

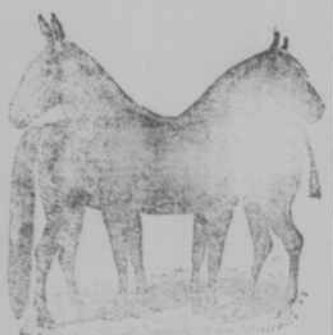
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Jacob's Vision and God's Promise

Sunday School Lesson for April 7, 1907

Specialty prepared for this paper.

LESSON TEXT—Genesis 28:10-15, 16-22; memory verses, 18, 19. GOLDEN TEXT—"Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest."—Gen. 28:15. TIME.—Not definitely known, but probably about 1200 B. C. Isaac was 117 years old and Esau and Jacob about 55. PLACE.—Bethel, on the southern edge of Palestine, and Bethel, about 12 miles north of Jerusalem. "There is a little village and a well at Bethel, which is on a hill, and the ruins of a Crusader church stand there. On a hill a quarter of a mile away are the ruins of a so-called 'castle of Abraham,' which some consider the site of the old Bethel."—Charles G. Trumbull.

SPIRITUAL REFERENCES.—Bible drama: Abraham, Gen. 22; Jacob's olive dream, Gen. 28:10-15; 42:24; Laban's, Gen. 31:23; Joseph's, Gen. 37:5-9; Pharaoh's, and his officers', Gen. 40, 41; the Midianites', Judg. 7:13; Solomon's, 1 Kings 2:2-7; Nebuchadnezzar's, Dan. 2:1-4; Joseph's, Matt. 1:20-23; 2:13, 19, 27; Pilate's wife's, Matt. 27:19; Paul's, Acts 16:19; 21:11, etc.

Compare God's covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Isaac's blessing, Gen. 28:13; 31:1-13; 27:1-13; 28:3-15; 28:21; 29.

New Testament. Refer on this event: John 1:51; Heb. 1:10; John 1:16; 1 Tim. 2:5.

Comment and Suggestive Thought. 1. "And Isaac." Now an old man of 117. "Called Jacob." About 57 years old, a young man for those times of long life. "And blessed him." "There is no attempt to substitute Esau for Jacob."—Ellicott. "Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan." This was Rebekah's contrivance (Gen. 27:16). In order to get Jacob safely away; and yet it was not wholly a pretext, for a wife must be provided for the now recognized first-born, and an alliance with heathenism was fit for the one in whose line the great Abrahamic covenant would descend. It would be well for Christians if they also took heed to "be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14).

A Father's Blessing. The best "start in life" a young man can have is the benediction of a godly father or mother. Jacob Comforted by a Heavenly Vision and a Renewed Covenant.—Our exile was a "mother's joy." He had been long enough from Beersheba to grow homelick. His heart was softened also by the lonely place and his solitary condition, by the night and the stars.

Light from Jacob's Ladder.—What the lonely traveler learned from this lovely vision we also may learn. These ladder lessons are:

1. The nearness of heaven. Angels are all around us to help us, as the mountain was full of celestial defenders round about Elisha.

2. These angels are magnificent creatures. God "maketh his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire." And yet they are ready to comfort a guilty fugitive like Jacob.

3. The way to heaven is a stairway, easy of ascent, with angels to help us. The Mohammedans, on the contrary, picture the entrance to heaven as a bridge, "as narrow as the thread of a famished spider."

4. And Jesus Christ is the Way! Our Lord himself (John 1:51) applied the description of Jacob's stairway to his own great work as a medium of communication between God and man. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

5. Gleams of heaven may be expected through the darkest sky of misfortune and sorrow.

6. The angels ascended; there is the ascent of our prayers. The angels descended; there is the descent of God's answers. We are reminded of the afferent and efferent nerves of the body—up which flash the sharp stings of pain from the extremities to the head; down which come the directions how to act.—F. B. Meyer.

Jacob's Covenant—a Response to God's Covenant.—In no way do men show their characters more clearly than by the response they make to the goodness of God. It is like the reaction in the chemist's test-tube, when a certain substance is added, which at once discloses the nature of the compound under examination. Jacob's responses to God's gracious promises were three: Veneration, commemoration and consecration.

Second Response, Commemoration.—Jacob established two memorials of the great event, a stone memorial, and a still more lasting name.

Third Response, Consecration.—V. 20. "And Jacob vowed a vow." When a man understands God's covenant of blessing, the natural and honorable impulse is to make one in return. Love begets love, and benediction inspires a wish to do something for the benefactor.

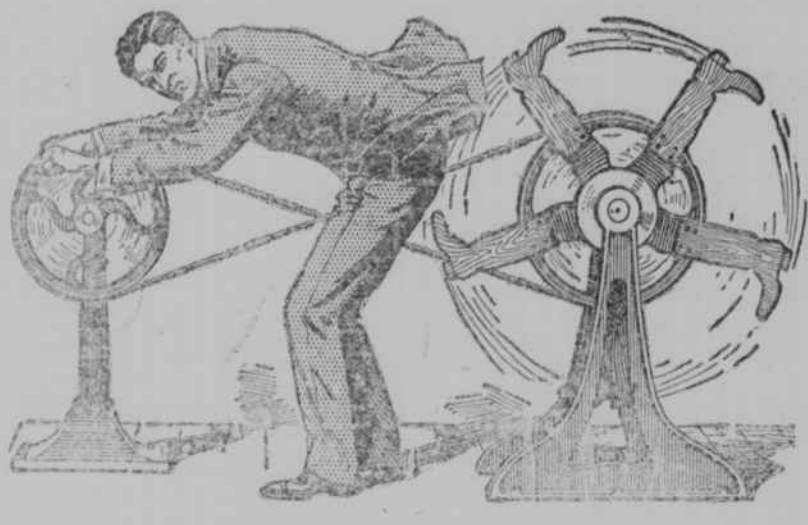
V. 22. "And of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." This giving of tithes was a very ancient custom, followed by Abraham in the case of Melchizedek (Gen. 14:20), and carefully laid down in the Mosaic law (Lev. 27:30-33).

God's Covenant with Us.—Christ's death is God's "new covenant" with men. It takes up and wonderfully enlarges all these ancient covenants with men. It means that God loves us, even the worst of us, with a marvelous love; that he reaches out after us, that he longs to heap all joy upon us. It is a promise to be with us everywhere, help us in all difficulties, save us from all temptation, and bring us triumphantly home at last.

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SOUTHERN RAILWAY

Table with train schedules for the Southern Railway, including columns for stations, times, and directions. Includes routes like Winterpark and Richmond, etc.

IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

Notice regarding land parcels and legal proceedings. Mentions names like J. B. Blanton, Annie Blanton, etc.

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