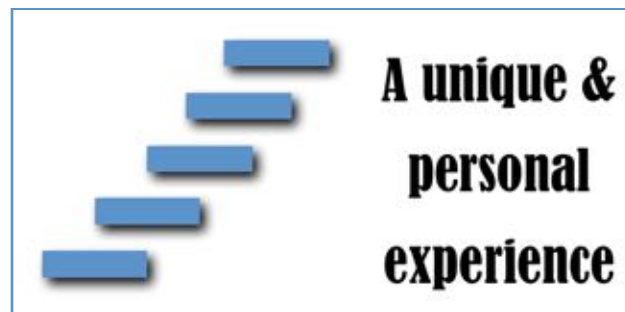




Surprising Encounters with God

Genesis 28:10-22

Learning from Abraham's faith



Paul J. Bucknell

Genesis 28:10-22 displays the amazing encounter God had with Jacob despite his unbelief and unworthiness. Jacob's ladder is a dream that gives us a brilliant picture of God's intervening work even in a very secular world. Our response to His voice is key to the well-being of our lives.



A person's greatest good always starts with meeting God.

A) Needing God (Gen 28:10-12)

He was going astray and full of fear. He needed to be brought back.

10 Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. 11 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. 12 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. (Gen 28:10-12)

- The need for a God-encounter
- Understanding unbelief
- Deserves the worse
- The dream
- The ladder reveals God's interest in mankind, not just to exercise justice but to pour out acts of mercy and grace upon the unworthy sinners. Jacob's ladder ridicules secularism which believes God is not involved in our lives.
- Understanding our unbelief
- Undeserving and unworthy
- Uninterested
- Application: Have you discovered that God is a greater good than anything you might find on earth?



B) Knowing God (Gen 28:13-25)

Many want direction for their lives, but this only comes after they know God.

13 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. 14 "Your descendants 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

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.” (Gen 28:13-15).

This powerful image seen in Jacob's dream convinces us that God's favor is upon Jacob. Notice how this set of promises is not conditional. It is blended together with what was in earlier years stated to Abraham and Isaac.

- The Lord will give the land to Jacob and his descendants.
- Jacob's descendants will be in great number.
- Jacob's descendants will spread out in every direction.
- Through Jacob and his descendants all the families on the earth will be blessed.



Reaffirms His Promise (15b)

- I am with you.
- I will keep you wherever you go.
- I will bring you back to this land.
- I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised.
- Application: What blessings do we desire and which does God desire to bless us with?

C) Responding to God (Gen 28:16-22)

Hearing from God is common but the difference is that we let Him change us.

16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” 17 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. 18 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. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz. 20 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, 21 and I return to my father's house in safety, then the LORD will be my God. 22 “And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house; and of all that Thou dost give me I will surely give a tenth to Thee” (Gen 28:16-22).

Jacob's bargain (Genesis 28:20-21)

- If God will be with me,
- If God will keep me on this journey that I take,
- If God will give me food to eat and garments to wear,
- If God makes it so I return to my father's house in safety...
 - Then (Joseph's part)
- Then the LORD will be my God.
- This stone... pillar, will be God's house.
- All that Thou dost give me I will surely give a tenth to Thee.



Application: What is it that we need? What does God want of us?

Conclusion: God interrupts our lives, whether boring or exciting, and uniquely places His words in our lives to significantly reshape how we think of Him so that we might pursue Him.

