains the popular etymology of the name Bethel.</i><sup>245</sup> In case you are wondering about the difference of the spelling (<i>bayith</i> as over against <i>bêth</i>), the former is the vocabulary form and the latter is the construct form.</p>			

**Translation:** [Is] this not the house of Elohim?

He remarks that where he is lying is the house of God. This is simply because God is there with him, speaking to him.

This experience is quite affecting; and Jacob is trying to process it. Let me suggest that, as a result of hearing God's words to him, Jacob did experience some spiritual growth. But, he is by no means a spiritually mature believer at this point. Furthermore, he would be in somewhat of an emotional state, based upon having encountered God.

*The house of God* here simply refers to this as being a place where God has manifested Himself. There are similar phrases throughout Scripture which do not mean the same thing. In Psalm 23:6, David says, "I will live in the house of Y<sup>e</sup>howah forever." This does not mean that King David is looking to live in Bethel forever; nor does this mean that Jesus Christ, in the Millennium, will have a particular house, and that David will live there. Instead, this indicates that Jesus Christ will reign over a land, a nation; and David may dwell there; or God will reign over a purified universe, and that is where King David will live forever (we have a similar use of the *house of Pharaoh* in Genesis 45:8 Acts 7:10).

### Genesis 28:17d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i> ]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
sha'ar (שַׁעַר) [pronounced <i>SHAH-gahr</i> ]	<i>gate [control of city can be implied]; area inside front gate; entrance</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8179 BDB #1044
shâmayîm (שָׁמַיִם) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAH-yim</i> ]	<i>heaven, heavens, skies; the visible heavens, as in as abode of the stars or as the visible universe, the sky, atmosphere, etc.; Heaven (as the abode of God)</i>	masculine dual noun with the definite article; pausal form	Strong's #8064 BDB #1029

**Translation:** And [is] this [not] the gate of heaven?"

<sup>245</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:17.

Jacob has observed the angels ascending and descending into heaven, and he remarks, “Isn’t this the gate of heaven as well?”

The phrase, *gate of heaven*, is only found here in Scripture.

Clarke: *Onkelos seems to suppose that the gate or entrance into heaven was actually above this spot, and that when the angels of God descended to earth, they came through that opening into this place, and returned by the same way. And it really appears that Jacob himself had a similar notion.*<sup>246</sup>

Genesis 28:17 Therefore, Jacob was afraid and he remarked, “This place is awesome! Is this not the house of God? Is this not the gate to heaven?”

### Wenstrom on the Doctrine of the 3 Heavens

1. Scripture teach[es] that there are three levels of heaven: (1) 1<sup>st</sup> heaven: Earth’s atmosphere. (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> heaven: Stellar universe. (3) 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven: Abode of God, the angels and the dead believers.
2. This multiplicity of heavens is indicated in Hebrews 4:14 where our Lord at His ascension is said to have “passed through the heavens” (accusative masculine plural noun ouranos). The 1st and 2nd heaven are not specifically mentioned but the 3rd heaven is.
3. 2 Corinthians 12:2, “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows such a man was caught up to the third heaven.”
4. Logically speaking, it is evident that there cannot be a 3rd heaven without also a 1st and 2nd heaven.
5. Although it is true that the Scriptures teach that “the heaven of heavens cannot contain God” (1 Kings 8:27) and that God is omnipresent in the universe, nevertheless, they clearly affirm that the third heaven is in a particular way the abode of the Trinity (Gen. 14:19, 22; 23:3, 7; 1 Kings 8:30, 49; 2 Chron. 6:21, 30; Neh. 1:4-5; 2:4, 20; Psa. 11:4; 20:6; 33:14; 103:19; Isa. 63:5; 66:1; Matt. 5:34; Luke 16:9; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 7:56; 2 Cor. 12:2; Heb. 2:10; Rev. 19:14).
6. The present 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven is also the abode of the elect angels as well as all believers throughout human history in every dispensation and is the present location of the appeal trial of Satan and all the fallen angels before the Supreme Court of heaven.
7. The Lord Jesus Christ during His 1<sup>st</sup> Advent repeatedly stated that He came from heaven (John 3:13, 27, 31; 6:38, 41-42, 50-51, 58) and is in heaven now seated at the right hand of God (Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:33; Romans 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13; 1 Pet. 3:22).
8. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of the three levels of heaven. Genesis 1:1, “In eternity past, God created out of nothing the heavens and the earth.”
9. Paul states that “inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak” are heard in heaven (2Corinthians 12:1-4).
10. Heaven is the place where Paul says “eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not entered into the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9).
11. Heaven is a place of beauty (Rev. 21:1-22:7) and is a place of eternal life (1 Tim. 4:8). Both the present heaven and the new heaven are a place of service to God (Rev. 22:3). Heaven is a place of worship (Rev. 19:1-3) and is a place of glory (2Cor. 4:17-18).
12. The New Jerusalem is located in heaven (Rev. 21:2) and the temple of God is also located in heaven along with the tabernacle (2 Sam. 22:7; Isa. 6:1; Heb. 8) and of course, God the Father’s house is located in the third heaven (John 14:1-2).
13. Our Lord Jesus Christ as part of His High Priestly prayer promised His Bride, the Church, a dwelling place in heaven (John 14:1-3) since Her true home and citizenship is not on planet earth but in heaven (Phil. 3:20).
14. The resurrection bodies of believers are located in heaven (2Cor. 5:1-2) as well as their eternal inheritance (Eph. 1:3).
15. The third heaven is the place where the resurrected Christ conducts the government of the kingdom of God as the ruler of all creation (Psa. 110:1-2; Matt. 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62; 16:19; Luke 20:42;

<sup>246</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:17.

## Wenstrom on the Doctrine of the 3 Heavens

- 22:69; Acts 2:33-34; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 3:20-22; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; Rev. 4-5).
16. Heaven is served by innumerable angels, their hosts and families and is the sphere of their existence (Matt. 18:10; Mark 12:25; 13:32; Eph. 3:15), coming from heaven and returning to it either individually (Matt. 28:2; Luke 22:43), or in hosts (Luke 2:15).
  17. Also, Satan and the fallen angels still have access to heaven because of their appeal trial (Job 1; Zech. 3; Rev. 12:7-9).
  18. Old Testament saints are now located in the 3rd heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ as a result of His trip to a compartment of Hades called Paradise (Luke 23:43; Eph. 4:8-10).
  19. The Lord Jesus Christ will create a new heavens and a new earth for the eternal state, which immediately follows the Great White Throne Judgment at the conclusion of the appeal trial, which is the conclusion of human history itself (See Revelation 20:11-21).
  20. In fact, Hebrews 1:10-11 quoting Psalm 102:25-27 states that the present heaven and earth “will perish...will become old as a garment” and “as a mantle” the Lord Jesus Christ “will roll them up...as a garment they (the present heavens and earth) will be changed.”
  21. The new heaven and new earth will be the real place of perfect happiness, peace and righteousness because no form of evil and unrighteousness will be allowed into it (2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1-8). The presence of evil in the universe as a result of Satan and the fallen angels rebellion resulting in the appeal trial require that the Lord Jesus Christ create a new heavens and a new earth.

From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:15); accessed June 1, 2017 (slightly edited).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Jacob is not altogether bereft of God; he is a believer, albeit rather immature. However, he recognizes this land is the center of human activity on earth, from where God will begin His work. There is even the possible implication that this is the place from where angels travel to and from heaven. I am not ready to stake much on that, but that is the implication.

Murphy makes a minor error common to several commentators.

### Clarifying a Point Concerning God Manifesting Himself

Murphy: *Jacob knew God's omnipresence, but he did not expect a special manifestation of the Lord in this place, far from the sanctuaries of his father. He is filled with solemn awe, when he finds himself in the house of God and at the gate of heaven.*<sup>247</sup>

We do not know exactly how sophisticated Jacob was in his understanding of God. Did he understand that God was omnipresent? Possibly (this is known in the Old Testament in general). Given Jacob's various antics throughout his life, we have a more difficult time pinning down what he knows and does not know at this point in his life.

It is certainly true that Jacob *did not expect a special manifestation of the Lord in this place*; and at that point, we should have added a *period*. Murphy adds *far from the sanctuaries of his father*. Although God had appeared to Abraham a number of times; and will appear to Jacob a number of times, there are few instances of God appearing to Isaac (I can only think of one, but there may have been more times). My point is, Jacob did not think of the altars built by his father Isaac as places for the special manifestations of God. There is no indication at all that God would make Himself known somehow during routine worship services and/or sacrifices.

In other words, Jacob did not experience numerous manifestations of God when Isaac worshiped Him; and is now surprised that God has followed him here.

<sup>247</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:18.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

**Genesis 28:17** And he was afraid, and said, "How fearful is this place! This is nothing but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven!"

Genesis 28:17 Therefore, he was afraid, and he remarked, "How awesome is this place! [Is] this not the house of Elohim? And [is] this [not] the gate of heaven?" (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Like any other normal person, this caused Jacob to experience some fear and apprehension. Jacob has never had a dream like this before.

Let me suggest that Jacob is speaking to Deborah, his mother's female servant, who accompanied him. We do not hear all of what Jacob says. Let me suggest that, somewhere in here, he tells Deborah what he experienced.

Genesis 28:17 Therefore, Jacob was afraid and he remarked, "This place is awesome! Is this not the house of God? Is this not the gate to heaven?" (Kukis paraphrase)

A question which I did not see asked is, *why the vision? Why did God not simply appear to Jacob and give him these promises?* Vv. 16–17 help to answer this question for us.

Genesis 28:16–17 Jacob awoke from his sleep and remarked, "Jehovah is surely in this place, yet I had no idea." Therefore, Jacob was afraid and he remarked, "This place is awesome! Is this not the house of God? Is this not the gate to heaven?"

Jacob, as has been discussed on numerous occasions, is not a spiritual giant. He lacked doctrine, he lacked focus, he did not get the big picture. He apparently knew some things, but it is not clear what he believed or did not believe. It is important that Jacob remember these promises from God. God appealed to the sensual nature of Jacob. This great vision would remain with Joseph for a very long time and would help him to believe what God said to him. At the same time, for us, the readers of this passage, we understand a little bit more about the angels.

Robert Dean: *Genesis 28:16, "And Jacob awoke from his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not." He is probably very excited. He has had quite an encounter in his dream and he is aware that this is a special place where God has given him this unique revelation. Whenever we have an encounter with God's Word there is often some sort of emotional reaction. That doesn't mean we get emotional. Sometimes we read the Word of God and we are happy, sometimes sad, sometimes discouraged because we sense that we are struggling in the Christian life. When there is a personal encounter with God, and we see this in a number of instances in Scripture—for example, when Isaiah sees God he is scared to death—there are different reactions. In Genesis 28:17, "And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God [Bethel], and this is the gate of heaven." He was afraid. The word that is translated "fear" is the Hebrew yare, the standard word for fear. It means to be afraid, to be scared, to be terrorized, and it also has the idea of reverence, to be in awe of someone. Proverbs 1:7 tells us that it is the fear of the Lord—this attitude of overwhelming respect for His authority, His power, His righteousness—that is the starting point of knowledge." Without the fear of the Lord there is no humility. Without humility we can't learn, we can't row, we can't advance. There has to be a genuine humility on our part, realizing we are the creature, He is the creator, and that is the starting point for learning. "But fools despise wisdom and instruction." You can always spot somebody who is not teachable, who is operating in arrogance, because when they really mess up you can't tell them when they've messed up. They don't want to hear it. They don't want to be told that they are out of line, that they have failed, that they made a mistake, and the result is that they are going to keep making those mistakes and that arrogance will eventually be self-destructive.*

Dean then adds these verses and commentary: *Psalm 11:10, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endures for ever."* We have to have that respect for God and His authority established in His Word before we are ever going to be able to grow and advance scripturally. *Psalm 34:11, "Come, you children, listen to me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD."* *Proverbs 9:10, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy one is understanding."* It is not academics as we stress academics that is the foundation for real knowledge, it is orientation to the authority of God and to the Word of God. *Proverbs 10:27, "The fear of the LORD prolongs days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened."* When we walk in obedience to God we are not going to come under divine discipline, we are not going to make a lot of foolish self-destructive decisions, and we are not going to make decisions that are bad for our health. So the general reality is that the fear of the Lord will produce a longer life. *Proverbs 14:26, "In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge."* When we fear the Lord we recognize that He is the one who is in control of the details of our life, and so we can relax and take refuge in Him. *Proverbs 15:16, "Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith."* It is more important to get your priorities right and your relationship with the Lord right and put doctrine first in your life, than it is to be an academic success, to be a financial success, and anything else. If you have to sacrifice your spiritual life in order to be a success in life then it is destructive. See also *Proverbs 8:13 14:27 16:6 19:23 23:17.*<sup>248</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable talks about such visions in general: *Other visions of God's heavenly throneroom appear in 1 Kings 22:19-22; Job 1:6-8; Job 2:1-3; Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 1; Zechariah 1:10; Zechariah 6:5; Revelation 4-5; et al. This was God's first revelation to Jacob, and it came in a dream (cf. John 1:51). Other passages contain promises of the land ( Genesis 12:7; Genesis 13:14-16; Genesis 15:18; Genesis 17:8; Genesis 24:7), but this one ( Genesis 28:13-14) is closest in terminology to the one in chapter 13, which also features a Bethel setting.*<sup>249</sup>

**And so rises up early Jacob in the morning and so he takes the stone which there his heads. And so he sets her [up] a pillar and so he pours oil upon her head. And so he calls a name of the place the this Bethel (and but Luz a name of the city to the first).**

Genesis 28:18-19

**Therefore, Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone which [was] there by his head and he set it up as a pillar, and he poured oil on its top. He called the name of this place Bethel (but Luz was the name of this city originally).**

**Jacob rose up early that morning and took the stone which was there by his head and he set it up as a pillar, and then poured oil on it. He called the name of that place Bethel (the original name of this city was Luz).**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so rises up early Jacob in the morning and so he takes the stone which there his heads. And so he sets her [up] a pillar and so he pours oil upon her head. And so he calls a name of the place the this Bethel (and but Luz a name of the city to the first).

Targum (trans. By Cook)

And Jakob arose in the morning, and took the stone which he had placed for his pillow, and set it standing, and poured oil on the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth El; but Luz was the name of the city at the first.

<sup>248</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed June 2, 2017.

<sup>249</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

Latin Vulgate	And Jacob arising in the morning, took the stone which he had laid under his head, and set it up for a title, pouring oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of the city Bethel, which before was called Luza.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone which he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. Then Jacob called the name of that place Beth-el (the house of God); but at the first the name of that place was called Luz.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob rose up in the morning, and took the stone he had laid there by his head, and he set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. And he called the name of that place, the House of God; and the name of the city before was Luz.
Significant differences:	The original Hebrew about the stone and Jacob's head was a bit difficult to translate; the ancient translations simplified it somewhat.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And early in the morning Jacob took the stone which had been under his head, and put it up as a pillar and put oil on it. And he gave that place the name of Beth-el, but before that time the town was named Luz.
Easy English	So Jacob got up early in the morning. He took the stone that he had put under his head. And Jacob put the stone up as a column. He poured oil on it. Then Jacob called that place Bethel, although people had called it Luz before.
Easy-to-Read Version	Jacob got up very early in the morning. Jacob took the rock he had slept on and set it up on its edge. Then he poured oil on the rock. In this way, he made this rock a memorial to God. The name of that place was Luz. But Jacob named it Bethel [This name means "God's house."].
Good News Bible (TEV)	Jacob got up early next morning, took the stone that was under his head, and set it up as a memorial. Then he poured olive oil on it to dedicate it to God. He named the place Bethel. (The town there was once known as Luz.)
<i>The Message</i>	Jacob was up first thing in the morning. He took the stone he had used for his pillow and stood it up as a memorial pillar and poured oil over it. He christened the place Bethel (God's House). The name of the town had been Luz until then.
NIRV	Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head. He set it up as a pillar. And he poured oil on top of it. He named that place Bethel. But the city used to be called Luz.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	After Jacob got up early in the morning, he took the stone that he had put near his head, set it up as a sacred pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. He named that sacred place Bethel [Or <i>God's house</i> ], though Luz was the city's original name.
Contemporary English V.	When Jacob got up early the next morning, he took the rock that he had used for a pillow and stood it up for a place of worship. Then he poured olive oil on the rock to dedicate it to God, and he named the place Bethel. Before that it had been named Luz.
New Berkeley Version	Jacob rose early in the morning and took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up for a memorial pillar; he poured oil on its top and named that place Beth-El [Beth means house, El means God, worshiped as the Almighty.], though previously the town was called Luz.
New Century Version	Jacob rose early in the morning and took the stone he had slept on and set it up on its end. Then he poured olive oil on the top of it. At first, the name of that city was Luz, but Jacob named it Bethel [This name means "house of God."].
New Living Translation	The next morning Jacob got up very early. He took the stone he had rested his head against, and he set it upright as a memorial pillar. Then he poured olive oil

over it. He named that place Bethel (which means "house of God"), although it was previously called Luz.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And after Jacob got up in the morning, he took the stone on which he had laid his head and erected it like a pillar. Then he anointed it with oil, and he named that place, <i>The House of God</i> (BethEl). (Before that, the city had been called UlamLuz.)
International Standard V	When Jacob got up early the next morning, he took the stone that he had used for his pillow [Lit. <i>for his head</i> ], set it up as a pillar, drenched it with oil, and named [Lit. <i>called the name of</i> ] the place Beth-el, although previously [Lit. <i>at the first</i> ] the city had been named Luz.
Names of God Bible	Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had put under his head. He set it up as a marker and poured olive oil on top of it. He named that place Bethel [House of God]. Previously, the name of the city was Luz.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	So it was that, when he rose in the morning, Jacob took the stone which had been his pillow, and set it up there as a monument, and poured oil upon it; and he called the place Bethel, the House of God, that was called Luza till then.
Translation for Translators	The next morning Jacob got up and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up on its end to show that the place was a holy place. He poured some olive oil on top of the stone to <i>dedicate it to God</i> . He named that place Bethel, which means "house of God". Previously its name was Luz.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Jacob arose in the morning and took the stone that he set for his pillows, and set it for a memorial, pouring oil over its head. He called the name of that place Bethel (House of God), although the city was first named Luz.
Conservapedia Translation	Jacob arose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had placed as a pillow, and placed it as a monument, and poured oil on the top of it. He gave the place the name of Bethel, though Luz had been the name of the city at first.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Jacob, however, slept until morning, when he took the stone which he had placed for a pillow and sat it upright, and poured oil on the top of it, and called the name of that place " God's House" [Beth-el] (but Andam-loz was its former name).
NIV, ©2011	Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head [ver 11] and set it up as a pillar [ver 22; Ge 31:13, 45, 51; 35:14; Ex 24:4; Jos 24:26, 27; Isa 19:19] and poured oil on top of it [Lev 8:11; Jos 4:9]. He called that place Bethel [ <i>Bethel means house of God.</i> ] [S Ge 12:8],[e](AW) though the city used to be called Luz [Ge 35:6; 48:3; Jos 16:2; 18:13; Jdg 1:23, 26].
H. C. Leupold	And Jacob arose early in the morning and took the stone which he set as his head place and set it up as a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel, whereas the name of the city had formerly been Luz.
Urim-Thummim Version	Jacob got up at sunrise and took the stone that he had put for his headrest, and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. And he called the name of that Standing Place Bethel, but the name of that city was first called Luz.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Jacob woke up in the morning, and took the stone which he had placed under his head, and put it up as a monument; and he anointed oil atop its head. And he called the place, Beit-el (Bethel); even though the city was originally named Luz.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Heritage Bible	And Jacob loaded up in the dawn, and took the stone that he had put at his head, and put it for a memorial column, and poured oil upon the head of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel, and the name of that city was Luz at first.
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- New American Bible (2002) Early the next morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head, set it up as a memorial stone [Memorial stone: in Hebrew, masseba, a stone which might vary in shape and size, set upright and usually intended for some religious purpose. Since the custom of erecting such "sacred pillars" in Palestine went back to its pre-Israelite period, their pagan associations were often retained; therefore, later Israelite religion forbade their erection (⇒ Lev 26:1; ⇒ Deut 16:22) and ordered the destruction of those that were associated with paganism (⇒ Exodus 34:31; ⇒ Deut 12:3).], and poured oil on top of it. He called that site Bethel [Bethel: i.e., "house of God"; the reference is to the abode of God in ⇒ Genesis 28:17.], whereas the former name of the town had been Luz.
- New American Bible (2011) Early the next morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head, set it up as a sacred pillar,\* and poured oil on top of it [Gn 31:13; 35:14-15.]. He named that place Bethel,\* whereas the former name of the town had been Luz [Gn 35:6; 48:3; Jos 18:13; Jgs 1:23; Hos 12:5.].
- New English Bible Jacob rose early in the morning, took the stone on which he had laid his head, set it up as a sacred pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He named that place Beth-El [That is House of God]; but the earlier name of the city was Luz.
- New Jerusalem Bible Early next morning, Jacob took the stone he had used for his pillow, and set it up as a pillar, pouring oil over the top of it. He named the place Bethel, but before that the town had been called Luz.

#### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

- Complete Jewish Bible Ya'akov got up early in the morning, took the stone he had put under his head, set it up as a standing-stone, poured olive oil on its top and named the place Beit-El [house of God]; but the town had originally been called Luz.
- exeGesés companion Bible And Yaaqov starts early in the morning and takes the stone he set for his headpieces and sets it for a monolith; and pours oil on the top thereof; and he calls the name of that place Beth El; but the name of that city was Luz at first.
- Kaplan Translation Jacob got up early in the morning and took the stone that he had placed under his head. He stood it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. He named the place God's Temple (Beth El) [We render this Beth El instead of Bethel. According to many authorities, Jacob was lying on the place of the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem (Pesachim 88a; Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer 35; Ramban). Hence, it was literally the 'gate of heaven' (see Jerusalem, Eye of the Universe, p. 50). From Beer-sheba to Jerusalem is 42 miles, a good day's journey (see note on Genesis 30:36). According to others, however, this was the Bethel which was Abraham's first home in the Holy Land (Genesis 12:8).]. The town's original name, however, had been Luz [See Genesis 35:6, 48:3; Rashi on Joshua 16:2, 18:13, Judges 1:23. Also see Judges 1:26. According to those who say that Beth El is in Jerusalem, there were two villages there, Salem (Genesis 14:18) and Luz.].
- Orthodox Jewish Bible And Ya'akov rose up early in the boker, and took haeven (the stone) that he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a matzevah (pillar), and poured shemen upon the top of it. And he called the shem of that place Beit-El; but the shem of that ir was called Luz at the first.
- The Scriptures* 1998 And Ya'aqob̄ rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a standing column, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bēyth Ēl, however, the name of that city had been Luz previously.

#### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

- The Amplified Bible* And Jacob rose early in the morning and took the stone he had put under his head, and he set it up for a pillar (a monument to the vision in his dream), and he poured oil on its top [in dedication]. And he named that place Bethel [the house of God]; but the name of that city was Luz at first.
- The Expanded Bible* Jacob rose early in the morning and took the stone he had slept on [which was under his head] and set it up on its end [as a pillar; 31:13, 45; 35:14, 20; Ex. 24:4; <sup>C</sup>a practice later prohibited because similar to Canaanite religion (Ex. 23:24; 34:13; Deut. 12:3)]. Then he poured olive oil on the top of it. 19 At first [Formerly], the name of that city was Luz, but Jacob named it Bethel [<sup>C</sup>house of God"].
- Kretzmann's Commentary* And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. He thus observed the usual ceremonies of consecration in setting apart this spot as one hallowed by the appearance of the Lord and setting up the stone which had served as his head-rest as an earnest of the sanctuary to be erected there in the future. And he called the name of that place Bethel (the house of God); but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. The name Luz was used by the Canaanites to designate both the city and the surrounding country, but the children of Israel, after the conquest, named the district Bethel, after the name that it bore since this happening.
- NET Bible®* Early [Heb "and he got up early and he took."] in the morning Jacob [Heb "he"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] took the stone he had placed near his head [See the note on this phrase in v. 11.] and set it up as a sacred stone [Heb "standing stone."] [Sacred stone. Such a stone could be used as a boundary marker, a burial stone, or as a shrine. Here the stone is intended to be a reminder of the stairway that was "erected" and on which the Lord "stood." (In Hebrew the word translated "sacred stone" is derived from the verb translated "erected" in v. 12 and "stood" in v. 13. Since the top of the stairway reached the heavens where the Lord stood, Jacob poured oil on the top of the stone. See C. F. Graesser, "Standing Stones in Ancient Palestine," BA 35 (1972): 34-63; and E. Stockton, "Sacred Pillars in the Bible," ABR 20 (1972): 16-32.]. Then he poured oil on top of it. He called that place Bethel [The name Bethel means "house of God" in Hebrew (see v. 17).], although the former name of the town was Luz.
- The Pulpit Commentary* And Jacob rose up early in the morning (cf. Genesis 19:27; Genesis 22:3), and took the stone that he had put for his pillows (vide supra), and set it up for a pillar—literally, set it up, a pillar (or something set upright, hence a statue or monument); not as an object of worship, a sort of fetish, but as a memorial of the vision (Calvin, Keil, Murphy; cf. Genesis 31:45; Genesis 35:14; Joshua 4:9, Joshua 4:20; Joshua 14:1–15:26; 1 Samuel 7:12)—and poured oil upon the top of it. Quasi signum consecrationis (Calvin), and not because he regarded it as in itself invested with any degree of sanctity. The worship of sacred stones (Baetylia), afterwards prevalent among the Greeks, Romans, Hindoos, Arabs, and Germans, though by some regarded as one of the primeval forms of worship among the Hebrews, was expressly interdicted by the law of Moses (cf. Exodus 22:24; Exodus 34:13; Le Exodus 26:1; Deut. 12:3; Deut. 16:22). It was probably a heathen imitation of the rite here recorded, though by some authorities (Keil, Knobel, Lange) the Baetylian worship is said to have been connected chiefly with meteoric stones which were supposed to have descended from some divinity; as, e. g; the stone in Delphi sacred to Apollo; that in Emesa, on the Orontes, consecrated to the sun; the angular rock at Pessinus in Phrygia worshipped as hallowed by Cybele; the black stone in the Kaaba at Mecca believed to have been brought from heaven by the angel Gabriel (vide Kalisch in loco). That the present narrative was a late invention, "called into existence by a desire" on the part of the priests and prophets of Yahweh (Jehovah) "to proclaim the high antiquity of the sanctuary at Bethel, and to make a sacred stone harmless", is pure assumption. The circumstance that the usage here

mentioned is nowhere else in Scripture countenanced (except in Genesis 35:14, with reference to this same pillar) forms a sufficient pledge of the high antiquity of the narrative (vied Havernick's 'Introd.,' § 20).

And he called the name of that place Bethel—i.e. a house of God. Rosenmóller and Kalisch find a connection between Bethel and Baetylia, the former regarding Beetylia as a corruption of Bethel, and the latter viewing Bethel as the Hebraised form of Beetylion. Keil objects to both that the interchange of τ in βαιτύλιον, and Θ in βαιθηλή), would be perfectly inexplicable. On the site of Bethel (Beitin) vide Genesis 12:8. But the name of that city was called Luz at the first. Originally the Canaanitish town, built according to Calvin after this event, was called Luz, or "almond tree," a name it continued to bear until the conquest (Judges 1:23). From the circumstances recorded in the narrative, Jacob called the spot where he slept (in the vicinity of Luz) Bethel—the designation afterwards extending to the town.

The Voice

So early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had put under his head, set it up as a pillar, and then poured oil on top of it to commemorate his experience with God. He named that place Bethel, which means "house of God." Before that the name of the city had been called Luz.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> departed early in the morning and he took the stone which he set in place as his headrest, and he set her in place as a monument and poured down oil upon her head, and he called out the title of that place Beyt-EI <sup>[House of EI]</sup> but Luz <sup>[Almond]</sup> was the title of the city at first,...

Concordant Literal Version And early is Jacob rising in the morning, and taking is he the stone which he had placed there for his pillow, and is placing it for a monument, and pouring oil on its top. And calling is Jacob the name of that place Beth-EI. Howbeit, Luz was the name of the city at first.

Emphasized Bible So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone which he halt lint for his pillow, and put it for a pillar,—and poured out oil upon the top thereof; and called the name of that place—Beth-el,—nevertheless, Luz, was the name of the city, aforetime.

New King James Version Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel [Literally *House of God*]; but the name of that city had been Luz previously.

Syndein/Thieme And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-'EI {name means 'house of God'} (now the name of that city was called Luz at first). {name means 'almond tree'}

Webster's Bible Translation And Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put [for] his pillows, and set it up [for] a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of that city [was called] Luz at the first.

Young's Updated LT And Jacob rises early in the morning, and takes the stone which he has made his pillows, and makes it a standing pillar, and pours oil upon its top, and he calls the name of that place Bethel, house of God, and yet, Luz is the name of the city at the first.

### The gist of this verse:

Jacob got up early the next day and took the stone where he laid his head, and stood it up and poured oil upon it. He called that area Beth-el; but it previously was known as Luz.

Vv. 18-19

## Genesis 28:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâkam ( שָׁכַם ) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAHM</i> ]	<i>to start, to rise, to rise early, to make an early start; morning (in the Hiphil infinitive absolute)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7925 BDB #1014
Ya'ăqôb ( יַעֲקֹב ) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>AV</sup></i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
bôqer ( בֹּקֶר ) [pronounced <i>BOH-ker</i> ]	<i>morning, daybreak, dawn; the next morning</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #1242 BDB #133

**Translation:** [Therefore, Jacob rose up early in the morning...](#)

What appears to be the case is, Jacob woke up, thinking about what he had seen, described in vv. 16–17. Whether he lay there awake for awhile or drifted off to sleep, we are not told. I would guess that he did not fall back asleep, given the powerful nature of his dream. He could, no doubt, not stop thinking about it. Personally, I know it is time to get up if, I am laying in bed and my brain does not shut off.

Throughout vv. 16–19, we have a series of wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs, indicating continuous and consecutive actions (or coterminous actions).

## Genesis 28:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach ( לָקַח ) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i> ]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
'êth ( אֶת ) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

## Genesis 28:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'eben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced EH <sup>B</sup> -ven]	<i>a stone [large or small] [in its natural state, as a building material]; stone ore; used of tablets, marble, cut stone; used of a tool or weapon; a precious stone, gem; rock; a weight of the balance</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #68 BDB #6
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb of place	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
m <sup>e</sup> ra'ăshôth (תַּשְׂאֲרֹתַי) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> rah-uh-SHOHTH]	<i>place at the head, at the head of [anyone or anything]; head-place; pillow, bolster [a long, cylindrical pillow or cushion]</i>	feminine plural noun sometimes used as a preposition; here used as an adverb; but with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4763 (and #4761) BDB #912

The adverbial nature and the suffix both come out of Owen.<sup>250</sup> The suffix is certain.

**Translation:** ...and took the stone which [was] there by his head...

Here, it is clear that he had one stone at his head, and he took that stone having a purpose for it.

## Genesis 28:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
sîym (שִׂיַם) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sūwm (שׁוּם) [pronounced soom]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>her, it; untranslated generally; occasionally to her, toward her</i>	sign of the direct object with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
matstsêbâh (מַצְטַבֵּה) [pronounced mahtz-tzay <sup>b</sup> -VAWH]	<i>pillar (as a monument or a personal memorial), sculpted images</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4676 & #4678 BDB #663

<sup>250</sup> *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*; John Joseph Owens; Baker Book House, Grand Rapid, Michigan; ©1989; Vol. I, p. 121.

