

GENESIS 28: 10 – 22: THE HOUSE OF GOD



Jacob was alone and lonely. He had had to leave behind his family, his home, his livelihood, everything that had felt familiar and secure. It even seemed to him that he had left God behind, too.

At sunset he lay down to sleep, with only a flat stone for a pillow. During the night he dreamt that he saw a stairway reaching from earth to heaven, with angels going up and down on it. Even more wonderfully, he became aware of the presence of the Lord God with him.

God spoke to Jacob, promising that he would possess the land where he was now lying, and that He would give him many descendants through whom all the nations would be blessed. He told Jacob that He would be with him and protect him wherever he went, and would bring him back to this land.

When Jacob awoke, he declared, “The Lord is here! He is in this place and I didn’t know it!” (Good News Bible). He set up the stone that had been his pillow as a memorial of his experience, and poured olive oil on it to dedicate it to God. Jacob named the place Bethel, which means, “House of God.”

We often call our church buildings “the house of God”, because in them we are aware of His presence, as we meet with others to worship Him. Now, for a time, we cannot go to church services or other meetings in our buildings. Perhaps it feels as if we are not only separated from our fellow Christians, but separated from our God, too.

The story of Jacob’s dream can be a great comfort and encouragement to us at this time. Wherever we may be, the Lord is with us. Nothing can separate us from His presence and His love. The place where you are now is the house of God and the gate of heaven.

A prayer: Lord God, help me to know that You are with me, right here and now. I think of the other members of my church, of my friends, and of my family. May they, too, be assured that You are with them, and that Your love surrounds them. Guide them and protect them in all they do today. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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