

04

GENESIS 28:10-22

JACOB'S DREAM

THIS WEEK'S focus

Who doesn't love a night in the great outdoors? Some people love time in nature, but others run in the other direction at the thought of sleeping in a tent. These days we can choose to stay in hotels when we travel; however, there was a time when sleeping in a tent was the most common option. In Genesis 28, we're going to learn about Jacob's remarkable encounter with God at a campsite. While fleeing his angry brother, Esau, Jacob was met by God in a supernatural way. Despite Jacob's sin, God reaffirmed that He would remain faithful to His promise and be with Jacob wherever he went. This moment served as a marker of God's faithfulness for Jacob. We, too, should be encouraged by God's commitment to His people and the way He delights in extending grace.



CENTRAL truth

God is intimately involved in the lives of His people.



EXPLORE

scripture

GENESIS 28:10-22

GENESIS 28:10-15

10 Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. **11** He reached a certain place and spent the night there because the sun had set. He took one of the stones from the place, put it there at his head, and lay down in that place. **12** And he dreamed: A stairway was set on the ground with its top reaching the sky, and God's angels were going up and down on it. **13** The LORD was standing there beside him, saying, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will

give you and your offspring the land on which you are lying. **14** Your offspring will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out toward the west, the east, the north, and the south. All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. **15** Look, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

GENESIS 28:16-17

16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." **17** He was afraid and said,

"What an awesome place this is! This is none other than the house of God. This is the gate of heaven."

GENESIS 28:18-22

18 Early in the morning Jacob took the stone that was near his head and set it up as a marker. He poured oil on top of it **19** and named the place Bethel, though previously the city was named Luz. **20** Then Jacob made a vow: "If God will be with me and watch over me during this journey I'm making, if he provides

me with food to eat and clothing to wear, **21** and if I return safely to my father's family, then the LORD will be my God. **22** This stone that I have set up as a marker will be God's house, and I will give to you a tenth of all that you give me."

04

GENESIS 28:10-22
CONVERSATION

questions

▶ READ GENESIS 28:10-15.

.01 Why do you think God chose to talk to Jacob through a dream? What does that say about God?

.02 How can God's promise to be with Jacob wherever he went encourage us?

.03 Review God's promises to Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 12:1-3 and 26:1-4. Why did God make another similar promise to Jacob?

Q GIVE AN ANSWER

Does God still speak to people through dreams? Throughout Scripture, God uses dreams to directly unveil Himself and His plans to His people. While God can still operate in this way, we must take two things into account. First, Scripture is our primary source for how God reveals Himself today (see 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 2:19-21). It's where we go to learn how God has revealed Himself in the person of Jesus, and how this revelation brings redemption to our world. In other words, the written Word reveals the Living Word—Jesus—to us (see John 5:39).¹ Second, today we have the luxury of being able to access the full library of Scripture, something those in the ancient world didn't have. God needed to communicate with His people in other ways: dreams, visions, angels, burning bushes, and so on. God continues to speak and respond to His people, but we must ask for wisdom, through His Spirit, to filter all things through what has been revealed in Scripture.

¹ David S. Dockery and Daniel L. Akin, *A Theology for the Church*, rev. ed (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2014), 109.

▶ READ GENESIS 28:16-17.

.04 How did experiencing God's presence change Jacob's perspective? How can talking to God change our perspective about life or our circumstances?

.05 What are some attributes of God that cause you to feel a sense of awe?

.06 While God's presence inspires awe and reverence, how does it make you feel to know that He invites you into a relationship?

▶ READ GENESIS 28:18-22.

.07 How can we remind ourselves and each other of moments when God was faithful?

.08 Take note of Jacob's response to God's presence. How should we respond to God's presence?



CULTURE

The building of monuments to mark significant events was a common theme among the Israelites in the Old Testament. Unlike pagan markers and monuments, these stone altars or markers weren't worshiped. Markers and monuments were set up to help people remember what God had done in those places. The monuments were often established to become ongoing testimonials and signs for future generations to help them look back and remember God's activity. Today, identifying spiritual markers is an important way for believers to recognize and remember God's activity in our lives.



04

GENESIS 28:10-22
NOW
what?



CENTRAL truth

God is intimately involved in the lives of His people.

.09 How can you talk about God's faithfulness to you with a friend, classmate, or family member?