## Genesis 28:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
This is the first occurrence of this word in Scripture. It will occur in several more places in Genesis (Genesis 28:22 31:13, 45, 51–52 35:14, 20).			

**Translation:** ...and he set it up as a pillar,...

Here, where Jacob sets this up as a pillar, this indicates that Jacob understand there to be a religious significance to this rock. Now, it is not holy or a good luck rock; but it has spiritual significance.

The purpose of this pillar is to mark the place where God spoke to Jacob. This would suggest that the stone was elongated and reasonably long—say maybe 2 feet or longer? In order to set up a stone as a pillar, that would suggest that it could be placed on end, and that it would stand out.

L. M. Grant: Now Jacob sets up the first of four pillars that were landmarks in his eventful life.<sup>251</sup>

In order the set up a rock into the position of a pillar, there is the reasonable assumption that the rock is somewhat elongated. Otherwise, how could anyone look at the rock and tell it was *set up*?

These pillars are primarily a Jacob thing; there is no prescription found for them in the Bible; this did not begin a rich tradition of setting up pillars; but Jacob did this.

We don't have a lot of precedent for this; nor will there be very many things which occur in the future where someone will set up an elongated stone. I think that most of what this says is, Jacob recognizes his dream/vision as being significant. If I were to make a guess, what is going on here is, Jacob is thinking about and remembering the dream/vision that he had, as he upends the stone, and then places additional stones around it in order to hold it up (or he may have placed the stones first, and then upended the long "pillow" stone to fit in between them.

From the human point of view, Jacob was recognizing the importance of his vision and commemorating it. From the divine point of view, the stone is often used to represent Jesus Christ and oil is often used to represent God the Holy Spirit. What Jacob would have seen would have been Jesus Christ—a vision of Him (in whatever form He has chosen); and perhaps God the Holy Spirit informed Jacob, to some limited degree, through this vision.

There are a great many legends of this stone ending up in Jerusalem, Spain, Ireland, Scotland, and even England<sup>252</sup>—no idea why this particular stone is chosen—in any case, these are simply legends with no factual basis. The stone which claims this honor in England is ordinary granite; whereas, most of the stone found in Bethel is limestone.<sup>253</sup>

## Genesis 28:18d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

<sup>251</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-28.html> accessed June 3, 2017.

<sup>252</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

<sup>253</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017. Coffman is citing Dummelow.

## Genesis 28:18d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâtsaq (יָצַק) [pronounced yaw-TSAHK]	to pour (out), to cast, to flow (out), to empty	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3332 BDB #427
shemen (שֶׁמֶן) [pronounced SHEH-men]	fat, oil	masculine singular noun	Strong's #8081 BDB #1032
This is the first occurrence of these two words in Scripture. These 3 words will be found again in Genesis 35:14.			
‘al (עַל) [pronounced ġah/]	upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
rōsh (רֹשׁ) [pronounced rohsh]	head [of a man, city, state, nation, place, family, priest], top [of a mountain]; chief, prince, officer; front, choicest, best; height [of stars]; sum	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7218 BDB #910

**Translation:** ...and he poured oil on its top.

Pouring oil on this rock continues with the religious significance.

Murphy: *The pillar is a monument of the event. The pouring of oil upon it is an act of consecration to God who has there appeared to him.*<sup>254</sup>

Genesis 28:18 Therefore, Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone which [was] there by his head and he set it up as a pillar, and he poured oil on its top. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The Palestine area was known for its olive oil. This might be too much information.

### The College Press Bible Study on Olive Oil Used in the Bible

The oil mentioned in Scripture was from the olive-tree. The olive-berry is the most frequently mentioned source of oil in the Bible. The many olive-plantations in Palestine made olive-oil one of the most important and most lucrative products of the country. It was an article of extensive and profitable trade with the Tyrians (Ezekiel 27:17, cf. 1Kings 5:11); and presents of the best grades of olive-oil were deemed suitable for kings. In fact, no other kind of oil is distinctly mentioned in Scripture, except in one instance (Est. 2:12, here it was oil of myrrh); and the different grades of oil referred to appear to have been only different kinds of olive-oil. Oil was used for many different purposes among the ancient Israelites and their neighbors. Special mention is made of it in the inventories of royal property and revenue (1Samuel 10:1; 1Samuel 16:1; 1Samuel 16:13; 1Kings 1:39, Genesis 17:16; 2Kings 4:2; 2Kings 4:6; 2Kings 9:1; 2Kings 9:3; 1Chronicles 27:29; Chron. Genesis 11:11, Genesis 32:28; Proverbs 21:20), A supply of oil was always kept in the temple (Josephus, Wars, Genesis 28:13; Genesis 28:6), and an oil "treasure" was included in the stores of the Jewish kings (2Kings 20:13; cf. 2Chronicles 32:28). Oil of Tekoa was considered the very best. Trade in oil was carried on also between Egypt and Palestine (Ezra 3:7; Isaiah 30:6; Isaiah 57:9; Ezekiel 27:17, Hos. 12:1).

<sup>254</sup> The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:18.

## The College Press Bible Study on Olive Oil Used in the Bible

Oil was used for food (Jer. 31:12; Jer. 41:8; Ezekiel 16:13; Ezekiel 27:17; Luke 16:6 ff.), and its abundance was a mark of prosperity (Joe. 2:19). It was used for cosmetic purposes (Deut. 28:40; 2Samuel 12:20; 2Samuel 14:2; Rth. 3:3). The bodies of the dead were anointed with oil by the Greeks and Romans, and apparently by the Jews (Mark 14:8, Luke 23:56). Oil was in common use for medicinal purposes (Isaiah 1:6, Mark 6:13, Luke 10:34, James 5:14). It was used to produce light in homes (Matthew 25:1–8, Luke 12:35). It was used for ritualistic purposes (Leviticus 2:1–2; Leviticus 5:11; Num. 5:15): the use of oil in sacrifices was indicative of joy or gladness; the absence of it denoted sorrow or humiliation (Isaiah 61:3, Joe. 2:19, Psalm 45:7, Revelation 6:6). Tithes of oil were prescribed (Deut. 12:17, 2Chronicles 31:5; Nehemiah 10:37; Nehemiah 10:39; Nehemiah 13:12; Ezekiel 45:14).

The first instance in Scripture of the use of oil for strictly religious purposes is in the account under study here, that of Jacob's anointing of the stone which he had used as a "head place" on his way to Paddan-Aram (Genesis 28:18, Genesis 35:14). This evidently was designed to be a formal consecration of the stone, and indeed of the whole place in which the Divine visitation occurred. Under the Mosaic Law persons and things set apart for sacred purposes were anointed with what was designated "the holy anointing oil" (Exodus 30:22–33). This anointing with oil was the symbol of the conferring of the gifts and powers of the Holy Spirit by which certain persons were especially qualified for the respective ministries ("offices") to which they were divinely commissioned. This was true especially in the ritual of formal induction of prophets, priests and kings into their respective services.

(With respect to priests, see Exodus 28:36–41; Exodus 30:30–33; Exodus 40:13–16; Leviticus 8:10–12; Leviticus 8:30; Leviticus 16:32; with respect to kings, 1Samuel 9:16–17; 1Samuel 10:1; 1Samuel 15:1; 1Samuel 15:17–23; 1Samuel 16:3; 1Samuel 16:11–13; 2Samuel 2:4; 2Samuel 2:7; 2Samuel 5:13; 2Samuel 5:17; 2Samuel 12:7; 2Samuel 23:1–2; Psalm 89:20; 1Kings 1:39; 2Chronicles 6:42; 1Kings 19:15–16; 2Kings 9:1–13; with respect to prophets, 1Kings 19:16; 1Kings 19:19, etc.)

The allusions to each of the three great kings of Israel—Saul, David, and Solomon, respectively—as Yahweh's Anointed are too numerous to be listed here (e.g., 1Samuel 24:6; 1Samuel 24:10; 2Samuel 23:1, Psalm 89:20, etc.). Jesus of Nazareth, the Only Begotten, was God's Anointed in a special and universal sense: hence He is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16).

The title Messiah (in Hebrew), Christos (in Greek), or Christ (in English) means "The Anointed One." To accept Jesus as the Christ is to accept Him as one's prophet, to whom one goes for divine truth, as one's priest who intercedes for His people at the throne of heaven, and as one's King—the Absolute Monarch of His Kingdom which includes all the redeemed of earth (John 14:6; John 8:31–32; John 6:68; John 6:63; 1Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:11–28; Hebrews 9:23–28; Hebrews 4:14–16; Acts 2:36; Php. 3:20–21; 1Timothy 1:17; 1Corinthians 15:20–28; 1Timothy 1:17; Revelation 19:11–16; Hebrews 1:6–8; Psalms 2, etc.).

To accept Jesus as Christ, then, is to accept Him as God's Anointed. Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, we are told, was "anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38). When did this Divine anointing—marking His formal induction into His threefold office of Prophet, Priest and King occur? Obviously, it occurred after His baptism in the Jordan River, when the Holy Spirit "descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him" (Luke 3:21–22; Matthew 3:16–17) and the voice of the Father, at the same moment, avouched His Sonship (cf. John 1:29–34). In a special sense this conferring of the gifts and graces of the Spirit upon the Son was the great Antitype of the symbolism of the holy anointing oil as used in Old Testament times for the formal induction of prophets, priests and kings into their respective ministries (Luke 11:20; Matthew 12:28; John 6:63; John 3:34; cf. 1Peter 1:10–12).

*The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:18.*

Genesis 28:18–19 Therefore, Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone which [was] there by his head and he set it up as a pillar, and he poured oil on its top. He called the name of this place Bethel (but Luz was the name of this city originally).

I came across a commentator who spoke about these issues, but what he said was somewhat muddled. The commentary was slightly more nuanced than, *pillars: good or bad?*

ESV; capitalized used below.

### Jacob; Pillars; Pouring Oil on Pillars

1. The word found here is matstsêbâh (מַצְטֵבָה) [pronounced *mahtz-tzay<sup>b</sup>-VAWH*] and it means, *pillar (as a monument or a personal memorial), sculpted images*. This is its first occurrence in the Word of God. Strong's #4676 & #4678 BDB #663.
2. Bear in mind that, what we are talking about here, regarding Jacob, is a stone which he slept on, which he appears to have set up in the ground lengthwise.
3. It is my opinion that Jacob went free form here. There was not a specific way given for a man to commemorate speaking to God; so Jacob called the name of the place Bethel (*House of God*) and he set up the rock where he laid his head. Presumably, this means it may have been an elongated rock, and Jacob set it up on its end, so that it stood out. Then he poured oil on the pillar.
4. This is the first use of the word *oil*; and therefore, the first time oil is said to have been poured upon a stone.
5. Based upon the fact that this is the first time that this is done; and that Jacob repeats this in Genesis 31:45 35:14, Jacob may seem to have been setting some kind of standard or pattern of worship to be later employed. However, apart from Jacob, this does not appear to have been a practice of later saints.
6. Clarke explains it like this: *[Jacob] placed the stone in an erect posture, that it might stand as a monument of the extraordinary vision which he had in this place; and he poured oil upon it, thereby consecrating it to God, so that it might be considered an altar on which libations might be poured, and sacrifices offered unto God. See Genesis 35:14.*<sup>1</sup>
7. What Jacob is doing here is all brand new and free form, insofar as we know.
  - 1) Previously, his grandfather Abraham would offer up an animal sacrifice when he wanted to express appreciation for God. Genesis 15:8–9 22:13
  - 2) Offering animal sacrifices goes back to Adam and Eve (the covering that they later wore was made of animal skins—Genesis 3:21).
  - 3) Abel and Cain also offered up sacrifices (Abel's was an animal). Genesis 4
  - 4) Noah had additional animals in the ark to offer up; something which he did upon exiting the ark after the great flood. Genesis 8:20–21
8. The point being, Jacob went off on his own worship tangent here.
9. Oil, on the other hand, was used in the worship of the True God. Exodus 30:25–30 Leviticus 8:10 Num. 7:1. I don't know that we could attribute that to Jacob.
10. Setting up stones differently than we would expect so that they would stand out; and pouring oil upon them as well may have been employed by other believers in later times based upon these 3 passages.
11. What Jacob did *not* do was worship these pillars; he did not see them as divine in any way. They simply marked the place where God spoke to him, which was quite a big deal.
12. We find pillars (same word) condemned throughout the Bible, beginning with the law. Exodus 23:23–24 "[When My angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and I blot them out, you shall not bow down to their gods nor serve them, nor do as they do, but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their pillars in pieces.](#)" Deuteronomy 16:21–22 "[You shall not plant any tree as an Asherah beside the altar of the LORD your God that you shall make. And you shall not set up a pillar, which the LORD your God hates.](#)" See also Exodus 34:13 Leviticus 26:1 Deut. 12:3.
13. In fact, most of what we read in the Old Testament condemns religious pillars, like the two passages quoted above. Let me suggest 2 differences: many of the pillars used by religious cults may have been carved by men and then they were worshiped or used as a part of their worship of a false god. Jacob did not do this.

## Jacob; Pillars; Pouring Oil on Pillars

14. Setting up stones as a commemoration of an event: Genesis 28:18 31:45 35:14 Joshua 4:9 Joshua 4:20 24:26 1Samuel 7:12. These would be non-sinful commemorations; no idolatry was practiced.
15. I did not find examples of later saints pouring out oil on stone pillars elsewhere apart from Jacob. Monuments made with stones will occur from time to time in later Scriptures.
16. So, what Jacob did was commemorating God speaking to him, which is far different from what the heathen of Canaan (and elsewhere) did. Moses commemorated the 12 tribes with pillars in Exodus 24:4; so the key is not the pillars themselves, but their function. To commemorate something related to the true God is perfectly acceptable; to make them the objects of worship or to use them in association with heathen worship ceremonies, they are not acceptable. By themselves, these pillars are not necessarily good or bad. Jacob used the pillar of this passage as a pillow.

The Cambridge Bible tells us: *There are many instances in ancient literature of sacred stones which were anointed with oil (λίθοι λιπαροί). Compare Tylor's Primitive Culture3, ii. 160–167.*<sup>255</sup> The key, again, is how the pillars were thought of; how they were employed.

Gill: *[The stone which Jacob set up was] not for a statue or an idol to be worshipped, but for a memorial of the mercy and goodness of God unto him, see Joshua 4:3; indeed, among the Heathens, stones, even rude and unpolished ones, were worshipped as gods; and this was the ancient custom among the Greeks.*<sup>256</sup>

Trapp: *[Setting up this pillar was] better to perpetuate the memory of that mercy he had there received; and that it might be a witness against him, if hereafter he failed of fulfilling his vow.*<sup>257</sup>

Clarke: *From Beth–El came the Baetylia, Bethyllia, Βαιυλια, or animated stones, so celebrated in antiquity, and to which Divine honors were paid. The tradition of Jacob anointing this stone, and calling the place Beth–El, gave rise to all the superstitious accounts of the Baetylia or consecrated stones, which we find in Sanchoniathon and others. These became abused to idolatrous purposes, and hence God strongly prohibits them, Leviticus 26:1; and it is very likely that stones of this kind were the most ancient objects of idolatrous worship; these were afterwards formed into beautiful human figures, male and female, when the art of sculpture became tolerably perfected, and hence the origin of idolatry as far as it refers to the worshipping of images, for these, being consecrated by anointing, etc., were supposed immediately to become instinct with the power and energy of some divinity. Hence, then, the Baetylia or living stones of the ancient Phoenicians, etc.*<sup>258</sup>

It is possible that Peter made a proper application here? Clarke continues: *As oil is an emblem of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, so those who receive this anointing are considered as being alive unto God, and are expressly called by St. Peter living stones (1Peter 2:4–5—As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.). May not the apostle have reference to those living stones or Baetyllia of antiquity, and thus correct the notion by showing that these rather represented the true worshippers of God, who were consecrated to his service and made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and that these alone could be properly called the living stone, out of which the true spiritual temple is composed?*<sup>259</sup> It seems like the proper way to understand this Peter passage is, the living church is composed of living stones (us), with Christ as the chief cornerstone (an understanding which is similar to Clarke's expressed commentary of 1Peter 2:4).

<sup>255</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:18.

<sup>256</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:18.

<sup>257</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 28:18.

<sup>258</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:19.

<sup>259</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:19 (slightly edited).

The College Press Bible Study: *It should be noted, of course, that these sacred pillars are not to be interpreted as fetishes (i.e., as having magical powers), but as memorials. It is important that we keep this fact in mind. (Cf. the tendency to corrupt the significance of the Lord's Supper in this way by the—shall I say, magical?—dogma of transubstantiation).*<sup>260</sup>

Let me provide you a related example. Bethel, based upon what we have read, appears to be quite the holy site. However, Jeroboam would designate this as one of the high places where he set up calves of gold. 1Kings 12:29-33

Some related passages: Genesis 31:45–52 35:14 Leviticus 8:10–11 Num. 7:1 Joshua 4:3 1Samuel 7:12 2Samuel 18:18.

<sup>1</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:18.

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Genesis 28:18–19 Therefore, Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone which [was] there by his head and he set it up as a pillar, and he poured oil on its top. He called the name of this place Bethel (but Luz was the name of this city originally).

### The Pouring Out of Oil on Stones—or, Whatever (Various Commentators)

Clarke: *Stones, images, and altars, dedicated to Divine worship, were always anointed with oil. This appears to have been considered as a consecration of them to the object of the worship, and a means of inducing the god or goddess to take up their residence there, and answer the petitions of their votaries. Anointing stones, images, etc., is used in idolatrous countries to the present day, and the whole idol is generally smeared over with oil.*

Clarke continues: *Sometimes, besides the anointing, a crown or garland was placed on the stone or altar to honor the divinity, who was supposed, in consequence of the anointing, to have set up his residence in that place. It appears to have been on this ground that the seats of polished stone, on which the kings sat in the front of their palaces to administer justice, were anointed, merely to invite the deity to reside there, that true judgment might be given, and a righteous sentence always be pronounced.*

The College Press Bible Study: *The Oil of Consecration was an integral part of this ritual. "The worship of sacred stones (Baetylia), afterward prevalent among the Greeks, Romans, Hindoos, Arabs, and Germans, though by some regarded as one of the primeval forms of worship among the Hebrews, was expressly interdicted by the law of Moses (cf. Exodus 23:24; Exodus 34:13; Leviticus 26:1; Deut. 12:3; Deut. 16:22). It was probably a heathen imitation of the rite here recorded, though by some authorities the Baetylian worship is said to have been connected chiefly with meteoric stones which were supposed to have descended from some divinity, as, e.g., the stone in Delphi sacred to Apollo; that in Emesa, on the Orontes, consecrated to the sun; the angular rock at Pessinus in Phrygia worshipped as hallowed by Cybele; the black stone in the Kaaba at Mecca believed to have been brought from heaven by the angel Gabriel. That the present narrative was a late invention 'called into existence by a desire' on the part of the priests and prophets of Yahweh 'to proclaim the high antiquity of the sanctuary at Bethel, and to make the sacred stone harmless,' is pure assumption.*<sup>261</sup>

<sup>260</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:20–22.

<sup>261</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:18.

## The Pouring Out of Oil on Stones—or, Whatever (Various Commentators)

Leupold: *Since the pillar marked a holy experience, it was in this instance consecrated by the pouring out of oil upon it (cf. Exod. 40:9-11). It has been claimed that travelers would in olden times regularly carry a horn of oil with them so that the oil might be used for purposes of anointing and for food. In addition to the consecration expressed by the anointing there is the possibility that the oil also gave expression to the idea of sacrifice and was offered as sacrifice, for in 35:14 in consecrating the Bethel altar Jacob poured a drink offering and oil upon the altar. In any case, we need not wonder that Abraham and Isaac had not set up memorial stones heretofore; they had no direct occasion to do so as Jacob here had. Good parallels are seen in 31:45; Jos 4; 24:26 f; 1 Sam. 7:12. So natural is it to do a thing of this sort that anyone of us might in our day do a similar thing with 2.778the utmost of propriety, Later, when the Canaanite shrines for idolatrous worship had these "pillars" regularly set up round about the "holy place" (maqôm), as excavations still amply prove, and Israel stood in danger of copying heathen abominations, the Lord saw fit to forbid the use of such matstseboth and bade Israel to destroy them—Exod. 23:24; 34:13; Lev. 26:1Deut. 12:316:22. The idea of a fetish stone simply does not enter into this case. Efforts to inject it by claims very boldly stated are quite futile; as when it is said: matstsebhah —"originally a fetish, the supposed abode of a spirit or deity—a belief of which there are clear traces in this passage." Koenig has successfully refuted such claims by pointing out that Jacob says: "How awe-inspiring is this place"— not "this stone."*

Leupold continues: *It is much to be deplored that on this point another attempt to cheapen the holy record is made by identifying Jacob's anointing of the stone with the so-called Baetylian stone worship. That such a practice as stone worship existed rather widely in days of old is, of course, true. That such anointed stones were called in Greek βαιτυλοι is also known. But this accidental point of coincidence proves nothing about Jacob's experience as belonging into this class. It might possibly be admitted that a distorted record of the Bethel experience began to circulate among the Gentiles and gave rise to stone worship. But even that assumption has great difficulties. For, in the first place, the name βαιθήλ ("Bethel") does not occur in this chapter of the Septuagint, being rendered "house of God," and if it did appear, as Keil points out, it would be quite inexplicable how the θ was changed to the τ in βαιτυλοι. Besides, it is claimed that Baetylian worship in days of old centered around meteoric stones, which were thought to have been dropped down from high heaven by the gods. In 2.779any case, if a superstitious practice existed among the heathen, must everything similar at once be put into the same class? Then with equal propriety sacred memorials that we might set up in our day would also have to be classed as Baetylian worship, especially if the practice of anointing stones should be revived.<sup>262</sup>*

Passages where setting up pillars as memorials or as a witness to a vow or an agreement are found in Genesis 31:13, 45 35:14, 20 Joshua 24:26–27 1Samuel 7:12 2Samuel 18:18 Isaiah 19:19.<sup>263</sup>

There are many passages where oil is used to anoint holy objects. Leviticus 8:10–12 Num. 7:1 are two examples.

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Oil would be used many times in the Law of Moses; but it would be unlikely to attribute this back to Jacob here.

Genesis 28:18–19 **Therefore, Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone which [was] there by his head and he set it up as a pillar, and he poured oil on its top. He called the name of this place Bethel (but Luz was the name of this city originally).**

<sup>262</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxix.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

<sup>263</sup> Passages collected by *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 28:18.

## Was Pouring Oil upon Stone a Well-Established Practice at this Time?

The College Press Bible Study makes a statement which I found that many commentators made: *Although this act of Jacob is the first instance of stone consecration on record, it was evidently a familiar and established practice in the time of the patriarchs.*<sup>264</sup> As a matter of fact, I made this same assumption, at first.

Quite frankly, this is not something which we know or can even conclude, based upon Jacob's actions. I think that there is just as good of a chance that, Jacob, moved by this experience and surveying the options available to him, just decided to do this on the spot, as a part of his (legalistic) vow which he will give (vv. 20–22). In fact, the setting up of the stone here might stand as a witness here to Jacob's vow.

What Jacob did here was more likely him improvising with what he had. He was not traveling without supplies; he obviously had some oil; and the stone was his pillow. This is what he had at hand; he could not just walk on without some sort of commemoration; so this is what he went with.

Now, did Jacob see this primarily as a commemoration or as a witness of his vow? I don't know that I could answer that quite yet.

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *The practice of setting up stones as a memorial by travellers still exists in Persia, and other parts of the East.*<sup>265</sup>

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As an aside, oil is absolutely necessary for a long trip on foot or on beast. I have a friend of mine who hiked a portion of a California trail (the Pacific Crest Trail), and he testified by experience that having a proper amount of oil for such a hike was absolutely necessary, simple for the function of the body and the bones. It acted like an internal lubricant. This would have been known to the ancients and it would have been among Jacob's essential supplies (he did not leave empty-handed, as a few have assumed).

## What was Jacob traveling with?

The passage where Jacob says, "I had but my staff in hand" (speaking to God, Jacob say, "[I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps.](#)"—Genesis 32:10); I believe the meaning is, Jacob had virtually nothing with him when traveling to Paddan-aram, as compared to Abraham's servant when he went to fetch a wife for Isaac. Abraham's servant was loaded up with gold and silver jewelry with which to purchase a wife; Jacob probably had basic supplies, 1 or 2 camels, and his mother's servant, Deborah. Let me suggest several reasons to support my opinion:

(1) right here, in this passage, Jacob has oil to pour out over a stone; so he is probably carrying oil.

(2) It is illogical for Isaac and Rebekah to send their son to the east without some supplies, even though his leaving was sudden. It seems so odd to make the assumption that, after the wonderful blessing given Jacob by his father, that he would have said, "Oh, by the way, don't forget to take your staff; you are on your own, kid. Haran is that way. Goodbye"

(3) Later, the death of Deborah will be spoken of in association with Jacob's return to the Land of Promise—in Bethel, in fact (Genesis 35:8). How is Deborah (not mentioned prior to this) suddenly with him? Her presence would make sense, if she went on this trip with Jacob, as she had made this trip herself previously (about 97 years previous<sup>266</sup>).

<sup>264</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:18.

<sup>265</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 28:18.

<sup>266</sup> Assuming that Jacob is 77 years old at this time; and Jacob and Rebekah did not have children until 20 years after they married). At her death, Deborah would have been her age when she left Haran, + 77+20+20 years old. I would say her age at death was 130 at minimum.

So, relative to the mission of this trip, finding a wife, Jacob had virtually nothing—that is, he did not have what was necessary to purchase a wife.

Wenstrom writes: *No doubt, his mother packed food and supplies for him along with money to purchase necessities along the way but otherwise from the human perspective and his at the time, he is alone in a strange and dangerous country. But as he will soon find out, he is not alone since God is with him and elect angels are protecting the father of the nation of Israel.*<sup>267</sup>

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**Genesis 28:18** And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone which he had put at his head, and set it as a memorial pillar, and poured oil on the top of it.

Barnes: *Jacob awakes, and exclaims, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." He knew his omnipresence; but he did not expect a special manifestation of the Lord in this place, far from the sanctuaries of his father. He is filled with solemn awe, when he finds himself in the house of God and at the gate of heaven. The pillar is the monument of the event. The pouring of oil upon it is an act of consecration to God who has there appeared to him Num. 7:1.*<sup>268</sup>

Robertson: *[Jacob] set up a memorial of the impressions just made upon him. He erected a few stones, and called them Bethel. They were a fixed point to remind him of the past. The power of this Bethel we shall see in the 35th chap. Herein is the value of forms; impressions, feelings, will pass away unless we have some memorial. If we were merely spiritual beings then we might do without forms; but we are still mixed up with matter, and unless we have a form the spirit will die.*<sup>269</sup> For believer in the Church Age, this memorial may take the form of a considerable number of notes taken during Bible class.

## Pillars (Various Commentators)

Speaker's Commentary: *It has been thought by many that this act of Jacob, in setting up a stone to mark a sacred spot, was the origin of cromlechs and all sacred stones. Certainly we find in later ages the custom of having stones, and those, too, anointed with oil, as objects of idolatrous worship. Clement of Alexandria (Strom. vii) speaks of 'worshipping every oily stone,' and Arnobius, (Ad. Genes, 1:39,) in like manner, refers to the worshipping of 'a stone smeared with oil, as though there were in it a present power.' It has been conjectured, further, that the name Boetulia, given to stones called animated stones by the Phoenicians, (Euseb. Praep. Evang., 1:10,) was derived from this name of Bethel. These Boetulia, however, were meteoric stones, and derived their sanctity from the belief that they had fallen from heaven; and the name has probably but a fancied likeness to the name Bethel. Still the connexion of the subsequent worship of stones with the primitive and pious use of them to mark places of worship is most probably a real connexion. The erection of all such stones for worship was strictly forbidden in later times. Leviticus 26:1; Deut. 16:22.*<sup>270</sup>

<sup>267</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:11); accessed May 28, 2017.

<sup>268</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:16–19.

<sup>269</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:16 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses).

<sup>270</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 28:18.

## Pillars (Various Commentators)

The College Press Bible Study offers up some examples of a perversion of this sort of worship: *This superstition of consecrated stones was both very ancient and very extensive, from the Graeco-Phoenician Bantulia, or Boetylia, the monolithic temples of Egypt and Hindostan, the lithoi liparoi of the Greeks, the 'lapides informes' of the Romans, the pyramids and obelisks of others, the cairns and cromlechs of Northern Europe, and the caaba of Arabia. That black stone of Mecca is described as 'an irregular oval, about seven inches in diameter, with an undulated surface, composed of about a dozen smaller stones of different sizes and shapes, well joined together with a small quality of cement, and perfectly smooth'*<sup>271</sup>

Cornfeld: *The custom of the sacred pillar ('matzeba') is one of the central foundations of the patriarchal beliefs, and many of them have been discovered. They are usually small rectangles, flat and thin, more like small and humble grave-stones of today. They appear to have been erected chiefly to commemorate a theophany, a vow or sacred covenant rite, or' even an ancestor or important official. The recent excavations at Hazor and other ancient sites have produced sacred slabs of this sort.*<sup>272</sup>

Robert Dean: *That he set the stone up as a pillar indicates that this wasn't a small stone that was used as a pillow but it was a large stone that he was using to prop himself up so he could be more comfortable, because now he upends it as a pillar. Pouring oil upon it was a symbol of setting it apart to the use of God. "Bethel" is the "house of God." Then he makes a vow; this is his response.*<sup>273</sup>

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Jacob will set up pillars on 3 occasions, as recorded in Scripture.

### Jacob's 3 Pillars

In this passage, Jacob sets up a pillar to mark the place where God spoke to him. Genesis 28:16–18

Jacob will work for his Uncle Laban for 20 years, and then sneak away. When Laban catches up with him, they discuss their relationship, Jacob's work, and Jacob's wives (who are also Laban's daughters). They come to an agreement, and then Jacob sets up a pillar to commemorate their agreement. Genesis 31:36–53

God appears to Jacob again at Bethel and Jacob sets up another pillar to commemorate the event. Genesis 35:9–15

Wenstrom: *Memorials like the one set up by Jacob were set up to recall divine visitations so that others might learn about God when they ask, "What do these stones mean?" (See Joshua 4:6).*<sup>274</sup>

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In the Bible, the rock (or stone) is often representative of Jesus Christ; and oil is often representative of God the Holy Spirit. So Jacob, without knowing it, is presenting the anointing of God the Son by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16).

It does not matter whether it is 4 or 5 or 6 am, I can get up and get going because I have lights and electricity. Jacob woke up after his dream/vision and was probably thinking about it for a few hours before he was able to get up and start his day. Furthermore, if he is traveling with Deborah, his mother's personal servant; then he must

<sup>271</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:18 (they cite CECG 200).

<sup>272</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:20–22.

<sup>273</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed June 2, 2017.

<sup>274</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:15); accessed June 1, 2017.

allow her time to sleep. So his waking up, his comment, and what he does early in the morning are separate events, perhaps occurring over a period of 3 or 4 hours (most of that time spent ruminating over his vision).

Genesis 28:16–18 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." And 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." So 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. (ESV; capitalized)

Unless otherwise noted, the translation is from the ESV; capitalized.

