

# Famous Bible Stories

## Jacob's Incredible Ladder

### Gen 28.10-22<sup>1[1]</sup>

[In the story of Jacob's ladder we find a marvelous revelation about salvation. The book of Genesis is the seedbed of all Biblical doctrine. We have marvelous spiritual gems and truths given in symbol and type in the book of Genesis.]

[Nature forms us, sin deforms us, education informs us, penitentiary's try to reform us, but only Jesus can transform us. If you would like to be transformed, then you can be transformed, you can be made brand new through the Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation He offers.]

[The Old Testament says somebody is coming, the New Testament says somebody has come, the Revelation says somebody is coming again. All of the scriptures are about the Lord Jesus Christ.]

[Jacob is the son of Isaac and he has a twin brother Esau. Jacob received all of the inheritance that should have been given to his older brother Esau. Esau became very angry and said he was going to kill Jacob after their father died. So, Jacob ran for his life and now he is in the wilderness all alone. He sets up a rock for his pillow and falls asleep.]

**A. A Picture of a Sinner (vs 21)** [- Incidentally, this appears to be the place where Jacob got saved. Jacob was not a godly man until after this event in his life. Jacob declares in this passage of scripture,]

*[Genesis 28:21 <sup>21</sup> . . . then shall the LORD be my God:]*

**[Everyone needs to decide and choose that the Lord is their God.]**

**Jacob Is A Picture Of A Sinner Because,**

- 1. He Was Shrouded In Darkness (vs 11; 2 Cor 4.4; John 3.19-20)** [- *And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; . . .* - The sun had set and literally speaking Jacob was now in physical darkness. However, the Bible records it here for us that we might see figuratively speaking that Jacob is in spiritual darkness. The Bible indicates that the next day the sun arose and Jacob was a changed man.]

[The darkness that Jacob was in reminds us of the darkness that every lost sinner in this world is in. The Bible says,]

*[2 Corinthians 4:4 <sup>4</sup> In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. ]*

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1[1] Resourced from Adrian Rogers

[Every man without the Lord Jesus is in darkness. Some people like that darkness because that darkness is more comfortable to them than the light. Many of us have known children that are afraid of the darkness and have thought, “Oh how ridiculous.” But what is more ridiculous a child afraid of the darkness or a man afraid of the light. Jesus said,]

*[John 3:19-20<sup>19</sup> And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> For every one that doeth evil **hateth the light**, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. ]*

2. **He Was Surrounded By Desert (vs 11; Prov 13.15; Matt 11.28)** [– *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.* – Can you imagine a place so barren that the only thing you could find to sleep on was rocks? If there is anything that Israel has a lot of its rocks. Jacob was in a desert place.]

[Jacob was out there in the darkness with the wilderness beasts around him and he is all alone and exposed to the elements and the world around him. He is alone physically and he is alone spiritually without God, without hope, without peace.]

[Some people say, “It’s hard to be a Christian.” Think about Jacob out there all alone with rocks for his bed. It’s hard not to be a Christian. The Bible says,]

*[Proverbs 13:15<sup>15</sup> Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard. ]*

[What could be harder than a stone for a pillow? Jesus said,]

*[Matthew 11:28-30<sup>28</sup> Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. ]*

[Have you ever heard a truly born again Christian say, “I’m sorry that I ever gave my heart to the Lord Jesus Christ.” You will likely never hear any lost sinner say, “I wanna tell you how much the dear old sweet devil means to me.”]

3. **He Was Sentenced With Death (vs 10; Gen 27.41)** [– *And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.* – The fact that Esau wanted to kill Jacob is why he left and found himself in this dark, barren place.]

*[Genesis 27:41<sup>41</sup> And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.]*

[Here is Jacob with the hounds of justice on his trail. Here he is picturing every unsaved sinner. The sinners plight is death. The Bible says,]

***[Romans 6:23 <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. ]***

- B. A Picture of a Savior (vs 12; John 1.47-51)** [*– And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. – Jacob is out there with a rock for his pillow and he dreamed of a ladder whose bottom was on the earth and it went all the way up to heaven and God was at the top of that ladder. He also saw angels coming down and going up that ladder. ]*

[The word translated ladder here is also translated stairway, hence this ladder was a stairwell. This should not be thought unusual since in the Navy a stairwell is also called a ladder well. ]

**[Illustration:** A young man said to a young lady, “Last night I had a dream, and I dreamed that I proposed to you. What do you think that means?” The young lady replied, “I think it means you have more sense when you are asleep than you do when you are awake.”]

[This is just like Jacob, he had more sense when he was asleep than he had when he was awake. Because when he was asleep he had a glorious vision and saw this ladder reaching all the way to heaven. ]

**[This ladder pictured the Lord Jesus Christ.]**

***[John 1:47 <sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite [Jacob] indeed, in whom is no guile [Jacob]! ]***

[We know that latter in the Bible God will change Jacobs name to Israel. Also the name Jacob means deceiver, conniver, or beguiler. So twice our Lord mentions Jacob here in this statement, which sets the message Jesus is referencing. Jesus then says,]

***[John 1:48-51 <sup>48</sup> Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. <sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. <sup>50</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. <sup>51</sup> And he saith unto him, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. ]*****

[In the Old Testament the angels are seen ascending and descending upon a ladder. In the New Testament Jesus said you will see the angels ascending and descending upon me. In the Old Testament we have a seed of truth hidden, in the New Testament we have the doctrinal truth revealed.]

[Jesus is plainly saying that the Old Testament ladder is an Old Testament prophecy of a New Testament Savior. That ladder is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only one that gives mankind access to the Heavenly Father. Jesus Christ is the link between heaven and earth. Jesus is our connection with heaven.]

