



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 47



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE. ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----
LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

JACOB DREAMS A DREAM

Gen 29:10 "And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. ¹¹ 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ 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; ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. ²⁰ 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, ²¹ So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: 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." (Genesis 29:1-22)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT
Journeying toward Haran, Jacob comes to a certain place, and prepares to spend the night. Using some stones for pillows, he fell asleep and dreamed an arresting dream. Behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, the top of it

reached to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it. The Lord Himself stood above the ladder, and spoke to Jacob. He told the patriarch he would give the land on which he was lying to him and his seed, who would be as the dust of the earth,

and that in his seed all families of the earth would be blessed. He promised he would be with Jacob wherever he went, would bring him back to this land, and not leave him until he had done everything he promised. When Jacob awoke, he was afraid and said

In his trip toward Haran, Jacob tarried all night in a certain place. There he had one of the most significant dreams of human history – Given O. Blakely

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this was the house of God and the gate of heaven. He arose, set up the stone he had used for a pillow, anointed it, and called the name of the place Bethel. He then vowed he would give a tenth of all that God would give him back to Him.

TO THIS POINT

To this point, the spotlight has been turned on certain individuals – **those who were pivotal in the purpose of God.**

- ➔ ADAM. Genesis 2:19-5:5
- ➔ CAIN. Genesis 4:1-17
- ➔ ENOCH. Genesis 5:18-24
- ➔ NOAH. Genesis 5:29-9:29
- ➔ ABRAHAM. Gen 11:26-25:12
- ➔ LOT. Genesis 19:1-38
- ➔ ISAAC. Genesis 24:1-25:28
- ➔ JACOB. Genesis 25:28-49:33
- ➔ JOSEPH: Genesis 37:1-50: 26

The following Genealogies have also been provided.

- ➔ Cain (Gen 4:17-24).
- ➔ Noah (Gen 6:10).
- ➔ The sons of Noah (Gen 10:1-32)
- ➔ Shem (Gen 11:10-26).
- ➔ Terah (Gen 11:27).
- ➔ Nahor (Gen 22:20-24)
- ➔ Abraham, by Keturah (Gen 25:1-4)
- ➔ Ishmael (Gen 25:12-16).
- ➔ Isaac (Gen 25:19-25).

WHAT WE ARE BEING TAUGHT

- ➔ That God does not view all people alike.
- ➔ That humanity is not a conglomerate of people who all have the same opportunities.
- ➔ That God makes choices among people.
- ➔ That the most significant people are the ones God chooses.
- ➔ That in all of the nuances of life, it is God's will that is ultimately being done.
- ➔ That there are significant people, blessed by God, who determine certain experiences of other people.
- ➔ The one person can represent a number of other people.
 - ➔ ADAM – Because of his sin: many are dead, judgment unto condemnation came upon all men; death reigned; man were made sinners (Rom 5:15-19).
 - ➔ NOAH – Built an ark to the saving of his house (Heb 11:7).
 - ➔ ABRAHAM – Promise given to bless Isaac and Jacob (Gen 26:4-5); delivered Lot (Gen 19:29).
 - ➔ ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB – Delivered Israel from Egypt (Ex 2:24); Israel brought to

- ➔ **ULTIMATELY, JESUS CHRIST.** God loves Jesus' disciples because they love Jesus (John 16:27); God has forgiven us for Christ's sake (Eph 4:32); there is *"no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus"* (Rom 8:1); the love of God *"is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Rom 8:39). Because of Christ the *"gift of grace"* has abounded unto many; justification is a reality; we receive an abundance of grace and reign in life; man are made righteous (Rom 5:15-19).

All of these are fundamental pillars of acceptable spiritual thought. As we proceed through the Scriptures, they will be illustrated in the history of Israel. Through the Prophets God will provide the reasoning for these things, confirming that **He is altogether righteous.**

Although it goes without saying, all of this is being done deliberately and with inscrutable wisdom by God Himself. There is no happenstance or coincidence in any of these workings. **We are being exposed to the working of the Lord, not of the workings of men that God bends to suit His own purpose.** This is taught specifically by apostolic doctrine:

- ➔ *"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."* (Rom 11:36)
- ➔ *"But to us there is but one God, the*

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the land of Canaan (Ex 6:8; 33:1).

Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and

we by him." (1 Cor 8:6)

- ➔ "And **all things** are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18).
- ➔ "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh **all things** after the counsel of his own will" (Eph 1:11).
- ➔ "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and **through all**, and in you all" (Eph 4:6).
- ➔ "For it became him, for whom are **all things**, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb 2:10).

These realities are taught doctrinally, but not **only** doctrinally. **By Divine design they have been lived out in the crucible of life.** People have been used by God with whom we can identify, amidst circumstances that we can comprehend, even associating them with our own.

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

Ponder the seeming obstacles that appeared to stand in the way of God doing what He purposed.

- ➔ In the beginning there was chaos and darkness.
- ➔ Man and woman had no sooner been created than the serpent deceived them, appearing to bring the Divine purpose to an abrupt end.
- ➔ No sooner was a sacrifice accepted, than the brother of he who offered it killed him.
- ➔ Unholy men appeared to gain prominence in Lamech, Nimrod, and then the whole human race was swallowed up in violence.
- ➔ Following the flood Noah became

drunk, and one of his sons conducted himself shamefully, bringing a curse upon Canaan.

Commencing with Abraham:

- ➔ Sarah was found to be barren (Gen 11:30).
- ➔ A famine was found in the promised land (Gen 12:10).
- ➔ Pharaoh of Egypt thought to defile Sarah (Gen 12:15ff).
- ➔ Lot and Abram had to separate (Gen 13:7-12).
- ➔ Abraham's nephew Lot was taken captive with others by four kings who were ravaging the area (Gen 14:10-16).
- ➔ The men of Sodom were so exceeding wicked that God had to destroy them (Gen 19).
- ➔ Abimelech thought to defile Sarah (Gen 20:3-8).
- ➔ Friction was in the house of Abraham between Hagar and Sarah (Gen 16:6).
- ➔ The birth of Ishmael and the circumstances that surrounded him were introduced (Gen (Gen 16:16; 21:10).

➔ After a miraculous conception, twins, Jacob and Esau are born, with Esau being born first (Gen 25:24-25).

- ➔ Isaac loves Esau (Gen 25:28).
- ➔ Esau determine to kill Jacob (Gen 27:21).

As men reckon things, any one of these could have interfered with the fulfillment of the purpose of God. However, none of them did, for the purposes of God cannot be overthrown.

The apostle doctrine is, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom 8:28-30).

This doctrine fully supported by the records of Genesis. Those accounts involved God's initial working on the purpose that is now in full swing, so to speak. They confirm to our hearts that what God starts He completes, and that there is every reason to put our faith fully in Him. No person can afford to fail

This doctrine fully supported by the records of Genesis. Those accounts involved God's initial working on the purpose that is now in full swing, so to speak. They confirm to our hearts that what God starts, He completes, and that there is every reason to put our faith fully in Him.

- ➔ Isaac's wife Rebekah is barren (Gen 25:21).

to do this. It is imperative that God be seen for who He really is. That is why these things have been written.

JACOB WENT TOWARD HARAN



Gen 28:10 ***"And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran."***

There is something common about all of the obedience mentioned to this point. Included are the following:

THE NEAR-TOTAL ABSENCE OF CONVENIENCE

- ➔ Noah building an ark (120 years of hard work amidst wickedness).
- ➔ Abram going from Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan (1,500 miles of travel, and all of the inconveniences that attend long journeys).
- ➔ Abram arriving in Canaan to find a famine (thought and diligence required for survival).
- ➔ The time Abram spent in Egypt (Facing the inconsideration of a foreign people).

- ➔ Reestablishing himself in Canaan (inconveniences associated with separation from Lot, and moving about from place to place).
- ➔ Walking through the land (facing various hostilities and inconveniences associated with moving from place to place).
- ➔ The birth of Isaac (his own impotence, Sarah's barrenness, long waiting).
- ➔ The expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael (difficulty because this was grievous to Abraham).
- ➔ The offering of Isaac (a lengthy journey to an unknown place, and the difficulties associated with not knowing all the details).
- ➔ Obtaining a wife for Isaac (a long journey, the need for discretion, and a lengthy wait).
- ➔ Isaac having the promised offspring (the barrenness of Rebekah, having to distinguish between two sons when bestowing the blessing).
- ➔ Jacob obtaining the blessing (not naturally qualified, inconveniences associated with dealing with Esau, and obtaining the blessing).
- ➔ Jacob obtaining a wife (having to leave home, travel a long distance, and wait a long time).

Observe there is a glaring absence

of convenience in all of this. This is especially important to note, because some people have equated blessing with ease and convenience – sometimes even relaxation and fleshly quietude. This conception is so ingrained in the human nature, many people tend to think something is wrong if they encounter hardship and inconvenience. Although God is fully able to make our enemies be at peace with us (Prov 16:7), that is NOT the *"peace that passes all understanding,"* keeping our *"hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"* (Phil 4:7). Certainly, Beginning a 600-700 mile trip on foot, or even by means of a beast of burden, could not be considered convenient by anyone!

Reading between the lines, as it were, the mindset of these early *"fathers"* is seen in this manner: **These men considered obedience to the Lord and His will as having absolute priority.** The thought of disobeying God is never even suggested. And, if this fairly represents the case, why was this true? **In my mind, it was because they had confronted the real God, and knew it.**

I suggest that the absence of this attitude in our time is owing to the lack of a knowledgeable exposure to the God of heaven. Somehow, valid religious requirements, imposed by the Lord Himself by means of His Word, are simply not being associated with the Almighty God. **That, in essence, confirms the absence of faith.** I cannot think of a more serious malfunction of thought than this.

HE TARRIED THERE ALL NIGHT

"¹¹ 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."