## A Spiritually-Empowered Jesus Christ is our Spiritual Model

1. Jesus Christ test-drove the Christian life. We look to Him as our example. This is the fundamental concept.
2. This understanding is a little tricky because Jesus Christ, as the Messiah, fulfilled all Old Testament requirements and prophecies. The 1<sup>st</sup> Advent of Jesus Christ is the Jewish Age; it is *not* the Church Age. Even if we understand His 1<sup>st</sup> Advent to be the Advent of the Hypostatic Union (a very short dispensation indeed), He is still adhering to the requirements of the Mosaic Law and fulfilling all of the Old Testament prophecies and Old Testament typology (Jesus fulfilled Old Testament typology *before* we knew what it was).
3. However, at the same time, Jesus provides us the model for the Christian life.
4. There are two fundamental principles of the Christian life that we learn from Jesus Christ: the power of God the Holy Spirit and the power of God's holy Word.
5. Over and over again, the Bible tells us of Jesus Christ being empowered by the Holy Spirit.
  - 1) Isaiah prophesies in Isaiah 11:1–2 **There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.** There is even a play on words here, which draws attention to what is being said. The *Spirit* is *rûwach* (רוּחַ) [pronounced *ROO-ahkh*], and what the *Spirit* does is: *nûwach* (נָוַח) [pronounced *NOO-ahkh*] *upon Him*. *Nûwach* means *rest, cause to rest, to be at rest, set down, lay down, deposit, leave*. Strong's #5117 (and #3240) BDB #628. See also Matthew 12:18 Luke 4:18 where this is acknowledged to be about Jesus Christ.
  - 2) Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Matthew 1:18
  - 3) Jesus grew spiritually in His humanity. Luke 1:80 **And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and He was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.**
  - 4) When Jesus was baptized by John, the Spirit descended upon Him. Matthew 3:16 Luke 3:22
  - 5) Jesus was led by the Spirit. Matthew 4:1 Mark 1:12 Luke 4:1
  - 6) Jesus was empowered by the Spirit. Luke 4:14
  - 7) Jesus cast out demons by the power of the Spirit. Matthew 12:28
  - 8) Although Jesus is fully God, He did not use the power of His Deity during the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent; He relied upon the power of God the Holy Spirit instead. You may recall one of the temptations laid before Him by Satan: "Cast Yourself down and God's angels will catch You." As the Creator of the Universe, Jesus had power over His creation. He could have easily cast Himself down without any harm. However, that was outside of God's plan; and He would have been relying on His Deity; or He would have been relying on the intervention of angels. We read in Philip. 2:6–8 **He existed in the form of God [i.e., He shared God's very nature], but did not consider [remaining] equal with God something [to continue] to hold onto. Instead, He gave up what He had and took on the form [i.e., the nature] of a slave, becoming like a man, [and even] His appearance was found to be like a man's. He humbled Himself [by] becoming obedient [to God] to the point of death, even death on a cross.** (AUN–NT) He accepted His form as a man and relied completely upon the power of God the Holy Spirit, the same power He has given to us.
6. Jesus promised His Spirit to His disciples.
  - 1) When they were persecuted and had to speak, Jesus told them that God would speak through them through the Holy Spirit. Matthew 10:20 Mark 13:11

## A Spiritually-Empowered Jesus Christ is our Spiritual Model

- 2) Jesus told His disciples that the only need ask for the Holy Spirit. Luke 11:13
- 3) John the Baptizer promised that Jesus would baptized His people with the Holy Spirit. Mark 1:8
- 4) Before He was taken up into the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven, God again promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples. Acts 1:8
7. Just as the birth of Jesus involved the Holy Spirit, so we are reborn by God the Holy Spirit. John 3:5–8  
**Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again [or, from above].' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."** The *wind* is often symbolic of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that gives life. John 6:63
8. We call this birth by the Holy Spirit as being born again or being regenerated. John 3:7 Titus 3:5 1Peter 1:23
9. The disciples would be able to recall all the Jesus taught them by means of the Holy Spirit. John 14:26
10. God gives the Spirit without measure in John 3:34. Although, in context, this applies to Jesus Christ; this is also the promise to us as believers in Christ.
11. As believers, our worship of God must be in Spirit and in truth (= Bible doctrine). This is the key to the entire spiritual life of the believer. John 4:24
12. The ministry of the Holy Spirit to the early church:
  - 1) After Jesus was crucified and resurrected, He gave the Holy Spirit to His disciples to carry them through to the day of Pentecost. John 20:22
  - 2) On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit would be given to the disciples, and, through them, to all believers in the Church Age. Acts 2:1–18, 38
  - 3) However, the focus was to be on the saving work of Jesus Christ, not upon the power of God the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:21–41
  - 4) The early Apostles were filled with God the Holy Spirit. Acts 4:8, 31 6:3, 5 7:55
  - 5) The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God—which comes from exercising faith in Jesus Christ. Acts 5:29–32
  - 6) Much of the book of Acts involves finding those who have trusted in the true God, indicating to them that their faith needs to be in Christ Jesus, and afterward, the Holy Spirit is given to them. Acts 19:2, 6
  - 7) The early disciples were shown to clearly have the Spirit of God because they manifested various sign gifts. Once their authority was established, their words became authoritative; after which, their writings became authoritative.
  - 8) For new converts, the Holy Spirit was given simultaneous to their faith. After the time period of the book of Acts, there was not a group of people wandering about who believed in Jesus Christ, but had not yet received the Holy Spirit. That is, there was not two classifications of Christians—those who received the Holy Spirit and those who believed in Jesus but did not yet get the Spirit. **For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit.** (1Corinthians 12:13)
13. The Holy Spirit is given to all believers.
  - 1) Once Jesus is glorified, then the Holy Spirit would be given to all believers. John 7:37–39 **On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this He said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**
  - 2) The Holy Spirit would guide Jesus' disciples into all truth; and, by application, this is the same promise made to us. John 16:13 **When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His Own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come.**
  - 3) The carnal Corinthians have the Holy Spirit.
    - (1) Of all the churches referred to in the New Testament, the Corinthian church appeared to have

## A Spiritually-Empowered Jesus Christ is our Spiritual Model

- the most problems.
- (2) Paul talks about how he still needs to give them milk (basic doctrine) when they ought to be eating meat. 1Corinthians 3:2
  - (3) Yet Paul speaks of the Spirit searching all things, and how the thoughts of God can only be known by the Spirit of God (1Corinthians 2:10–11). Then Paul writes: **Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.** (1Corinthians 2:12)
  - (4) Paul tells these carnal Corinthians that the Spirit of God dwells in them. 1Corinthians 3:16
  - (5) Paul tells them: **...you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.** (1Corinthians 6:11)
  - (6) He tells them that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit in 1Corinthians 6:19.
  - (7) Paul sarcastically tells the Corinthians **I too have the Spirit of God** in 1Corinthians 7:40 (some of them arrogantly thought that they had a greater spiritual understanding than Paul).
  - (8) In 1Corinthians 12, Paul speaks of the gifts of the Corinthians and how they have the various gifts and that these gifts are bestowed by the Holy Spirit.
  - (9) Paul then writes: **For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit.** (1Corinthians 12:13)
  - (10) Throughout both epistles to the Corinthians, Paul *never* says, “You know, what might be your problem is, some of you never got the Spirit.” If there were two classes of Christians—this with and those without the Holy Spirit—then don’t you think that Paul would have figured that this might be the problem with many of the Corinthians?
  - (11) The Corinthians have one problem with God the Holy Spirit, and that is that they are often in carnality, and therefore, quenching the Spirit (1Thessalonians 5:19). Before eating the bread or drinking the cup of communion, Paul tells these Corinthians to examine themselves (for sin) and to judge this sin in themselves. **But if we [had] examined ourselves [properly], we would not be [i.e., not have been] judged [i.e., with sickness and death. See verse 30].** (1Corinthians 11:31; AUV–NT) So it is the end of 1Corinthians 11 which tells us the problem that the Corinthians faced—they had the Holy Spirit, but they were carnal. Paul tells them here that they deal with that by judging themselves. John presents the same concept in 1John 1:9 that we confess (name) our sins to God.
14. Therefore, throughout the New Testament, we are urged to follow the example of Jesus Christ:
    - 1) Peter mandates: **But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** (2Peter 3:18a) This is again based upon the model of Jesus Christ, Who also experienced spiritual growth in His humanity: **And Jesus kept advancing in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and people.** (Luke 2:52; ALT)
    - 2) **Whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.** (1John 2:6) We have discussed in this doctrine *how* Jesus walked.
    - 3) **For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps.** (1Peter 2:21; ESV; capitalized)
    - 4) **Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.** (Ephesians 5:1–2; ESV; capitalized) The phrase *in love* is actually a technical phrase referring to being filled with the Spirit.
    - 5) See also Galatians 3:27 Philip. 2:5.
  15. There is one difference regarding the Spirit between Jesus and us. Jesus did not sin, so He did not confess any sin. He always had the Spirit of God and was always empowered by the Spirit of God throughout His brief public ministry. We have the same Spirit; we simply need to acknowledge our sins when we sin, so that we are filled with (that is, empowered by) the Spirit once again. 1Corinthians 11:31 Ephesians 5:18 1John 1:9

The emphasis of this doctrine is clearly upon the power which we have, by means of the Holy Spirit; and how Jesus, during His public ministry, showed us how it was done.

**A Review of Genesis 28:12–18:**

Jacob is leaving the Land of Promise because he has angered his twin brother Esau. Jacob successfully pretended to be Esau to their father, Isaac; and Isaac gave the preferred blessing of Esau to Jacob. At this point, Jacob finds himself at the beginning of his 400 miles journey to his family in the east.

Genesis 28:12 *And 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!*

Jacob had barely begun his trip, when he had this very strange dream of angels being transported between heaven and earth right where he lay.

Gen 28:13–15 *And behold, 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. Your 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. Behold, 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."*

Then God speaks to him, and reiterates the promise which God originally made to Abraham and then later, to Jacob's father, Isaac. God assures Jacob that he would be blessed with a great many descendants—so many, that they would be as the dust of the earth.

God also promised to remain with Jacob, wherever he went.

Gen 28:16–18 *Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." And 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." So 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.*

Jacob was amazed by this experience and he refers to this place as the *house of God*, as well as *the gate of heaven*. Then Jacob continues on his journey to the east (he is actually traveling northeast).

Although this journey is portrayed as if Jacob is traveling alone, it would be reasonable that he had several servants with him. There is the strong likelihood that Rebekah's personal nurse is with Jacob at this point (Genesis 35:8). However, when Abraham sent a servant in search of a wife for Isaac, he sent him with many camels, servants and gifts. Getting Jacob to move along was not the result of a well, laid-out plan—but something done to quickly get him out of town and away from Esau. So, at this point, we do not know for certain if Jacob is traveling alone or with servants or with a servant. However, we may certainly surmise that he is not leading this great procession of camels, as did Abraham's servant back in Genesis 24.

## Genesis 28:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (אָרָק) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i> ]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i> ]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
mâqôwm (מִוְקָם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHW</i> ]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
hûw' (אוּהוּ) [pronounced <i>hoo</i> ]	<i>that; this; same</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
Bêyth-êl (בֵּית־אֵל) [pronounced <i>bayth-AYHL</i> ]	<i>house of God; transliterated Bethel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1008 BDB #110

**Translation:** He called the name of this place Bethel...

Jacob named this place where he dreamed this great dream, *the house of God*.

When God contacts Jacob again, when Jacob has been living in Paddan-aram, and He tells Jacob that it is time to return to the Land of Promise, God calls Himself *the God of Bethel*. Gen. 31:13 [God, speaking to Jacob:] "I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to Me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred." (ESV; capitalized)

## Genesis 28:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ûwlâm (אֲוַלָּם) [pronounced <i>oo-LAWM</i> ]	<i>but, but indeed, yet, however</i>	a very strong adverbial adversative	Strong's #199 BDB #19

## Genesis 28:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Lûwz (לוז) [pronounced looze]	possibly <i>almond-tree, almond wood</i> ; transliterated <i>Luz</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #3870 BDB #531
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
ġyr (רִיעַ) [pronounced ġeer]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
rîshônâh (רִשׁוֹנָה) [pronounced ree-show-NAW]	<i>first [in time, in degree, chief, former [in time], ancestors, former things; foremost; beginning</i>	feminine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #7223 BDB #911

I will translate these two words *at the first, in the beginning, originally*.

**Translation:**...(but Luz was the name of this city originally).

However, the original name of this city (he is apparently near a city) was Luz.

*Clarke: As Luz signifies an almond, almond or hazel tree, this place probably had its name from a number of such trees growing in that region. Many of the ancients confounded this city with Jerusalem.*<sup>275</sup>

Luz was the Canaanite name for this city (Jacob was probably camped out in the outskirts of the city). Bethel means *House of God*, and is an apropos name.

Genesis 28:19 He called the name of this place Bethel (but Luz was the name of this city originally). (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 28:18–19 Therefore, Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone which [was] there by his head and he set it up as a pillar, and he poured oil on its top. He called the name of this place Bethel (but Luz was the name of this city originally). (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 28:18–19 Jacob rose up early that morning and took the stone which was there by his head and he set it up as a pillar, and then poured oil on it. He called the name of that place Bethel (the original name of this city was Luz). (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 28:18–19 Jacob rose up early that morning and took the stone which was there by his head and he set it up as a pillar, and then poured oil on it. He called the name of that place Bethel (the original name of this city was Luz).

I may have included too many commentators here.

<sup>275</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:19.

### Renaming Luz (Many Commentators)

Barnes: *He calls the name of the place Bethel, "the house of God." This is not the first time it received the name. Abraham also worshipped God here, and met with the name already existing (see on Genesis 12:8 13:3 25:30).*<sup>276</sup> The updated name may simply be a gloss; a change to give a later reader the more common name for that place.

Benson: *It had been called Luz, an almond-tree, but he will have it henceforward called Beth-el, the house of God. This gracious appearance of God to him made it more remarkable than all the almond-trees that flourished there.*<sup>277</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *The old city's name mentioned also in Genesis 35:6, Genesis 48:3, Judges 1:23, not identical with, but close to Bethel, Joshua 16:2. The narrative does not suggest that Jacob's dream was in the vicinity of a town.*<sup>278</sup>

CECG: *It is not easy to discover whether Beth-el is identical with Luz, or they were two distinct places. Some passages seem to countenance the former view (Genesis 35:6, Judges 1:23), others the latter (Genesis 12:8, Genesis 13:3; Joshua 16:2; Joshua 18:13). The probability is that they were in close contiguity, and were in time merged into one.*<sup>279</sup>

PCG: *Originally the Canaanitish town was called Luz, or 'almond tree,' a name it continued to bear until the conquest (Judges 1:23). From the circumstances recorded here in the narrative, Jacob called the spot where he slept (in the vicinity of Luz) Bethel—the designation afterward extending to the town (Genesis 35:6). Until the conquest both titles appear to have been used—Luz by the Canaanites, Bethel by the Israelites. When the conquest was completed the Hebrew name was substituted for the Hittite, the sole survivor of the captured city building another Luz in another part of the country (vide Judges 1:26).*<sup>280</sup>

HSB: *Luz, probably meaning 'almond tree,' was renamed by Jacob Bethel, meaning 'house of God,' and became a holy place to the children of Israel. It was located on land which later was granted to the tribe of Benjamin and was about twelve miles north of Jerusalem. The sacred place was defiled when Jeroboam erected a golden calf (1Kings 12:28–33), therefore God decreed the destruction of the altar (1Kings 13:1–5, 2Kings 23:15–17, Amo. 3:14–15).*<sup>281</sup>

BCOTP: *Jacob then gave the place the name of Bethel, i.e., House of God, whereas the town had been called Luz before. The antithesis shows that Jacob gave the name, not to the place where the pillar was set up, but to the town, in the neighborhood of which he had received the divine revelation. He renewed it on his return from Mesopotamia (Genesis 35:15). This is confirmed by ch. Genesis 48:3, where Jacob, like the historian in ch. Genesis 35:6, speaks of Luz as the place of this revelation. There is nothing at variance with this in Joshua 16:2; Joshua 18:13; for it is not Bethel as a city, but the mountains of Bethel, that are here distinguished from Luz.*<sup>282</sup>

<sup>276</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:16–19.

<sup>277</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:19.

<sup>278</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882–1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:19.

<sup>279</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:19.

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<sup>281</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:19.

<sup>282</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:19.

## Renaming Luz (Many Commentators)

UBD: *Beth-el, house of God. A town about twelve miles North of Jerusalem, originally Luz (Genesis 28:19). It was here that Abraham encamped (Genesis 12:8; Genesis 13:3), and the district is still pronounced as suitable for pasturage. It received the name of Beth-el, 'house of God' because of its nearness to or being the very place where Jacob dreamed (Genesis 28:10–22). Beth-el was assigned to the Benjamites, but they appear to have been either unable to take it or careless about doing so, as we find it taken by the children of Joseph" (UBD, 139). (Cf. Judges 1:22–26; Judges 20:26–28; 1Samuel 7:16; 1Kings 12:28–33; 2Kings 23:15–20; Ezra 2:28; Nehemiah 11:31 Excavations at Bethel, conducted by Albright and Kelso reveal house walls from the time of the Judges; its occupation is thought to have begun about 2250 B.C.).<sup>283</sup>*

College Press Bible Study: *The problem of a twofold naming, as, for example, the naming of Bethel by Jacob at one time (Genesis 28:19) and again at a later time (Genesis 35:15) poses no serious problem.<sup>284</sup>*

Haley: *At the first time Jacob made a vow that, if God would bless and keep him till his return, the pillar which he had set up should be 'God's house.' Upon his return, in view of the abundant blessings which he had received, he performed his vow, changing the ideal to an actual Bethel, and thus encompassing and confirming the original name.*

Haley continues: *To the rationalistic objection that 'identical names of places are not imposed twice,' we may reply, in general, that it is in 'full accordance with the genius of the Oriental languages and the literary tastes of the people' to suppose that a name may be renewed; in other words, that a new meaning and significance may be attached to an old name. This fact sweeps away a host of objections urged against this and similar cases.<sup>285</sup>*

The College Press Bible Study: *The place-name Bethel must have been known as far back as Abraham's time: as Murphy put it, "Abraham also worshipped God here, and met with the name already existing (see Genesis 12:8, Genesis 13:3, Genesis 25:30)." Or indeed the place may have been known as Luz in earlier times, this having been the Canaanite name, and somehow the two names became associated in the later historical accounts. (For examples, i.e., of twofold naming, cf. Genesis 14:14, Deut. 34:1, Joshua 19:47, Judges 18:29, with reference to Laish (or Leshem) and Dan; also Num. 32:41, Deut. 3:4; Deut. 3:14, Judges 10:3–4, with reference to Havoth-jair. Note also the name Beer-sheba: in Genesis 21:31, we read that Abraham gave this name to the place where he entered into a covenant with Abimelech; in Genesis 26:33, however, we read that Isaac called the place Shiba; but from Genesis 26:15; Genesis 26:18, we find that all the wells dug by Abraham in this region had been filled with earth by the Philistines, but that Isaac re-opened them and called them by the old familiar names. This certainly is a satisfactory explanation of the problem.).<sup>286</sup>*

A gloss would easily explain the early occurrences of the name *Bethel* in Genesis.

Bethel is found here: Gen. 12:8 13:3 28:19 31:13 35:1,3,6,7,8,15,16 Jos. 7:2 8:9,12,17 12:9,16 16:1,2 18:13,22 Judges 1:22,23 4:5 20:18,26,31 21:2,19 1Sa. 7:16 10:3 13:2 30:27 1Ki. 12:29,32,33 13:1,4,10,11,32 16:34 2Ki. 2:2,3,23 10:29 17:28 23:4,15,17,19 1Ch. 7:28 2Ch. 13:19 Ezra 2:28 Neh. 7:32 11:31 Jer. 48:13 Hos. 10:15 12:4 Amos 3:14 4:4 5:5,6 7:10,13 Zech. 7:2. Luz is found here: Genesis 28:19 35:6 48:3 Jos. 16:2 18:13 Judges 1:23,26.

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Summarizing the basic information about Bethel:

<sup>283</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:19.*

<sup>284</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:19.*

<sup>285</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:19.*

<sup>286</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:19.*

## The City of Bethel

1. Bethel is located about 10 miles north of Jerusalem on the border of Ephraim and Benjamin.
2. Bethel is one of the first cities that we hear about in the Bible. Abraham traveled there from Ur of the Chaldees. Genesis 12:8
3. Interestingly enough, Jacob apparently named this city; it means *House of God*, as God revealed Himself to Jacob here. When the history of Genesis was recorded, the name *Bethel* was used rather than *Luz*. Genesis 28:19 35:7, 15 This could be updating the text by a later editor; or this could be as simple as Joseph telling his sons *the History Between God and Man* (that is, the book of Genesis), and simply updates the name of the city in his telling of this history (I am assuming that the book of Genesis was passed along orally until the time of Moses).
4. Jacob, in fact, is associated on several occasions with this city. Genesis 13:3 31:13 35:1–16
5. When Joshua enters the Land of Promise to conquer it, then we hear a lot more about the city of Bethel. In fact, Joshua conquers this city, along with Ai, its neighbor. Joshua 8 12:16
6. However, it apparently needed to be re-conquered in Judges 1:22
7. Joshua appears to distinguish between Luz and Bethel in Joshua 16:2; but then treats them as one in Joshua 18:13.
8. Bethel will continue to be a prominent city in Israel for many years to come.
9. Bethel, prior to this, was essentially, the spiritual center for Israel, where the Ark of God had been kept. Judges 20–21
10. Unfortunately, this place will become a place of idolatry in the future. 1Kings 13:32 Hosea 10:15 Amos 4:4

Dr. Peter Pett on *Bethel* being found in the Bible prior to this chapter: *Jacob names the place where he is 'Beth-el' (the house of God) but the closest city is called Luz. Its name was later changed to Bethel because of this incident. But the name is not static. Joshua 16:2 still distinguishes between Bethel and Luz, although they are clearly very close (Joshua 18:13). The use of Bethel earlier in Genesis is a result of scribal updating. It was not uncommon for ancient names to be updated when documents were copied. This constant changing or re-adaptation of names in Genesis reflects the gradual taking over of the land by the patriarchs.*<sup>287</sup>

Bush: *This place was long regarded with religious veneration, as we may infer from Jereboam's having chosen it for the seat of his idolatrous worship of the golden calves (1Kings 12:28; 1Kings 12:23), for which reason the prophet Hosea, (Hos. 4:15) alluding to the name given it by Jacob, calls it, Beth-aven, "the house of vanity"—i.e., of idols—instead of Beth-el, "house of God." In like manner, (Amos 5:5): "Bethel shall shall come to naught." (Heb. shall be Aven). A good name has no security of permanence where a change for the worse has taken place in the character. God even writes upon His own people, Lo-Ammi, "not my people," instead of Ammi, "my people," when by their transgression they forfeit His favour.*<sup>288</sup>

The College Press Bible Study: *Bethel was assigned to the Benjamites, but they appear to have been either unable to take it or careless about doing so, as we find it taken by the children of Joseph, Judges 1:22–26). Later Old Testament history makes it clear that Jeroboam I did establish idolatrous sanctuaries both at Bethel and Dan (1Kings 12:28–33), and that King Josiah later destroyed the "high places" that Jeroboam had instituted; specific mention is made of the destruction of the idolatrous altar at Bethel, (cf. 2Kings 23:15–20). As stated above, however, Lange suggests that "through Jehovah's revelation, this place, which is viewed as a heathen waste, becomes to Jacob a house of God, and therefore he consecrates it as a permanent sanctuary"*<sup>289</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable: *Bethel receives more mention in the Old Testament than any other city but Jerusalem. This indicates its importance in biblical history.*<sup>290</sup>

<sup>287</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 28:19.

<sup>288</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:19 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses).

<sup>289</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:19. It cites Lange CDHCG, 523.

<sup>290</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

This, of course, is a bare-bones examination of this city; but it is given just to give you an idea about Bethel. See the complete **Doctrine of Bethel** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

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### Various Commentators on Bethel

The Cambridge Bible: *[Bethel means] "the house of God": see Genesis 35:1; Genesis 35:6. This place was one of the most famous sanctuaries in Canaan. It was selected by Jeroboam as one of the High Places at which he set up the calves of gold (1Kings 12:29–33). For its repute and popularity as a sanctuary and place of pilgrimage, see Amo. 7:13: close by the altar of Bethel would stand the pillar connected with its worship, and associated with this story of Jacob. The site has been identified with the modern Beitin.*<sup>291</sup>

Clarke: *Beth-el - That is, the house of God; for in consequence of his having anointed the stone, and thus consecrated it to God, he considered it as becoming henceforth his peculiar residence; see on the preceding verse. This word should be always pronounced as two distinct syllables, each strongly accented, Beth-El.*<sup>292</sup>

BBA: *Fleeing the vengeance of Esau, Jacob passed the night at Bethel about twelve miles north of Jerusalem on the road to Shechem. There he received the divine promise of a safe return to the land of his birth. The vision of the heavenly ladder reminded Jacob that the God of his fathers would not forsake him in his journeys. Bethel later became an important shrine. Golden calves were placed there by Jeroboam I to dissuade his people from going to the Temple at Jerusalem.*<sup>293</sup>

Wenstrom: *If you recall, it was near Bethel that Abraham built an altar and worshipped the Lord in prayer just before and after his ill advised trip to Egypt with Sarah (See Genesis 12:8; 13:3, 4). Bethel would be the place that Jacob would later return to from his exile according to Genesis 35:1. It would become to him a lifelong memorial of God's promises to him and of His ability to fulfill those promises.*<sup>294</sup>

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Bethel is clearly one of the most important cities of ancient Israel. Jacob, in a rare spiritual insight, sees this land as God's. Generally speaking, Bethel and Luz are considered to be identical places. However, there is one passage where they are distinguished from one another in Josh. 16:2 where it reads *then going from Bethel to Luz, it [the boundaries] passes along the territory of the Archites to Ataroth*. However, there is no lamed (ל) which falls between the two names of the cities in Joshua; lamed is the preposition indicating direction. Furthermore, the Septuagint does not even include the word *Luz*, giving us the likely possibility that *Luz* is there by way of added information, as in *then going from Bethel (Luz), it passes along the territory of the Archites to Ataroth*. *Luz* could have been either in the original or inserted later. There are a couple of other explanations given by ZPEB<sup>295</sup> and other theologians, but they do not ring true, as Josh. 18:13 confirms that these two places are one and the same.

<sup>291</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:19 (slightly edited).*

<sup>292</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:19.

<sup>293</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:19.*

<sup>294</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:11); accessed May 28, 2017.

<sup>295</sup> For instance, Bethel could refer to the mountains and Luz to the city; or Bethel could refer to a small portion very near to the city. However, neither of these makes sense because (1) when this a set of boundaries is given, the two cities are usually separated by some distance so that the direction of movement is clear, and (2) if Bethel referred to a mountain range, then it would make sense for the word *mountain* to show up in the verse.

One might wonder the spiritual significance of this paragraph that I have just written. Why should I bother to even bring it up? The Bible is God's Word as originally recorded and the Bible should make logical sense with no internal contradictions. Although I may not have the ability to explain each and every *apparent* contradiction, I should be able to clearly explain some of them. God saw to it that no autographs<sup>296</sup> (and certainly, no originals) would survive and that there would be some intentional (and, therefore, some unintentional) textual corruption (this is implied by Deut. 4:2 Revelation 22:18–19). For this reason, since we have the whole Word of God, we have many spiritual gifts which have allowed us to ascertain the actual text and the true meaning of each passage in God's Word.

Some of the spiritual gifts which have come along over the past few centuries involved those of transcribing the text, language gifts, textual criticism gifts, etc. The majority of those men lead quiet, almost unknown lives, yet they have had tremendous spiritual impact. Without the gifts of hundreds of Godly men (and those are the ones who I can name), my discussion of Genesis would lack depth, clarity and meaning. Some explanations would not ring true. And even though I will never know any of these men here on earth, except by their names (and some, I will not even know that well), I recognize and acknowledge my complete dependence upon their gifts and will know them in eternity. It is because of them that I can present God's Word so that it makes sense and so that there are no real internal contradictions.

Another consideration of this verse is the oil. In terms of progressive revelation, those in the Old Testament did not have a full understanding (at least, not as full as we have) of God the Holy Spirit. They had in Scripture an inkling of His ministry toward us, as He is found in Genesis 1:2 (God the Father is found in v. 3 and God the Son is found in v. 1). However, oil represents the Holy Spirit, Who makes spiritual information understandable to us (natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit). Jacob, who is spiritually handicapped at this time, has divine information given to him in the dream and he has an understanding of this information by God the Holy Spirit. The rock represents his sleep and the oil the spiritual revelation.

**Genesis 28:19** And he called the name of that place *The House of God* [= *Beth-el*]. But the name of that city was Luz at first.

This same place is called *Bethel* back in Genesis 12:8 13:3. I believe that the book of Genesis was passed along from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob. I think that portions of it were understood to be the Word of God (surely Genesis 1–10). Much of the rest was the family line and a family history. Today, we know that all of the book of Genesis is the Word of God; however, let me suggest when Abraham or Jacob wrote this family history, they themselves may not have considered the parts that they wrote to be divinely inspired.

I personally believe in a very organic construction of the original book of Genesis. Let's say that we start with Abraham. He probably recognized Genesis 1–10 as being divinely inspired (to some limited degree—not as we understand that today). It just seemed natural to him to string together his family line and to record his encounters with God, and then to pass this along to his son Isaac. Now, did he understand his own words as being God's words? I would guess not. Whether his son or grandson recognized Abraham's words as God's Word; that is hard to tell. However, I suspect that, by the time we get down to the time of Moses, the book of Genesis is known and revered as the Word of God. Also, there are probably a number of Jews familiar with this book, to some degree or another given these few facts: (1) when God told Moses that he was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses did not stop God and say, "Who?" At no time did Moses question these sorts of statements by God. (2) Moses made similar statements to the elders of Israel. Again, none of them said, "Abraham and who else?" This suggests to me that something was known about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. One also should be aware that Moses' background is very different from the background of the elders of Israel. Moses was raised as royalty; but, because he murdered a taskmaster, he had to escape out to the desert-wilderness of Midian. Now, where did Moses learn about the book of Genesis? We have no idea, whether it was a part of his studies in the Egyptian palace or if he learned this under the teaching of his father-in-law in Midian. The elders of Israel would have had to have learned this by word of mouth from their fathers and grandfathers. (3) The book of Genesis is filled with chiasmi, which often make it easier to memorize a long passage of narrative (if you have the overall narrative tucked away in your brain; you can more easily recall the text of it).

<sup>296</sup> Completely accurate copies of the originals

We have no idea whether this history was kept through memorization or if it was written down (writing materials did exist in this era; but it is unclear whether Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had access to them; or whether their Hebrew had been reduced to a written language that they knew at this time<sup>297</sup>). There are words for writing in the Hebrew, but they have not been used in conjunction with Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob.

Bear in mind that men of that day lived much longer than they do today. It is reasonable to assume that men of that era were much smarter than they are today; so hearing and learning the book of Genesis would not be something as difficult for them as it would be for us.

Now, Jacob, knowing the history of Abraham (which is exactly what we have been studying from Genesis 12 forward), would have naturally taken the previous name of this place Luz and rename it in the history which he had memorized (or written down). Jacob is telling Joseph, for instance, the family history; and he is at Genesis 12:8 (there were no chapters or verse divisions at that time), Jacob would first say *Luz*, and then he would clarify this by saying, *which is now known as Bethel*. He has not changed anything, although he has clarified to Joseph where this place is. So, Jacob originally heard the family history from Abraham (or from Isaac), and heard the words: *From there he [Abraham] moved to the hill country on the east of Luz and pitched his tent, with Luz on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.* He repeats this narrative to his son Joseph, but Joseph does not know where Luz is; so, instead, Jacob tells Joseph: *From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.* What I am suggesting—and this is simply a theory—is that portions of the Scripture came into their final form very logically and organically. No person sat down, thinking to himself, “Now it is time for me to write down the Word of God.” Jacob does not necessarily consider his family history as being on a par with the Word of God (Genesis 1–10 or the book of Job). So, he would have heard Genesis 12:8 taught to him with the city *Luz*; but because he changed the name of that city (it wasn’t really a city at that time), he teaches it to his son Joseph using the name *Bethel* instead.