.10 What are some experiences we might describe as "awesome" that would lead us to worship God?

.11 How can we prepare ourselves to truly expect encounters with God in our daily lives?

.12 How have we benefited from God's promise to Jacob?

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE GENESIS 28:14

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

GENESIS 28:10-12

DWELL

One night while journeying to Haran, Jacob had a bizarre dream. In it, there was a stairway or ladder going to heaven and angels going up and down the stairs. This wasn't any ordinary dream, but a message from God! What started as an ordinary day and night turned into something spectacular because of God's presence. That's the way God works—He breaks into the ordinary events of our lives to show us who He is.



Look back at Genesis 28:1-5. Where was Jacob traveling to? Do you think he expected to encounter God along the way? Why or why not?



When has God used an ordinary set of events to get your attention?

MEMORIZE

Write Genesis 28:14 on an index card or sticky note and attach it to your bathroom mirror. Say the verse aloud each day, emphasizing a few different words each time.

PRAY

Pray that God would help you become more aware of His work all around you.

day 2

GENESIS 28:13-15

DWELL

In Jacob's dream, the Lord appeared to him and identified Himself as the God of Abraham and Isaac. God reaffirmed the covenant He had made to Jacob's grandfather, Abraham, and promised Jacob that his descendants would multiply to be a blessing to all peoples. But don't miss God's promise to Jacob in verse 15. God is with us, and He is faithful to His promises.

↑ What do these verses say about God?

↔ How can you be a blessing to people as you go about your week?

MEMORIZE

Save Genesis 28:14 as a wallpaper or screensaver on your phone or computer. Read it aloud each time you see it.

PRAY

Thank God for being faithful to His promises. Ask Him to call to mind ways that He has worked in your life to make you a blessing to others.

day 3

GENESIS 28:16-17

DWELL

When Jacob awoke from his dream, he was aware of God's presence around him. There are times when God allows us to have a special sense of His presence. Sometimes that can be during a worship service, while other times it may be while standing at the beach or in the mountains, enjoying God's creation. But remember: God's presence is always with us, even when we don't recognize it or feel it.

← Why was it important for Jacob to recognize God's presence at Bethel?

↪ How do these verses challenge you to be aware of God's presence around you?

MEMORIZE

Say the book, chapter, and verse number for Genesis 28:14 out loud several times. Then read aloud just the first few words of the verse. Do this a few times a day and see if you can memorize more each time.

PRAY

Offer a personal prayer of praise to God by singing along with one or two of your favorite worship songs. Praise God for His presence with you.



day 4

GENESIS 28:18-22

DWELL

Jacob was so moved by the events at Bethel that he set up a monument to remember his experience. Throughout Scripture, the people of God are encouraged to remember His involvement in their story. We, too, are invited to remember, and one way we can remember is with spiritual markers. We can use things like photos, journaling, social media, or crafts to capture and memorialize those experiences. Identifying and remembering significant moments with spiritual markers is a great way to personalize our experiences with the Lord.

↔ How can sharing your personal experiences with God encourage others to do the same?

↻ How has God moved in your life recently? What are some ways you can intentionally remind yourself of this experience?

MEMORIZE

Write out Genesis 28:14 on a piece of paper. Circle three to five key words in the verse and consider their importance. Focus on those words and see how much of the verse you can speak from memory.

PRAY

Take some time to think back over your own experiences and thank God for the ways He has moved in your life.

day 5

1 JOHN 1:8-10

DWELL

In the story of Jacob and his dream, we see God actively involved in the lives of His people. Despite Jacob's sin against his brother and father, God promised to be with him and to be faithful. Today's verses from John highlight confession as an important part of our relationship with God. The practice of confession is recognizing and admitting our sin to Him. God's activity in our lives is shown through His forgiveness of our sin and the restoration of our relationship with Him. He is faithful and we can rest in His forgiveness.

↓ If you were to say, "I have no sin in my life," how do you think Paul would respond?

→ What are some steps you can take to recognize and confess sin in your life?

MEMORIZE

Read Genesis 28:14 several times. Then start by trying to memorize the first two or three words. Once you have those words memorized, add a few more words at a time until you can say the whole verse.

PRAY

Take some time to consider any unconfessed sin in your life. Confess it to God, allowing Him to forgive you and restore your relationship with Him.