HE LIGHTED UPON A CERTAIN PLACE

"And he lighted upon a certain place . . ." Other versions read, *"He came to a certain place,"* ^{NKJV} *"he reached a certain place,"* ^{NIV} *"coming to*

a certain place," ^{BBE} *"he came upon a certain shrine,"* ^{NAB} *"At sundown he arrived at a good place to set up camp,"* ^{NLT} *"he toucheth at a certain place,"* ^{YLT} *"he stopped to camp at sundown,"* ^{LIVING} *"he encountered a place,"* ^{ABP} and *"he*

In his trip toward Haran, Jacob tarried all night in a certain place. There he had one of the most significant dreams of human history – Given O. Blakely

came to a holy place and camped there.”^{GNB}



Assuming this was the first night, it appears to have made a lengthy progress, for from Beersheba to Bethel is about forty miles – some think it was as many as forty-eight miles.^{JOHN GILL}

This is the place near which Abraham had moved when he first entered the land, situating himself between Bethel and Ai. He had built an altar there (Gen 13:3-4). I gather this was in the mind of the translators of the New American Bible (“he came upon a certain shrine”), and the translators of the Good News Bible (“he came to a holy place”).

Considering the above observations, and taking into consideration the experience that Jacob had here, I am inclined to think this was, indeed, an appointed place, where God intended for Jacob to stop for the night. If the Lord led the servant of Abraham, when he went to Haran to obtain a wife for Isaac (Gen 24:27,48), it certainly is not a stretch of the imagination to consider that he did the same for Jacob. After all, there is no record that he had been in this area before.

HE TARRIED THERE ALL NIGHT

“ . . . 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.”

Jacob seems to sense there is something special about this place. Perhaps he knew about Abraham arriving in Canaan and using this area as his base of operation – even building an altar there (Gen 12:8).

It is important to note that Bethel was in the land of Canaan. Assuming this was his first night’s rest, he chose to spend it in the promised land. There, in an isolated place, the Lord spoke to him during the night.

It appears from Scripture that it is often God’s manner.

- ➔ Job said God gave “songs in the night” (Job 35:10).
- ➔ Moses – Received a revelation in the wilderness, and on the mountain (Ex 3:1-2; 24:13).
- ➔ David – Confessed that he was instructed in the night seasons (Psa 16:7), and visited him “in the night” (Psa 17:3).
- ➔ Isaiah – Confessed that he desired the Lord “in the night” (Isa 26:9).
- ➔ Jeremiah – Nineteen times the word of the Lord is said to have come to Jeremiah. He was alone every time (Jer 1:2,4,11,13; 2:1; 13:3,8; 16:1; 18:5; 24:4; 28:12; 32:6; 33:1,19,23; 34:12; 36:27; 39:15; 42:7).
- ➔ Daniel – Had revelations upon his bed (Dan 7:1)

- ➔ Daniel – Had “night visions” (Dan 7:7,13).
- ➔ Ezekiel – Received revelations by the river of Chebar (Ezek 1:1).
- ➔ John the Baptist – The word of the Lord came to him in the wilderness (Lk 3:2).
- ➔ Paul – Was taught by Christ in Arabia (Gal 1:17).

When Jesus needed to speak to the Father, He would often go “up into a mountain apart to pray,” being found “there alone” (Matt 14:23). Another time, when He perceived the people “would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain himself alone” (John 6:15).

Another time, when Jesus and His disciples were ministering to many who were “coming and going,” they “had no leisure so much as to eat.” It was then that He said unto them, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while” (Mark 6:31).

The point is that spiritual calling and insight do not take place in a morally and spiritually cluttered environment. Those whose lives are dispersed in a number of unrelated activities will rarely receive insight from the Lord. I know of few men, included myself, who have received any extraordinary insight while they were heavily involved in the mundane, or peripheral matters. Such things are more distracting than many think. Such things tend to be distracting. I do not say such a thing is impossible, but that it is improbable. It is far better to reserve some part of the day, perhaps when retiring, to concentrate on your identity with the Living God.

HE DREAMED A DREAM

“¹² 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.”

Because man is comprised of more than a body and an animating soul, things can occur during sleep, or unconsciousness, that are meaningful. **This is a most marvelous thing, for during this time, the will of man is by no means prominent.** This is confirmed by the fact that men often dream things that are not at all in harmony with their wills. Whatever men may think of “free will,” it does not have precedence when we are asleep – and that can be as much as one third of our life.

HE DREAMED

“And he dreamed . . .”

CONCERNING DREAMS

Dreams have been the subject of much curious speculation in all ages. The ancients had various theories respecting them, the most notable of which for our present purpose is that of Homer (*Iliad*, 1:63), who declares that “they come from Jove.” The most philosophic opinion of antiquity respecting dreams was that of Aristotle, who thought that every object of sense produces upon the human soul a certain impression, which remains for some time after the object that made it is removed; and which, being afterwards recognized by the perceptive faculty in sleep, gives rise to the varied images which present themselves. This view nearly approaches that of modern mental science, which teaches that dreams are ordinarily the re-embodiment of thoughts which have before, in some shape or other, occupied our minds (Elwin, *Operations of the Mind in Sleep*, Lond. 1843).” McCLINTOK & STRONG'S

The only other dream mentioned prior to this is one that the heathen, Abimelech, had (Gen 20:3-6). In that dream, Abimelech conversed with God (Gen 20:4-5). That kind of dialog does not take place in this dream. Rather, we have a revelation of the fact that God works upon the earth, and the manner in which His will is carried out.

A LADDER SET UP ON THE EARTH

“ . . . and behold a ladder set up on the earth . . .” Other versions read, *“a stairway resting on the earth,”* NIV *“steps stretching from earth to heaven,”* BBE *“A stairway was set on the ground,”* CSB *“there stood a ladder Upon the earth,”* GENEVA *“a ladder fixed on the earth,”* SEPTUAGINT *“a stairway erected on the earth,”* NET *“a ladder, planted on the ground,”* NJB *“a stairway that reached from the earth,”* NLT *“a staircase reached from earth,”* LIVING *“He saw a raised highway that had been built with its ending point on earth,”* ISV *and ladder*

placed on the earth.” LITV

The various versions refer to **what** was set up on earth differently.

- ➔ A ladder. KJV
- ➔ Steps. BBE
- ➔ A stairway. CSB
- ➔ A staircase. LIVING
- ➔ A raised highway. LITV

The **manner** in which it was put on the earth is also represented in different manners.

- ➔ *Set up* on the earth. KJV
- ➔ *Resting* on the earth. NIV
- ➔ *Stretching* from the earth. BBE
- ➔ *Set* on the ground. CSB
- ➔ *“Stood . . . upon the earth.”* GENEVA
- ➔ *Fixed* on the earth. SEPTUAGINT
- ➔ *Erected* on the earth. NET
- ➔ *Planted* on the ground. NJB
- ➔ *Reached* from the earth. LIVING
- ➔ *Built* with its ending point on earth. ISV
- ➔ *Placed* on the earth. LITV



According to Strong’s, the Hebrew word used here means “A STAIRCASE: — LADDER.” STRONG'S McClintok & Strong’s Cyclopedia maintains that “*ladder*” is the proper word: “SCALING LADDERS FOR WAR ARE MENTIONED IN THE APOCRYPHA (1 MACC. 5:30). THAT THIS WAS A CONTRIVANCE KNOWN FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES, WE HAVE ABUNDANT EVIDENCE ON THE MONUMENTS OF THEBES, WHERE ATTACKS ON FORTIFIED PLACES ARE REPRESENTED AS BEING MADE BY SOLDIERS PROVIDED WITH SCALING-LADDERS (WILKINSON, I, 390).” McCLINTOK & STRONG'S The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia also favors the word “*ladder*,” referring to the use of them in primitive military sieges.

Set Up On the Earth

The language here is critical. The word translated “*set up*” has the following lexical meaning: “(1) TO STAND, . . . STAND UPRIGHT, BE SET (OVER), ESTABLISH . . . TO BE STATIONED, BE APPOINTED . . . TO STAND FIRM . . . TO STATION, SET . . . TO SET UP . . . TO FIX, ESTABLISH . . . BE

DETERMINED, BE STATIONARY.” STRONG'S

This is referring to a **deliberate** action – something God has done, making a provision for meaningful communication between heaven and earth. **“A Ladder” was NOT set up in heaven, but upon earth.** It was designed to address the fact of alienation that had occurred when sin entered into the world.

As confirmed in the attempts of humanity in the plain of Shinar, man cannot reach into heaven by his own efforts or works. **God will not allow such attempts to be successful, no matter how wise they may appear.**

In order for men to benefit from access to God, or have any kind of contact with Him, **God Himself must institute the provision on the earth.** This provision was revealed to Jacob under the similitude of a ladder that was set up on the earth – tailored for humanity and their habitat. The point here is not merely that he saw a ladder in his dream but that he saw a ladder that had been “*set up on the earth.*”

I doubt that this ladder had always been on the earth. Rather, there came a time when, because of a marked increase of God’s involvement with men, that this ladder was “*set up on the earth.*”

The fact that it was “*set up*” by God confirms the alienation of men, and their consequent inability to **initiate** any personal involvement with the Living God. **Those who argue that all men are not by nature alienated from God, and that they still possess a free will and the ability to seek and find God, must account for this ladder having to be “set up on the earth.”** The fact that it was “*set up*” by God confirms the natural alienation and spiritual impotence of the human race. Let them answer the question posed by Zophar: *“Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?”* (Job 11:7).

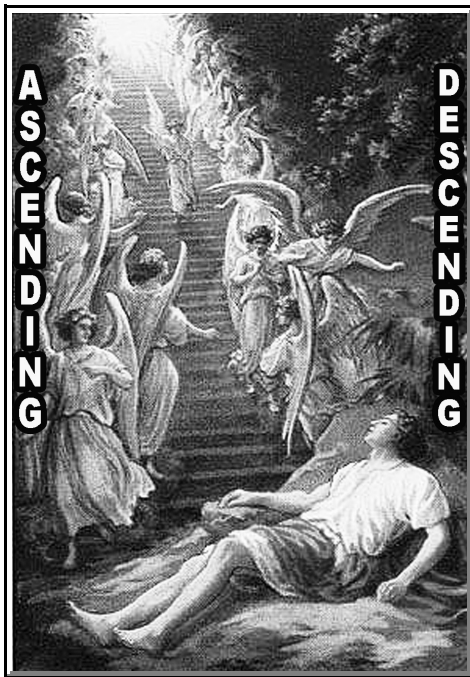
THE TOP OF IT REACHED TO HEAVEN

“ . . . and the top of it reached to

heaven . . .” Other versions read, “stretching from earth to heaven,”^{BBE} “the top thereof touching heaven,”^{DOUAY} “from earth up to heaven,”^{NLT} “reached top the sky,”^{TNK} “the top arrived in the heaven,”^{ABP} and “reached all the way to the sky.”^{MESSAGE}

If it was not for where this ladder reached from earth, it would have no real value at all. The fact that it reached into heaven certainly does not mean that heaven was any richer because its access to the earth.