I believe the process of writing the Word of God, remembering the Word of God, and recognizing these chapters as the Word of God all took place at different times, in a very organic and progressive way. So, Abraham may certainly view Genesis 1–10 as being divinely inspired; and he also records his own family history, logically, to connect that time with his own. He might not even connect the two sets of writings in his own mind. He may understand the record of the ark, for instance, to be inspired by God. However, at the same time, as he records his own life in Genesis 12 and onwards, he is simply recording family history. Even though the Holy Spirit guided him to record this history (and his personal history may have been recorded mentally); that does not mean that Abraham knew that he was writing (or thinking) Scripture.

So Jacob preserves the history of his family, but he changes the name of the places where Abraham was, so that his sons know where this place is (they know it by the name *Bethel* and not by the name *Luz*).

What I have done here is offer a completely logical reason why we find the name *Bethel* back in Genesis 12:8 13:3; and yet, it is not given this name until now. This approach simply takes into account how real people would act when it comes down to writing or remembering family history.

If memory serves me correctly, the street that I lived on in 1953 was called Palm Ave., but later it was named Flagstone St. When referring back to it, we always refer to it as Flagstone, because that was its name for most of the time that we lived there.

It does not seem reasonable that Abraham sat down and decided to write out the Word of God, and so he begins with Genesis 12:1. When a patriarch recorded the Word of God (mentally or in writing), he did not necessarily need to know himself that he was recording the Word of God. Nor did his children necessarily recognize that they were hearing the Word of God when spoken to them by their father or grandfather. To them, this would have been

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<sup>297</sup> Remember when Abraham bought the acre or so of land on which Sarah would be buried, title was clearly transferred verbally before witnesses.

family history—and, quite obviously, Abraham’s interaction with God would be a good reason to remember family history.

You will recall that we studied Genesis 24, which was all about Abraham’s servant making this trip to find a wife for Isaac. The vocabulary and the repetition of the language certainly suggests a different author than Genesis 23 or 25. You may recall that language was very much like a story spoken to a child before they go to sleep. It seems unlikely that the servant who wrote this history and probably repeated it to Jacob as a child, did not consider it the Word of God, but simply a true bedtime story.

Obviously, Jacob would have appreciated the importance of knowing Genesis 1–10; and he would have appreciated knowing the family history—and about God speaking with his grandfather, Abraham. He would have memorized both; and he would have likely memorized these things together. What is not necessary in this process is for him to have the full-on understanding of what it means for this to be the Word of God, inspired by God the Holy Spirit.

**Genesis 28:19** And he called the name of that place *The House of God* [= *Beth-el*]. But the name of that city was Luz at first.

This tells us the route that Jacob was going along; and this would have been quite early on in his journey.

**Map of Jacob’s Journey** (so far) from [Bible-history.com](http://Bible-history.com), accessed August 6, 2014. Jacob

would have started his journey down in Beersheba and now he has traveled north-northeast, parallel to the Dead Sea and the River Jordan up to Bethel.



## Chapter Outline

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**Genesis 28:16–19** Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." And 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." So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on its top. And he called the name of that place *bethel*; however, previously the name of the city had been *Luz*. (Snider’s translation)

### Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 28:16–19

1. Having received the Divine information, and at an unexpected time and in such an unexpected fashion, Jacob is frightened out of his sleep.
2. He awakes in the middle of the night and is quite naturally scared.
3. He immediately supposes that the place in which he lies is somehow sacred, or different than any other place.
4. God’s revelation and manifestation of His presence makes the area "holy", not the fact that God "resides" there.
5. We know that God is equally present in every area of the universe, because He chooses to reveal Himself locally, does not mean He lives there.
6. This is precisely what Jacob interpreted this to mean, since God revealed Himself there, He must live

## Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 28:16–19

- there.
7. Some have stated that Jacob's understanding of God and His Essence was on a par with that of Abraham, but statements such as this indicate that it was not.
  8. The immediate result upon Jacob was fear, which was not something that this gracious revelation was supposed to cause.
  9. This was designed to comfort and encourage Jacob, yet he responds with fear.
  10. He attributes the significance of this event to the place, and not to God who communicated with him.
  11. His actions and response are not those of a believer who is straight in their thinking, but more along the lines of a superstitious old woman.
  12. Whether or not he went back to sleep that night is not recorded.
  13. He definitely arises early in the morning and takes the stone he had used as a head rest and places it upright.
  14. He then pours oil on the stone to commemorate this encounter.
  15. He calls the name of the nearby city Bethel, which means house of God.
  16. The city had been previously known as Luz.
  17. The setting up of memorials and activities such as anointing the stone were common during this period of history.
  18. These memorials were used to commemorate communications between God and men and between men and men. Genesis 28:18, 31:52
  19. The problem with the religious type of commemoration is that men, being superstitious tend to come to regard the ritual or symbol as the reality.
  20. There is abundant proof that pillars were used in the worship of demons by the Canaanites. Ex. 23:24; Lev. 26:1; Deut. 16:22; 2Kgs 3:2
  21. The believer should recognize that places, artifacts, religious trinkets, and other symbols have no inherent power or ability to bless them.
  22. The area around Bethel was no more holy than any other area of the planet, it only became significant due to God Himself.
  23. Jacob demonstrates his foolishness by his occupation with the place and not with the God of the place.

From [Makarios Bible Church](#); will open up in Word or WP; accessed June 1, 2017.

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Logically, God would have contacted Jacob *while* he is still in the Land of Promise (which is what we have been studying). Like Abraham, every time that God speaks to Jacob, he is going to make a mental note of it and recall all of the pertinent circumstances. When God speaks to you, obviously you are going to remember what He said and the circumstances surrounding this talk.<sup>298</sup>

## Jacob's 6 Responses to the Vision of God

1. Jacob makes his first remark: [Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it."](#) Gen 28:16 (ESV)
2. Then Jacob has a response and an observation. [And 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."](#) Gen 28:17
3. Jacob takes the stone which was near his head and set it upright as a pillar. Gen 28:18
4. Jacob then poured oil on the pillar. Genesis 28:18
5. Fifthly, he names the place where he encountered Him. Genesis 28:19
6. Finally, Jacob made a vow to God. Genesis 28:20-22

<sup>298</sup> God is not audibly speaking to anyone today.

## Jacob's 6 Responses to the Vision of God

7. What Jacob *should* have done was, offer an animal sacrifice rather than a vow to God.

Restated from [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:15); accessed June 1, 2017.

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### Jacob's Vow

One way that Jacob will respond to God's appearance and His promises is with a vow. The problem with this vow, in a nutshell, is, it is not really an expression of faith. It is more a transaction. It is almost as if Jacob is trying to *sweeten the pot* for God by saying, "Okay, You do what You said You'd do, and I will give You 10%!"

**And so vows Jacob a vow, to say, "If is Elohim with me and He has kept me in the way the this that I am walking and He has given to me bread to eat and clothing to wear, and I have returned in peace unto a house of my father and has been Y<sup>e</sup>howah to me for an Elohim. And the stone the this which I have set up [as] a pillar is a house of Elohim and all which You give to me tithing I tithe him to You."**

Genesis  
28:20–22

**Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If Elohim is with me and [if] He keeps me on this road that I am going [on] and He has given to me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and I return in peace to my father's house, then Y<sup>e</sup>howah will be to me for an Elohim. And the this stone which I have set up will be a pillar [of] the house of Elohim and all that You have given me, I will tithe it [back] to You."**

**Jacob then vowed a vow, saying, "If God is with me and if He keeps me along this pathway that I go in, and if He gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and if I am able to return in peace to my father's home, then Jehovah will be for me God. Furthermore, this stone from the house of God and all that You give me, I will surely tithe it back to You."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so vows Jacob a vow, to say, "If is Elohim with me and He has kept me in the way the this that I am walking and He has given to me bread to eat and clothing to wear, and I have returned in peace unto a house of my father and has been Y<sup>e</sup>howah to me for an Elohim. And the stone the this which I have set up [as] a pillar is a house of Elohim and all which You give to me tithing I tithe him to You."

Targum (trans. By Cook)

And Jakob vowed a vow, saying, If the Word of the Lord will be my Helper, and will keep me from shedding innocent blood, and from strange worship, and from impure converse, in this way that I am going; and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to wear, and will bring me back in peace to my father's house; the Lord will be my God: "and this stone which I have set (for) a pillar will be ordained for the house of the sanctuary of the Lord, and upon it will generations worship the Name of the Lord; and of all that You mayest give me, the tenth will I separate before You.

Latin Vulgate

And he made a vow, saying: If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way, by which I walk, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, And I will return prosperously to my father's house: the Lord will be my God: And this stone, which

Peshitta (Syriac)	I have set up for a title, will be <u>called</u> the house of God: and of all things that you will give to me, I will offer tithes to you. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me and will protect me in this way that I go, and will give me food to eat and clothing to wear So that I may return to my fathers house in peace, then the LORD will be my God; And this stone which I have set up for a pillar will be God's house and of all that you will give me I will give the tenth to you.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If the Lord God will be with me, and guard me throughout on this journey, on which I am going, and give me bread to eat, and clothing to put on, and bring me back in <u>safety</u> to the house of my father, then shall the Lord be my God. And this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be to me a house of God; and of everything You shall give me, I will tithe a tenth to You.
Significant differences:	The Latin has <i>he</i> rather than <i>Jacob</i> . The Hebrew has <i>if Elohim is with me</i> ; the targum has <i>If the Word of the Lord will be my Helper</i> . The targum inserts the text <i>from shedding innocent blood, and from strange worship, and from impure converse</i> .  The Hebrew has the word <i>peace</i> ; the Latin has <i>prosperous</i> ; the Greek has <i>safely</i> . These are reasonable English meanings for the original Hebrew word.  The targum and Latin then add some additional words. Instead of <i>give</i> , the targum has <i>separate</i> (in context, it means much the same thing).

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Jacob took an oath, and said, If God will be with me, and keep me safe on my journey, and give me food and clothing to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace, then I will take the Lord to be my God, And this stone which I have put up for a pillar will be God's house: and of all you give me, I will give a tenth part to you.
Easy English	Jacob made a promise. He said, 'I make a promise if God will be with me. I make this promise if he will protect me on this journey. I make it if he will give bread for me to eat. I make it if he will give clothes for me to wear. I make it if will bring me back in peace to my father's house. If those things are so, then I promise this: The *Lord will be my God. And this stone, which I have put up as a column shall be God's house. And I will give back to you, *Lord, one tenth of everything that you give to me.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Jacob made a promise. He said, "If God will be with me, and if God will protect me on this trip, and if God gives me food to eat and clothes to wear, and if I return in peace to my father's house—if God does all these things—then the Lord will be my God. I am setting this stone up as a memorial stone. It will show that this is a holy place for God. And I will give God one tenth of all he gives me."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then Jacob made a vow to the LORD: "If you will be with me and protect me on the journey I am making and give me food and clothing, and if I return safely to my father's home, then you will be my God. This memorial stone which I have set up will be the place where you are worshiped, and I will give you a tenth of everything you give me."
The Message	Jacob vowed a vow: "If God stands by me and protects me on this journey on which I'm setting out, keeps me in food and clothing, and brings me back in one piece to my father's house, this GOD will be my God. This stone that I have set up as a memorial pillar will mark this as a place where God lives. And everything you give me, I'll return a tenth to you."

Names of God Bible	Then Jacob made a vow: "If <b>Elohim</b> will be with me and will watch over me on my trip and give me food to eat and clothes to wear, and if I return safely to my father's home, then <b>Yahweh</b> will be my <b>Elohim</b> . This stone that I have set up as a marker will be the house of <b>Elohim</b> , and I will surely give you a tenth of everything you give me."
NIRV	Then Jacob made a promise. He said, "May God be with me. May he watch over me on this journey I'm taking. May he give me food to eat and clothes to wear. May he do as he has promised so that I can return safely to my father's home. Then you, Lord, will be my God. This stone I've set up as a pillar will be God's house. And I'll give you a tenth of everything you give me."

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Jacob made a solemn promise: "If God is with me and protects me on this trip I'm taking, and gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and I return safely to my father's household, then the Lord will be my God. This stone that I've set up as a sacred pillar will be God's house, and of everything you give me I will give a tenth back to you."
Contemporary English V.	Jacob solemnly promised God, "If you go with me and watch over me as I travel, and if you give me food and clothes and bring me safely home again, you will be my God. This rock will be your house, and I will give back to you a tenth of everything you give me."
New Berkeley Version	Jacob then made this vow, "If God accompanies me and watches over me on this journey, giving me food to eat and clothes to wear, and I return in peace to my father's home, then the LORD shall be my God and this stone which I have erected for a memorial pillar shall become a house of God. Moreover I will without fail give Thee a tithe of all Thou shalt give me."
New Century Version	Then Jacob made a promise. He said, "I want God to be with me and to protect me on this journey. I want him to give me food to eat and clothes to wear so I will be able to return in peace to my father's house. If the Lord does these things, he will be my God. This stone which I have set up on its end will be the house of God. And I will give God one-tenth of all he gives me."
New Life Version	Then Jacob made a promise. He said, "If God will be with me and take care of me as I go, and if He will give me food to eat and clothes to wear, so that I return in peace to my father's house, then the Lord will be my God. I have set up this stone as a pillar to be God's house. And I will give You a tenth part of all You give to me."
New Living Translation	Then Jacob made this vow: "If God will indeed be with me and protect me on this journey, and if he will provide me with food and clothing, and if I return safely to my father's home, then the Lord will certainly be my God. And this memorial pillar I have set up will become a place for worshipping God, and I will present to God a tenth of everything he gives me."

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Thereafter, Jacob made a vow, saying: 'If Jehovah God will be with me and guard me throughout this journey, and give me bread to eat and clothes to wear, then bring me back safely to the house of my father; He will be my God. Also, this stone that I have erected as a pillar will be a House of God to me, and I will return to Him a tenth of everything that He gives to me.'
Beck's American Translation	Then Jacob made a vow, "If God will be with me," he said, "and watch over me where I'm going and give me food to eat and clothes to wear, so that I come back safely to my father's home, then the LORD will be my God, and this stone I set up as a pillar will be God's house; and I will give You a tenth of everything You give me."

International Standard V	Then he made this solemn vow [Lit. <i>vowed a vow</i> ]: "If God remains with me, watches over me throughout this journey that I'm taking, gives me food to eat and clothes to wear, and returns me safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God, this stone that I've erected in the form of a pillar will be God's house, and I'll give you a tenth of everything that you give to me."
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And there he took a vow; If God will be with me, he said, and watch over me on this journey of mine, and give me bread to eat and clothes to cover my back, till at last I return safe to my father's house, then the Lord shall be my God. This stone, too, which I have set up as a monument, shall be called the House of God. And of all the gifts thou sendest me, a tenth part shall be the offering I make thee.
Today's NIV	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 so that I return safely to my father's household, then the LORD will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."
Translation for Translators	Jacob solemnly promised God, saying, "God, if you will help me and protect me while I am taking this journey, and if you give me enough food to eat and clothes to wear, in order that I can later return safely to my father's house, then you, Yahweh, will be the God that I will worship. This stone that I have set up will mark the place where people can worship you. And I will give back to you a tenth of everything that you give to me."

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Ancient Roots Translinear	Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If God is with me, and keeps me in this way that I go, giving me bread to eat, clothing me with cloaks, and I return to my father's house in peace, Yahweh is my God. This stone, which I set for a memorial is God's house and I will   tithe   to you of all that you give me."
Conservapedia Translation	Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am traveling, and give me breat to eat and clothes to put on, and I return in peace to the house of my father, then the LORD will be my God. And this stone that I have placed as a monument, will become the house of God, and of everything that you give me, I will give you back ten percent." This is the establishing authority of the tithe, or the ten-percent remittance to God.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then Jacob vowed a vow, saying; "If the EVER-LIVING God is with me, and will guard me in the way that I now go, and give to me bread to eat and clothing to put on, and bring me back safely to the house of my father, - then the EVER-LIVING shall be my God. And this stone which I placed for a pillow shall be a House of God, and of all that You give to me, I will return a tenth part to You."
H. C. Leupold	And Jacob vowed a vow, saying: If God will be with me and will keep me in this way which I am going, and will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and I shall return in peace to my father's house, and Yahweh will be God to me—then this stone, which I have set up as pillar, shall be a house of God and of all that Thou givest to me, I will surely give a tithe to Thee.
Urim-Thummim Version	And Jacob affirmed a pledge saying, if Elohim will be with me and will guard me in this journey that I go, and will grant me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I return to my dad's house in peace, then will YHWH be my Elohim. And this stone pillar that I have set for a pillar will be Elohim's house, and of all that you will bestow to me I will take a tenth part for an offering as a tithe to you.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Jacob swore an oath to say: "If God will be with me, and keep me on this way which I do travel, and give me bread to eat, and clothes to wear. And if I were to return safely to my father's house; then Yahweh would be onto me, my God. And this stone which I have placed here as a monument-- will be the house of God; and everything which you will give me, a tenth to you will I tithe."

**Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Heritage Bible	And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will hedge me about in this way that I walk, and will give me food to eat, and clothing to put on, And I return to my father's house in peace, then Jehovah shall be my God, And this stone, which I have set for a memorial column, shall be the house of God, and I will tithe the tenth to you of all that you give me.
New English Bible	Thereupon Jacob made this vow: 'If God will be with me, if he will protect me on my journey and give me food to eat and clothes to wear, and I come back safely to my father's house, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone which I have set up as a sacred pillar shall be a house of God. And of all that thou givest me, I will without fail allot a tenth part to thee.'
New Jerusalem Bible	Jacob then made this vow, 'If God remains with me and keeps me safe on this journey I am making, if he gives me food to eat and clothes to wear, and if I come home safe to my father's home, then Yahweh shall be my God. This stone I have set up as a pillar is to be a house of God, and I shall faithfully pay you a tenth part of everything you give me.'
New RSV	Then 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, 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; and of all that you give me I will surely give one-tenth to you.'
Revised English Bible	Jacob made this vow: 'If God will be with me, if he will protect me on my journey and give me food to eat and clothes to wear, so that I come back safely to my father's house, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone which I have set up as a sacred pillar shall be a house of God. And of all that you give me, I shall allot a tenth part to you.'

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	Ya'akov took this vow: "If God will be with me and will guard me on this road that I am traveling, giving me bread to eat and clothes to wear, so that I return to my father's house in peace, then ADONAI will be my God; and this stone, which I have set up as a standing-stone, will be God's house; and of everything you give me, I will faithfully return one-tenth to you."
The Complete Tanach	And Jacob uttered a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and He will guard me on this way, upon which I am going, and He will give me bread to eat and a garment to wear;...

**If God will be with me:** If He keeps these promises that he promised me to be with me, as He said to me, "And behold, I am with you." [from Gen. Rabbah 70:4]

**and He will guard me:** As He said to me, "and I will guard you wherever you go."

**and He will give me bread to eat:** As He said, "for I will not forsake you," for if one must seek bread, he is called "forsaken," as it is said, (Ps. 37:25): "and I have not seen a righteous man forsaken and his seed seeking bread." [from Gen. Rabbah 69:6]

...And if I return in peace to my father's house, and the Lord will be my God;...

**And if I return:** As He said to me, "and I will restore you to this land."

**in peace:** Perfect from sin, that I will not learn from the ways of Laban.

**and the Lord will be my God:** that His name will rest upon me from beginning to end, that no disqualification should be found among my seed, as it is written: “[I will do] that which I have spoken concerning you.” And this promise He promised to Abraham, as it is said (17: 7): “to be a God to you and to your seed after you.” (“Your seed” [means that they should be] of pure lineage, that no disqualification should be found in him.) [from Sifrei Va-etchanan 31]

Then this stone, which I have placed as a monument, shall be a house of God, and everything that You give me, I will surely tithe to You.

**Then this stone:** Heb. תִּאֲזָרָה וּבְאֵרוֹ, lit., and this stone. This “vav” of וּבְאֵרוֹ is to be explained as follows: If You will do these things for me, I too will do this: “And this stone, which I have placed as a monument, etc.” As the Targum paraphrases: “I will worship upon it before the Lord.” And so he did when he returned from Padan-aram, when He said to him, (35:1): “Arise, go up to Beth-el.” What is stated there? (ibid. verse 14): “And Jacob erected a monument, etc., and he poured a libation upon it.” [from Mishnath Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 14]

exeGesés companion Bible	And Yaaqov vows a vow, saying, Elohim is with me and guards me in this way I go and gives me bread to eat and clothing to enrobe, so that I return to the house of my father in shalom; then Yah Veh becomes my Elohim: and this stone, which I set for a monolith, becomes Beth Elohim: and of all you give me, in tithing, I tithe to you.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Jacob then made a bow, saying, “If God remains with me, if He protects me on this journey that I am making, and gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear, and if I return safe to my father’s house—the LORD shall be my God. And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar shall be God’s abode; and of all that You give me, I will set aside a tithe for You.”
Judaica Press Complete T.	And Jacob uttered a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and He will guard me on this way, upon which I am going, and He will give me bread to eat and a garment to wear; And if I return in peace to my father's house, and the Lord will be my God; Then this stone, which I have placed as a monument, shall be a house of God, and everything that You give me, I will surely tithe to You.
Kaplan Translation	Jacob made a vow. 'If God will be with me,' he said, 'if He will protect me on the journey that I am taking, if He gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear, and if I return in peace to my father's house, then I will dedicate myself totally to God [Literally, 'God will be my Lord' (cf. Ramban; Sforno; Hirsch). Others have it as part of the condition: 'and if God will be my Lord' - that is, 'If God will be uniquely associated with me and my children forever' (Rashi)]. Let this stone that I have set up as a pillar become a temple to God [It was later the place of the Holy of Holies (see note on Genesis 22:19)]. Of all that You give me, I will set aside a tenth [Literally a tithe. See note on Genesis 14:20.] to You.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Ya'akov vowed a neder (vow), saying, If Elohim will be with me, and will be shomer over me in this derech (way, journey) that I go, and will give me lechem to eat, and beged (clothes) to put on, So that I return to bais avi in shalom; then shall Hashem be for me Elohim (my G-d). And this even (stone), which I have set for a matzevah (pillar), shall be Beis Elohim: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the aser (tenth) unto Thee.

#### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

- The Amplified Bible* Then 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 food to eat and clothing to wear, So that I may come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God; And this stone which I have set up as a pillar (monument) shall be God's house [a sacred place to me], and of all [the increase of possessions] that You give me I will give the tenth to You.
- The Expanded Bible* Then Jacob made a promise [vowed a vow]. He said, "I want God to be with me and to protect [guard] me on this journey. I want him to give me food to eat and clothes to wear so I will be able to return in peace [or safely] to my father's house. If the Lord does these things, he will be my God. This stone which I have set up on its end [as a pillar] will be the house of God. And I will give God one-tenth [a tithe] of all he gives me."
- Kretzmann's Commentary* And Jacob vowed 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 raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then will the Lord be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, will be God's house; and of all that You will give me I will surely give the tenth unto You. It was not a condition which Jacob here expressed, but a thankful acknowledgment of the divine assurance. By this vow Jacob accepted the promise of the Lord and declared what, in his estimation, was included in it. He had a definite event before his eyes, for the stone which at present served only as a reminder of the miraculous vision, would be replaced by a monument of the presence and dwelling of God with His people, and of the gifts of God which would come to him as a result of that promise he herewith dedicated the tenth part to the Lord in return. That is the proper form of trust in God, to accept His promises in simple faith, and to worship and serve Him in turn.
- NET Bible®* Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God is with me and protects me on this journey I am taking and gives me food [Heb "bread," although the term can be used for food in general.] to eat and clothing to wear, and I return safely to my father's home [Heb "and I return in peace to the house of my father."], then the Lord will become my God. Then this stone [The disjunctive clause structure (conjunction + noun/subject) is used to highlight the statement.] that I have set up as a sacred stone will be the house of God, and I will surely [The infinitive absolute is used before the finite verb for emphasis.] give you back a tenth of everything you give me [Heb "and all which you give to me I will surely give a tenth of it to you." The disjunctive clause structure (conjunction + noun/object) highlights this statement as well.]"
- The Pulpit Commentary* And Jacob vowed a vow,—not in any mercenary or doubtful spirit, but as an expression of gratitude for the Divine mercy (Calvin), as the soul's full and free acceptance of the Lord to be its own God (Murphy), as the instinctive impulse of the new creature (Candlish)—saying, If (not the language of uncertainty, but equivalent to "since, ' or "forasmuch as;" Jacob by faith both appropriating and anticipating the fulfillment of the preceding promise) God (Elohim; for the reason of which vide infra) will be with me,—as he has promised (Genesis 28:15), and as I believe he will—and will keep me in this way that I go,—a particular appropriation of the general promise (Genesis 28:15)—and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on (i.e. all the necessaries of life, included, though not specially mentioned, in the preceding promise), so that I come again to my father's house—also guaranteed by God (Genesis 28:15), and here accepted by the patriarch—in peace (i.e. especially free from Esau's avenging threats); then shall the Lord be my God—literally, and Jehovah will be to me for Elohim (Rosenmóller, Hengstenberg, Keil, Kalisch, 'Speaker's Commentary'), though the received translation is not without support (LXX; Vulgate, Syriac, Calvin, Michaelis, Lange, Murphy, Wordsworth); but to have bargained and bartered with God in the way which this suggests before assenting to accept him as an object of trust and worship would have been little less than criminal. Accordingly, the clause is best placed in the protasis of the sentence,

which then practically reads, "if Elohim will be Jehovah to me, and if Jehovah will be to me Elohim".

And (or then, the apodosis now commencing) **this stone which I have set for a pillar** (vide on Genesis 28:18) **shall be God's house**—Bethel, meaning that he would afterwards erect there an altar for the celebration of Divine worship—a resolution which was subsequently carried out (vide Genesis 35:1, Genesis 35:15). "The pillar or cairn or cromlech of Bethel must have been looked upon by the Israelites, and may be still looked upon in thought by us, as the precursor of every "house of God" that has since arisen in the Jewish and Christian world—the temple, the cathedral, the church, the chapel; nay, more, of those secret places of worship that are marked by no natural beauty and seen by no human eye—the closet, the catacomb, the thoroughfare of the true worshipper. **And of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.** Literally, giving I will give the tenth (cf. Genesis 14:20). The case of Jacob affords another proof that the practice of voluntary tithing was known and observed antecedent to the tune of Moses

The Voice

Then Jacob made a vow.

**Jacob:** If God is going to be with me, keeping me safe on this journey and giving me bread to eat and clothing to wear so that I return to my father's house in peace, then the Eternal will be my God. And this stone I have made into a pillar will be the first stone laid in God's house. And Lord, of everything You give me, I will give one-tenth always back to You!

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Ya'aqov [He restrains] vowed a vow saying, if YHWH <sup>[He Exists]</sup> of Elohiym <sup>[Powers]</sup> is by me and he will guard me in this road which I am walking and he will give to me bread to eat and garments to clothe, and I will turn back in completeness to the house of my father then YHWH <sup>[He Exists]</sup> will exist for me for Elohiym <sup>[Powers]</sup>, and this stone which I set in place as a monument will exist as the house of Elohiym <sup>[Powers]</sup> and all which you will give to me I will surely give a tenth of him to you, ...

Concordant Literal Version And vowing is Jacob a vow, saying, "Should it be coming that Yahweh Elohim stands by me, and keeps me in this way which I am going, and gives to me bread to eat and a garment to put on, and I return in peace to my father's household, then Yahweh becomes my Elohim, and this stone, which I place for a monument, shall become the house of Elohim for me. And of all that You are giving to me, tithe, yea, tithe it will I for You.

Context Group Version And Jacob vowed 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 put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and YHWH will be my God, then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you shall give me I will surely give the tenth to you.

Darby Translation And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and keep me on this road that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and a garment to put on, and I come again to my father's house in peace -- then shall Jehovah be my God. And this stone, which I have set up [for] a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou wilt give me I will without fail give the tenth to thee.

*Emphasized Bible* And Jacob vowed a vow, saying,—If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way whereon, I, am going, and give me bread to eat and raiment to put on; and I come back in prosperity unto the house of my father, Then will Yahweh prove to be my God,— And, this stone which I have put for a pillar, shall be the house of God,—And, of all which thou shalt give me, a tenth, will I tithe unto thee.

NASB Then Jacob made a vow [Gen 31:13; Judg 11:30; 2 Sam 15:8], saying, "If God [Genesis 28:15] will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take [Lit go], and will give me food [Lit bread] [1 Tim 6:8] to eat and garments to wear, and I

return [Judg 11:31] to my father's house in safety [Lit *peace*], then the Lord will be my God [Deut 26:17]. This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house [Gen 35:7], and of all [Lev 27:30; Deut 14:22] that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Updated Bible Version 2.11

And Jacob vowed 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 raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and Yahweh will be my God, then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, will be God's house. And of all that you will give me I will surely give the tenth to you.

Webster's updated Bible

And Jacob vowed 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 raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then will the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set [for] a pillar, will be God's house: and of all that you will give me, I will surely give the tenth to you.

Young's Updated LT

And Jacob vows a vow, saying, "Seeing God is with me, and has kept me in this way which I am going, and has given to me bread to eat, and a garment to put on—when I have turned back in peace unto the house of my father, and Jehovah has become my God, then this stone which I have made a standing pillar is a house of God, and all that You will give to me—tithing I tithe to You."

**The gist of this verse:**

Jacob makes a vow that, if God is with him and if God protects him and if God gives him food and clothing, then Jacob will give a tithe back to God.

Genesis 28:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nādar (נדן) [pronounced <i>naw-DAHR</i> ]	<i>to vow, to make a promise, to make a commitment, to give a word of assurance concerning a matter, to give one's personal and honorable guarantee, to make a solemn oath or pledge to do or not to do a thing</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5087 BDB #623
Ya'āqôb (בְּקָעִי) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
nēder (נדן) [pronounced <i>NAY-der</i> ]	<i>a vow, a promise, a personal guarantee, the giving of one's word of assurance, a commitment</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5088 BDB #623

Bullinger: *Made a solemn vow.*<sup>299</sup>

**Translation:** Jacob vowed a vow,...

<sup>299</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:20.

Jacob was quite struck by all that had happened, and this dream made him realize clearly that God would still bless him; and that God would fulfill the promises to him. However, he will make a vow, looking forward, to what might come to pass.

This is the first vow recorded in Scripture; and we should not think that, whatever we find in the Bible, ought to be imitated. We get an objective view of Jacob, his good points (haven't seen many of those yet) and his bad. Just because vowing a vow sounds very holy and nice, does not mean that it is. See the **Doctrine of Vows** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) for more information.

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge's list of Scripture on this topic: Genesis 31:13; Leviticus 27:1–34; Num. 6:1–20, Num. 21:2–3; Judges 11:30–31; 1Samuel 1:11, 1Samuel 1:28; 1Samuel 14:24; 2Samuel 15:8; Neh. 9:1–10:39; Psalm 22:25, Psalm 56:12, Psalm 61:5, Psalm 61:8, Psalm 66:13; Psalm 76:11, Psalm 116:14, Psalm 116:18, Psalm 119:106, Psalm 132:2; Eccles. 5:1–7; Isaiah 19:21; John 1:16; Acts 18:18, Acts 23:12–15.<sup>300</sup>

### Genesis 28:20a And Jacob vowed a vow, saying,...

Before we examine this vow, we are going to take a little time to look at the Hebrew here and to discuss ancient Hebrew and the vowel points found in the later Hebrew.