**[Notice three things about this ladder to heaven,]**

1. **The Reach Of The Ladder (vs 12; John 14.6; 10.1)** [- *And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and **the top of it reached to heaven**: . . .* – We recall how that in the account of the tower of Babel men tried to build a tower unto heaven and failed. Remember how they sat and wept in the ruins of their tower of blunders. You see every man made effort is destined to fail. No one can build into heaven. Oh, people try, they have all kinds of false religions and man made schemes but they will all fail and collapse.]

[There is only one ladder that will reach into glory and heaven and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. He reaches all the way to the top. Jesus said,]

*[John 14:6<sup>6</sup> . . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.]*

[So many people are trying to climb into heaven by another way. But Jesus said,]

*[John 10:1<sup>1</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.]*

**[Illustration:** There was a man who wanted to be at the top of the ladder. He wanted to be a success so he sacrificed his family, and his health so that he could achieve that goal. Finally, he made it to the top and when he got there he realized that his ladder was leaning on the wrong wall.]

[When you give yourself to the ladders of this life and sacrifice everything for them, when you get to the top of your ladder you will realize it is a short ladder and is leaning on the wrong wall. Jesus is the only ladder that reaches all the way up to heaven.]

2. **The Reliability Of The Ladder (vs 13)** [- *And, behold, the LORD stood above it, . . .* – This means that Almighty God is watching over that ladder. This is one way that you can count on. The mighty angels of God ascend and descend upon that ladder, because it is the only reliable way to get to heaven. This is God's way, and this is the only way God watches over.]
3. **The Resources Of The Ladder (vs 12; Heb 1.13-14)** [- *. . . and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.* – What are these angels of God going up and down for? What do angels do?]

*[Hebrews 1:13-14<sup>13</sup> But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? <sup>14</sup> Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation]*

[Angels are ministering spirits. Angels are sent to minister to you. Do you know that we have guardian angels? Do you know that we have servant angels? We have angels that are come to us and going for us back to the Father. They are ascending and descending this ladder.]

**[God sends His resources to us by means of this ladder. Not only is Jesus the way in which I go to God, but Jesus is the way in which God comes to me.** God meets my needs through Jesus. No angel comes down from God except he comes down by this ladder. No angel goes back to heaven except he goes by this ladder.]

[Hence, not only is this a stairway to the stars it is a stairway to the storehouse. Everything we have and receive from God comes through the Lord Jesus Christ.]

4. **The Riches Of The Ladder (vs 13-15; 1 Tim 2.5)** [*– 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; <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither 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.* – Notice the many and bountiful riches that are available because of this ladder. ]

- a. [The Promises of God are in this ladder (Christ) (vs 13-14)]
- b. [The Presence of God is in this ladder (Christ) (vs 15)]
- c. [The Protection of God is in this ladder (Christ) (vs 15)]

**[This Old Testament type is a revelation of the link between heaven and earth. ]**

*[1 Timothy 2:5<sup>5</sup> For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; ]*

**[Jesus is not a good way to heaven. Jesus is not the best way to heaven. Jesus is the only way to heaven.]**

- C. **A Picture of Salvation** [*– On this night Jacob came to know God as his savior. Jacob knew about God, but now he would have salvation through God. How did this change happen?*]
- 1. **There Was A Consciousness Of God (vs 16; Rom10.8-13)**[ *– And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. <sup>17</sup> And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.* – Jacob before he placed his head upon that rock yawned in the face of God and went to sleep. So far as he knew God was 10,000 miles away.

But then after that vision he said God was in this place. No one is ever saved until he reckons with the reality of God. With this consciousness comes a holy reverence for God.]

[How close is God to you?]

*[Romans 10:8<sup>8</sup> But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, **which we preach**; ]*

[God is already in your heart. How did he get in your heart? Every time you hear a preacher speak the gospel message then Christ is placed in your heart. He is just waiting for you to believe in Him and confess Him.]

*[Romans 10:9-13<sup>9</sup> That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.<sup>10</sup> For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.<sup>11</sup> For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.<sup>12</sup> For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.<sup>13</sup> For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.]*

**[If you ask Jesus to save you today, He will save you.]**

2. **There Was A Conversion To God (vs 18-21)** [- *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.**<sup>19</sup> And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.*— Jacob was cognizant of God, he even feared and trembled in God’s presence. But that was not enough.]

[Notice in these verses the name **Luz**. This name means separation. When Jacob first came there he was separated from God, but now it is named Bethel meaning the house of God. That howling wilderness has now become for Jacob the very house of God. This was an incredible transformation for Jacob. This is now the place of fellowship with God. It is the place of communion with God.]

*[Genesis 28:20-21<sup>20</sup> 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,<sup>21</sup> So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: ]*

[Some people believe that Jacob was making a bargain with God, but the word “if” in this text can also mean “since.” Hence Jacob was making a commitment to God based upon what God had already promised to do.]

[Jacob was converted. Not only was it a new morning he was a new man. The sky was bluer and the earth was a sweeter green. He had been saved and born again. He was no longer separated from God but God was his God.]

3. **There Was A Commitment Through God (vs 22)** [- *And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.* – This is the second reference to tithing in the Bible. Jacob did not give to get saved, he gave because he got saved. That's the nature of this transformation. There was no law at this time that said Jacob had to tithe. Jacob just wanted to give from his heart. ]

[Up until this time the motto of Jacob had been "GET." Now his motto will be "GIVE." The name Jacob means getter, grabber, conniver. But now his whole character was changed. That's what Jesus does in us.]

[Do you have a Bethel, where the Lord Jesus Christ became your ladder to ever lasting life and every resource of God? Every body needs a Bethel.]

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