

God Reveals Himself to the Fugitive Jacob at Bethel (Gen 28:10–22)

Grace Chapel January 13, 2010 Dr. John Niemelä

INTRODUCTION

CHRONOLOGY (Gen 28:10ff. occurred in 1930 BC)

Jacob married Leah & Rachel at age 76 (Joseph was born 14 yrs after Jacob went to Paddan Aram. Joseph was 40 & Jacob was 130 when Jacob went to Egypt). Leah & Rachel were much younger than Jacob (Jacob was 90 at Joseph's birth)

GEOGRAPHY

In 28:10 Jacob left Beersheba (in the southern part of Israel)

In 28:11 he arrived in Bethel in mid-northern Israel, **where the LORD met him by night**

In 29:1 he arrived at Haran

In 31:55 he left Haran

In 32:1 he arrived at Mahanaim, northeast of Bethel, **where the LORD met him by night**

OWNERSHIP VERSUS POSSESSION

Jacob owned the right of the firstborn and he owned the blessing, but left the land

Esau forfeited the right of the firstborn and the blessing, but remained in the land

1: GOD REVEALS HIMSELF TO JACOB AT BETHEL (28:10–22)

A. THE VISION (28:10–15)

(28:10–11) Jacob left Beersheba for Haran, staying in a certain place because the sun had set and putting a stone next to (where) his head (would lie)

From Jacob's standpoint, sundown was the only reason for stopping at this place

The passage does not say that he used the stone as a pillow. The significance of the stone at his head (*rō'sh*) comes later in the passage.

(28:12–13a) The LORD appeared to Jacob in a vision, standing at the head of a staircase filled with angels (going up and down the staircase) [between heaven and earth]

The LORD is *standing at the head* (*rō'sh*) of the staircase. More about this later.

(28:13b–14) The LORD reiterated the promise He made to Abraham and Isaac: to give the land to them and to their seed, to multiply their seed, and to bless all families of the earth through them

Gen 12² I will make you a **great nation**; I will **ble**ss you And make your **name great**; Be a blessing. ³ I will **ble**ss those who bless you, And I will **cur**se him who curses you; And in you **all the families of the earth shall be blessed** [my translation].

Gen 12⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your seed I will give this **land**.” And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸And he [Abram] moved from there to the mountain east of **Bethel**, and he pitched his tent *with Bethel* on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD [my translation].

Gen 26³ Dwell in this land, and I will be with you [Isaac] and bless you; for to you and your seed I give **all these lands**, and I will **perform the oath which I swore to Abraham** your father. ⁴And I will **make your seed multiply** as the stars of heaven; I will give to your seed **all these lands**; and in your seed **all the nations of the earth shall be blessed** [my translation].

(28:15) The LORD promised to bless and protect Jacob, [even as he was leaving the land]

B. JACOB'S RESPONSE TO THE VISION (28:16–22)

(28:16–17) Upon awakening, Jacob realized that the LORD was in the place (which he had not known before) and fearfully acknowledged the LORD's presence

(28:18) Jacob arose early, stood the stone that had been at his head as a pillar, and anointed its top (head, *rō'sh*) with oil.

It is now a standing rock: a pillar.

Jacob anointed the stone's head (*rō'sh*)

What is the point?

(28:19) Jacob called the place Beth-el (that was then known as Luz)

Beth = House of El = God

(28:20–21) Jacob recognized (as the basis for the vow) that the LORD will protect him, provide for him, and return him [to Bethel], and the LORD becomes his God

The Hebrew is not explicit which is the last *if clause* and where the *then clause* begins.

I agree with Dr. Allen Ross in viewing verses 20–21 as the *if clauses* and verse 22 as the *then clause*.

(28:22) Jacob vowed to worship the LORD at Bethel and to tithe to Him.

SUMMARY

**APPENDIX:
NATIONAL APPLICATION BY MOSES**

Deuteronomy 30

NATIONAL APPLICATION BY JOHN THE BAPTIST

Matthew 3

NATIONAL APPLICATION BY JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 4

NATIONAL APPLICATION BY PETER

Acts 2

Acts 3