#### The ancient Hebrew, vowel points, and the preservation of ancient manuscripts:

This is the first time that we have the verb *to vow* and its noun cognate. The verb is *nâdar* (נָדַר) [pronounced *naw-DAHR*], and it means, *to vow, to make a promise, to make a commitment, to give a word of assurance concerning a matter, to give one's personal and honorable guarantee, to make a solemn oath or pledge to do or not to do a thing*. Strong's #5087 BDB #623. The noun is *nêder* (נֶדֶר) [pronounced *NAY-der*].

In the original Hebrew, before the vowel points were added, these words would have looked exactly the same, but have been pronounced differently. The reading of this would have originally been *NDRNDR* (נדרנדר), but the reader would have pronounced these words *naw-DAHR NAY-der*. (Actually, the subject of the verb, *Jacob*, is found between these two words.) These words would have been memorized, so people who read them would read them as different words, even though they are spelled identically in the original Hebrew, which did not have vowels (or, vowel points).

They apparently memorized the Word of God and the passages so that they would be able to read them aloud.

Vowel points were later added—in fact, these vowel points may not have been added until around the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. So נדר became נֶדֶר. If you notice, the original text remains undisturbed; unchanged. But now, a reader of Hebrew can look at this word by itself and know whether it is the verb or its noun cognate. Furthermore, he is able to pronounce it.

There is a goofy practice among a few people today who spell the word *God* as *G\*d*. Somehow, they think that they are being more true to original language when they do that or more intellectual or more religious. Using the spelling *G\*d* is absolutely absurd! There were no vowels used at all in the Hebrew language for about 2000 years. Now, if you think that you should leave the vowels out of the word *God*, then why don't you leave them out of every word, as the ancient Jews did? And why do you use an asterisk? The Hebrews did not use asterisks! So, logically, it is much more holy and intellectual to leave out the vowels and asterisks altogether.

What did happen is, the Hebrews, when reading the Word of God publically, stopped saying God's proper name *YHWH*, and began using the more general term *Adonai* instead (*Adonai* means *Lord*). So, the text *YHWH* (יהוה)

<sup>300</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 28:20.

would be what they saw with their eyes; but they said *Adonai* instead. As a result, for thousands of years, they knew how to say NDRNDR, because they knew that they were different words; but they forgot how to say *YHWH*—because they stopped saying it! As a result, you may see God's proper name as *the Lord*, *Jehovah*, *Adonai*, *YHWH*, *Yawah* and *Y<sup>e</sup>howah* (which I believe is the most accurate representation of God's person name). The latter word is pronounced *Y<sup>e</sup>ho-WAH*, somewhat like an exhaled breath (the first 4 letters form a single syllable with a very short e).

My guess is, some people use the spelling *G\*d* to show off how smart they are—when they really aren't.

Speaking of old manuscripts: originally, the manuscripts which we have depended upon for the Hebrew Old Testament were two (yes, only two): the Leningrad Codex, which was copied in A.D. 1008 and is a complete copy of the Old Testament. We also depend upon the Aleppo Codex, which was copied in A.D. 925<sup>301</sup> (this is an incomplete text). By this time, the vowel points had been added in. There are other partial manuscripts, but there are only a handful<sup>302</sup> of ancient Masorite manuscripts of the Old Testament, as compared to the 26,000 full and partial ancient manuscripts of the New Testament. So our Old Testament is primarily based upon a single ancient manuscript, which is removed in time from the original text by at least 1400 years (for the final few books; and a longer time for the earlier books).

After the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 until around the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the rabbinical scholars attempted to establish an accurate and consistent text of the Old Testament.<sup>303</sup> It was probably in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. when Masorites actually standardized the Hebrew text, which included the addition of vowel points.<sup>304</sup> At this point, once the decision had been made to *vocalize the text* (add in the vowel points), all other ancient manuscripts were probably ordered destroyed, which explains why we have no Hebrew manuscripts prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

The exception to this are the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947 (and in the years following), which was an ancient library of texts dated around 100 B.C. This would make these manuscripts roughly coterminous with the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament).

The Hebrew writing of the Dead Sea Scrolls would have been without vowel points.

Because Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.) had conquered so much territory, many Jews spoke Hellenistic Greek as their first language, and Hebrew was becoming an unused language, except for religious purposes. Therefore, they needed to have a Bible in the language which they spoke. Interestingly enough, even though the Greek Old Testament (called the Septuagint) was developed for the Hellenistic Jews, the early Christians seized on this Greek Bible (many of them did not speak Hebrew) and they took on the responsibility of preserving the Greek text of the Old Testament. At the same time, the Jewish scribes continued to preserve the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. When Latin became the dominant language of that area, then the forerunners of the Catholic church began to preserve both testaments in Latin. Ancient translations of the Bible were made in Syriac and in Arabic as well, which were preserved by other sets of people.

As a result, we have several witnesses to the text of the Old Testament. (1) There are the Dead Sea Scrolls from 100 B.C.; (2) there are several Hebrew manuscripts from a time of standardization of the Hebrew text (mostly from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.); (3) and we have the Greek Septuagint (along with several other ancient translations)—these 3 sets of witnesses were all preserved by 3 very different groups of people. What would be natural (to the thinking of the unbeliever) is for these different groups to preserve the text in such a way to

<sup>301</sup> Some sources say A.D. 930.

<sup>302</sup> Geisler and Nix list only 7 of them; the Leningrad codex being the only complete manuscript. Norman Geisler and William Nix; *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1968, p. 250.

<sup>303</sup> *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*; translation and commentary by Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich; Harper SF, ©1999, p. xi.

<sup>304</sup> Norman Geisler and William Nix; *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1968, p. 251.

preserve their own beliefs and traditions, but that has not happened. Besides these, we have ancient Latin, Syriac and Arabic texts; all acting as witnesses for one another.

Although there are certainly some differences of note (primarily between the Masoretic and Greek texts), there is very little which is actually substantive. If you read an English translation from the Greek text and another English translation made from the Hebrew text, you would be hard-pressed to identify which was which. You would *not* be able to say, "Well, the Christian influence is profound, so this must be translated from the Greek." The differences in the text are, for the most part, non-theological. In fact, I have personally gone through over a third of the Old Testament, word-by-word in the Hebrew, and compared that to the Greek, and I cannot think of a single instance where a textual difference could be seen as theological in nature—despite the disparate nature of those who preserved the text.

I can only think of one instance where the difference in the text was truly significant (Saul calls for the ark in 1Samuel 14:18, but it is apparent that he has really called for the *ephod*).<sup>305</sup>

### Genesis 28:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to answer</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'îm (אם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
<p>When following an oath, either stated or implied, 'îm, by itself, functions as an emphatic negative. According to the Geneva Bible: <i>The Hebrews in swearing begin commonly with "If" and understand the rest, that is, that God will punish him who breaks the oath: here the wicked show that they are afraid lest that happen to them which they would do to others.</i><sup>306</sup></p>			
<p>Jacobus expresses the view of many commentators: <i>This is not making any condition with God, for this is only a recital of the promise, and is more properly rendered since—inasmuch as. It expresses no doubt or contingency.</i><sup>307</sup> I believe, on the other hand, that the entire tenor of this is a vow, based upon the actions of God; I think that point of view is in keeping with the thinking of Jacob.</p>			
hâyâh (היה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

<sup>305</sup> I am pretty certain that it was Saul; but it could have been David.

<sup>306</sup> From <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/geneva-study-bible/genesis/genesis-26.html> accessed March 10, 2013

<sup>307</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:20.

## Genesis 28:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from; against; toward; as long as; beside, except; in spite of</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

**Translation:** ...saying, "If Elohim is with me..."

Jacob's vows come with a great many conditions. In fact, he will put about 5 conditions upon God. It is clear that Jacob is not the spiritual giant that his father Abraham is.

The word ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced *eem*] is used here, and could be reasonably placed before each of the next few phrases which follow. It means, *if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when*. Strong's #518 BDB #49. What will go with this participle will be all of the conditions which he places upon God.

Although this could read, "Since God is with me..." that would presuppose that Jacob understood a great deal of doctrine. Let me suggest to you that he did not. Furthermore, the whole tenor of these final 3 verses is that of a deal that Jacob is striking with God. "You do this for me and I will do that for You," seems to be what Jacob is saying here. I realize the absurdity of bargaining with God, telling Him what you can do for Him—but bear in mind that Jacob is not, by any means, a spiritual giant.

First condition is, God must be with him. Now, Jacob is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the patriarchs which take us from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob. This is a promise that God gives to all believers in Him. Unfortunately, Abraham's son and grandson do not have any of the quality of spiritual life that Abraham does. In fact, there seems to be a degradation of their spiritual growth. Rather than meet and surpass the spiritual life of Abraham, neither Isaac nor Jacob come close. But, each man does believe in the Revealed Lord and they trust God in this great promise made originally to Abraham.

## Genesis 28:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAR</i> ]	<i>to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #8104 BDB #1036
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

## Genesis 28:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
derek <sup>e</sup> (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced DEH-rek <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>way, distance, road, path; journey, course; direction, towards; manner, habit, way [of life]; of moral character</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1870 BDB #202
With the bêyth preposition, this means <i>in the way, along the way [road], near the road, by the way, on [your] journey</i> .			
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced awn-oh-KEE]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הִלַּךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>is walking, is going, is departing, is advancing, is traveling</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

**Translation:** ...and [if] He keeps me on this road that I am going [on]...

Jacob is going into parts unknown. He has likely never left home before or even left his family before. So this is a great undertaking for him. Many of us may look back upon this as routine 6, but the first time a person leaves home—even if they are 50 years old—it is a major undertaking.<sup>308</sup>

For God to keep Jacob on this road simply means that God will *keep, guard, protect, watch, preserve* Jacob. For this step out, away from his family, Jacob is rightfully nervous. He is changing jobs, leaving his home and going out to get married, all within the same time frame; 3 things which are supposed to cause us the greatest stress in our lives.

## Genesis 28:20d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

<sup>308</sup> Most guess that Jacob is 77 years old; which is about equivalent to 40 years old today.

## Genesis 28:20d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lechem (לֶחֶם) [pronounced LEH-khem]	literally means <i>bread</i> ; used more generally for <i>food</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3899 BDB #536
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âkal (אָכַל) [pronounced aw-KAHL]	<i>to eat; to devour, to consume, to destroy</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #398 BDB #37
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
beged (בִּגְד) [pronounced BEH-ged]	<i>garment, clothing; treachery</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #899 BDB #93
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâbash (לָבַשׁ) [pronounced law <sup>b</sup> -VAHSH]	<i>to put on, to clothe, to be clothed, to wear</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3847 BDB #527

**Translation:** ...and He has given to me bread to eat and clothes to wear,...

Jacob asks for **logistical grace**, which is not something that the believer needs to necessarily ask for. However, Jacob is both confused and overwhelmed at this time, so he is asking that logistics be a part of what God does for him.

As we have discussed earlier, there is some question as to what Jacob has carried with him and how he is moving from his home in Canaan to Haran. However, there is no doubt that he is not certain to have enough food and water to get him through this entire journey.

The NEV commentary: *This is simply incredible in its lack of faith; 'If God will really look after me, which includes giving me food and clothes, if He's as good as His word, then I'll accept Him as my God'* <sup>309</sup>

Genesis 28:20 Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If Elohim is with me and [if] He keeps me on this road that I am going [on] and He has given to me bread to eat and clothes to wear,..." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

## Genesis 28:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

<sup>309</sup> From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen28com.html> accessed June 3, 2017.

Genesis 28:21a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shâlôwm (שׁוֹלֵם) or shâlôm (שׁוֹלָם) [pronounced shaw- LOHM]	<i>completeness, soundness, health and welfare, peace, prosperity, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7965 BDB #1022
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
'âb (אָב) [pronounced aw <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3

**Translation:** ...and I return in peace to my father's house,...

Jacob is leaving under some difficult circumstances. In fact, the reason that he is leaving is because of a lack of peace. He asks God to return him to his father's home in peace.

We ought to consider that what Jacob asks for here is not a long list of excessive demands. He is simply petitioning for logistical grace. Many believers—particularly in prosperous countries—often take these basic requests for granted; and when they pray, they pray for much more.

On the other hand, what is before Jacob is a very long journey through a great deal of desert<sup>310</sup> into the unknown. If you found yourself dropped out of a plane into the midst of a desert, these might be the very things which you ask for from God as well (and many believers, in difficult, ungodly countries, typically ask for these basic things from God, for themselves and for their family).

In any case, it is clear from this vow that Jacob does not fully understand or believe the promises God has already made to him.

What Jacob prayed for is given to us by God:

### The Five Promises of God (The Pulpit Commentary)

(1) Divine companionship—"If," or since, "God will be with me;"

<sup>310</sup> However, not desert as we know that area to be today.

## The Five Promises of God (The Pulpit Commentary)

- (2) Divine protection "and will keep me in this way that I go;"
- (3) Divine sustenance—"and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on;"
- (4) Divine favor—"so that I come again to my father's house in peace;" and
- (5) Divine salvation—"then," or rather, and since, "Jehovah shall be my God;"—five things promised to the poorest and most desolate of heaven's pilgrims.

Jesus spoke to this in Matthew 6:23–34:

"So I tell you to stop worrying about what you will eat, drink, or wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothes?"

"Look at the birds. They don't plant, harvest, or gather the harvest into barns. Yet, your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they?"

"Can any of you add a single hour to your life by worrying?"

"And why worry about clothes? Notice how the flowers grow in the field. They never work or spin yarn for clothes. But I say that not even Solomon in all his majesty was dressed like one of these flowers. That's the way God clothes the grass in the field. Today it's alive, and tomorrow it's thrown into an incinerator. So how much more will he clothe you people who have so little faith?"

"Don't ever worry and say, 'What are we going to eat?' or 'What are we going to drink?' or 'What are we going to wear?' Everyone is concerned about these things, and your heavenly Father certainly knows you need all of them. But first, be concerned about His kingdom and what has His approval. Then all these things will be provided for you."

"So don't ever worry about tomorrow. After all, tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." (God's Word™; capitalized)

*The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 28:10–22 (homiletics).

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The NEV commentary shrewdly compares the beginning of Jacob's vow to Psalm 23. Jacob is, essentially, asking for these things to be done; David is recognizing that they have been done.

The ESV; capitalized is used below:

Jacob's Vow/David's Assurances	
Genesis 28:20b–21	Psalm 23:1–6
If God will be with me	The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.
and will keep me in this way that I go,	He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
and will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear,	You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

### Jacob's Vow/David's Assurances

**Genesis 28:20b–21**

**Psalms 23:1–6**

so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God,

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen28com.html> accessed June 3, 2017 (I took their general idea and ran with it).

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### Genesis 28:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** ...then Y<sup>e</sup>howah will be to me for an Elohim.

Given all that has come before—assuming that God will do all of these things for Jacob (which He will), then Jacob agrees that Y<sup>e</sup>howah (the personal name for the Revealed Lord) will be his God. On the one hand, Jacob recognizes the sovereignty and provision of Y<sup>e</sup>howah; but it has eluded him that God has already made these promises to him.

God will have to provide the basic necessities for Jacob because he is in the line of Christ and he is the only person through whom can come the Jews and the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Basic necessities is a given (and, had he any spiritual growth, he would have understood that). We as believers have all of our basic necessities taken care of. David, in the Spirit, wrote: *I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his seed [i.e., God's elect] begging bread.* (Psalm 37:25) Our Lord admonished those that are His: *"Do not be anxious concerning your needs, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? [implied response: yes] And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to*

his height? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin. Yet, I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself as one of these. So if God arrays the grass of the field, which is [here] today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace; how much more for you, O men of a little faith?" (Matthew 8:25b–30)

This is called by Thieme, *logistical grace*. In order for us to have any sort of a spiritual life at all, the necessities must be taken care of. God takes care of these necessities. We do not have to ask for them and or make a vow in order to receive them. God will take care of all believers. What about those on the street who are begging for money or food—the ones who say *God bless you* when you give them something? God has provided for them, if they are believers and they have rejected His provisions. God has provided them a job and they have rejected it. The others use God and use His name to get what they want. They are not believers and they do not rely upon our Lord. This is why we have missions and poverty: to knock the religion<sup>311</sup> out of them, to remove their pride, and to give them God's glorious Word and salvation.

Why is Jacob making a vow? Because he is afraid, on his own, and spiritually immature. He did not have these couple verses to rely on, but God has just told him "Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth." It would be paradoxical to have descendants if you die without wife and children out in the desert. God has just guaranteed Jacob that He will take care of him; Jacob is just not spiritually mature enough to recognize that.

Jacob is on his way out of the Land of Promise—he has not traveled too far, and God has come to him in a dream.

Genesis 28:21 ...and I return in peace to my father's house, then Y<sup>e</sup>howah will be to me for an Elohim. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 28:20–21 Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If Elohim is with me and [if] He keeps me on this road that I am going [on] and He has given to me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and I return in peace to my father's house, then Y<sup>e</sup>howah will be to me for an Elohim. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 28:20–21 And Jacob vowed 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 put on, and I come again to my father's house in peace, then will Jehovah be my God.

Barnes: *A vow is a solemn engagement to perform a certain duty, the obligation of which is felt at the time to be especially binding. It partakes, therefore, of the nature of a promise or a covenant. It involves in its obligation, however, only one party, and is the spontaneous act of that party.*<sup>312</sup>

Does this saying mean that Jacob has not yet put his trust in the God of his fathers? Or has Jacob always believed in the God of Abraham, but has never trusted Him with his day-to-day life? Clearly, Jacob has not fully believed in the promises of Y<sup>e</sup>howah; he has not applied these promises to himself; and he has therefore, spent his life trying to improve his own advantage in any way that he could.

The NEV commentary: *Before that watershed night of Gen. 32, Jacob was influenced by the surrounding religious ideas, and was possibly involved with idol worship. The fact he openly says that Yahweh will only become his God if He brings him back home in peace is proof enough that up until age 77 at the earliest, Jacob was not an unreserved worshipper of Yahweh.*<sup>313</sup>

Jacob had a very short-sighted view of himself, his own life, and his family history. Now he has seen the Revealed God (albeit in a dream) and he has seen the amazing sight of angels traveling between earth and heaven.

<sup>311</sup> *Religion*, technically, referring to the belief that there are things that we can do to gain God's approbation and therefore His salvation. *Christianity* is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We do not earn or deserve this relationship.

<sup>312</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:20–22.

<sup>313</sup> From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen28com.html> accessed June 3, 2017.

That being said, this does not mean that Jacob will completely turn his life around at this point. However, when Jacob arrives in Paddan-aram, he is going to be at least a slightly changed man. He is not going to spend his time trying to figure out how to put one over on this or that person, as he did to his brother for those many years. Part of the reason for this is, Jacob will meet a woman (and what man's life has not been changed by a woman?). However, his uncle is going to see him as an easy mark, and his uncle is going to try to get as much out of Jacob as he possibly can.

**Application:** Although experience can occasionally help to turn a person around, it is what takes place in that person's soul, responding to the experience, that actually turns that person around. My point being, God could interact with you in your life, but if your soul does not change as a result, then there will be no actual changes in your life. This is illustrated by the Exodus generation and by those negative toward Jesus Christ during His 1<sup>st</sup> advent. Both sets of people observed God's unquestionable power, and no changes took place in their souls. As a result, life was disastrous for both sets of people.

Jacob has been a chiseler for much of his life; but his Uncle Laban is going to school him in the art of chiseling and people manipulation. Jacob had studied manipulation and deception as an undergraduate student from his mother Rebekah; but he will get the graduate course from his Uncle Laban. You may have thought that Rebekah was quite the manipulator; when Jacob arrives, we will find out that is a family characteristic.

### Genesis 28:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'eben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced <i>EH<sup>B</sup>-ven</i> ]	<i>a stone [large or small] [in its natural state, as a building material]; stone ore; used of tablets, marble, cut stone; used of a tool or weapon; a precious stone, gem; rock; a weight of the balance</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #68 BDB #6
zô'th (זֹה) [pronounced <i>zoth</i> ]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	feminine of singular zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb	Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
sîym (שִׂים) [pronounced <i>seem</i> ]; also spelled sūwm (שׂוּם) [pronounced <i>soom</i> ]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
matstsêbâh (מַצְבֵּי) [pronounced <i>mahtz-tzay<sup>b</sup>-VAWH</i> ]	<i>pillar, sculpted images</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4676 & #4678 BDB #663
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

## Genesis 28:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
ʿĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** And the this stone which I have set up [as] a pillar will be the house of Elohim...

Jacob recognizes this place as a portal, if you will, between Jacob and God.

God's house here is not *Bêyt-el*, but, *Bêyt-Elohim*.

A few **commentators** mentioned that Jacob never did build this house for God. In my reading of this passage, he is not promising to build a house for God. It says that this pillar which he set up *will be the house of God*.

Most did not understand it in that way. Leupold: *By "house of God" (beth-'el) Jacob does not mean a temple but a sacred spot, a sanctuary, which he purposes to establish and to perpetuate. How Jacob carried out the vow is reported in 35:1-7: he built an altar to Yahweh on the spot.*<sup>314</sup>

What Jacob is sayings seems to be in line with the Living Bible translation: *And this memorial pillar I have set up will become a place for worshipping God,...*

Now, there is a **stone in Great Britain**, called the *Coronation Stone* or the *Stone of Destiny*; and it was alleged to have been this same stone—but most people recognize this as nonsense. Geologists have proven this stone originally to have been quarried in Scotland. *Prof. Ramsay also pronounced it as being "not known to occur in Egypt or in the rocks around Bethel"*<sup>315</sup>

## Genesis 28:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

Together, kôl ʾăsher mean *all which, all whom, all that [which]; whomever, whatever, all whose, all where, wherever.*

<sup>314</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxix.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

<sup>315</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:18.

## Genesis 28:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
‘âsar (אָסַר) [pronounced gaw-SAHR]	to give a tenth of, to pay a tithe, to tithe	Piel infinitive absolute	Strong's #6237 BDB #797
The <b>infinitive absolute</b> has four uses: ❶ when found alone, it sometimes acts as an English gerund, so that we may add <i>ing</i> to the end of the verb; ❷ When found directly before its verbal cognate, it serves to intensify or strengthen the action or the meaning of the verb which follows; ❸ When it follows its cognate verb, it emphasizes the duration or the continuation of the verbal idea; and, ❹ it is sometimes used as a substitute for a finite verb form. <sup>316</sup>			
‘âsar (אָסַר) [pronounced gaw-SAHR]	to give a tenth of, to pay a tithe, to tithe	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Piel imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6237 BDB #797
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix; pausal form	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** ...and all that You have given me, I will tithe it [back] to You.”

And then Jacob introduces a new idea of tithing. He will give back to God a tenth of what God provides for him. The verb *to tithe* only occurs 7 times in the Bible. This is the first occurrence of this word. So Jacob promises two things back: he will recognize the Revealed God as God and he will tithe to God.

Here is one of the many verses found in the Bible which, when taken out of context, is completely misunderstood (Hebrews 4:9 and 6:6 readily come to mind when it comes to verses often taken out of context). Tithing, or giving one tenth, is not spiritual giving and is not designed for our standard in the church age.

Genesis 28:22 *And the this stone which I have set up will be a pillar [of] the house of Elohim and all that You have given me, I will tithe it [back] to You.*” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 28:20–22 *Jacob vowed a vow, saying, “If Elohim is with me and [if] He keeps me on this road that I am going [on] and He has given to me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and I return in peace to my father’s house, then Y<sup>e</sup>howah will be to me for an Elohim. And the this stone which I have set up will be a pillar [of] the house of Elohim and all that You have given me, I will tithe it [back] to You.”* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 28:20–22 *Jacob then vowed a vow, saying, “If God is with me and if He keeps me along this pathway that I go in, and if He gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and if I am able to return in peace to my father’s home, then Jehovah will be for me God. Furthermore, this stone from the house of God and all that You give me, I will surely tithe it back to You.”* (Kukis paraphrase)

<sup>316</sup> *Biblical Hebrew*; Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 184–185.

Genesis 28:20–22 Jacob then vowed a vow, saying, “If God is with me and if He keeps me along this pathway that I go in, and if He gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and if I am able to return in peace to my father’s home, then Jehovah will be for me God. Furthermore, this stone from the house of God and all that You give me, I will surely tithe it back to You.”

Jacob, in his spiritual immaturity, is making a vow to God that if God provides him with the basic necessities. God is in charge of taking care of our basic needs, but we do not have to vow to do anything in order to receive those needs. All we need to do is to take them and thank God for His gracious provisions. We should take this in points:

It ought to be noted that Jacob’s father has blessed him twice—once when deceived and then a second time, knowing that it was Jacob. Then God Personally made unconditional promises to Jacob. Now Jacob is going to turn around and try to make some kind of a legalistic deal with God?

### Jacob’s Vow

1. Jacob did have some spiritual information; he read and remembered that Abraham gave one-tenth of his possessions to Melchizedek, the king of Salem. (Genesis 14:17–20).
2. There was, during the time of the patriarchs, a spiritual code to which we are not entirely privy. This included a specialized priesthood which pre-dated the Law (Exodus 2:16 Hebrews 7:1–11). Melchizedek was a priest to God (Genesis 14:18). So was Moses’ father-in-law in Midian.
3. The basic difference between a priest and a prophet is that a priest would represent man to God (Hebrews 4:14 7:24–24) and a prophet represents God to man.<sup>1</sup> In either ministry, spiritual information is given to the believer. The prophet communicated God’s Word to those believers who listened and the priest, through the offering of sacrifices, revealed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:26–28). The priest, through sacrifices, covers the sins of man and propitiates God in his representation of man to God (Hebrews 2:17 5:1, 3 7:26–27 10:11). The priest was a foreshadowing or a type of Christ, who would sacrifice Himself and enter into the true holy of holies, having made a sacrifice once and for all on our behalf (Hebrews 7:26–27 9:11–14). A fuller discussion of the priesthood will be taken up in Leviticus.
4. A priest required some kind of financial support and that amount, as set up through the Law, and as possibly existed prior to the Law, was 10%. Therefore, it was right for Abraham to give Melchizedek, the King of Salem, the High Priest to God, a tenth of all he had (Genesis 14:20). This 10% is not a deal or a trade out which is made to God. Abraham, without coercion and without a vow, gave a tenth of what he had to Melchizedek.
5. It is interesting that Jacob would say this, adding in that he would pay a tithe if God looks out for him, as God has just said that He would (it was an unconditional promise back in v. 15). It is as if Jacob crudely adds, “Okay; and just to sweeten the pot, if You do what You promise, God, then I will throw in 10% of my earnings right back at You.”
6. Jacob is making a deal with God. This is a common practice of the spiritually inept and the spiritually immature. They get into a jam, they know little or nothing of spiritual information, so they make a deal with God: You get me out of this jam and I will do this for You. Millions upon millions of people have, throughout history, gotten into various jams or have faced tragedy and heartache, and have made these deals with God. Generally speaking, when God pulls them through (which He usually does on the basis of grace through what Jesus Christ did upon the cross and not on the basis of their puny little deal), the person who makes the deal rarely keeps up his part of the bargain, whether it was *to live for God* or *to start going to church more often* or *to throw a crummy dollar or two into the collection plate*. Why does God even tolerate this in us? The deal indicates some positive volition toward Him and some slight recognition of His omnipotence. With Jacob, God had not but 20 minutes ago promised him that out of his loins would come descendants as the dust of the earth, clearly implying that He would see to his basic needs and get Jacob out of that jam. **Jacob is expressing spiritual immaturity and unbelief when he makes this deal with God.** Jacob is saying, “Sure, you said that ‘I will guard you wherever you go’ but I’m going to sweeten the pot just a bit by throwing in 10% of my money just to make sure that You will keep Your promise.” How trivial and how blatantly arrogant of Jacob to think that his vow means anything.

## Jacob's Vow

7. Where did Jacob get the idea for a tithe? Abraham paid Melchizedek a tithe in Genesis 14:20; so I would suggest that Jacob had knowledge of that.
8. To the best of my knowledge, Jacob never actually gives a tithe to God, even though God will be faithful to him.
9. Dr. Peter Pett gives him the benefit of the doubt saying, *[Jacob] is going into a foreign land where Yahweh is not acknowledged and thus thinks in terms of 'God' going with him.*<sup>2</sup> The problem with this view is, the faith of the relatives back in Paddan-aram appears to have been a consideration. We do not know exactly why the Hittite women were rejected and the daughters of Bethuel were cherished; but I would suggest that the key is Y<sup>e</sup>howah worship. In Genesis 24, that family clearly worships the Revealed God; but it becomes clear later on that there was some idolatry going on as well (Rachel, Jacob's future wife, will steal some small idols from her father).
10. The difference between Abraham's tithe and Jacob's tithe is that Abraham did it in thanksgiving. He received deliverance from God and victory in battle and he was saying thank you to God. Jacob has received a promise directly from God, so he tells God, "You keep this promise You just made to me and I'm going to throw 10% of my cash your way."
11. Jacob could have responded to God's promises in faith and with awe and respect. That is, he could have said, "I believe You" and fallen to his knees in prayer. Instead, Jacob's response is, "Okay, *if* You do these things for me, then I am going to kick some of my income Your direction." Do you see that Jacob does not appear to fully trust God to do these things?
12. God has given Jacob the information; God has told Jacob what He would do. Jacob simply needs to respond to that in faith. That is the key. The NEV commentary **speaks** of coming to faith as the *lifetime struggle* of the believer; but it is not; *faith is a lifelong series of choices of the believer in Jesus Christ.*
13. Jacob is alive up until Genesis 49:33. Between Genesis 29 and Genesis 50 we do not find the words *tithe* or *tenth*. The point is that it is possible that Jacob never kept his vow and, even if he did, **God the Holy Spirit deemed it so unimportant so that it was not even recorded in Scripture.**
14. Allow me to offer a reasonable hypothesis that God, in His sense of humor, required a tenth be given to the Levitical priesthood so that Jacob, through his progeny, could fulfill this silly vow. I cannot offer any Scripture to back up this particular thought, however.
15. This tells us that Jacob, despite all of the blessing he has received and all of the grace that he has received, is still a very immature, legalistic believer. So, clearly, Jacob is the recipient of great grace from God.
16. It is worth noting that sometime in Jacob's life he will reveal some spiritual growth, particularly at the very end of his life. Therefore, it is not too late for anyone to grow spiritually.

What is the proper approach? You are able to pray to God, "This is what you have promised me, God; and I expect You to deliver on Your promises." You have nothing that you can trade to God; but you do have His Word, upon which you can stand.

<sup>1</sup> This is an over simplification, as the priest also taught God's written Word to the people whereas the prophet brought God's spoken Word to the people, which later became the written word (Ezekiel 7:26).

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 28:20–22.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Guzik: *Unfortunately, there is a great contrast between God's promise and Jacob's vow. One is totally God-centered; the other is terribly man-centered.*

## David Guzik on God's Promises and Jacob's Vow

- I. God's promise (Genesis 28:13–15):
  1. I am the LORD God.
  2. I will give to you.
  3. I am with you.
  4. I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken.
- II. Jacob's vow:
  - If God will be with me.
  - And keep me.
  - In this way that I am going.
  - Give me bread and clothing.
  - So that I come back to my father's house.
- III. How much better if Jacob had prayed like this: "Because You promised to be with me and to keep me and to provide for all my needs, and to bring me back to the land which you swore to give to my fathers and to me, I will be completely Yours, God."
- IV. God is gracious enough to not call off the whole deal when He saw such a carnal response from Jacob. Instead, He is willing to be called, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Exodus 3:6).