THE ANGELS OF GOD ASCENDING AND DESCENDING UPON IT



“ . . . and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.” Other versions read, “the Angels of God went up and down by it,”^{GENEVA} “the angels of God going up and coming down on it,”^{GWN} and “God’s messengers were going up and down on it.”^{NAB}

What Is An Angel?

Here is a vivid depiction of how the Lord carries out His will upon the earth – it is through the ministry of His holy angels, who are His messengers. A great separating gulf exists between God and man because of sin. Actually, this gulf enables men to survive, for

they could not endure contact with the holy God. Here we have an index to the mercy and grace of God, who arranged a means to communicate with men that permitted them to remain alive, opening the door for their rescue from an otherwise unsolvable dilemma.

Angels are intelligent creatures, having superior wisdom and ability. They are messages sent forth by God to do His will. Sometimes they deliver special messages that could not possibly be known otherwise (Num 22:35; Judges 6:12; Dan 8:16).

Sometimes they are sent to do certain things

- ➔ Leading Israel out of bondage in Egypt and to the promised land (Ex 14:19; 23:20-23).
- ➔ Giving and ordaining the Law (Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19; Heb 2:2).
- ➔ Destroying Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain (Gen 19:1,15).
- ➔ Deliver Peter from prison (Acts 12:7).

They have been dispatched to deliver special messages.

- ➔ Hagar (Gen 16:7)
- ➔ To Lot concerning his deliverance from Sodom (Gen 19).
- ➔ To Moses (Ex 3:2)
- ➔ To Gideon (Judges 6:11).
- ➔ To Manoah, Samson’s father (Judges 13:15).
- ➔ To David (2 Sam 24:16).
- ➔ To Elijah (1 Kgs 19:5).
- ➔ To Daniel (Dan 6:22).
- ➔ To Mary, the mother of our Lord (Lk 1:26).
- ➔ To Joseph, Mary’s husband (Matt 1:20).

➔ To Paul (Acts 27:23).

➔ Delivering the Revelation to John (Rev 1:1).

Sometimes They Bring Instructions for Men from God

- ➔ The shepherds when Jesus was born (Lk 2:9).
- ➔ To Philip (Acts 8:26).
- ➔ To Cornelius (Acts 10:3).

They also have special ministries of encouragement

- ➔ To Daniel (Dan 8:16-17; 9:21).
- ➔ To Jesus after he was tempted by the devil (Matt 4:11).
- ➔ To Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk 22:43).
- ➔ To Paul (Acts 27:23).

These are all examples of holy traffic between heaven and earth. Determinations were made in heaven, and the holy angels carried them out.

Ministers to Those Who Will Be Heirs of Salvation

Angels have a special minister – apparently even their major ministry – to those who “shall be heirs of salvation.” Thus it is written, “But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb 1:13-14).

It is interesting that their ministry is said to be to those who “SHALL BE heirs of salvation.” Other versions read, “who will inherit salvation,”^{NKJV/NASB} “who are to inherit salvation,”^{NRSV} “who are to obtain salvation,”^{RSV} “those whose heritage will be salvation,”^{BBE} “those whom God will deliver,”^{CJB} “who shall receive the inheritance of salvation,”^{DARBY} “those who are going to receive salvation,”^{GWN} “those about

to inherit salvation,” ^{YLT} “men who will receive salvation,” ^{IE} “those who are going to be unceasing possessors of salvation,” ^{WILLIAMS} “people who are going to be saved,” ^{CEV} “those who are destined to possess salvation,” ^{GNST} “those lined up to receive salvation,” ^{MESSAGE} and “ones being about to be enjoying the allotment of salvation.” ^{INTERLINEAR}

Notice, the text does NOT, “those who are saved.” This is because, especially in the book of Hebrews, “salvation” is viewed from the standpoint of God’s total intention – **salvation in the fullest sense.** This includes the totality of the “new creation,” including “the redemption of the body” (Rom 8:23; Eph 1:14; 4:30).

- ➔ **PREDESTINATION** – Rom 8:29-30; Eph 1:5,11.
- ➔ **CHOOSING** – Matt 20:16; 22:14; Lk 6:13; John 13:18; 15:16,19; Acts 1:2,24; 9:15; 10:41; 22:14; 16:13; Eph 1:4; 2 Tim 2:4; James 2:5; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 17:14.

However, once this view of God is seen:—i.e. that God has determined who will be saved – **then the ministry of the angels in ministering to and preserving is decidedly enlarged.** Ponder the following.

- ➔ How is it that Noah was preserved four hundred and eighty years until the time of his calling (Gen 6:3 with Gen 7:6)?

ministering to those who would be heirs of salvation – whether they lived prior to the Law, during the Law, or under the New Covenant administration of Jesus Christ.

It was an angel that delivered Israel from Egypt (Num 20:16; Num 20:16), led them to the land of Canaan (Ex 23:20; 32:34), and cleared the way for them to enter in and possess the land (Ex 33:2).

Angel’s supreme ministry in this regard was to the Lord Jesus Himself.

- ➔ He was protected in the womb of Mary.
- ➔ He was protected when He was born (Gal 1:4).
- ➔ He was protected from the age of two until Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth (Matt 2:13-19).
- ➔ He was protected until the age of twelve.
- ➔ He was protected from twelve years of age unto He was thirty, beginning His ministry.
- ➔ They ministered to Him when He was tempted (Matt 4:11).
- ➔ They ministered to Him in the Garden, when His bloody sweat fell like thundering drops to the ground (Lk 22:43).

The Scriptures testify to the nature of angelic activity in a manner that perfectly correlates with Jacob’s dream.

- ➔ *“Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, **hearkening unto the voice of his word**” (Psa 103:20).*
- ➔ *“For He shall give His angels charge over thee, **to keep thee in all thy ways.** They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone” (Psa 91:11-12)*
- ➔ *“Take heed that ye despise not one*

THOSE WHO SHALL BE HEIRS OF SALVATION		
ADAM TO MOSES	MOSES TO CHRIST	DAY OF SALVATION
BEFORE THE LAW	DURING THE LAW	THE NEW COVENANT
Adam, Seth, Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Joshua etc.	Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, the Prophets, Simeon, Anna, etc.	The Ethiopian eunuch, Cornelius, Saul of Tarsus, Those in Asia, Thessalonians, us, etc.

This includes maintaining those “appointed” to “obtain salvation” – i.e. **ensuring they remain until good news of the Gospel is sent to them** (Rom 10:14). Jude referred to this as being “preserved in Christ, and called,” or “kept for Jesus Christ” ^{NASB} (Jude 1:1). Paul referred to it as God calling those He had predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29-30).

This view of things brings great glory to God. Of course, it is very confusing to those who reject the proclamations of election, predestination, and God choosing.

- ➔ **ELECTION** – Matt 24:24,31; Lk 18:7; Rom 8:33; 9:11; 11:5,7,28; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; Tit 1:1; 1 Pet 1:2; 5:1q3; 2 John 1:1,13; Rom 8:28,30; Eph 1:5,11.

- ➔ How is it that Abraham was preserved for seventy-five years prior to being called from Haran to Canaan (Gen 12:4).
- ➔ How is it that Moses was preserved for eighty years before his calling (Ex 3:2-4; 7:7)?
- ➔ How was Joseph preserved until the age of thirty, when his real ministry began (Gen 41:46)?
- ➔ Although he was chosen from his mother’s womb (Gal 1:15), how is it that Paul was preserved until he was “apprehended” on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6; Phil 3:12-13)?

The answer is delivered in Jacob’s dream. He was given to see behind the scenes, where holy angels went about

of these little ones; for I say unto you, *That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven*" (Matt 18:10).

What an extraordinary thing that God would reveal to Jacob, in a primitive spiritual time, such a magnificent thing as the ministry of holy angels. They come from heaven to

earth to fulfill assigned missions, and return when they are completed for further orders. They are charged with seeing to it that the will of the Lord carried out in a field of competition.

THE LORD STOOD ABOVE IT

"¹³ 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; ¹⁴ 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."

THE LORD STOOD ABOVE IT

"And, behold, the LORD stood above it . . ." Other versions read, *"There above it stood the Lord,"* NIV *"the Lord stood beside him,"* NRSV *"stood by his side,"* BBE *"suddenly ADONAI was standing there next to him,"* CJB *"the Lord leaning upon the ladder,"* DOUAY *"the Lord stood upon it,"* SEPTUAGINT *"the Lord stayed upon it,"* ABP *"standing beside the ladder,"* CEV *"standing by the ladder,"* ERV *"standing upon it,"* YLT *"the Lord stood over and beside him."* AMPLIFIED

Here again, the various versions present a distorted picture. The Authorized Version reads, *"the Lord stood above it"* (the ladder). Other versions read:

- ➔ *"Beside him"* (Jacob) NRSV/CSB/NAB/NJB/TNK
- ➔ *"Stood by his side"* BBE
- ➔ *"Stood beside him"* JPS/GNB/JPS
- ➔ *"Standing next to him"* (Jacob) CJB
- ➔ *"Leaning on the ladder"* DOUAY
- ➔ *"Stood upon it"* (the ladder) SEPTUAGINT/BRENTON/YLT
- ➔ *"Standing beside the ladder"* ERV/CEV
- ➔ *"Standing by the ladder"* ERV
- ➔ *"Standing upon it"* (the ladder) YLT
- ➔ *"At the top"* LIVING
- ➔ *"The Lord was right before him"* (Jacob) MESSAGE
- ➔ *"Stood over and beside him"* (Jacob)

AMPLIFIED

There are twelve different renderings of the text, all supposedly taken from the original language. It is enough to say that if, as some allege, the only way to properly understand the Bible is to know the original languages (Hebrew and Greek) these differences would not be possible. It is obvious that, to some extent, there are significant differences in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. I will affirm that men are no more capable of properly distinguishing these differences than they are of comprehending the Person, Word, and Purpose of the Almighty God.

