

A Study of Genesis: Presence and Grace

Scripture Focus: Genesis 28:10-17

Jacob is on the run. All the elements of his father's blessing – land, family, domination - became ironic memory. Jacob had to leave all behind to flee for his life. The word of blessing seems to have degenerated into a writ of exile. As observers/readers, we're permitted to watch the saga unfold. To learn from it. It seems especially important for us to pay close attention as God confronts Jacob. Will Jacob get a good scolding? Harsh punishment meted out as a result of Jacob's lying and cheating to gain his father's blessing? Will God "let him have it" all to demonstrate that any wrongdoing will be judged and severely dealt with by a holy and righteous God? Read Genesis 28:10-17 to find out.

Stopping for the night to rest as he flees in the direction of Haran and his uncle's family, Jacob lays down, falls asleep and dreams.

- What did Jacob see in his dream? What do you believe is the significance of what Jacob saw?
- What did Jacob hear, particularly in verses 13-14? What was God's message to Jacob and why are these words important – as they most certainly are?
- What else did Jacob hear from God as recorded in verse 15? Are you surprised by what God said to Jacob? Why or why not?

Jacob wakes up from his dream and comes to a startling conclusion (v. 16-17).

- What is the conclusion that Jacob declares and how is he feeling about it?
- In this encounter with God did Jacob, given his wrongdoing, get what he deserved (the Lord's blessing and punishment)?
- Have you ever felt a keen sense of being in God's presence? What were the circumstances and what did you experience?
- Given this story and what we are taught throughout Scripture about who God is and who we are, what are some reliable indicators that it is God's presence we are sensing and not something else?

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long. (Psalm 23:6)