*David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 28:20–22.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 28:20–22 Jacob then vowed a vow, saying, "If God is with me and if He keeps me along this pathway that I go in, and if He gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and if I am able to return in peace to my father's home, then Jehovah will be for me God. Furthermore, this stone from the house of God and all that You give me, I will surely tithe it back to You."

### Various Commentators with a Negative View of Jacob's Vow

Commentators who took a dim view of Jacob's vow; or had reservations about him making this vow:

Wenstrom: *Jacob's vow is the longest vow in the Old Testament. Vows were not contracts or limited agreements but rather they were verbal and voluntary acts of submission to the Lord and the reorientation of one's life to meet the Lord's standards.*<sup>317</sup>

Wenstrom: *Remember, he left home because of Esau's desire to kill him but now Jacob's journey takes on a whole new different meaning since God has revealed to him that He has a plan for his life. Since the Lord has revealed Himself to Jacob through the theophany and guaranteed him divine protection and prosperity while in exile in Paddan Aram, Jacob has committed himself to living according to the standards of the living God. Therefore, we see that Jacob has had a life changing experience. He went from being on the run and in doubt about his future to possessing assurance that God had a plan for his life and would make him successful.*<sup>318</sup>

<sup>317</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:20–21); accessed June 1, 2017.

<sup>318</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:20–21); accessed June 1, 2017.

## Various Commentators with a Negative View of Jacob's Vow

L. M. Grant: *Though Jacob appreciated God's blessing, yet his faith as to God's promise was pathetically weak. Rather than simply thanking God for the absolute truth of His word, Jacob considered that he also should make a promise to God! But Jacob's promise is conditional, not unconditional, as God's was. Abraham had been "strong in faith, giving glory to God, - being firmly persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (Romans 4:20-21), but Jacob was not so sure. He said, "If God will be with me" (v.20). But what God promises, faith simply believes.*<sup>319</sup>

Barnes: *Jacob's vow. A vow is a solemn engagement to perform a certain duty, the obligation of which is felt at the time to be especially binding. It partakes, therefore, of the nature of a promise or a covenant. It involves in its obligation, however, only one party, and is the spontaneous act of that party. Here, then, Jacob appears to take a step in advance of his predecessors. Hitherto, God had taken the initiative in every promise, and the everlasting covenant rests solely on his eternal purpose. Abraham had responded to the call of God, believed in the Lord, walked before him, entered into communion with him, made intercession with him, and given up his only son to him at his demand. In all this there is an acceptance on the part of the creature of the supremacy of the merciful Creator. But now the spirit of adoption prompts Jacob to a spontaneous movement toward God. This is no ordinary vow, referring to some special or occasional resolve.*<sup>320</sup>

Jamieson, CECG: *This vow has often been presented in a light injurious to the character of Jacob, as indicating that his mind was so wholly engrossed with his present state and necessities that he felt no interest in the temporal blessings guaranteed to his posterity, or in the spiritual good which, through their medium, would be conveyed in remote ages to the world at large; and that, so far from having exalted views of the providential government of God, he confined his thoughts exclusively to his personal affairs and his immediate protection, as well as suspended his devotedness to the Divine service on condition of God's pledges being redeemed.*

Jamieson, CECG continues: *But it should be borne in mind that it was in consequence of the vision, and of the promises made to him during the night, in the most unexpected manner, by the Divine Being, that he vowed his vow the next morning—a view indicative of his profound feelings of gratitude, as well as of reverence, and intended to be simply responsive to the terms in which the grace of his heavenly Benefactor and Guardian was tendered. Nay, so far is he from betraying a selfish and worldly spirit, the moderation of his desires is remarkable; and the vow, when placed in a just light, will be seen to evince the simplicity and piety of Jacob's mind. Our translators have given rise to the mistaken impressions that so generally prevail in regard to Jacob's vow, by the insertion of the word 'then' in Genesis 28:21. But the apodosis properly begins in the verse following—'then shall this stone,' etc. (It should be noted that the versification is clarified in the ARV.*

Jamieson, CECG continues: *The words of Jacob are not to be considered as implying a doubt, far less as stating the condition or terms on which he would dedicate himself to God. Let 'if be changed into 'since,' and the language will appear a proper expression of Jacob's faith—an evidence of his having truly embraced the promise. And the vow as recorded should stand thus: 'If (since) God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; and if (since) the Lord shall be my God, then this stone which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house,' where I shall erect an altar and worship Him.*<sup>321</sup>

I found most commentators favorably disposed toward Jacob's vow and tend to agree mostly with how Jamieson began.

<sup>319</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-28.html> accessed June 3, 2017.

<sup>320</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:20–22.

<sup>321</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:20–22.

## Various Commentators with a Negative View of Jacob's Vow

The Cambridge Bible: *This is the first mention in the O.T. of a religious vow, i.e. a solemn promise, enforced by an adjuration of the Deity, to dedicate, or wholly set apart, some offering or gift...Jacob's vow is made with special reference to the personal promise in Genesis 28:15. Its three conditions are: (1) Divine presence (with me), (2) Divine preservation (keep me), (3) Divine restoration (so that I come again).*<sup>322</sup>

The Cambridge Bible continues: *The crowning thought is that in days to come, Jehovah, who has been the God of Abraham and Isaac, shall also be the God of Jacob. This forms the substance of Jacob's vow; to which is added, that Bethel, as well as Beer-sheba and Hebron, shall be a place of Jehovah's worship. Jacob's vow, with the conditions attached to it, reflects his calculating character. But it acknowledges that Jehovah is the God who has revealed Himself to his fathers, and is distinct from mere nature-gods.*<sup>323</sup>

Lange, on the evidence of spiritual growth in Jacob life: *There is clear evidence that Jacob was now a child of God. He takes God to be his God in covenant, with whom he will live. But what progress there is between Bethel and Peniel. Grace reigns within him, but not without a conflict. The powers and tendencies of evil are still at work. He yields too readily to their urgent solicitations. Still, grace and the principles of the renewed man gain a stronger hold, and become more and more controlling. Under the loving but faithful discipline of God, he is gaining in his faith, until, in the great crisis of his life, Mahanaim and Peniel, and the new revelations then given to him, it receives a large and sudden increase. He is thenceforward trusting, serene, and established, strengthened and settled, and passes into the quiet life of the triumphant believer.*<sup>324</sup> Methinks that Lange might be taking too much for granted here.

Murphy: *Note that the conditions correspond with the Divine promise; that is, they are not really "conditions" at all, but a reiteration of the elements of the promise: (1) the presence of God, (2) Divine protection, (3) a safe return to his father's house, which naturally includes the provision of food and raiment. "If God will be with me. This is not the condition on which Jacob will accept God in a mercenary spirit. It is merely the echo and the thankful acknowledgement of the divine assurance, 'I am with thee,' which was given immediately before. It is the response of the son to the assurance of the father: 'Wilt thou indeed be with me? Thou shalt be my God'*<sup>325</sup>

C. H. Mackintosh: *Now the Lord had just said, emphatically, I am with you, and will keep you in all places where you go, and will bring you again into this land, etc. And yet poor Jacob's heart cannot get beyond an "if," nor in its thoughts of God's goodness, can it rise higher than bread to eat and raiment to put on. Such were the thoughts of one who had just seen the magnificent vision of the ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with the Lord standing above, and promising an innumerable seed and an everlasting possession, Jacob was evidently Unable to enter into the reality and fullness of God's thoughts. He measured God by himself, and thus utterly failed to apprehend Him. In short, Jacob had not yet really got to the end of himself; and hence he had not really begun with God.*<sup>326</sup>

L. M. Grant: *He vows too that he would surely give to God one tenth of all that God gave to him! Did he seriously think he was being very generous? God had said, "I will," but Jacob said, "I will surely." Of course God's promise is perfectly fulfilled, but there is no record of Jacob's having ever carried out his promise to give God one tenth of all.*<sup>327</sup>

<sup>322</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:20.

<sup>323</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 28:21.

<sup>324</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:21 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses).

<sup>325</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:20-22.

<sup>326</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:20-22 (slightly edited).

<sup>327</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-28.html> accessed June 3, 2017.

### Various Commentators with a Negative View of Jacob's Vow

Dr. Thomas Constable: *Jacob's relationship with Yahweh was quite different from what Abraham or Isaac's relationship had been. God tested Abraham, but Jacob tested God. God told Abraham to leave his country before he entered into blessing, but Jacob imposed conditions on God before he vowed to bless God. [Note: J. H. Walton, *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary*, pp573-74.] He was willing to accept God's promises, but he did not commit himself to God until God proved faithful to him personally. God blessed Jacob because of God's election and Abraham and Isaac's faith more than because of Jacob's faith at this time.*

Constable continues: *Many believers bargain with God as Jacob did here. They agree to worship Him on their terms rather than because God has proven Himself faithful in the past. God often accommodates such weak faith, but the fact that He does does not commend the practice of bargaining with God.*<sup>328</sup>

J. Vernon McGee: *What is he doing? He wants to trade with God. He says, "Now, God, if You will do this for me. ..." But God has already told him that He is going to do every one of these things for him — "I am going to keep you; I am going to bring you back to this land; I am going to give you this land; and I'm going to give you offspring." Then Jacob turns around and bargains with Him, "If You will do it, then I'll serve You."*

McGee continues: *God doesn't do business with us that way. He didn't do business that way with Jacob either. If He had, Jacob would never have made it back to that land. God brought him back into that land by His grace and mercy. When Jacob did finally come back to Bethel, he came back a wiser man. Do you know what he came back to do? To worship and praise God for His mercy. God had been merciful to him.*

McGee concludes: *Many people even today say they will serve the Lord if He will do such and such. You won't do anything of the kind, my friend. He doesn't do business that way. He will extend mercy to you, and He will be gracious to you without asking anything in return. But He does say that if you love Him, you will really want to serve Him. That will be the bondage of love. It is the same kind of love a mother has for the little child. She becomes its slave. That's the way that He wants you and me.*<sup>329</sup>

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Commentators who viewed Jacob's vow favorably:

### Various Commentators with a Positive View of Jacob's Vow

Leupold was mostly favorable: *Jacob's gratitude for the much needed comfort and encouragement finds expression in an appropriate vow, of which v. 20, 21 forms the protasis and v. 22 the apodosis. True, the greater promises concerning the possession of the land and of being a blessing to all the families of the earth are not mentioned. That does not say that Jacob does not understand them 2.780 and is not grateful for them. They, in the nature of the case, are seen to lie in the distant future. For the other tangible blessings which the next years are to bring Jacob vows to give tangible tokens of gratitude. For the greater blessings, what shall or can he return to the Lord? Nothing except praise and thanks, because these blessings are unspeakably great. In enumerating protection, food, clothing and safe return Jacob is not displaying a mind ignorant of higher values but merely unfolding the potentialities of God's promise (v. 15), "I will keep thee and bring thee again," etc. When he says: "If Yahweh will be God to me," he is paraphrasing the promise (v. 15): "I am with thee." Consequently, in all this Jacob is not betraying a cheap, mercenary spirit, bargaining with God for food and drink and saying: "If I get these, then Yahweh shall be my God." That would be about the cheapest case of arrogant bargaining with God recorded anywhere. In fact, it is difficult even with the very best construction that it is possible to put upon the words to draw the clause wehayah yahweh li le'lohim into the apodosis: "then shall the Lord be my God" (A.V. and Luther). The Lord was his God. Jacob was not an unconverted man still debating whether or not to be on the Lord's side and here making an advantageous bargain out of the case.*<sup>330</sup>

<sup>328</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-28.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

<sup>329</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) (Genesis 28); accessed June 4, 2017.

<sup>330</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxix.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

## Various Commentators with a Positive View of Jacob's Vow

Many saw this vow favorably; HSB: *Jacob here was not expressing doubt as to whether God would keep His promise of Genesis 28:13–15; he used the particle if in the sense of 'on the basis of the fact that' (cf. Romans 8:31: If God is for us). Nor was he necessarily making a bargain with God, as if he would bribe Him to keep His word. He was simply specifying in the form of a vow the particular expression he would give to his gratitude for God's surprising and wholly undeserved favor. This became a customary type of thanksgiving in Israelite practice and was of ten solemnized by a votive offering.*<sup>331</sup>

Gosman: *There is clear evidence that Jacob was now a child of God. He takes God to be his God in covenant, with whom he will live. He goes out in reliance upon the divine promise, and yields himself to the divine control, rendering to God the homage of a loving and grateful heart. But what a progress there is between Bethel and Peniel.*<sup>332</sup>

IB: *With respect to Jacob's character, most commentators hold that the experience at Bethel was the turning-point in his religious life...It was no pleasant meadow, no green oasis, no sheltered valley. It was a hilltop of barren rock; and its barrenness seemed to represent at that moment Jacob's claim on life.*<sup>333</sup>

Some commentators instinctively knew that Jacob's vow was not right, so tried to portray it in a different way. Gill: *the word if is not a sign of doubting, but is either an adverb of time, and may be rendered, "when God shall be with me"; or as a supposition, expressive of an inference or conclusion drawn, "seeing God will be with me"; which he had the utmost reason to believe he would, since he had not only promised it, but had so lately granted him his presence in a very singular and remarkable manner.*<sup>334</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown presents much the same viewpoint: *[Jacob's] words are not to be considered as implying a doubt, far less as stating the condition or terms on which he would dedicate himself to God. Let "if" be changed into "since," and the language will appear a proper expression of Jacob's faith - an evidence of his having truly embraced the promise.*<sup>335</sup>

Robert Dean: *What did God promise? This isn't the typical if-then type of thing. He is not saying maybe He will and maybe He won't. There is an element of certainty here. God promised to be with him. In other words, if God fulfills what He just said then what happens is that when he comes back home he will take this stone which he had set as a pillar and it shall be God's house. He is going to establish it as a sight of worship, and he is going to give God a tithe. This is a free will offering, there is no mandate anywhere in the Old Testament up to this point on giving. Exactly to whom he would give this money isn't stated, there is no priesthood. It is simply that he would use that tenth of what God provides for him to maintain this sight as a place of worship. This is what he has chosen to do out of his own volition in order to express His gratitude to God for making him the beneficiary of this blessing. This isn't a mandate for tithing.*<sup>336</sup>

Poole says very much the same thing: *He speaks not thus as if he doubted of the truth of God's promises, or would, like a mercenary person, make a bargain with God, but rather supposes that God will do this for him, as he had in effect promised, Genesis 28:15, and thereupon obliges himself to a grateful return to God for this mercy...[the meaning being] "Seeing God will be with me," etc., for the Hebrew im does not always imply a doubt, but rather a supposition, and is oft rendered seeing that, as Exodus 20:25 Num. 36:4 1Samuel 15:17 Amos 7:2.*<sup>337</sup>

<sup>331</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:20–22.

<sup>332</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:20–22.

<sup>333</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:20–22.

<sup>334</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:20.

<sup>335</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 28:20.

<sup>336</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed June 2, 2017.

<sup>337</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:20.

## Various Commentators with a Positive View of Jacob's Vow

The problem with Gill's view (and the views of the others) is, Jacob makes a promise to God at the end. We could understand this to mean *since*, if Jacob began tithing from that point forward. But the sense of what Jacob said is, "Okay, You come through on these things that You promise, God, and I will start tithing." Jacob turns God's grace into Jacob's legalism.

Furthermore, Jacob's emphasis is upon temporal necessities; God's promise to Jacob was far more reaching than that, assuming God's provision of the temporal necessities.

Even Matthew Henry tries to paint a smiley face on this vow: *1. Jacob made a solemn vow on this occasion. In this observe, 1. Jacob's faith. He trusts that God will be with him, and will keep him; he depends upon it. 2. Jacob's moderation in his desires. He asks not for soft clothing and dainty meat. If God give us much, we are bound to be thankful, and to use it for him; if he gives us but little, we are bound to be content, and cheerfully to enjoy him in it. 3. Jacob's piety, and his regard to God, appear in what he desired, that God would be with him, and keep him.*<sup>338</sup>

Jacob is not showing trust; his requests are very temporal and self-centered; and his piety, apart from being overwhelmed by this experience, is almost nonexistent.

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Genesis 28:20–22 Jacob then vowed a vow, saying, "If God is with me and if He keeps me along this pathway that I go in, and if He gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and if I am able to return in peace to my father's home, then Jehovah will be for me God. Furthermore, this stone from the house of God and all that You give me, I will surely tithe it back to You."

Not all of these are going to be right on.

## Various Commentators on Vows

Barnes: *[A vow] is the grand and solemn expression of the soul's free, full, and perpetual acceptance of the Lord to be its own God. This is the most frank and open utterance of newborn spiritual liberty from the heart of man that has yet appeared in the divine record. "If God will be with me." This is not the condition on which Jacob will accept God in a mercenary spirit. It is merely the echo and the thankful acknowledgment of the divine assurance, "I am with thee," which was given immediately before. It is the response of the son to the assurance of the father: "Wilt thou indeed be with me? Thou shalt be my God." "This stone shall be God's house," a monument of the presence of God among his people, and a symbol of the indwelling of his Spirit in their hearts. As it comes in here it signalizes the grateful and loving welcome and entertainment which God receives from his saints. "A tenth will I surely give unto thee." The honored guest is treated as one of the family. Ten is the whole: a tenth is a share of the whole. The Lord of all receives one share as an acknowledgment of his sovereign right to all. Here it is represented as the full share given to the king who condescends to dwell with his subjects. Thus, Jacob opens his heart, his home, and his treasure to God. These are the simple elements of a theocracy, a national establishment of the true religion. The spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, has begun to reign in Jacob. As the Father is prominently manifested in regenerate Abraham, and the Son in Isaac, so also the Spirit in Jacob.*<sup>339</sup>

<sup>338</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:20–22.

<sup>339</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:20–22.

## Various Commentators on Vows

The College Press Bible Study (SIBG): *A vow is a solemn promise made to God, by which we bind ourselves more strictly to necessary duty, or what indifferent things are calculated to promote it (Psalm 76:11; Psalm 119:106; Isaiah 19:21; Isaiah 44:4–5; Isaiah 45:23; 2Corinthians 8:5; Deut. 5:2–3; Deut. 29:1; Deut. 29:12–13; Joshua 24:25; 2Kings 11:17; 2Chronicles 29:10, 2Chronicles 34:31–33; Ezra 10:3; Nehemiah 9:10; Acts 18:18; Acts 21:23–24), and that either in thankfulness for some mercy received (Jon. 1:16), or for obtaining some special benefit (Num. 21:1–2; Judges 11:30; 2Samuel 1:11; Proverbs 31:2).*<sup>340</sup>

Wenstrom: *The verb connotes the act of voluntarily and verbally dedicating and devoting oneself to the service of the Lord whereas the noun form of the word represents the thing offered to fulfill a vow... Vows were not contracts or limited agreements but rather they were verbal and voluntary acts of submission to the Lord and the reorientation of one's life to meet the Lord's standards.*<sup>341</sup>

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Often, tithing is the place where those who understand grace are separated from the legalists.

## Tithing (Various Commentators)

The College Press Bible Study: *[I]t is interesting to note that in Jacob's vow we have only the second Scripture reference to the voluntary tithe. The first reference occurs in Genesis 14:20, where we are told that Abraham paid the King priest Melchizedek a tenth of the spoils (goods) he brought back from his victory over the invading kings from the East. (Incidentally, the fact that this is one of the only two references to the tithe in the book of Genesis, enhances the mystery of the identity of this King–Priest, does it not?).*

The College Press Bible Study continues: *For the involuntary—legal—tithes required under the Mosaic economy, see the following: Leviticus 27:30 ff.; Num. 18:21–28; Deut. 12:5–18; Deut. 14:22–29; Deut. 26:12–14; 2Chronicles 31:5; 2Chronicles 31:12; 2Chronicles 31:19; Nehemiah 12:44; Amo. 4:4; Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; Luke 18:12; Hebrews 7:5–8, etc.*<sup>342</sup>

Wenstrom: *The tithe Jacob proposed to give the Lord was a form of taxation levied by rulers and became a definite obligation of the Mosaic Law to maintain the armies of Israel, the tabernacle or temple worship (Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:21, 24). Jacob proposes to give this tithe to the Lord because he now recognizes the Lord's authority over him and does this willingly rather than from obligation.*

Wenstrom continues: *The fact that Jacob proposes to give the Lord a tenth of all that the Lord prospers him with indicates that Jacob recognized the Lord's authority and rank and expressed his appreciation and gratefulness to the Lord for guaranteeing his safe return home.*<sup>343</sup>

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**Genesis 28:22** And this stone which I have set for a pillar will be God's house. And of all that You will give me, I will surely give the tenth to You.”

<sup>340</sup> The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:20–22.

<sup>341</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:20–21); accessed June 1, 2017.

<sup>342</sup> The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 28:20–22.

<sup>343</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 28:22); accessed June 1, 2017.

Jacob tithing (giving a tenth) to God is a response to God, as well as a deal that Jacob is brokering here. He has been told about the God of Abraham, but he is only just experiencing that God now (don't mistakenly take from this to mean that you must *experience* God in some sort of supernatural way as well).

At most, the only thing available to the Old Testament saint of that era would have been the first 15 or 20 chapters of Genesis (which were probably memorized and recited from generation to generation) and the book of Job (which was also probably memorized and carried down until writing became a part of their culture<sup>344</sup>).

However, note here that Jacob sees his relationship to God as more of a deal than the result of God's graciousness. "You do this for me, God, and I will give 10%."

You may ask, "Just who gets the 10%?" We know from Genesis 19 and our meeting with Melchizedek that there were priests in that era—not well-defined for us like the priests of Israel are—and that they had dedicated their lives to the Revealed God as well as to the offering of sacrificial animals. Their exact *modus operandi* is never given to us, although we may logically surmise that offered up animal sacrifices they preserved whatever was known of the God Who made Adam.

I have suggested that Melchizedek may have handed off the Bible (possibly verbally) to Abraham; or confirmed the words of Scripture that Abraham already knew. In any case, Abraham knew to respect Melchizedek as a legitimate priest.

Jacob here is offering to give a tenth of what he has to the LORD, and we have already studied tithing; so that would lead us to the doctrine of giving.

We covered the **Doctrine of Tithing** back in **Genesis 14** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It can also be found here: the doctrine of **Tithing** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). This might be a good time to study the Doctrine of Christian Giving.

It is human nature to be selfish; and human nature to hold on to all that you have. Conversely, it is also human nature to try to bribe God for a better deal in life. Neither of these attitudes works in the Church Age.

### The Doctrine of Giving (from Bible Doctrine Resource)

1. Definition.
  - 1) Giving is an expression of worship to commemorate the grace policy of God.
  - 2) Giving in the Church Age is a legitimate function of the believer's royal priesthood in worship, both inside and outside the local church (for instance, offering hospitality). Giving is one of the four categories of Christian service.
    - (1) Christian service related to your spiritual gift.
    - (2) Christian service related to your **royal priesthood**, which **includes** prayer, giving, and the execution of the protocol plan of God through learning, thinking, and solving.
    - (3) Christian service related to your **royal ambassadorship**, which includes evangelism, witnessing, administration in the local church, function on the mission field, and function in a Christian service organization.
    - (4) Christian service related to the **laws of divine establishment**, which includes the divine institutions and patriotism, as well as military service and a respect for law enforcement, and government. Political activism is not a part of Christian service.
  - 3) Giving is the presentation of money or other valuable commodities which may be used to sustain the ministry of doctrinal communication. Many churches meet in homes, rent out a space; and some build a church building. The location is immaterial. The actual amount that you give is unrelated to your actual say in church policy.
  - 4) Christian giving may be extended to organizations other than the local church, e.g., missionary

<sup>344</sup> Writing does exist during this time period.

## The Doctrine of Giving (from Bible Doctrine Resource)

organizations, Bible schools, radio, or tape ministries. Giving is designed to support communication gifts (the communication of the gospel and the communication of Bible doctrine).

- 5) Giving is one way of inculcating teamwork and coordination into the body of Christ.
2. The Motivation in Giving.
  - 1) Motivation is always the issue in giving, not the amount given.
  - 2) 2Cor. 9:7 **Each person, to the degree he has determined by means of his heart [= right lobe], so let him give. He is not to give as motivated by distress of mind or compulsion of emotions; for God loves a grace-oriented giver.**
    - (1) You give based on the metabolized doctrine in your soul, not on the basis of your emotions.
    - (2) God provides all of our material benefits and He enjoys the mental attitude which accompanies giving. God loves grace-oriented giving. Don't give emotionally or impulsively. Determine for yourself what to give.
  - 3) 2Cor. 9:8 **And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.**
    - (1) God graciously provides the ability for grace givers to give.
    - (2) The only legitimate system of giving is a grace giver giving to a grace cause. Giving because you are under pressure from the pastor or the board of deacons is not true giving.
    - (3) A right action must be done in a right way in order for it to have impact in the plan of God.
  - 4) 2Cor. 9:9 [Psalm 112:9] **Just as it stands written, He scatters abroad, He gave it to the poor, His righteousness abides forever.**
    - (1) "He scatters abroad" means that the good man (as per the context of Psalm 112:9) shares of his blessings.
    - (2) He provides for the poor. This may be a part of your consistent giving and it may be a result of coming into contact with others.
    - (3) The righteousness of such a man stands forever; that is, it remains as eternal, divine good.
    - (4) This is not socialism; nor does this advocate socialism.
  - 5) 2Cor. 9:10 **Now He who supplies seed to the sower [= capital] and bread for food, He will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.** God supplies and gives profit to grace givers. As a result, there is an increase in the harvest of your Christian service.
  - 6) 2Cor. 9:11-12 **You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgiving to God.** God blesses us in a multitude of ways. His grace to us overflows.
  - 7) Giving is a mental attitude based upon grace-orientation. Grace-orientation is the basis for grace giving.
3. The Doctrinal Principles of Giving.
  - 1) Giving is an expression of the royal family honor code.
    - (1) Rom. 15:26 **For Macedonia and Achaia have decided with pleasure to make a special offering to the poor believers who are in Jerusalem.**
    - (2) Gal. 2:10 **They only asked us to remember the poor; the very thing I was also eager to do.**
    - (3) Charity is from God; socialism and government welfare are from man. As discussed in the doctrine of **Tithing (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)**, it is reasonable for the government to supply some aid to the helpless. In the Mosaic economy, 3 $\frac{1}{3}$ % per year was the amount set apart for the poor from the government of Israel (the people themselves provided additional help for the poor). The poor received additional help from private persons in the Age of Israel.
  - 2) Giving is an expression of free will, without gimmicks and without coercion. 2Cor. 8:3 **I testify on the basis of their ability and beyond their ability they gave willingly.** Their giving was a sign of their volition and their spiritual growth. It was not a matter of coercion.
  - 3) Giving is an expression of mental attitude in every circumstance of life. 2Cor. 8:2 **That in the midst of severe testing and great pressure, the superabundance of their happiness and their deep poverty overflowed in rich generosity.** Even though under adversity, they shared the happiness of God.

## The Doctrine of Giving (from Bible Doctrine Resource)

- And having that mental attitude, they gave even while in deep poverty.
- 4) Giving must express an attitude toward the Lord before it can express an attitude toward others. 2Cor. 8:5 *And not even as we anticipated, but they gave first of themselves to the Lord, then they gave to us by the will of God.* They were occupied with Christ and had personal love for God the Father which motivated their giving.
  - 5) Giving depends on the consistent post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation. 2Cor. 8:7 *But just as you excel in everything in faith-rest and in doctrine and in knowledge and in all diligence and in love from you to us, you also excel in this grace giving.* Giving is associated with **impersonal love**, not with **personal love**. That is grace giving.
  - 6) Precedence for giving is derived from the **dispensation of the Hypostatic Union** and is predicated on grace. 2Cor. 8:9 *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich [as eternal God], yet for your sake He became poor [true humanity], so that you through His poverty [being judged for our sins] might become rich [a son of God].*
  - 7) Giving is a mental attitude related to an overt act. 2Cor. 8:12 *For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable on the basis of what one has, not on the basis of what one does not have.* Willingness counts for giving even if you have nothing to give.
  - 8) Giving is related to motivation from metabolized doctrine in the right lobe of the soul (metabolized doctrine is spiritual information which you understand and believe). 2Cor. 9:7 *Each one, as he has determined in his heart [= right lobe], so give, not from distress of mind or under compulsion or pressure of emotions; for God loves a gracious giver.* True giving is a result of a gracious mental attitude; it is not the result of pressure or coercion.
  - 9) God in His matchless grace provides both the spiritual motivation and monetary capital for grace giving. 2Cor. 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that in always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have abundance for every good deed.*
  - 10) God in His matchless grace provides both the monetary capital for grace giving and makes it part of your Christian service. 2Cor. 9:10 *Now He who supplies seed for the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.*
  - 11) Generosity of mental attitude results in generosity of giving. 2Cor. 9:11 *You will be made rich in every way, so that you can be generous on every occasion; and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.* Giving is never a strain.
  - 12) Giving is Christian service; it is the result of spiritual growth and blessings from God. 2Cor. 9:12 *For this service which you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgivings to God.*
4. The principle of giving is related to two spiritual gifts: pastor-teacher and evangelism.
- 1) The pastor must make an issue out of two things as a recipient of support from believers: the gospel, and what is the Christian way of life after salvation. If you are making an issue out of the gospel and Bible doctrine, then you cannot make an issue out of money.
  - 2) The pastor must never make an issue out of money.
  - 3) 2Cor. 11:7–9 *...because I proclaimed the gospel of God to you without charge? I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to serve you; and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when fellow believers [lit., the brethren] came from Macedonia, they fully supplied my need in everything, and I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so.*
    - (1) Paul was supported by other church bodies, such as the Ephesians and Philippians, while he was in Corinth. In this way he could make an issue out of the Gospel and doctrine.
    - (2) The function of the board of deacons is to make issues clear that pertain to the economic survival of a local church.
    - (3) The Corinthians were very wealthy; and yet Paul could not make an issue out of money with them. They were a difficult and confused group, and had Paul made an issue out of money, a faction of them would have complained, saying, "This is why Paul has established a church here—he wants our money."
  - 4) The pastor-teacher exchanges spiritual blessing to the congregation for material blessing from the

## The Doctrine of Giving (from Bible Doctrine Resource)

congregation, fulfilling the principle of mutual blessing by association. Philip. 1:3, 5 **I am giving thanks to God for every memory of you, ...because of your contribution from the first day until now for the purpose of spreading the gospel.**

- 5) Giving reflects the mental attitude of the congregation toward their pastor-teacher. Philip. 4:10 **I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you have been concerned, but you lacked opportunity to give.**
  - 6) Giving establishes a partnership between the pastor and the congregation. The congregation provides the financial contribution as they are spiritually blessed by the pastor's teaching. Philip. 4:14 **However, when you shared [by giving] and became partners with me in my adversity, you functioned honorably.** Although this passage is specifically applied to Paul and his gift of apostleship, the principle is applicable to individual pastors and their congregations.
  - 7) Giving is the application of Bible doctrine on the part of the congregation. Philip. 4:15-16 **And you yourselves also recognize, that in the beginning of my ministry with reference to the gospel, when I had departed from Macedonia, [that] not one church contributed to me in the application of doctrine of giving and receiving except you Philippians only; because even in Thessalonica you had sent an offering more than once for my needs.**
  - 8) Giving is a grace production in Christian service, which service will accumulate and eventually be rewarded. Philip. 4:17 **Not because I seek the gift, but I seek after the grace production of divine good which accumulates to your account.**
  - 9) Giving to one's right pastor is maximum blessing to the pastor and it is pleasing to God. Philip. 4:18 **Moreover, I have received in total all of your gifts, and I have an abundance; I have been filled with blessing, having received from Epaphroditus the things [money] from you, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.** Paul was the right pastor for many congregations, although he made an effort to train new pastors for these churches (e.g., Timothy).
  - 10) The responsibility for support of the pastor is the responsibility of the local church. The number one priority is support of the pastor, not the building.
    - (1) Like many others, I appreciate amazing **architecture**, and I have seen **churches** and temples which I enjoy aesthetically. However, it is not the business of the church to be spending huge amounts of money on buildings. Some congregations may have particularly wealthy donors; and other congregations might have only a handful of people who struggle day-by-day. Whatever is done by way of a meeting place—gathering in someone's home or in a massive church—is not the issue and it should never get in the way of the teaching of the Word of God. A local church may or may not have a large, impressive building.
    - (2) Related to this is the pastor and his own relationship to his congregation. A pastor really needs to think twice about *moving up* to a better church, better area and/or a larger congregation. Some congregations are going to be small where there are virtually no church assets; and others will be larger. This should never be an issue to the pastor-teacher. It takes great faithfulness on the part of a pastor-teacher to remain faithful to a congregation of 5 or 10 people; especially if another congregation of 300 or 3000 beckon him. God has a place for every teacher, and it is not always at the front podium of some mega-church. As Zechariah asks, **"Who has despised the day of small things?"** (Zechariah 4:10a)
5. The Grace Concept of Giving. It is never the amount; it is always the mental attitude.
- 1) In the Old Testament, Prov 11:24–25 **There is the one who gives generously, yet he becomes more prosperous. There is also the one who [is stingy] holds back what is fitting, and he becomes impoverished. The generous person will be prosperous. He who gives water will also himself be caused to have water.** Those who hang on to their money impoverish themselves. Giving never impoverishes. In supergrace, no matter what you give you never lose.
  - 2) In the New Testament, 1Cor 16:2 **On the first day of the week let each one of you put aside and save on the basis of his prosperity, that no collections be taken when I come.** You determine how much you can give from your prosperity. You don't give if you are broke or if giving would place a hardship on your family.