Preferred Reading – "Stood Above It"

In my judgment, the preferred reading is that the Lord *"stood above"* the ladder. This would have the angels being sent by God from heaven, and returning there upon the completion of their mission. Heaven, in that case, would be the base of operation – the place from which the angels were sent to earth. **It seems to me that the whole point of the vision is that God Himself does not come down to earth, but rather does so in the form of angelic messengers, which is frequently delineated in Scripture.** Also, what would be the point of the angels returning to heaven while God was standing next to the individual?

It ought to be noted that we are afforded rare glimpses of Deity in heaven **standing**. Most of the time God is depicted as being *"seated"* (Psa 2:4; 29:10; 47:8; 99:1; Isa 6:1; 40:22; Dan 7:9; Rev 4:9,10; 5:13; 6:16; 7:10). One time the exalted Jesus was seen standing (Acts 7:55).

The seated God is the Sovereign God, seated upon His throne, ruling in

majesty and glory. The holy angels are carrying out His commandments and commissions.

The point of this revelation is that God Almighty is carrying out His purpose from heaven, dispatching holy angels to do His will on the earth. **This revelation is given to Jacob because he has been called into the purpose of God.** God will assure the patriarch that even though circumstances on earth may not appear favorable, they are being manipulated from heaven through the instrumentality of angelic personalities that are vastly superior to any individual or individuals on the face of the earth.

Incidentally, in the Revelation the working of God is continually affirmed in provision, blessings, and judgments. In that context, angels are mentioned seventy times. Often, as depicted in Jacob's dream, they were ascending and descending upon the ladder God set up on the earth.

I AM THE LORD GOD OF ABRAHAM AND THE GOD OF ISAAC

" . . . and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac . . ."

The expression *"LORD God"* means THE EVER-EXISTENT ONE WHO RULES AND JUDGES. In other words, He is over everything, and always has been. This is a point made again and again in Scripture.

➔ *"The LORD shall reign for ever and ever."* (Ex 15:18)

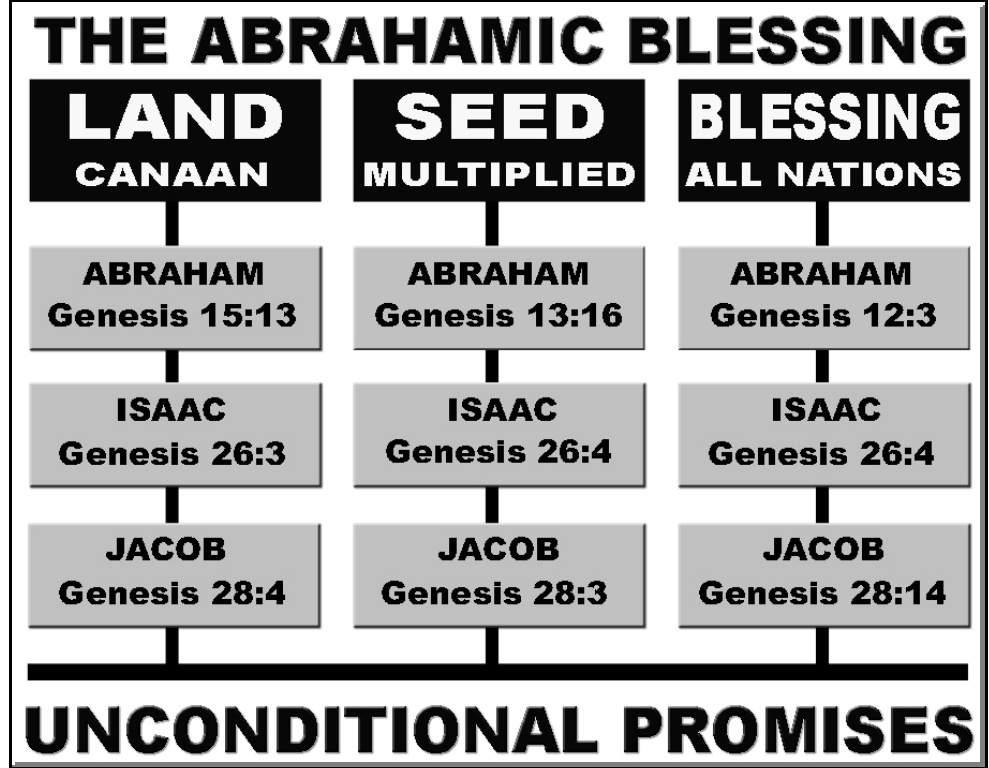
➔ *"For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which*

regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward" (Deut 10:17)

- ➔ "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all." (1 Chron 29:11)
- ➔ "For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth." (Psa 47:2)
- ➔ "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." (Isa 44:6)
- ➔ "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph 4:6)
- ➔ "Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding." (Dan 2:20-21)
- ➔ "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev 4:11)

All of the commitments and promises of God are buttressed by His own greatness and Sovereignty. He has no peers, there are no impossibilities, with Him, and He does whatever He pleases. This is not a status He achieved. It is His nature.

God's Work Continued in Jacob
The work that God was doing in Jacob was not peculiar to him. It was the same work He started with Abraham, and that continued in Isaac – a single purpose, a single plan, but including multiple personalities. God did not begin a new work with Isaac, or with Jacob. Rather, He continued the



work which commenced with Abraham.

THE LAND

"... the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed..."

This promise was first given to Abraham (Gen 12:7; 13:15; 15:7;7:8), then to Isaac (Gen 26:3), and now to Jacob (Gen 28:4,13). It was in view of the coming Redeemer – where He would be born (Micah 5:2), raised (Matt 2:23), minister (Matt 4:14-16), and lay down His life a ransom for many (Zech 12:10).

THY SEED SHALL BE AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH

"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..."

Again, this promise was also given to Abraham first (Gen 13:16; 16:10;7:2; 22:17), then Isaac (Gen 26:4,24), and now Jacob (Gen 28:3,14). It was in prospect of the spiritual seed of Christ, which would be greater than that of all other progenitors (Isa 54:1-5).

THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED

"... and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Again, this promise was given first to Abraham (Gen 12:3, 22:18), then to Isaac (Gen 26:4), and now to Jacob (Gen 28:14). The blessing would come through the coming Savior, the ultimate Seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16). Confirming that the Lord Jesus did, in fact, spring forth from Abraham's progeny, it is written of Israel, "Israelites... of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom 9:5).

UNCONDITIONAL PROMISES

These promises, made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were **unconditional**. Their fulfillment did not depend upon what Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did. **It ought to be apparent that the promise of a Savior was not conditioned upon the response of men.** *Benefitting* from the Savior would depend on human response, but not the promise of the Savior Himself. This is a fine, but necessary distinction.

There are several of these unconditional promises in Scripture. They are announcements of Divine intent, the will and ways of mankind notwithstanding. Here is a brief sampling of such promises.

➔ **SATAN TO BE CONQUERED.** "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen 3:15)

➔ **A PROPHET RAISED UP.** "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." (Deut 18:18)

➔ **A VIRGIN WOULD CONCEIVE.** "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa 7:14)

➔ **A SOVEREIGN SON WOULD BE BORN.** "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." (Isa 9:7).

➔ **A NEW COVENANT.** "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will

remember their sin no more." (Jer 31:34)

➔ **SIN REMOVED AND RIGHTEOUSNESS BROUGHT IN.** "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." (Dan 9:24)

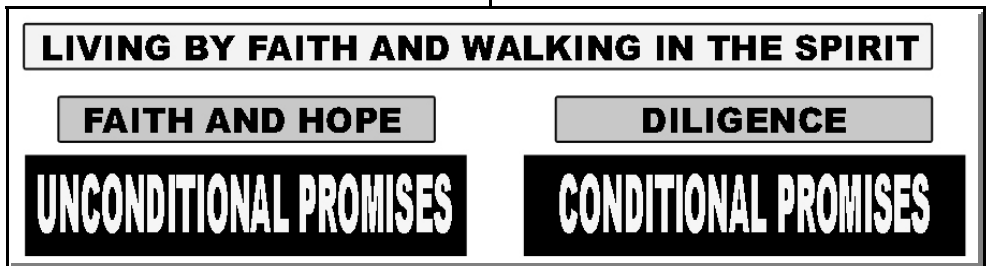
➔ **A RULER BORN IN BETHLEHEM.** "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:2)

➔ **THE REVELATION OF THE ONLY POTENTATE.** "Which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and

aspect of the Divine nature was made known through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Promises were made to them that also were impossible in the realm of nature. Details were revealed that provided for the analysis of those promises by later generations. The promises made to "the fathers" were extensive, were transcendent to any mortal capability, and contradicted every form of human reasoning. They were designed to teach men about the Living God, and to open the door of hope to those would believe on the coming Messiah.

Unconditional promises are the means through which become "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4). Once persuaded of these promises, the conditional promises will be heartily embraced, confirming that we have, in fact, taken hold of the promises of God.

NOT UNCONDITIONAL TO ISRAEL
However, when it came to the



only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim 6:15)

There was not the slightest chance that any of these promises would be delayed, changed, or come short of fulfillment. They were unconditional in the fullest sense of the word.

This sovereign nature of God, and the sureness of His purpose and Word, was initially introduced through Noah. The Almighty God announced a totally destructive global flood, revealed the reason for it, and brought it to pass the selfsame day it was appointed (Gen 7:13-24).