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6. A Review of the True Meaning of Tithing.
  - 1) Tithing is not spiritual giving in the Old Testament. Tithing promotes arrogance. Tithing was never spiritual giving in Israel.
  - 2) Tithing was a 10% income tax under the laws of establishment delineated in the Mosaic Law for the citizens of Israel only. Believers and unbelievers alike were being charged the same amount of tax. As a tax it was not spiritual giving.
  - 3) There was also a 10% tithe for all Jewish citizens, both believers and unbelievers, for the maintenance of the Levites for their presentation of doctrine (Num 18:21, 24). This is not pertinent today.
  - 4) There was also a 10% tithe for all Jewish citizens, both believers and unbelievers, to support the cost of the Lord's sacrifices (Deut. 14:22–24). This is also not pertinent today.
  - 5) Every third year Israel required the payment of a charity tithe of 10% for those who legitimately needed help (Deut 14:28–29). This was a 10% income tax paid by all the people. This was charity and not socialism. This is the only tax pertinent today. We should pay income tax for the support of the military, and should pay a 10% charity tax every third year.
  - 6) Spiritual giving in the Old Testament is presented under the word "offerings." Offerings were given by believers only.
  - 7) In the time of apostasy in Israel, both believers and unbelievers failed to pay their taxes; and believers were not fulfilling their spiritual obligations in giving as well. Mal. 3:8–10 talks about income tax. *"Will a person defraud God, yet you have been robbing Me. Yet you say, 'How have we robbed You?' 'In tithes [income taxes], and offerings [spiritual giving]. To the entire nation you are cursed with a curse, for you are defrauding Me. Bring your entire tithe [taxes] to the treasury, so that there may be food in My house,' says the Lord of the Armies. 'See if I will not open for you the windows of heaven [prosperity] and pour out blessings for you until there is not room enough."*

One of the things which attracted me to Berachah Church, particularly because I was quite poor when I first became positive toward Bible doctrine, was their policy on **giving**:

*There is no charge for any material from Berachah Church. Anyone who desires Bible teaching can receive our recordings without obligation. God provides Bible doctrine. We wish to reflect His grace.*

*Berachah Church is a grace ministry and operates entirely on voluntary contributions. There is no price list for recordings. No money is requested. When gratitude for the Word of God motivates a believer to give, he has the privilege of contributing to the dissemination of Bible doctrine.*

This policy was put into effect by R. B. Thieme, Jr. and I can personally testify that I have never been asked for money; and have never been treated differently during the times when I could contribute and the times when I could not.

From [http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=2422](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=2422) accessed January 25, 2015 and subsequently edited. Many of the doctrines on this page originate from the teaching of R. B. Thieme, Jr. The translation used above is probably from R. B. Thieme, Jr. as well.

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The verse which set off this study:

**Genesis 28:22** And this stone which I have set for a pillar will be God's house. And of all that You will give me, I will surely give the tenth to You."

Leupold on Jacob's tithe: *Nothing is reported about his giving of the tithe, perhaps because that is presupposed as the condition upon which the maintenance of the sanctuary depended. The silence of the Scriptures on this latter point by no means indicates that it was neglected.*<sup>345</sup>

In my opinion, whether or not Jacob gave a tithe is not the important question. The important question is, did Jacob offer up a worthwhile or important vow? The fact that its fulfillment (or lack thereof) is never spoken of, suggests to me that this is not important. Jacob gave it; but it is a legalistic vow which very nearly denies God's grace.

Interestingly enough, up to this point, all of the vows have been one-way. God has made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob concerning what He would do for them. Here, Jacob is making a vow to God—a vow which is completely and totally voluntary on his part.

*Barnes: Here, then, Jacob appears to take a step in advance of his predecessors. Prior to this, God had taken the initiative in every promise, and the everlasting covenant rests solely on his eternal purpose. Abraham had responded to the call of God, believed in the Lord, walked before him, entered into communion with him, made intercession with him, and given up his only son to him at his demand. In all this there is an acceptance on the part of the creature of the supremacy of the merciful Creator. But now the spirit of adoption prompts Jacob to a spontaneous movement toward God...[This] is the grand and solemn expression of the soul's free, full, and perpetual acceptance of the Lord to be its own God. This is the most frank and open utterance of newborn spiritual liberty from the heart of man that has yet appeared in the divine record. "If God will be with me." This is not the condition on which Jacob will accept God in a mercenary spirit. It is merely the echo and the thankful acknowledgment of the divine assurance, "I am with thee," which was given immediately before. It is the response of the son to the assurance of the father.*<sup>346</sup>

Personally, I question just how much of a step forward this really is, given who Jacob is. However, Jacob will appear to be somewhat changed in the years that follow.

Genesis 28:20–22 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If god will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, ) and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear, and I will return in peace to my father's house and the lord will be my god, Then this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will become God's house; and all which you give me, I will surely give a tenth to you." (Snider's translation)

### Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 28:20–22

1. Jacob here makes a vow to the Lord.
2. Vows were an accepted part of OT piety, both before and during the age of Israel.
3. While there are different types of vows, offered in different spirits, this vow most closely resembles what we would call a bargain.
4. The believer cannot and should not attempt to bargain with God.
5. God has just promised Jacob living grace, as well as His personal presence and a safe return to Canaan in vs 15.
6. Jacob demonstrates his lack of confidence in doctrine by what he articulates here.
7. Both Jacob and Rebekah had a problem in this area, they did not believe that God could or would do what He said.
8. This vow is a verbal expression of a promise that Jacob makes to the Lord.
9. The protasis is found in vs 21.
10. Jacob takes the general promise of vs 15 and translates it into specific aspects.
11. He elaborates on that promise by breaking it down into the following specifics:
  - 1) God's personal presence.

<sup>345</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxix.html> accessed June 4, 2017.

<sup>346</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:20–22 (slightly edited).

### Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 28:20–22

- 2) God's protection.
- 3) Provision of food.
- 4) Provision of clothing.
- 5) Safe return to his home.
12. The apodosis is found in vs 22.
13. Jacob promises to build some sort of a sanctuary for God in the area of Bethel, as well as returning one tenth of what God gives him in terms of financial blessing.
14. This is commendable, but not commanded.
15. There is no record that Jacob ever built any sort of structure in this region, only that he sets up two pillars. vs 18, 35:14
16. His second promise is to give ten percent of his income back to the Lord in return for His blessing.
17. This is called tithing, and is obviously voluntary.
18. This is the second reference to the 10% figure in Gen. 14:20
19. True grace giving is to come from one who is grateful to God and is not to be an attempt to bribe or buy God's favor.
20. Blessings in the plan of God come as a result of the pursuit of BD, and not from bargaining with God.
21. There is no indication that Jacob ever fulfilled either part of his vow, yet God was entirely faithful to His promises.
22. God did not bless Jacob based on future promises of what Jacob might do for Him.
23. God does not need a house, neither does He need our money.

From [Makarios Bible Church](#); will open up in Word or WP; accessed June 1, 2017.

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Genesis 28:16–22 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, 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, and this is the gate of heaven." So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top. He called the name of that place Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear and I return to my father's house in safety, then the LORD will be my God. "This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You." (Ballinger's translation)

### Jack M. Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 28:16–22

1. Upon awaking Jacob's immediate reaction to the dream was fear (cf. v.17).
2. The narrator tells us this.
3. Jacob had heard the stories of his parents and grandparents encounters with the LORD.
4. Now for the very first time he experiences an encounter, the intent of which was to provide Jacob with reassurance for his personal safety, his sustenance and the continuing validity of the Abrahamic Covenant as centered in him and him alone.
5. Jacob thoughts run amok as he imagines that he has come upon a most holy place quite by accident (v. 16b).
6. Hence his words, "Surely Yahweh is in this place, and I did not know it."
7. Just because Jacob chose a spot in the immediate vicinity of Bethel (a town 12 miles north of Jerusalem) to bed down and there having a dream did not make this spot unique.
8. He should have got up thanked God and proceeded on his journey.
9. In verse 17 we see just how far a field his imaginings took him.
10. He constructs his own theology based on an experience.
11. The vision of a stairway linking heaven and earth in the vicinity of Bethel did not mean that this location was what he imagines it to be.

### Jack M. Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 28:16–22

12. By the expressions "house of God" and "gateway to heaven" Jacob declares Bethel to be a unique place, indeed the most sacred place on earth—a portal between heaven and earth establishing Bethel as God's special dwelling on earth.
13. All this speculative theology comes from a troubled and excited soul and his declarations and actions on this occasion was pure bunk.
14. No such importance was placed on this location by Abraham.
15. And nowhere does God indicate that Bethel was a sacred place above and beyond all other places on earth.
16. That is reserved for Jerusalem (cf. Ps. 48:2 "Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mt. Zion in the far north, the city of the great King" and Ps. 87:2 "The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob.").
17. His folly is further manifest by the setting up of a sacred memorial stone which Jacob anoints with oil (v. 18).
18. Jacob picks out one of the stones that he had placed as a protective barrier around his head anoints it with oil.
19. Jacob actually thinks that because he set up this stone and anointed it that the very location will in time "be God's house" (cf. v. 22).
20. Jacob renames the place Bethel, a Canaanite city previously called Luz (v. 19).
21. The name means "house of God."
22. This name replaced the Canaanite name "Luz."
23. The significance of Bethel during the Israelite occupation was that it was a notorious site for idolatrous activity (cf. During the divided kingdom Jeroboam sought to nullify the influence of Jerusalem as the center of spiritual activity, chose Bethel as one of the two centers of golden calf worship; cf. 1Kgs. 12:26-30, 321Kgs. ; Amos 3:14; 4:4-6; Amos the prophet condemned the idolatry of the Jews in Bethel; Hosea pronounced judgment against Bethel mockingly renaming it "Bethaven" meaning "house of nothingness"!; Here an Assyrian priest lived and taught the people whom Assyria had placed in the land (2Kgs. 17:27-28). Josiah removed the idolatry from the place and established the worship of Yahweh there.).
24. Before the sacred memorial stone (v.22) Jacob takes a vow in which he seeks to buy divine protection and provision (vv. 20-21).
25. For his part he promises to give God one tenth of his earthly earnings if God will do His part which is to protect him on his journey and to provide food and clothing (v. 20) and to get him safely back to the land at some future date (v.21).
26. The clincher for all this stupidity is found in the contingency phrase "then/and the LORD will be my God."
27. In other words 'if God does X, Y, and Z then and only then is He worthy to be my God', says Jacob.
28. He is making a deal with God and God just told him in the dream that he would do these things for him!
29. God did not make his living grace or his safe return contingent on anything.
30. It was a pure grace proposition from the divine perspective and had nothing to do with Jacob's vow to tithe from his material blessings.
31. Jacob the manipulator thinks he can manipulate God for living grace and protection.
32. God chose Jacob and yet here we have Jacob trying to chose God as in, "If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear and I return to my father's house safely, then the LORD will be my God."
33. The LORD is already his God and Jacob's insecurity is the result of his failure to take God at His word in the dream with its unconditional promises.
34. This part of the experience at Bethel was sponsored by Jacob's fear (v. 17a), which drove him to treat God as some fickle deity that might just cast him aside for some other candidate which was impossible in light of the oracle of 25:23 and the subsequent blessing of succession in the previous chapter.
35. Jacob imagines that the stone will be the spot of some future sanctuary because "this place is awesome!"
36. Neither Abraham nor Isaac came away from a divine visitation being afraid.
37. The anointed memorial stone never became the spot of a permanent sanctuary (the Ark wound up there on one occasion).

## Jack M. Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 28:16–22

38. The vow did not secure the promises of the dream.
39. Or stated another way, the absence of a vow would not have impinged upon the promises contained in the vision.
40. The best we can say about Jacob is that he was positive to his destiny as the heir although he was very short on understanding and confidence.
41. Stripped of the resources of a rich father and running from assassination he is still capable of playing the manipulator.
42. He has nothing to offer but a tithing vow thinking he can buy divine blessing.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen28.htm> accessed May 27, 2017.

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## A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary

### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 28:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

In the previous chapter, Jacob, as encouraged by his mother, pretended to be his brother Esau when with his father, and managed to wrangle from him the blessing for the firstborn. See Genesis 27.

When Isaac realized what had taken place, his wife told him that Jacob needed a wife from their relatives and not from the Hittites. Rebekah had already butted heads with Esau's Hittite wives.

Rebekah's solution, presented at the end of Genesis 27, is to send Jacob back east to take a wife. Isaac must make this call. Isaac must send Jacob there.

Genesis 28:1 **And Yitshaq [= Isaac] called Ya'aqob [= Jacob] and blessed him, and commanded him, and said to him, "Do not take a wife from the daughters of Kena'an [= Canaan]."**

Rebekah has told her husband that Jacob needs to marry a woman of their own breeding, and there are relatives living in Charan (Haran) which Jacob could marry.

However, it is the next day after being deceived and certainly Isaac has figured out that: (1) Jacob deceived him. (2) His wife, Rebekah, was a party to this scheme. (3) Esau wants to kill his brother. (4) His father, Abraham, did not want him to leave the land of Canaan no matter what. When Rebekah told Isaac that Jacob needed to go to Haran, all of this information was already in Isaac's mind. He probably did not know what he was going to say to Rebekah or do. However, guaranteed, what she said to him here came right out of left field. He was not expecting this at all.

What Rebekah has apparently told Isaac is, "Jacob cannot marry some uncivilized Hittite trollop like his brother did. We need to send him up to Haran in order to find a decent wife. Based upon the information given in this chapter, Rebekah did not reference what happened the previous day—it was as if nothing had happened. Yet, all of this time, Isaac has been thinking about everything that he knows.

So what does half-blind Isaac do? Does he confront his wife and say, "Listen, you were in on this scheme with Jacob, weren't you?" Does he say, "Let's let the boys sort it out between themselves"? Does he assert, "Listen, Abraham would not let me leave the land, so Jacob cannot leave the land"? Or does Isaac go with option #4, ignore these things which he already knows or has figured out; and keep the peace by sending Jacob to Haran to find a wife? What is so good about this solution? Jacob and Esau are separated and Isaac does not need to talk to Rebekah or to Jacob about the great deception from the previous day.

Therefore, Isaac does exactly what Rebekah requests. No matter what happens between Jacob and Esau—Isaac does not want one of them to die. Furthermore, Isaac remains married to Rebekah (there is no reason for them to discuss yesterday's events). To some degree, Isaac is dependent upon Rebekah (although he is certainly rich enough to live separately and still be taken care of).

I suspect that Isaac weighs all of these possible options in his mind and decides that the simplest solution, the one that stirs up the least amount of dust and disappointment, is sending Jacob away to Haran to *find a wife*. Furthermore, no matter what Isaac planned or determined to do, Jacob has the blessing of the firstborn. Therefore, he needs a wife. Since Isaac already knows what the Hittite women can be like, he decides, that sending Jacob to Haran is the best solution. It solves all their family problems.

Genesis 28:2 (Isaac continues speaking to Jacob:) **"Arise, go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethu'el your mother's father. And take a wife for yourself from there, from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother."**

Isaac send Jacob to Haran for the express purpose of finding a wife (as per Rebekah's request from the previous chapter). Nothing is said about the blessing achieved by deceit; nothing is said about Esau's anger. The whole cover story—which is accurate, by the way—is all about sending Jacob to Haran to find a wife.

Genesis 28:3–4 **"And El Shaddai bless you, and make you fruitful and increase you, and you shall become an assembly of peoples, and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your seed with you, so that you inherit the land of your sojournings, which Elohim gave to Abraham."**

El Shaddai is another name for God, and Isaac blesses Jacob a second time, confirming that he will receive the blessing of Abraham (which would be the blessing of the firstborn). "You and all of your descendants will inherit the land of Canaan, which God gave to Abraham."

Genesis 28:5 So Yitshaq sent Ya'aqob away, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethu'el the Aramean, the brother of Ribqah [= *Rebekah*], the mother of Ya'aqob and Ėsaw.

Jacob is sent away, but all of this takes place rather quickly. Isaac does not take time to put together a dowry, as was done for him.

Genesis 28:6–7 And Ėsaw saw that Yitshaq had blessed Ya'aqob and sent him away to Paddan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a command, saying, "Do not take a wife from the daughters of Kena'an," and that Ya'aqob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Paddan Aram.

Esau did not necessarily watch with his own eyes all of this take place. He found about it, so that, at some point, Esau knew all that had happened. He is well-aware that his Hittite wives are displeasing to his mother.

Genesis 28:8–9 So Ėsaw saw that the daughters of Kena'an did not please his father Yitshaq, and Ėsaw went to Yishma'el [= *Ishmael*] and took Maḥalath the daughter of Yishma'el, Abraham's son, the sister of Neḃayoth, to be his wife, besides the wives he had.

It is at this point that Esau realized that his parents did not approve of his two wives. He knew that there was some tension, but at this point, he takes it seriously. Therefore, Esau reaches out to Ishmael to take a wife from his tribe. This is Esau's third wife.

Genesis 28:10 And Ya'aqob went out from Be'ērsheḃa and went toward Haran.

Jacob, with whatever he was given, left Beersheba and went to Haran.

When Abraham's servants went to Haran to take a wife for Isaac, he was sent with a massive dowry. This totally got the attention of Laban. However, there is no indication that Jacob will travel with anything except one or two camels, maybe a slave, and some supplies to keep him alive.

In the book of Genesis, there is a fair amount of travel which takes place. However, when a person travels from point A to point B, rarely do we know anything about the actual trip between those two places. However, this is different. This trip was quite eventful.

Genesis 28:11 And he came upon a place and stopped over for the night, for the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.

Along the way, Jacob had to stop and sleep.

Genesis 28:12 And he dreamed and saw a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to the heavens, and saw messengers of Elohim going up and coming down on it.

In his dreams, Jacob saw an amazing thing. He saw a ladder going up from the earth to heaven and he watched messengers go up and down this ladder. This has been represented by many paintings over the years.

Genesis 28:13 And see, הוהי stood above it and said, "I am הוהי Elohim [= *YHWH Elohim*, *Yehowah Elohim*, *Jehovah God*] of Abraham your father and the Elohim of Yitshaq [= *the God of Isaac*]. The land on which you are lying, I give it to you and your seed.

God speaks to him in this dream. He repeats His promises made to Abraham and to Isaac. Even though Jacob did some terrible things, God chooses him over Esau. Why? Because of Jacob's line. God can see where Esau's line is going to go and He can see where Jacob's line is going. There will be believers in the line of Esau. In fact, I believe that the list of descendants from Esau all represent specific believers. But, after a certain period of time, Esau's line had fewer and fewer unbelievers. At many points in their history, they became antagonistic to the Jews. This is true of many specific groups, particularly the Arabs.

Jacob's line is going to lead to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, despite his many shortcomings, he is the line of promise.

Genesis 28:14 “And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall break forth to the west and to the east, to the north and the south. And all the clans of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your seed.

“Your seed,” God tells Jacob, “is going to be scattered throughout the entire earth, to the east, to the west, to the north and to the south.” God has given the people of Jacob a specific plot of land, but at the same time, Israel is going to be scattered throughout the globe.

Prior to this, all of the promises made to the people of God were that they would be associated with the land of Canaan. With Jacob, suddenly, God's promises have them breaking out of their land and ending up all over the world. Right at this point in time in the narrative, there are essentially five Jews, living or dead: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob. Every genealogical Jew will be born with the genes of this three men, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Genesis 28:15 “And see, I am with you and shall guard you wherever you go, and shall bring you back to this land. For I am not going to leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”

God promises Jacob to guard him wherever he goes and that He will bring Jacob back to the land of promise.

Genesis 28:16 And Ya'aqob̄ awoke from his sleep and said, “Truly, יהוה is in this place, and I did not know it.”

Jacob wakes up and he is surprised by what he dreamed. “Certainly, Y<sup>e</sup>howah is here, in this place, and I had no clue.”

Genesis 28:17 And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of Elohim, and this is the gate of the heavens!”

Jacob called this place awesome, the house of God, and he said the gates of heaven are found here.

Genesis 28:18 And Ya'aqob̄ rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a standing column, and poured oil on top of it.

Jacob stood a stone up, and then poured oil upon it. Sometimes this was done to mark a spot of importance. An large oblong stone is stood upright to make some kind of a statement.

Genesis 28:19 And he called the name of that place Běyth Ĕl, however, the name of that city had been Luz previously.

He calls this place Beth-el, which means, *House of God*.

Genesis 28:20–22 And Ya'aqob̄ made a vow, saying, “Seeing Elohim is with me, and has kept me in this way that I am going, and has given me bread to eat and a garment to put on – when I have returned to my father's house in peace, and יהוה has been my Elohim, then this stone which I have set as a standing column shall be Elohim's house, and of all that You give me, I shall certainly give a tenth to You.”

Jacob then makes a vow to God, that if God feeds and clothes him, and returns him to his father's home, then he will give God a tenth of what he has.

What lies ahead for Jacob is this: he is presently a dishonest, crafty manipulator; so he is going to spend time with his Uncle Laban, who is more dishonest, more crafty and more of a manipulator.

The idea here is, there are things which we find in this chapter which are extremely important.

### Why Genesis 28 is in the Word of God

1. We find out that God is with Jacob, and that he is clearly the favored line of God.
2. God revealing Himself to Jacob lets us know that Jacob is still in the geographic will of God, even though he is going to Paddan-aram. What might be less clear is, God is with Jacob because God has ordained this line of promise from eternity past.
3. The purity of the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is hinted at, with Jacob going east to find a wife from their family (part of the assumption is, their common faith in the Revealed God).
4. When God appears to Jacob, we also become aware of the vastness of the angelic involvement in human history.
5. It becomes clear with this chapter that God is with Jacob and that the blessings of Abraham and Isaac will go to Jacob (despite anything that he has done in the past).
6. Changing the name of Luz to Bethel occurs here.
7. Logistical grace is hinted at; a tithing vow is expressed (which is somewhat confusing to most readers).
- 8.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

These are things which we learn while studying this particular chapter.

### What We Learn from Genesis 28

1. We learn why God chose Jacob over Esau.
2. We study Jacob's shortcomings.
3. We view a map of Jacob's journeys.
4. We study marriage to first cousins in the time of Jacob.
5. We examine how each person—Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob—views Jacob traveling east to find a wife.
6. We study some of the psychology of Isaac accepting Jacob as the line of promise.
7. Angels observing us is very similar to us going to a play.
8. We study why there was no dowry sent with Jacob to take to the east.
9. We study the moral principles found in Genesis 1–28+.
10. We study a new approach to the *writing* and *assembling* and *ordering* of the book of Genesis. This might be understood as the *organic development of the book of Genesis*. This is a different perspective than is found in most commentaries.
11. This chapter, of course, spawns a great deal of discussion of Jacob's ladder, which logically leads to a great deal of discussion of angels.
12. We spend a considerable amount of time studying various contradictions which are said to be found in the Bible.
13. We study the uniqueness of the Bible.
14. God's promises to Jacob cause us to consider God's promises to us.
15. Jacob's vision here might be best described as *Jacob's clarifying moment*; but this does not turn his life around.
16. The study of vowel points in the Hebrew (based upon the discussion of a particular word); and how the practice today of writing *G\*d* is silly.
17. We study Jacob's vows, vows in general, tithing and giving.

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Carroll summarizes portions of the Genesis narrative very much like Edersheim does.

## B. H. Carroll Summarizes Genesis 28

### HISTORY OF JACOB

In the first of the chapter on Isaac we have necessarily considered somewhat the incidents of Jacob's life up to the time that he left his father's home. It was then said that those incidents would be examined more particularly when we studied Jacob's own life. Oliver Wendell Holmes, in reply to the question, How early should the education of a child begin? replied, "Commence with his grandmother." To a great extent certainly most lives are the mixed results of preceding forces. Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, are all in some degree reproduced in Jacob. Oliver Wendell Holmes also says, "A man is an omnibus in which all his ancestors ride." Don't forget these two quotations. This thought he embodies and illustrates in his book *Elsie Venner*. The object of that book was to show how conflicting ancestral traits struggled for supremacy in this girl. We might add that every life is a result of many forces, including the following: (1) God; (2) the devil; (3) heredity; (4) individuality; (5) environment; (6) opportunity; (7) education; (8) habits. We will be little prepared to analyze or comprehend Jacob's life, if we lose sight of any one of these forces. So far in Jacob's life individuality has had but limited place, since he has been under the dominion, or domination, of his mother. Individuality comes most into play when we are thrown upon our own resources, and are responsible for our own decisions and have to make our own way. We will find in this history that Jacob appears to much greater advantage when his own individuality comes into play than when he was under the influence of another. We will find the value of his past habits in his taking care of himself and making a support, and that, too, under very adverse conditions, more adverse than that of any of you boys, hard as you think your lot is. We are going to like Jacob a great deal better as we get on in his history than we do at the start. It has been well said that no hunter is a good businessman. This holds good from Esau to Rip Van Winkle. The domestic habits of Jacob, and his training in caring for flocks and herds, serve him well in after life. From his mother and her family comes his shrewd business sense. Woe to the man who expects to get rich trading with Jacob. He is a prototype of all Yankees and modern Jews in driving close bargains. Hunter Esau was the first victim to "cut his eye-teeth" on that fact.

But before we study the individuality as manifested when thrown upon his own resources, we must refresh our minds with a backward glance at his history as given in previous chapters. His parentage, Isaac, son of Abraham, and Rebekah, granddaughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother. But a mightier factor than parental influence or heredity touches him. Prophecies and mighty doctrines were on their way toward him before he began to be. God comes before parents. The divine purpose and the divine election touching his life will look far beyond the personal Jacob, and be far above and paramount over affection, will, weakness, or duplicity of parent or child, long after the earthly actors are dead. Yea, into thousands of years of the future the foreknowledge, predestination and election of God will project themselves until the whole human race becomes involved in Jacob, and until eternity and everlasting destiny comes. Deep and wide as may be this shoreless ocean of the divine purpose, we are permitted to look at it, so far as revealed, though it be unnavigable by the human reason. Prophecies: The first prophecy directly affecting Jacob is God's answer to the mother's inquiry concerning the infants in her womb. "Two nations are in thy womb, and two peoples shall be separated therefrom, and one shall be stronger than the other people and the elder shall serve the younger." This prophecy evidently refers not so much to the boys themselves as to their descendants. Indeed in its wider significance it concerns all nations more than the two nations. So referring, it considers neither parental bias, nor character of either child. It is not a divine decree fixing the eternal destiny of either child. For reasons sufficient to himself, God of his own will selects one of these nations to become his people and through whom he will savingly reach all other peoples. The second relevant prophecy appears in Isaac's blessing on Jacob: "And God give thee of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth, plenty of grain and new wine." That is temporal. "Let peoples serve thee and nations bow down to thee." That is national. That refers to the primogeniture. "Cursed be every one that curseth thee and blessed be every one that blesseth thee." That is the prophecy of the twenty-seventh chapter. This prophecy is restated and enlarged in the blessing on Esau, as follows: "And thou shalt serve thy brother, but it shall come to pass, when thou shalt break loose, thou shalt shake his yoke off thy neck" (Genesis 24:40). These two prophecies, like the first, find their real meaning in the descendant nations, rather than in Jacob and Esau personally. Esau himself never served Jacob himself. Their application to the nations rather than to the brothers themselves appears in the last Old Testament book,

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Mal. 1:2–5 : "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Jehovah, yet I loved Jacob, but Esau I hated, and made his mountains a desolation." It is evident that Malachi in his day, thousands of years after Jacob and Esau, is not discussing the two men personally, but Jacob the people, and Edom, Esau's people. This national application is also evident from Paul's use of the Genesis and Malachi quotations in Romans 9:10–13. He is there discussing God's election of Israel to be his people, and how that nation, on account of infidelity, was cast off and the Gentiles took their places. He is proving that doctrine from this quotation from Malachi. All this prophecy, Paul says, illustrates God's sovereign election. But so far it is the election of a nation. Personal election of an individual Christian is not so far discussed. The personal privilege conferred in this is the primogeniture conferred on Jacob. In what did this right consist? I am sure to ask that question on examination. The answer is: (1) Rule in family and tribe; (2) A double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 2:17 3) The priesthood of the family and the high priesthood of the tribe. In England the right of primogeniture still prevails to a large extent. The eldest son inherits the father's estate, and in order to support that property they have the "Law of Entail," that the property cannot be alienated, but must pass down to each first son. The income may be used in providing a portion for the other children, but the principal must remain intact. That is one of the special privileges our forefathers objected to. Jefferson and his colaborers determined to abolish both of these laws as far as they applied to America. The history of Virginia shows various steps of legislation undertaken by Jefferson, and aided particularly by the Baptists, in destroying these laws. A man may bequeath his property by will, but that will is subject to legal investigations. It can be broken if he unjustly deprive any child of a fair share of the inheritance. The original prophecy that the elder should serve the younger was never forgotten by the mother, and through her it was made known to her favorite son, Jacob. In both of them arose a desire to hasten the fulfillment of that prophecy. Like Sarah, their impatience could not wait for God himself to fulfill his word. Now comes another examination question, What was the first step taken to hasten its fulfillment? That mess of pottage business. I will not recite the history, but I will ask you on examination to analyze Jacob's sin in that transaction, and Esau's sin. The analysis of Jacob's sin is: (1) Presumption toward God by human instrumentality to hurry up God's purpose. (2) Unfilial toward Isaac. (3) Unfraternal and inhuman toward Esau to take advantage of his extremity by a sharp bargain. (4) It was snatching at a promise before it was ripe. The doctrine involved is: You may do evil to bring about a good thing. That is the doctrine of the Jesuits, abhorrent to God's Word. This evil rather delayed matters. It brought on Jacob the intense hatred of Esau. The analysis of Esau's sin is: (1) He was sensual; the satisfaction of present desire seemed greater than future blessing. (2) There was profanity in his sin; he despised the sacred primogeniture. How does the Old Testament characterize Esau's sin? "He despised the birthright." How does the New Testament? "He was guilty of profanity." Any act of irreverence is profanity. There has come a proverb from that transaction: "Don't sell your birthright." Who has written a book entitled *The Mess of Pottage* You will find it in the book stores, but I do not recommend it to you. Ben Franklin has a similar proverb. When he was small, a man had a whistle which he made very attractive. Ben Franklin, so intense in his desire to get that whistle, gave the man everything he had. But when he walked off he felt very much dissatisfied; it did not whistle as well as he thought it would. It taught him this: Never pay too much for a whistle. John Bunyan, in *Pilgrim's Progress*, has a picture hanging in the interpreter's house: Two boys, Patience and Passion. Passion rushes up and says, "Father, give me all my goods right now." The father gives him the goods and he soon spends all. But Patience waits for the right time. Many people are so governed by appetite that though they may know that the commission of an offense will wreck their future career, they forget the future in their lust.