To an even fuller extend, this

children of Israel possessing the land, that was conditioned upon their response. If they were not obedient, God would drive them out of the land, not allowing them to remain there. He told them He would do this (Lev 18:26-28; 20:22-23), and He actually did it (Jer 9:19; Ezek 36:17-18).

CONDITIONAL AND UNCONDITIONAL PROMISES
It is a necessary for the saints of God to distinguish between the unconditional and conditional promises. The unconditional promises are the foundation for faith. **The conditional promises are the impetus for effort, diligence, and consistency.** The combination of faith and diligence is summarized in the expressions, "live by

There is no valid reason for anyone who has access to the Scriptures to remain ignorant of God Almighty.

faith" (Rom 1:17; Heb 10:38), and "walk in the Spirit" (Gal 6:16,25).

Some examples of conditional promises made to those in Christ are:

- ➔ "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev 2:10)
- ➔ "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." (2 Cor 6:17)
- ➔ "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us." (2 Tim 2:12).
- ➔ "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him" (2 Tim 2:11).

Promises such as these must not be treated as though they were

unconditional, and unconditional promises must not be viewed as conditional.

THE FACT OF PROMISES DESTROYS THE MODERN NOTION OF RELEVANCY

The fact and prevalence of the promises of God sounds the death-knell to the modern concept of relevancy. It is not uncommon to hear church people say, "What does that have to do with us now?" **The fact of the matter is that the promises of God are not a "hear-and-now" matter.** Ultimately, the exceeding great and precious promises of God do not even have to do with "this present evil world" from which Jesus has delivered us (Gal 1:4). They deal more with "the world to come" (Matt 12:32; Mk 10:30; Lk 18:30; Heb 2:5; 6:5), "the ages to come" (Eph 2:7), and the "world without end" (Eph 3:21). **This proper view is not being declared or fostered by the modern church.** That is a sure indication that

we are in the midst of a "falling away."

INTRODUCED TO THE REAL GOD

To this point in the book of Genesis, we are being introduced to the real God. He is the Creator and Sustainer. He is the great promise-Maker and Keeper. He is the One to whom every personality and circumstance must yield. We are exposed to His reaction to faith, sin, faithfulness, and disobedience. **There is no valid reason for anyone who has access to the Scriptures to remain ignorant of God Almighty.** For that matter, nature itself removes all reason for remaining ignorant of God (Rom 1:20-28). **There is no greater knowledge than "the knowledge of God," which is "eternal life"** (John 18:3; 1 John 5:20). Yet, although it is in every way superior, **there is not a religious institution in Christendom that will honor a teacher and preacher because he possesses such knowledge.** Today, there is a consistent demand for worldly credentials, and the modern church has answered by supplying institutions who will give them.

This is a form of religious people, who make profession of faith, heaping to themselves teachers after their own desires (2 Tim 4:3). In the Kingdom of God, they are totally without value.

I AM WITH THEE AND WILL KEEP THEE

¹⁵ **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."**

I AM WITH THEE

"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest . . ."

The commitment of God to be with His people is indispensable. It bolsters the heart during times of trouble and challenge. In dry seasons, it assures the heart that all be well. The

same truth stated doctrinally is: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38-39). In the strength of this, truth faith shouts out, **"If God be for us, who can be against us?"** (Rom 8:31).

A Consistent Commitment

A similar promise was made to Abraham: "After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am

thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen 15:1).

The promise to Isaac: "And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am **with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.**" (Gen 26:24).

Later God said to Israel, "Fear thou not; for I am **with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness"** (Isa 41:10).

To Paul: *"For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city"* (Acts 18:10).

To the saints: *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Heb 13:5).

Here, then, is a consistent commitment from the Lord to those He chooses, and with whom He works for good. As it is written, *" . . . Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord"* (1 Cor 1:7-9).

IN ALL PLACES

" . . . and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest."

Jacob had traveled over forty miles, and had well over three hundred miles to go. There were unquestionable dangers along the way from both beasts and men, to say nothing of the natural environment. Yet, the Lord guarantees Jacob's safety throughout the journey. **All of this postulates the Lord's control of all things, from nature itself to living creatures and men.** Such a promise could not be made if God was not the absolute Sovereign over everything. The places of safety would include the dwelling of Laban, his destination.

I WILL BRING THEE AGAIN

" . . . and will bring thee again into this land . . ."

Jacob was in the process of leaving the promised land, being sent away to find a proper wife. As it will turn out, he will be gone for twenty years (Gen 31:38), and will therefore have many occasions to remember these words of Divine commitment.

Jacob was not to grow accustomed to living outside of the promised land, nor must he yield to any temptation to forget the promised land.

God would bring him back to his proper residence.

I WILL NOT LEAVE THEE

" . . . for I will not leave thee . . ."

What a blessed promise! How often it has been made to the people of God.

➔ **TO ISRAEL:** *"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."* (Deut 31:6).

"And the LORD, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed." (Deut 31:8)

➔ **TO JOSHUA:** *"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."* (Josh 1:5)

➔ **TO SOLOMON:** *"And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he*

➔ **THOSE IN CHRIST:** *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."* (Heb 13:5)

This is how God desires to be known! Further, it is a trait that strictly comports with His unchangeable character. This promise, when believed, calms the heart, enabling the trusting one to press forward with confidence.

UNTIL I HAVE DONE

" . . . until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Other versions read, *"until I have done what I have promised you,"* ^{NASB} *"till I shall have accomplished all that I have said,"* ^{DOUAY} *"not till that I have surely done that which I have spoken to thee,"* ^{YLT} and *"until I have finished giving you all I am promising."* ^{LIVING}

Only God and "His Christ" (Rev 11:15) can make a commitment like this. He not only **can** make such a promise, He **DOES!**

Later, after the Law had been given, God spoke a word through Balaam on this matter. *"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son*

Yet, the Lord guarantees Jacob's safety throughout the journey. All of this postulates the Lord's control of all things, from nature itself to living creatures and men.

will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD." (1 Chron 28:20)

➔ **THE POOR AND NEEDY:** *"When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them."* (Isa 41:17)

of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num 23:19). Joshua reminded Israel that God had done for them all He said He would do: *" . . . not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof"* (Josh 23:14).

If God says He will do it, faith can rest fully on that word, that it shall be fulfilled to the finest detail.

WHAT HAD GOD PROMISED JACOB?

commitments were made by God.

➔ "... the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed" (Gen 28:13).

➔ "... for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen 28:15d).

God makes an unqualified commitment to Jacob. There are no qualifiers attached to it. It is unconditional. The reason is that it is directly related to the coming Savior, the Seed of Abraham. **Every promise related to Christ's entrance into the world, His ministry, His death, His present ministry, and His return is unconditional.** The only matters that are conditional relate to men appropriating those promises. However, in the promises given to Jacob, there were no such conditions.

The only way these could be fulfilled is for God Himself to control the circumstances, orchestrating all of the matters relating to the fulfillment of those promises. It is true that this is difficult for some to receive, for they insist upon granting too much ability to men. However, that is only because they have a minuscule view of God, and an exaggerated view of man.

That condition can be corrected by taking heed to the texts before us, which are designed to acquaint us with an Almighty, all-wise, and Sovereign God.

Every promise related to Christ's entrance into the world, His ministry, His death, His present ministry, and His return is unconditional.

Through the prophecy of his father Isaac, the promises were made.

- ➔ God Almighty would bless him (Gen 18:3a).
- ➔ God would make him fruitful and multiply him, that he might be "a multitude of people" (Gen 28:3b)
- ➔ Give him and his seed "the blessing of Abraham" (Gen 28:4).
- ➔ That he would inherit the land in which he was then a stranger (Gen 28:4).

In this very dream, a number of

➔ "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" (Gen 28:14a).

➔ "... and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen 28:14b).

➔ "I am with thee" (Gen 28:15a).

➔ "... and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest" (Gen 28:15b).

➔ "... and will bring thee again into this land" (Gen 28:15c)

THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE

" ¹⁶ *And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.* ¹⁷ *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.* ¹⁸ *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.* ¹⁹ *And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first."*

How will Jacob react to this dream? It is the reaction, or response, of people to Divine communication that

testifies to their true character and preferences. At Mount Sinai, when the people heard an arresting voice speak out the Ten Commandments, it is written, "And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off" (Ex 20:18). As if that was not enough, they said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Ex 20:19). How different they were from Moses. Moses saw and heard even more than they did. Yet, after it all he said to the Lord, "And he said, I beseech thee, show me

thy glory" (Ex 33:18) – and that was after he said, "I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb 12:21).

That is one of the marked distinctions between those who are carnally minded, and those who are spiritually minded (Rom 8:6). **Those who are "spiritual"** (1 Cor 2:15) **want to see and hear more from God, not less.** That has, with perfect consistency, been true throughout the ages.

SURELY THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE

"*And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD IS in this place; and I knew it not. . . .*"

Jacob does not shake his head in unbelief when he awakens, passing off the dream as nothing more than an expression of human imagination. If there were such things as dream analysts in his time, he certainly would not have sought their services. A strong faith had been awakened within, and he will now shape his life about what has been revealed to him.

So far as the record is concerned, this is the first time the Lord appeared or spoke to Jacob. Apart from this, his total awareness of God and His promises were owing to the testimony of Rachel and Isaac. Now, however, he has a testimony of his own – an experience which eventually takes place when one believes the testimony of what God has revealed to someone else.

The Doctrine of God's Omniscience

Doctrinally, God is omnipresent – everywhere. Although this was not articulated by any of the “fathers,” David did well at expressing it. *“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee”* (Psa 139:7-12).

Those who live in an awareness of these realities will be careful where and how they live, and move, and have their being. Those who “live ungodly” (2 Pet 2:6), do not think of such things.

Yet, this text is not about the Lord being everywhere. It is rather about the cognizance of His immediate presence. Two men of Scripture who expressed this kind of discernment are Eli and John the apostle. When Eli heard the report of the child Samuel, to whom God had particularly spoken, he recognized it was the Lord, even though

a most grievous message was delivered. After hearing it he said, ***“It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good”*** (1 Sam 3:18). The other is the apostle John who, when the disciples confronted the risen Christ from a distance, heard His voice, saw the multitude of fish that they caught at the word of the Lord, and responded, ***“It is the Lord”*** (John 21:7).

By saying *“I knew it not,”* Jacob was affirming he had not expected to hear from the Lord at this place. He had stopped to rest for the night, but more

5:5). Later, after Sapphira had been stricken dead as well, *“great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things”* (Acts 5:11).

Frequently the Lord could only quiet the hearts of men by effectually saying, ***“Fear not”*** – a command, like *“Let there be light!* (Gen 15:1; 26:24; 46:3; Josh 8:1; Dan 10:12,19; Matt 28:5; Lk 5:10; 8:50; Acts 27:24; Rev:17).

In Our Day

In our day, as the prophet would

Even though man is made “after the similitude of God” (James 3:9), there is such a vast difference between the created and the Creator, that the presence of the Lord can make the most godly man fear and quake.

took place than he had dared to imagine. In fact, at seventy years of age, this is the very first time of record when he had been personally confronted the Living God.

HE WAS AFRAID

“And he was afraid” . . .

This was Jacob's response to a dream that was clearly given to him by God. It was not a withdrawing fear, but it still was genuine fear, for Jacob had confronted the Living God, and yet He had remained alive.

Even though man is made *“after the similitude of God”* (James 3:9), **there is such a vast difference between the created and the Creator, that the presence of the Lord can make the most godly man fear and quake.** Moses said at Sinai, *“I exceedingly fear and quake”* (Heb 12:21). When the disciples saw Jesus calm the raging sea, *“they feared exceedingly”* (Mk 4:41). When Ananias fell dead because he had lied to the Holy Spirit, *“great fear came on all them that heard these things”* (Acts

say, *“A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land”* (Jer 5:30). **A God is being preached that men do not fear!** A “user-friendly” God is being presented as a pal, who is always there with a positive word for you, and is anxious to help you obtain what you desire. Generally speaking, it can again be said with the Psalmist, *“There is no fear of God before their eyes”* (Psa 36:1). Paul said this was true of all unregenerate men: *“There is no fear of God before their eyes”* (Rom 3:18).

Rather than men hearing of the true God, they are hearing human ideas and conclusions about God, and the results are not good. There is a spirit of casualness being associated with religious life and gatherings that has not existed in previous generations. **I will tell you that God is not speaking to such a generation.** That simply is not how people conducted themselves when they knew they were in the presence of the Lord, or were receiving what they perceived to be a word from God. The casual environment is a most alarming condition!

As soon as men become acutely aware of God and His nature, there will be a kind of resurrection of “godly fear” (Heb 12:28).

HOW DREADFUL IS THIS PLACE

“ . . . and said, How dreadful is this place! . . .” Other versions read, “How awesome,” ^{NKJV} “This is a holy place” ^{BBE} “How fearful is this place!” ^{GENEVA} “How awe-inspiring this place is!” ^{GWN} “This is a very great place,” ^{ERV} “What a terrifying place this is!” ^{GNB} “How scary this place is!” ^{ISV} “He whispered in awe, “Incredible,” ^{MESSAGE} and “How to be feared and revered is this place!” ^{AMPLIFIED}

You will notice that some of the versions reflect the spirit of the present times rather than the character of those to whom the Lord appeared – “This is a holy place” ^{BBE} “How awe-inspiring this place is!” ^{GWN} “This is a very great place,” ^{ERV} “How scary this place is!” ^{ISV} “He whispered in awe, “Incredible.” ^{MESSAGE} Such expressions are indicative of a period the apostle would call a “falling away” (2 Thess 2:3).

Scripture that when some one, such as an angel, or some word in a vision such as Jacob received, took place on earth, that place was instantly separated from all other places. The patriarchs would generally build an altar there, to leave some remembrance in honor of God (Gen 12:7; 13:18; 35:6-7; Ex 17:15; Judges 6:24; 1 Sam 7:15-17). They would often return to that place (Gen 13:3-4).

THE HOUSE OF GOD

“this is none other but the house of God . . .” Other versions read, “abode of God,” ^{NASB} “I’ve stumbled into His home,” ^{LIVING} “God’s house.” ^{ISV} All of the other versions to which I have access read “house of God.”

This was, in a sense, a holy place because of what had taken place there. It is where Abraham had built an altar when he first entered Canaan (Gen 12:8), and where he returned when he came back from, Egypt (13:3-4), during which occasion God spoke to Abraham (Gen 13:14-17). Later, Jacob himself would build an altar there, naming it Bethel (Gen 35:1-15). Still later, during

between the cherubim over the mercy-seat, and in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Some might object, saying that God does not identify Himself with certain places. But this is not a well-thought statement.

- God identified Himself with the land of Canaan, referring to it as “My land” (Jer 2:7), and “Sanctuary” (Ex 15:17).
- God identified Himself with Jerusalem, placing His name there (1 Kgs 11:36).
- God identified with the Tabernacle, referring to it as a “sanctuary” built for Him, in which He would “dwell among” the Israelites (Ex 25:8).
- He identified with the Temple, referring to it as “the Temple of the Lord” (2 Kgs 23:4).
- Jesus called the Temple of His day, built by Herod, “My Father’s house” (John 2:16).
- In this day, He has particularly identified Himself with the body of Christ, referring to it as His “Temple” (1 Cor 3:16-17), and “house” (1 Tim 3:15).

I have observed over the years that a lot of so-called theology, particularly among those with whom I was identified, lacked heart and spiritual sensitivity. At times, there was almost a disdain for places and times that were devoted to the Lord. This kind of attitude is certainly not reflected in Scripture – particularly the text we are reviewing. **It is glaringly apparent that Jacob did not consider the place where he had his remarkable vision as a common place.** That will be confirmed by what he both said and did.

As for myself, I find it exceedingly difficult to forget the times and places when I was brought to see new things, and my spiritual vision was enlarged.

THE GATE OF HEAVEN

“ . . .and this is the gate of

It is fairly consistent in Scripture that when some one, such as an angel, or some word in a vision such as Jacob received, took place on earth, that place was instantly separated from all other places.

The word translated “dread” has the following lexical meaning: “TO FEAR, REVERE, BE AFRAID . . . TO STAND IN AWE OF, BE AWED . . . RESPECT . . . TO BE FEARFUL, BE DREADFUL, BE FEARED . . . TO CAUSE ASTONISHMENT AND AWE, BE HELD IN AWE . . . INSPIRE REVERENCE OR GODLY FEAR OR AWE . . . TO MAKE AFRAID, TERRIFY” ^{STRONG’S} **It is a word that depicts an event that radically altered the emotion and demeanor of the person.** To me, “dreadful” is a proper word for this text. It is not applied to the experience he had, but to the place in which it occurred. It is fairly consistent in

the time of the Judges, the children of Israel went to this place and “asked counsel of the Lord” (Judges 20:18). On one later occasion, the men of Israel would also go to this place, abiding there “till even before the Lord” (Judges 21:2). In all of these texts, later versions translate “house of God” as “Bethel.” ^{NASB/NIV/NRSV} The Hebrew word used in those texts is “Beythel” – “Beyth” meaning “house,” and “el” meaning “God.” **I suspect that this was a sanctified place where God spoke to His people** – like the Tabernacle,

heaven . . .” Other versions read, “doorway of heaven,” ^{BBE} “gateway to heaven,” ^{GWN} “entrance to heaven,” ^{LIVING} “ladder to heaven,” ^{CEV} “gate that opens into heaven,” ^{GNB} and “the door to heaven.” ^{LITV}

The word translated “gate” means precisely that – “GATE,” “ENTRANCE POINT,” OR “PORT.” ^{STRONGS}

There “gates” to:

- ➔ “Cities” (Gen 23:10; Deut 22:24; Josh 8:29)
- ➔ “To the court of the Tabernacle” (Num 4:26)
- ➔ “To the Temple” (Acts 3:2,10)
- ➔ “The king’s house” (Esth 5:1)
- ➔ “The Lord’s house” (Jer 7:2).

This depicted a place of entrance. In this case, entrance into heaven – a place from which Divinely sent messengers proceeded, and through which they returned to heaven. In this expression, the entrance was actually a place – Bethel – where activity between heaven and earth took place. This was, in fact, a holy place, sanctified by an altar and Divine communication.

The ladder was “set up on the earth” by the ordination of God Himself. That is, this was driven by Divine initiative. It was not that Jacob established this place as holy, and then called for the Lord to meet him there. He confessed he had no idea that this was the house of God and the gate to heaven. God was in that place, but, he confessed, “I knew it not.”

A Current Erroneous View

The modern praise and worship movement presents a view that has man establishing a means through which God will come down to bless them. Their teaching is that as men praise God, it opens a portal between heaven and earth through which God enters into their presence. The doctrine is based upon Psalm 22:3: “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.”

The Psalm is referring to the

Temple singers, who sang day and night in the Temple, probably in some form of rotation (1 Chron 9:33).

The erroneous doctrine to which I refer couples Psalm 22:3 with a text related to the dedication of the Temple. Second Chronicles 5:13 reads, “It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and

The ladder was “set up on the earth” by the ordination of God Himself. That is, this was driven by Divine initiative. It was not that Jacob established this place as holy, and then called for the Lord to meet him there.

singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD.”

Based on the blending of these two texts, the teaching is that as men today praise the Lord, He responds by coming down to inhabit those praises.

However, in the above text, a single occurrence is described – the dedication of the Temple. From that time forward, God was considered to be dwelling in the Temple continually. Because the ark of the covenant was in that Temple, God was noted as “the Lord God of Israel which dwelleth between the cherubims” (1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15; 1 Chron 13:6; Psa 80:1; 37:16) – which was on the mercy seat which covered the ark of the covenant (Heb 9:4-5). He did not come down again and again, dwelling between the cherubims, but came down once, when the glory filled the house, with His glory remaining between the cherubims from then on.

The point of the 22nd Psalms is not

that whenever praise is offered God comes down. Rather, it is that praise is offered where God already is, or, so to speak, is located. It is the place that sanctified the praise, not the praise that sanctified the place. That was the primary reason for having the Tabernacle and the Temple in the first place.