What was the second step to hasten the fulfillment of the promise? It consists in the concerted action between Rebekah and Jacob to deceive blind old Isaac and have him bless Jacob, confirming the right of primogeniture. I shall now proceed to analyze the sin of Rebekah in this transaction. Rebekah's sin consisted in presumption toward God in doing an evil thing and in the overweening power over Jacob's character, who did.. not want to do it. "Honoring the mother," was carried beyond the legitimate limit. Children ought not to obey their parents in committing a crime. Jacob's sin consisted in making his mother's desire greater than the promptings of conscience and regard for God's will. This did not help the purpose a particle. How does the New Testament show that it did not help the purpose? "It is not to him that willeth, like Isaac, nor to him that runneth, like Esau, but it was of God." It intensified Esau's hatred against his brother: "He cheated me out of my birthright by trade, and now out of my father's blessing. I will kill him." Esau was the fellow to do it. He would boil over, and in anger

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would kill anybody. So to save the favorite child the mother sent him away and never saw him again. She did not make anything, "but it is true that both of these evil steps were overruled by the providence of God for good.

Now we come to an important event in Jacob's life, his leaving home to be absent many years, and his conversion. How different his leaving from old Eliezer's! Eliezer went openly, with a large train and many handsome presents. Jacob had to slip off, without money, an exile and afoot. From this time on the man's individuality will come out. This chapter gives an account of his conversion, the great event of his life, Genesis 28:10–18. That dream was God's method of communicating with this lonely man. The ladder in that dream, according to John's Gospel, represents Jesus Christ, the connecting stairway between earth and heaven, upon which angels descend to earth and ascend to heaven. In that dream Jacob saw a grand sight for any man. Earth and heaven had been separated by sin with earth's inhabitants under a curse. By grace that chasm was spanned by the coming of the Redeemer. Upon that stairway angels come to earth and carry back their reports. Jesus said (John 1), "Hereafter you shall see the angels of heaven ascending and descending upon the Son of man," showing that he fulfilled the type of Jacob's ladder. Dr. Richard Fuller has a marvelous sermon on Jacob's ladder. He was the great orator of the Southern Baptist pulpit, tall, finely formed, handsome, his voice as a silver bell, and as sweet in its melody as the whisper of an Aeolian harp. It is said that no man could interest a crowd following Dr. Fuller in a speech. He is the only man, other than Dr. J. L. Burrows who has preached the Convention Sermon more than once in the Southern Baptist Convention. People were carried away by the man and his personality. He was one of the few rich men who are called a man of great intellectuality. Read his sermon on Jacob's ladder, and also the one on "The Cross of Christ."

Jacob awakened from his sleep and said, "Surely Jehovah is in this place," and he called the name of that place Bethel. "And Jacob vowed 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 raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and Jehovah shall be my God, then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." There is the evidence of his conversion, his keen sense of divine presence and realization of the import of divine communication, his recognition, as if for the first time in his hitherto unworthy life, of his relations to God and the fixed purpose that came into his heart from that time on to serve God, and to honor God with the firstfruits. Here we come to the second mention of tithing before the giving of the law on Sinai. We have seen before that Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek. This man is changed from this time on. He does not lose his shrewd business sense, but he is godly and prayerful and believes that wherever he goes God is with him. That is the secret of a religious life. The conviction that there is a direct connection between earth and heaven, and that every angel in heaven, to the extent of his power, is pledged to the companionship and protection of every child of God, and that Jesus Christ is the connecting link between earth and heaven, and that through sickness and health, good and evil report, God will be with his people, is a sure basis of a good life. That consciousness brings out the purpose, "I will serve and honour God with everything that I have." I remember, while sitting in the back end of a wagon, I read this passage to my wife. The circumstances were these: At the close of the War Between the States, though crippled with wounds, and bankrupt, I voluntarily assumed an antebellum debt of \$4,000, not legally my own, and had finally paid all by selling everything I had but wife and baby, and was moving to a church on the promise of \$500 a year. I said, "Now, wife, here is a time to settle our financial relation to God. We haven't got a thing, and we are sure to fail if he is not honored by us, and if he is honored we will succeed. Let us enter into a covenant right here that whatever happens we will give God one-tenth of every cent that we ever make." We did from that time on. I have long since passed that limit. For many years I have been giving one-fifth, and some years two-fifths. So here was the event that changed this man's life. What matters it that he was banished from home and alone, without friends and without money? If God's was his portion he was rich no matter how poor. If God was with him he had company, no matter how lonely. If God was for him, who could be against him?

From *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, by Dr. B.H. Carroll; from e-sword; Genesis 25:19-28:9 and Genesis 28:10-31:55. Updated.

Alfred Edersheim wrote a book called *The Bible History, Old Testament*, which is very similar to Josephus, where he simply rewrites much of what is in the Bible, and adds in notes and comments as he deems to be relevant. This volume of the book is entitled *The World Before the Flood, and The History of the Patriarchs*.

### Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 28

The following comes from Chapter 16, entitled *Isaac's Blessing obtained by Jacob deceitfully - Esau's Sorrow - Evil Consequences of their error to all the members of their family - Jacob is sent to Laban - Isaac renews and fully gives him the Blessing of Abraham (GENESIS 27-28:9)*.

For, that Isaac was now acting in faith, and that he discerned how, without knowing it, he had blessed, not according to his own inclination, but according to the will and purpose of God, appears from the subsequent history. It seems that Esau, full of hatred and envy, resolved to rid himself of his rival by murdering his brother, only deferring the execution of his purpose till after the death of his father, which he also believed to be near at hand. Somehow Rebekah, ever watchful, obtained tidings of this; and knowing her elder son's quick temper, which, however violent, did not long harbor anger, she resolved to send Jacob away to her brother Laban, for "a few days," as she fondly imagined, after which she would "send and fetch" him "from thence." But kindness towards her husband prompted her to keep from him Esau's murderous plan, and to plead as a reason for Jacob's temporary departure that which, no doubt, was also a strong motive in her own mind, that Jacob should marry one of her kindred. For, as she said, "If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life be to me?" Petulant as was her language, her reasoning was just, and Isaac knew it from painful experience of Esau's wives. And now Isaac expressly sent Jacob to Laban, to seek him a wife; and in so doing, this time consciously and wittingly, renewed the blessing which formerly had been fraudulently obtained from him. Now also the patriarch speaks clearly and unmistakably, not only reiterating the very terms of the covenant-blessing in all their fullness, but especially adding these words: "God Almighty . . . give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee." Thus Isaac's dimness of spiritual sight had at last wholly passed away. But the darkness around Esau seems to only have grown deeper and deeper. Upon learning what charge Isaac had given his son, and apparently for the first time awakening to the fact that "the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac\* his father," he took "Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael" as a third wife - as if he had mended matters by forming an alliance with him whom Abraham had, by God's command, "cast out!" Thus the spiritual incapacity and unfitness of Esau appeared at every step, even where he tried to act kindly and dutifully.

\* There is no mention here that Esau dreaded God's displeasure, or even thought of it. We may remember our earthly, and yet, alas, forget our heavenly Father.

To conclude, by altering and adapting the language of a German writer: After this event Isaac lived other forty-three years. But he no more appears in this history. Its thread is now taken up by Jacob, on whom the promise has devolved. Scripture only records that Isaac was gathered to his fathers when one hundred and eighty years old, and full of days, and that he was buried in the cave of Machpelah by Esau and Jacob, whom he had the joy of seeing by his death-bed as reconciled brothers. When Jacob left, his father dwelt at Beersheba. The desire to be nearer to his father's burying-place may have been the ground of his later settlement in Mamre, where he died. (Genesis 35:27-29) Rebekah, who at parting had so confidently promised to let Jacob know whenever Esau's anger was appeased, may have died even before her favorite son returned to Canaan. At any rate the promised message was never delivered, nor is her name mentioned on Jacob's return.

The following comes from Chapter 17, entitled *Jacob's Vision at Bethel - His Arrival at the House of Laban - Jacob's double Marriage and Servitude - His Flight from Haran - Pursuit of Laban, and Reconciliation with Jacob (GENESIS 28:10-31:55)*

IT had been a long and weary journey that first day when Jacob left his home at Beersheba.\* More than forty miles had he traveled over the mountains which afterwards were those of Judah, and through what was to become the land of Benjamin. The sun had set, and its last glow faded out from the gray hills of Ephraim, when he reached "an uneven valley, covered, as with gravestones, by large sheets of bare rock, - some few here and

## Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 28

there standing up like the cromlechs of Druidical monuments.\*\*\* Here, close by a wild ridge, the broad summit of which was covered by an olive grove, was the place where Abraham had first rested for some time on entering the land, and whence he and Lot had, before their separation, taken a survey of the country. There, just before him, lay the Canaanitish Luz; and beyond it, many days' journey, stretched his weary course to Haran.\*\*\* It was a lonely, weird place, this valley of stones, in which to make his first night's quarters. But perhaps it agreed all the better with Jacob's mood, which had made him go on and on, from early morning, forgetful of time and way, till he could no longer pursue his journey. Yet, accidental as it seemed - for we read that "he lighted upon a certain place," - the selection of the spot was assuredly designed of God. Presently Jacob prepared for rest. Piling some of the stones, with which the valley was strewn, he made them a pillow, and laid him down to sleep. Then it was, in his dream, that it seemed as if these stones of the valley were being builded together by an unseen hand, step upon step, "a ladder" - or, probably more correctly, "a stair." Now, as he watched it, it rose and rose, till it reached the deep blue star-spangled sky, which seemed to cleave for its reception. All along that wondrous track moved angel-forms, "ascending and descending upon it;" and angel-light was shed upon its course, till quite up on the top stood the glorious Jehovah Himself, Who spake to the lonely sleeper below: "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." Silent in their ministry, the angels still passed up and down the heaven-built stairs, from where Jacob lay to where Jehovah spake. The vision and the words which the Lord spoke explain each other, the one being the symbol of the other. On that first night, when an outcast from his home, and a fugitive, heavy thoughts, doubts, and fears would crowd around Jacob; when, in every sense, his head was pillowed on stones in the rocky valley of Luz, Jehovah expressly renewed to him, in the fullest manner, the promise and the blessing first given to Abraham, and added to it this comfort, whatever might be before him: "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places where thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." And what Jacob heard, that he also saw in symbolic vision. The promise was the real God-built stair, which reached from the lonely place on which the poor wanderer lay quite up to heaven, right into the very presence of Jehovah; and on which, all silent and unknown by the world, lay the shining track of angel-ministry. And so still to each one who is truly of Israel is the promise of that mysterious "ladder" which connects earth with heaven. Below lies poor, helpless, forsaken man; above, stands Jehovah Himself, and upon the ladder of promise which joins earth to heaven, the angels of God, in their silent, never-ceasing ministry, descend, bringing help, and ascend, as to fetch new deliverance. Nay, this "ladder" is Christ,\*\*\*\* for by this "ladder" God Himself has come down to us in the Person of His dear Son, Who is, so to speak, the Promise become Reality, as it is written: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." (John 1:51)

\* We infer from the sacred text that Jacob made his first night's quarters at Bethel.

\*\* Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, p. 217.

\*\*\* The journey from Beersheba to Haran is quite four hundred miles.

\*\*\*\* So both Luther and Calvin understood it.

"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not." Quite another fear now came upon him from that of loneliness or of doubt. It was awe at the conscious presence of the ever-watchful, ever-mindful covenant-God which made him feel, as many a wanderer since at such discovery: "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." And early next morning Jacob converted his stony pillow into a memorial pillar, and consecrated it unto God. Henceforth this rocky valley would be to him no more the Canaanitish Luz, but Beth-el, "the house of God;" just as John the Baptist declared that God could of such stones raise up children to Abraham. At the same time Jacob vowed a vow, that when God had fulfilled His promise, and brought him back again "in peace," he would, on his part also, make the place a Beth-el, by dedicating it to God, and offering unto the Lord a tenth of all that He should give him, which also he did. (Genesis 35:6, 7)

From [http://philologos.org/\\_\\_eb-bhot/vol\\_I/contents.htm](http://philologos.org/__eb-bhot/vol_I/contents.htm) and [http://philologos.org/\\_\\_eb-bhot/vol\\_I/ch17.htm](http://philologos.org/__eb-bhot/vol_I/ch17.htm), both accessed December 3, 2016.

<b>Chapter Outline</b>	<b>Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines</b>	
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## Addendum

It ought to be clear that Jacob, if anything, is a mixed bag. There are times when he seems to get it and so many times when he appears to want to just go his own way. It took me a great deal of study to come to a point where I believe I understand the relationship between God's appearance to Jacob, God's words to Jacob and Jacob's responses.

It is headstrong Jacob, who wants to do things his own way, who gives many of us hope. God stayed with Jacob all of his life and God provided for Jacob all of his life. God did try to knock some sense into him, from time to time (like the wrestling match, which we are yet to study); but we as believers can view Jacob's life and think, "Well, we might be crap Christians, but, on the other hand, there is Jacob, after whom is named all the Jewish people."

I thought I might come across commentators who saw parallels between Jacob and the nation Israel being removed from the land, but Pink takes this to a new level.

### Arthur Pink on Jacob's Parallel to the Jewish Nation

Jacob and his experiences may be viewed from two chief viewpoints: as a picture of the believer, and as a type of the Jewish nation. We shall take up the latter first. As to Jacob foreshadowing the history of the Jews we may note, among others, the following analogies:

1. Jacob was markedly the object of God's election: Romans 9:10. So, too, was the Jewish nation. See Deuteronomy 6:7; 10:15; Amos 3:2.
2. Jacob was loved before he was born, Romans 9:11-13. Of the Jewish nation it is written, "Thus saith the Lord, the people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest, the Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:2, 3).
3. Jacob was altogether lacking in natural attractiveness. This is singularly true of the Jewish people.
4. Jacob was the one from whom the Twelve Tribes directly sprang.
5. Jacob is the one after whom the Jewish race is most frequently called. See Isaiah 2:5, etc.
6. Jacob was the one whom God declared should be "served," Genesis 25:23; Genesis 27:29. Of the Jews the prophetic scriptures affirm, "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up Mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up My standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face to the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet" (Isa. 49:22, 23). And again it is written of Israel, "And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules" (Isa. 66:20).
7. Jacob was the one to whom God gave the earthly inheritance, Genesis 27:28; Genesis 28:13. So, too, the Jews.
8. Jacob suffered a determined effort to be robbed of his inheritance, Genesis 27: Isaac and Esau. So have the Jews.
9. Jacob valued the blessing of God, but sought it in carnal ways, totally opposed to faith, Genesis 26:27. So it is written of the Jews, "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own

## Arthur Pink on Jacob's Parallel to the Jewish Nation

- righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:2, 3).
10. Jacob was exiled from the land as the result of his sin, Genesis 28:5. So have the Jews been.
  11. Jacob spent much of his life as a wandering exile from the land; such has been the history of his descendants.
  12. Jacob was distinctly the wanderer among the patriarchs, and as such a type of the wandering Jew!
  13. Jacob experienced, as such, the sore chastenings of a righteous God. So, too, the Jews.
  14. Jacob had no "altar" in the land of his exile: thus also is it written of the Jews, "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a King, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice" (Hosea. 3:4).
  15. Jacob set his heart upon the land while exiled from it. His yearning for home is strikingly expressed in his words to Laban: "Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country," (Gen. 30:25). How we behold the same yearning among the Zionists today, as they appeal to American and British statesmen to make it possible for them to return in safety to Palestine!
  16. Jacob was unjustly dealt with in the land of exile, Genesis 29:23; Genesis 31:41, 42.
  17. Jacob developed into a crafty schemer and used subtle devices to secure earthly riches, Genesis 30:37, 43.
  18. Jacob while in exile receives promise from God that he shall return unto the promised land, Genesis 28:15.
  19. Jacob received no further revelation from God during all the years of his exile, until at length bidden by Him to return, Genesis 31:3.
  20. Jacob was graciously preserved by God in the land of his exile and was the object of His ceaseless providential care.
  21. Jacob became wealthy while in the land of exile, Genesis 30:43.
  22. Jacob, because of this, had stirred up against him the enmity of those among whom he sojourned, Genesis 31:1.
  23. Jacob ultimately returned to the land bearing with him the riches of the Gentiles, Genesis 31:18.
  24. Jacob is seen at the end blessing the Gentiles (Gen. 47:7), and acting as God's prophet, Genesis 49. In all these respects Jacob was a striking type of the Jew.

We shall next look at Jacob as a picture of the believer. It is intensely interesting to mark how each of the patriarchs foreshadowed some distinct truth in the believer. In Abraham we see the truth of Divine sovereignty, and the life of faith; in Isaac Divine sonship, and the life of submission; in Jacob Divine grace, and the life of conflict. In Abraham, election; in Isaac, the new birth; in Jacob, the manifestation of the two natures. Thus we find the order of these Old Testament biographies foreshadowed accurately what is now fully revealed in the New Testament. Again, we may remark further that, typically, Jacob is the servant. This is ever the Divine order. Abraham, the chosen object of God's sovereign purpose, necessarily comes first, then Isaac, the son born supernaturally, the heir of the father's house, followed by Jacob, the servant. It is needful to call special attention to this order to-day, though we cannot here enlarge upon it. Man would place sonship at the end of a long life of service, but God places it at the beginning. Man says, Serve God in order to become His son; but God says, You must first be My son in order to serve Me acceptably. The apostle Paul expressed this order when he said: "Whose I am, and whom I serve" (Acts 27:23). How carefully this order is guarded in our type appears further in the fact that before Jacob commenced his service at Padan-aram he first tarried at Bethel, which means "the House of God"- we must first enter God's household before we can serve Him! That Jacob does, typically, represent service is clear from, Hosea 12:12, where we are told, "And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep." The history of this we get in Genesis 29 and 30. As a servant with Laban, Jacob was singularly faithful. Here is his own challenge, "These twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was, in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night."

From [http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings\\_Genesis/genesis\\_29.htm](http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_29.htm) accessed June 4, 2017.

An interesting question; although it seems to be thrown in at a weird place (Genesis 28:10–15).

### Bible Query: Why did God choose the Jews instead of someone else?

Q: In Gen 12:1, 28:10-15; 32:22-32, why did God choose the Jews instead of the Chinese or someone else?

A: First of all, God has the right to choose whomever He wishes. Here God did not choose a people, but rather one man: Abraham. Later the covenant and offspring were reckoned through Isaac in Genesis 17:21 and 21:12. Later Jacob was chosen in Genesis 26:23-24. Abraham was willing to leave his culture and city (Ur), which was probably the largest city (100K to 180K population) and most civilized city on the earth at that time. Many people have some desire to do what is right, but fewer wealthy men would be willing to sacrifice their ties to their culture and religion to follow God above all, even to a place he did not know (Hebrews 11:8). Today, Romans 10:12 and Galatians 3:24 teach there is no difference to God in Jews and non-Jews. See 735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered p.171 for more info.

Let me offer two extremely important reasons: (1) God knew that Abraham would offer up his son as a sacrifice to God, which is an amazing type of Christ on the cross. (2) Through Abraham, Jesus Christ would be born.

*Bible Query*; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006.; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:11.

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[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

There was a statement made in the Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary which I think needed some sussing out.

### Discovering God—a Discussion

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary makes this statement: *We do not really discover God anywhere, not even in His Word, unless He reveals Himself inwardly to our souls. Then do we truly know that God was there, though we knew it not.*<sup>347</sup>

This is an oversimplified statement. God has designed specific spiritual gifts to help the believer grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are not receiving the majority of your spiritual growth at a local church, then there is something wrong with your spiritual life and, more particularly, with your church.

Secondly, let's say you pick up the Bible and start reading. Is it completely on God what you understand? That is what that statement appears to mean (I don't think the original author actually believes that, however). If the believer is out of fellowship or has absolutely no background to understand a particular passage, then he will get limited information from it.

If you are in fellowship and you have the background for a particular passage, then you have the minimum requirements for understanding what you are reading. What this passage appears to imply (and I don't think the author actually believes this) is, God may just arbitrarily choose to turn off the spigot of knowledge for the believer desiring to know the Word of God. God is clearly not arbitrary in His dealings with man.

Whereas, I have nothing against personal Bible study or reading the Bible for oneself, the pastor who puts this on the individual believer is not necessarily doing his job. It is the job of the pastor-teacher to teach his congregation the Word of God. If a believer never picks up the Bible outside of church, he should still experience spiritual growth and be able to make good decisions in his life, if he is keeping up with the teaching done in the local church.

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<sup>347</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 28:16 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses).

The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

## Josephus' History of this Time Period

### THE CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD AND THE DISPOSITION OF THE ELEMENTS.

#### CHAPTER 19.

#### CONCERNING JACOB'S FLIGHT INTO MESOPOTAMIA, BY REASON OF THE FEAR HE WAS IN OF HIS BROTHER.

1. Now Jacob was sent by his mother to Mesopotamia, in order to marry Laban her brother's daughter (which marriage was permitted by Isaac, on account of his obsequiousness to the desires of his wife); and he accordingly journeyed through the land of Canaan; and because he hated the people of that country, he would not lodge with any of them, but took up his lodging in the open air, and laid his head on a heap of stones that he had gathered together. At which time he saw in his sleep such a vision standing by him: - he seemed to see a ladder that reached from the earth unto heaven, and persons descending upon the ladder that seemed more excellent than human; and at last God himself stood above it, and was plainly visible to him, who, calling him by his name, spake to him in these words: -

2. "O Jacob, it is not fit for thee, who art the son of a good father, and grandson of one who had obtained a great reputation for his eminent virtue, to be dejected at thy present circumstances, but to hope for better times, for thou shalt have great abundance of all good things, by my assistance: for I brought Abraham hither, out of Mesopotamia, when he was driven away by his kinsmen, and I made thy father a happy man, nor will I bestow a lesser degree of happiness on thyself: be of good courage, therefore, and under my conduct proceed on this thy journey, for the marriage thou goest so zealously about shall be consummated. And thou shalt have children of good characters, but their multitude shall be innumerable; and they shall leave what they have to a still more numerous posterity, to whom, and to whose posterity, I give the dominion of all the land, and their posterity shall fill the entire earth and sea, so far as the sun beholds them: but do not thou fear any danger, nor be afraid of the many labors thou must undergo, for by my providence I will direct thee what thou art to do in the time present, and still much more in the time to come."

3. Such were the predictions which God made to Jacob; whereupon he became very joyful at what he had seen and heard; and he poured oil on the stones, because on them the prediction of such great benefits was made. He also vowed a vow, that he would offer sacrifices upon them, if he lived and returned safe; and if he came again in such a condition, he would give the tithe of what he had gotten to God. He also judged the place to be honorable and gave it the name of Bethel, which, in the Greek, is interpreted, The House of God.

From: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-1.htm> accessed December 3, 2016. Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*; Book 1, Chapter 1.

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It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

### A Complete Translation of Genesis 28

#### A Reasonably Literal Translation

#### A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

Isaac sends his son Jacob east to find a proper wife

Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and commanded him, saying to him, "You will not marry one from the daughters of Canaan.

Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and gave him a stern command, saying, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman.

<b>A Complete Translation of Genesis 28</b>	
<b>A Reasonably Literal Translation</b>	<b>A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase</b>
[Instead] rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father and take for yourself from there a wife from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.	Instead, rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take a wife from the daughters of Laban (Laban is your uncle, your mother's brother).
And 'El the Almighty will bless you, make you fruitful and multiply you so you become a [great] assembly of peoples. Furthermore, He will give the blessings of Abraham—[both] to you and to your descendants. For the ground [over which] you have traveled [is] your possession, [that very same ground] which God had given to Abraham."	And God the Almighty will bless you, and He will make you fruitful and multiply you into a great assembly of peoples. He will give all of the blessings of Abraham to you and to your own sons and daughters. All this ground which you have traveled on will be yours—just as God had promised to Abraham."
So Isaac sent Jacob away and he departed to Paddan-aram to Laban ben Bethuel (the Aramæan), the brother of Rebekah, [who is] the mother of Jacob and Esau.	So Isaac send Jacob away to Paddan-aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel, the Aramæan, the brother of Rebekah, who is Jacob and Esau's mother.
<b>Esau marries a third wife, taken from the line of Ishmael</b>	
Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and then sent him away to Paddan-aram to take from there a wife in his blessing to him [or, <i>when he blessed him</i> ].	Esau observed that Isaac first blessed Jacob and then sent him off to Paddan-arm to take from there a wife as a part of the blessing.
Isaac charged him, "Do not take a woman from the daughters of Canaan."	Isaac had charged Jacob, "Do not take a wife from the Canaanites."
Consequently, Jacob listened to his father and mother and he went to Paddan-aram.	Jacob obeyed his father and mother and went to Paddan-aram.
Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Isaac, his father, so Esau went to Ishmael and he took to wife Mahalath, Ishmael ben Abraham's daughter ([she is] the sister of Nebaioth) in additional to his [other] wives.	Esau also observed that Isaac saw the women of Canaan as evil, so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, Ishmael's daughter, as an additional wife (Ishmael is the son of Abraham and Mahalath is the sister of Nebaioth).
<b>Jacob's dream vision of the ladder</b>	
Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and he advanced toward Charan. He reached a [particular] place and stayed there, because the sun had gone down. He took from the stones of the place and placed [it near] his head. Then he laid down [to sleep] in that place.	Jacob left Beer-sheba, heading toward Charan. He came to a particular place and decided to stop there because the sun had gone down. He took a few stones and used them as a pillow, laying down to sleep there.
Then Jacob [lit., <i>he</i> ] dreamed, and he saw [lit., <i>behold</i> ] a staircase [ramp, ladder, elevator?] stationary on the earth; and its top reached [into] the heavens. And he saw [lit., <i>behold</i> ] the angels of Elohim ascending and descending on it.	While Jacob was dreaming, he saw a staircase stationary on the earth, but its top reaching into the heavens. He watched the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.
<b>God orients Jacob to His plan</b>	
And he saw [lit., <i>behold</i> ] [that] Y <sup>e</sup> howah is standing over it.	And he saw Jehovah standing over these stairs.

A Complete Translation of Genesis 28	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Then He said, "I [am] Y <sup>e</sup> howah, the Elohim of your father Abraham and the Elohim of Isaac. The ground upon which you are laying, I will give to you and to your descendants. Furthermore your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, east, north and south; and all of the families of the earth will be blessed by you and by your Seed.	Then Jehovah said, "I am Jehovah, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give the ground upon which you are lying to you and to your descendants after you. Furthermore, your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will be scattered all over the earth, to the west, east, north and south. Also all of the families of the earth will be blessed by you and by your Seed.
Listen, I [am] with you and have kept you wherever you have gone. Furthermore, I will bring you back to this land, for I have not deserted you until now; listen, I will do [that] which I have proclaimed to you."	Listen, I am with you and I have guarded you wherever you have gone. Furthermore, I will bring you back to this land, because I have not deserted you even until now. Recognize, therefore, that I have done exactly that which I have proclaimed to you."
Jacob's response to his dream-visioni	
Jacob then awoke from his sleep and said, "Y <sup>e</sup> howah [is] surely in this place [and] yet I [even I] did not know [it]."	Jacob awoke from his sleep and remarked, "Jehovah is surely in this place, yet I had no idea."
Therefore, he was afraid, and he remarked, "How awesome is this place! [Is] this not the house of Elohim? And [is] this [not] the gate of heaven?"	Therefore, Jacob was afraid and he remarked, "This place is awesome! Is this not the house of God? Is this not the gate to heaven?"
Therefore, Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone which [was] there by his head and he set it up as a pillar, and he poured oil on its top. He called the name of this place Bethel (but Luz was the name of this city originally).	Jacob rose up early that morning and took the stone which was there by his head and he set it up as a pillar, and then poured oil on it. He called the name of that place Bethel (the original name of this city was Luz).
Jacob's vow	
Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If Elohim is with me and [if] He keeps me on this road that I am going [on] and He has given to me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and I return in peace to my father's house, then Y <sup>e</sup> howah will be to me for an Elohim.	Jacob then vowed a vow, saying, "If God is with me and if He keeps me along this pathway that I go in, and if He gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and if I am able to return in peace to my father's home, then Jehovah will be for me God.
And the this stone which I have set up will be a pillar [of] the house of Elohim and all that You have given me, I will tithe it [back] to You."	Furthermore, this stone from the house of God and all that You give me, I will surely tithe it back to You."
Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Doctrinal Teachers* Who Have Taught Genesis 28			
	Series	Lesson (s)	Passage
R. B. Thieme, Jr.	1976 Abraham (Genesis 11:26–22:24) (#600)	#	Genesis :1–
	1963 Dispensations (#201)	#	Genesis :1–

## Doctrinal Teachers\* Who Have Taught Genesis 28

Series	Lesson (s)	Passage
Ken Reed	<a href="https://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/exegesis/">https://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/exegesis/</a>	Genesis 38–50
Dr. Robert Dean	<a href="https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/genesis-menuitem">https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/genesis-menuitem</a>	Genesis 1–50
Bill Wenstrom	<a href="https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&amp;view=libwritten&amp;selCat=2&amp;Itemid=124">https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&amp;view=libwritten&amp;selCat=2&amp;Itemid=124</a>	Genesis 1–50
Jack M. Ballinger	<a href="http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/genesisindex.html">http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/genesisindex.html</a>	Genesis 1–49
Ron Snider	<a href="http://www.makarios-bible-church.org/oldtest.html">http://www.makarios-bible-church.org/oldtest.html</a>	Genesis 1–50

\* By doctrinal teacher, I mean a man whose primary focus is the teaching of the Word of God, verse-by-verse and book by book. A believer under the teaching of such a man should fully understand the gospel and rebound after less than a month in attendance.

When it comes to teaching, I should think that a 45 minute teaching session would be the bare minimum; and that, at least 3x a week (with provisions for getting teaching in some way on the other days of the week). Although this man may interact or even learn from other teachers, he should clearly be the authority over his church; and the authority over him is the Word of God and God the Holy Spirit (Who guides the pastor in his study).

ICE teaching would also be a part of the package, ICE being an acronym standing for Isagogics (a teaching of the history of that time in order to understand the context of a passage), Categories (a study of categories of Bible doctrine), and Exegesis (a close study of each passage, word-by-word whenever necessary).



These two graphics should be very similar; this means that the exegesis of Genesis 28 has stayed on topic and has covered the information found in this chapter of the Word of God.

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