It is emphatically NOT true that when men praise the Lord a portal is opened in heaven through which God comes to be with us.

A Clarifying Point

When the saints come together, God is already among them. Jesus said where more gathered in His name “there am I in the midst of them.” He does not say, “then will I come to them,” but that He IS in the midst of them.

Referring to this kind of presence, Paul introduced a scenario in which a person unlearned in the ways of God, or an unbeliever, came into the assembly – when the saints were gathered together in one place. He then poses two possibilities: one was that all of the people spoke in tongues, and the other is that they all prophesied, speaking to edification, and comfort (1 Cor 14:3). “Therefore, if the whole church assembles and all of you speak in [unknown] tongues, and the ungifted and uninitiated or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are demented **But if all prophesy [giving inspired testimony and interpreting the divine will and purpose] and an unbeliever or untaught outsider comes in, he is told of his sin and reproved and convicted and convinced by all, and his defects**

*and needs are examined (estimated, determined) and he is called to account by all, The secrets of his heart are laid bare; and so, falling on [his] face, he will worship God, declaring that **God is among you in very truth**"* AMPLIFIED (1 Cor 14:23-25).

In this case, God was not among them because they prophesied, any more than He is among His people because they praise Him. Rather, they prophesied because God was among them. The experience of the individual who was convicted by what the people said confirmed this was the case.

WHAT ABOUT NOW?

The "portal" has already been set up on the earth. It does not need to be opened. To say it another way, a "new and a living way" has been opened to men (Heb 10:20). Of course, in Jacob's dream, the provision was made for angels, who ministered to men. Yet, even in that instance, the means did not originate at that time. **Jacob was shown an existing condition, not one that commenced that night.**

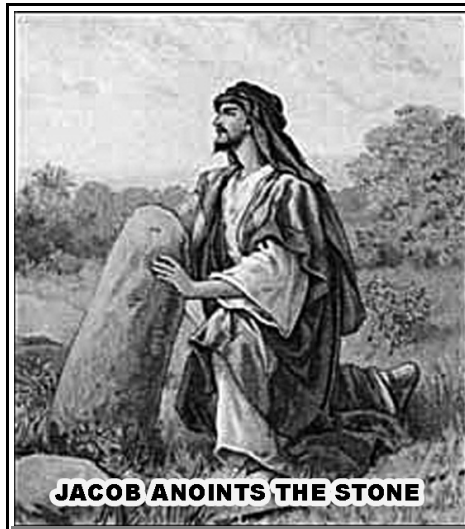
HE SET UP A PILLAR

" . . . 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 . . . "

Unable to forget his dream, like Nebuchadnezzar did his (Dan 2:1-5), Jacob awakens and immediately set up a remembrance of the occasion.

It is good to note the profound devotion of the saints of old time. Our society has robbed the people of this

kind of commitment to God. Jacob was so impacted by this dream that he took the stone he had used for a pillow and "set it up for a pillar" –i.e. something was that standing and stationary. We



JACOB ANOINTS THE STONE

would call this a personal memorial, or a monument. It confirms that **Jacob did not want to forget the solemn night through which he had just passed.** He would take some action that would ensure it would not be forgotten. **Remember, he was still in Canaan when he set this memorial** – the land to which he would return twenty years later with his family!

HE CALLED THE NAME OF THAT PLACE BETHEL

" . . . And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first."

Because of the accounts of earlier occasions, one might imagine this name already existed for this place. When

Abraham first arrived in the land, he located himself to the east of Bethel (Gen 12:8; 13:3). How is it that Jacob is given the credit for naming the area?

It must be remembered that Moses, by inspiration, is writing this record around three hundred years later. At the time he wrote, "Bethel" was a well known place. In our text, however, we are informed of the origin of its name.

From Joshua through Amos, "Bethel" is mentioned fifty-four times. Some of the events that took place there as follows. They confirm the sanctity of the place after Jacob's vision.

- A court of judgment was established there by Deborah the Judge (Judges 4:5).
- A court of judgment was established there by Samuel, the last Judge of Israel (1 Sam 7:16).
- The Tabernacle, then called "the house of God," was set up there (Judges 20:18,31; 21:2).
- The "sons of the prophets" had their residence there (2 Kgs 2:3).

At the time, there was no "city" there. At the time Moses wrote this book, there was a city located there, which was earlier called "Luz." Later Moses will write, "So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him" (Gen 35:6). This was upon his return from Laban's house.

IF THE LORD WILL . . . I WILL SURELY

" 20 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, 21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: 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."

JACOB VOWED A VOW

"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying

. . . "

This is the first time in Scripture that the word "vow" is used, or that any one on earth was said to have made a "vow." Abraham made his servant "swear by the Lord, the God of

heaven" (Gen 24:2), but that was quite different from vowing a vow to the Lord Himself.

The only other place the word is used in Genesis is in chapter thirty-one, where God reminded Jacob of the vow he made in our text, and commanded him to return to Canaan: *"I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred"* (Gen 31:13). This confirms the epochal nature of the event we are now reviewing. **Jacob's vow was duly noted by God, and will be mentioned to Jacob by God twenty years later.**

Lexically, a "VOW" IS "A PROMISE (TO GOD); ALSO (CONCRETELY) A THING PROMISED: — VOW." ^{STRONG'S}

"VOW" FROM INTERNATIONAL STANDARD ENCYCLOPEDIA

"INCLUDED ALL PROMISES TO PERFORM CERTAIN THINGS FOR, OR BRING CERTAIN OFFERINGS TO, GOD, IN RETURN FOR CERTAIN BENEFITS WHICH WERE HOPED FOR AT HIS HAND" (GENESIS 28:20-22, JACOB; LEVITICUS 27:2,8; NUMBERS 30; JUDGES 11:30, JEPHTAH)." ^{ISBE}

Considering the limited exposure to God, and the abbreviated knowledge of God, that existed during the time of Jacob, the making of a vow to God is a most arresting phenomenon. It certainly confirms that Jacob knew to some extent the ability of God, the necessity of God working in his behalf, and that God would have a response to what he promised. **Keep in mind that even though we are living during the time of extensive revelation, there are many professing Christians who have not, in their entire lifetime, made a vow to God to do anything in honor to Him, or to expect anything from him that approximates what Jacob mentions at this time.**

IF GOD WILL

" . . . 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, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God . . ."

Ponder the marvelous thoroughness of what he desires the Lord to do.

- ➔ **DIVINE ACCOMPANIMENT.** Will be with me.
- ➔ **DIVINE GUIDANCE AND PROTECTION.** Will keep me in that way that I do.
- ➔ **PROVISION OF FOOD.** Give me bread to eat.
- ➔ **PROVISION OF CLOTHING.** Give me raiment to put on.
- ➔ **COMPLETION OF THE MISSION.** So that I come to my father's house in peace.

All of this had to do with life in this world, as nothing about the world to come had yet been revealed, although the sense of that world was no doubt possessed to some degree (Heb 11:10,13).

Certainly those who are in Christ Jesus should have many greater expectations, solidly based upon God's *"exceeding great and precious promises"* (2 Pet 1:4).

THIS STONE SHALL BE

"...And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house... "

This is a remarkable statement! Other versions read, *"shall be called the house of God,"* ^{DOUAY} *"shall be to me a house of God,"* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *"shall be God's abode,"* ^{NAB} *"shall be God's house,"* ^{RWB} *"is a house of God,"* ^{YLT} *"will be your house,"* ^{CEV} *"this is a holy place for God,"* ^{ERV} *"will be the place where you are worshiped,"* ^{GNB} *"a place where God lives,"* ^{MESSAGE} *"shall become a place for worship,"* ^{LIVING} and *"shall be God's house [a sacred place to me]."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Later, when Jacob returned to Canaan, God instructed him, *"Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother"* (Gen 35:1).

This was a primitive view of what was to come, when God would identify

Himself with a particular place:—i.e. the Tabernacle (Ex 25:8) the Temple (1 Kgs 6:12-13), and the church of God (Tim 3:15). God was not, of course, confined to these areas, for they *"cannot contain God"* (1 Kgs 8:27; 2 Chron 2:6). **As "house" is used here, it is a place where there is communication between God and man.** It is a Divine accommodation to human frailty, as well as confirmation of God's desire to have favorable dealings with men.

I WILL SURELY GIVE A TENTH UNTO THEE

" . . . and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Other versions read, *"I will faithfully return one-tenth to you,"* ^{CJB} *"I will without fail give the tenth to thee,"* ^{DARBY} *"I will give a full tenth to you,"* ^{ESV} *"I will tithe a tenth for thee,"* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *"I shall faithfully pay you a tenth part of everything you give me,"* ^{NJB} and *"tithing I tithe to Thee."* ^{YLT}

This is now the second time the matter of tithing has been mentioned in Genesis, the first being when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek (Gen 14:20). Both of these references antedated the Law, which gave specific instructions concerning tithing (Lev 27:30-32; Num 18:24-28; Deut 12:6-17; 14:22-28; 26:12).

This circumstance – tithing being mentioned before the Law – means **there is something about this matter that is unrelated to Law.** It is in the same category as faith, which also existed prior to the Law, and is integral to the New Covenant life. I say this because some have been persuaded that tithing, or giving a tenth, is not applicable to those in Christ Jesus.

Notice that the text reads, **"THE tenth."** ^{KJV/DARBY} Pulpit Commentary says of this verse, "LITERALLY, GIVING I WILL GIVE THE TENTH." Young's Literal Translation also presents a similar view: *"tithing I tithe to Thee."* This suggests that the tenth part belonged to God in the first place, and was never intended for men to keep. This was apparently known intuitively by those with faith, like Abraham and Jacob. Later, under the

Law, this will be specifically stated: *"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD"* (Lev 27:30).

More than three hundred years later, moved by the Holy Spirit, Moses makes a point of writing up this vow. There is no suggestion that this was a unique response belonging to some period prior to the Law, or to be excluding during *"the day of salvation."* **This was something that had to do with Divine arrangement.** It was introduced prior to the Law, outlined with specificity during the Law, and commended after the Law.

TITHING UNDER THE LAW

Under the Law, the tithe was exclusively for the Levites for their service in the Tabernacle. As it is written, *"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD"* (Lev 27:30). This was given to the Levites for their service in the Tabernacle: *"And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation"* (Num 18:21).

During the time of Nehemiah, he observed that, in the matter of providing for the priests, there had been a neglect of the priests. As a result, he contended with the rulers, calling them into account for such neglect. He re-instituted tithing, made provision for proper storage, and appointed proper caretakers of the goods (Neh 13:10-13).

The prophet Malachi was inspired to rebuke the people for failing to pay their tithes. Speaking for God Himself, he said they had robbed God. *"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings"* (Mal 3:8-11). **That is strong language reflecting the fact that the tithe belongs to the Lord. It is His, not man's.** There is not the slightest indication in Scripture that this fact has ever been rescinded.

JESUS COMMENDS TITHING

During Jesus ministry, He pointed out the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. In a blistering denunciation of their manners, He did take the time to mention their tithing. *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone"* (Matt 23:23).

Some will object, saying that this was spoken under the administration of the Old Covenant. **But this is not so.**

6:26), etc.

However, the objectivity of that Kingdom, and its actual workings were not spelled out as they are in Christ Jesus –i.e. it is to be sought (Matt 6:33), men enter into it (Matt 19:24; 21:31; John 3:5), seeing the Kingdom (John 3:3), consists of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17), is *"in power"* (1 Cor 4:20), is *"inherited"* (1 Cor 6:9), etc. In the Gospels *"the Kingdom of God"* is mentioned fifty-four times.

Matthew, referring to the same kingdom, uses the phrase *"Kingdom of*

Some will object, saying that this was spoken under the administration of the Old Covenant. But this is not so. Jesus plainly said, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16) – and John was dead at this time

Jesus plainly said, *"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it"* (Luke 16:16) – and John was dead at this time (Matt 14:10). **The time of the ministry of Jesus was actually an interim period during which the manner of the Kingdom of God was introduced.**

There is not a single reference to *"the Kingdom of God"* from Genesis through Malachi. It did exist, but was not the subject of proclamation. There are references to *"His kingdom"* (Psa 103:19), *"the kingdom of the Lord"* (2 Chron 13:8), but they do not represent the focus of the expression *"the Kingdom of God."* **The pre-Christ descriptions that were ascribed to it lack the kind of details that were provided from John the Baptist on.** For example the Kingdom was referred to as ruling over all (Psa 103:19), being *"everlasting"* (Dan 4:3), *"from, generation to generation"* (Dan 4:34), one that will *"not be destroyed"* (Dan

heaven" thirty-two times. That is a total of eighty-six references to this Kingdom. It is during this period of heralding that Jesus said of tithing, *"these ought ye to have done."* Further, this same Kingdom was the subject of preaching and teaching after Jesus returned to heaven, and the New Covenant was initiated (Acts 1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,31; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9; 15:50; Gal 5:21; Col 4:11; 2 Thess 1:5).

THE DOCTRINE OF PAUL

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul alluded to tithing which we the means of supporting the Levitical priests. He clearly stated that the same means used to support those priests is also intended to support those who preach the Gospel. *"If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we*

should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (1 Cor 9:11-14).

THE TEACHING IN HEBREWS

The epistle to the Hebrews mentions the matter of tithing, bringing up the incident when Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec. *"Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils" (Heb 7:4).*

There is then a reference to the Levites receiving tithes, which reference also connects them with Abraham. *"And verily they that are of the sons of*

Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better" (Heb 7:5-7).

The Spirit then wraps up the whole matter by saying, *"And here men that die receive tithes; but there He receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that He liveth" (Heb 7:8).* Other versions read,

The person described as He of whom *"it is witnesseth that He liveth,"* or *"lives on,"*^{NASB} cannot be

Melchizedek, for it is not witnessed that he lives on. There is no record of his birth or death, but neither is there a statement that he lived on. **The only one of whom that is said is the exalted Christ.** In the very same chapter it is stated, *"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25).* Jesus Himself testified to John, *"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev 1:18).* Jesus Christ is the only Person who, owing to having life in Himself, lives on.

I am affirming that the exalted Christ is the one who is receiving tithes, and if He is receiving them, someone has to be paying them. Let no person in Jesus be outdone by Jacob!

CONCLUSION

As the revelation of God in Genesis continues to increase, the matter of the involvement of heaven with earth has now been expanded. There is the continual movement of holy angels coming from heaven, and returning to heaven. They come to fulfill the commissions and commandments of the Lord, and they return to give an

account of their stewardship and receive new orders. **The base of operation is heaven, while the sphere of operation is the earth.** The means of access has been established by God, and He presides and strictly governs over all of the activity.

Now, in the blazing light of New

Covenant glory, we are to live in an acute awareness of the fact that God's *"is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Matt 6:13).* No circumstance is to be considered independently of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ to whom He has given all authority, or power, in heaven and in earth (Matt 18:18).

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 12/14/12. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The forty-eighth lesson will cover verses 1 through 20 of chapter twenty-nine: "JACOB CHOOSES RACHEL." After arriving at the appointed place, Jacob finds himself at a well. Upon inquiry, he finds he is dealing with the right people. He then meets Rachel, whom he came to love. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

FIRST THINGS IN GENESIS

Chapters 1 thru 28

As its name indicates, the book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. It accounts for the beginning of the heavens and the earth, the creation of humanity, the original family, the entrance of sin, and the effects of sin upon mankind. This book introduces us to God Almighty: His character, His responses to both sin and righteousness, and His purpose, conceived before the world began. Here is where we get our bearings, and prepare to think correctly about God, man, the devil, the world, sin, and righteousness. The following listing identified the “firsts” found in this book.

1. First mention of God (Gen 1:1)
2. First use of the word “created” (Gen 1:1)
3. First circumstance of chaos and disorder (Gen 1:2)
4. First mention of darkness” (Gen 1:2)
5. First mention of the Holy Spirit (Gen 1:2)
6. First commandment (Gen 1:3)
7. First mention of “light” (Gen 1:3)
8. First none-heavenly orderliness (Gen 1:4-10)
9. First Separation (Gen 1:4,7)
10. First Day and night (Gen 1:5)
11. First mention of “evening” and “morning” (Gen 1:5)
12. First mention of “firmament” (Gen 1:6)
13. First use of the word “appear” (Gen 1:9)
14. First Terrestrial substance (Gen 1:10)
15. First Vegetation life (Gen 1:11-12)
16. First Celestial substance (Gen 1:16)
17. First sea-life (Gen 1:20-22)
18. First fowl (Gen 1:20)
19. First Animal life (Gen 1:24-25)
20. First language of plurality in the Godhead (Gen 1:26)
21. First Man (Gen 3:19)
22. First Warning (Gen 2:17)
23. First Display of human wisdom (Gen 2:19-20)
24. First Woman (Gen 2:21-22)
25. First Marriage (Gen 2:22-24)
26. First Exposure to Satan (Gen 3:1)
27. First Temptation (Gen 3:1-5)
28. First delusion (Gen 3:6)
29. First Sin (Gen 3:8)
30. First Knowledge of nakedness and its shame (Gen 3:7)
31. First Divine interrogation (Gen 3:9-13)
32. First Vicarious death (Gen 3:21)
33. First Divinely provided clothing (Gen 3:21)
34. First Promise (Gen 3:15)
35. First Curse among men (Gen 3:17)
36. First expulsion (Gen 3:23-24)
37. First Birth (Gen (Gen 4:1)
38. First Offering (Gen 4:3)
39. First accepted sacrifice (Gen 4:4)
40. First rejected sacrifice (Gen 4:5)
41. First human reaction to a rejected sacrifice (Gen 4:5)
42. First time a man became angry (Gen 4:5-6)
43. First Divine response to human anger (Gen 4:6-16)
44. First Family hatred (Cain/Abel, Ishmael/Isaac, Esau/Jacob, Brothers/Joseph (Gen 4:8; Gen 21:9-10; Gen 38:3-4)
45. First Murder (Gen 4:8)
46. First wanderer or vagabond (Gen 4:12)

In his trip toward Haran, Jacob tarried all night in a certain place. There he had one of the most significant dreams of human history – Given O. Blakely

47. First mark put on a man (Gen 4:15)
48. First man to go out from the presence of the Lord (Gen 4:16)
49. First city built (Gen 4:17)
50. First case of bigamy (Gen 4:19)
51. First instance of retaliation (Gen 4:23)
52. First human substitute (Gen 4:25)
53. First Calling on the name of the Lord (Gen 4:26)
54. First genealogy (Gen 5:1-32)
55. First person said to have walked with God (Gen 5:22)
56. First Translation into heaven – Enoch (Gen 5:24)
57. First unequal yoke (Gen 6:2)
58. First men of the Spirit striving with men (Gen 6:3)
59. First reference to a society of ruthless men (Gen 6:4)
60. First reference to man's thoughts being corrupt (Gen 6:4).
61. First reference to God repenting (Gen 6:6).
62. First reference to a universal judgment (Gen 6:2).
63. First reference to a person finding grace (Gen 6:).
64. First reference to a man who was just and perfect in his generation (Gen 6:9).
65. First reference to the total corruption of humanity (Gen 6:12).
66. First reference to "the end of all flesh" (Gen 6:13).
67. First Large building project (Gen 6:4-16).
68. First boat built (Gen 6:14-15).
69. First reference to a flood (Gen 6:17).
70. First Covenant made with a man (Gen 6:18).
71. First reference to someone being saved (Gen 6:18).
72. First reference to the gathering of animals (Gen 6:19-20).
73. First reference to the gathering and storage of food (Gen 6:21).
74. First reference to someone doing all that God had commanded (Gen 6:22).
75. The first person God affirmed He saw as "righteous" (Gen 7:1).
76. First Salvation of a family (Gen 7:1).
77. First record of someone being saved because of another (Gen 7:1).
78. First record of animals being saved (Gen 7:8).
79. First rain (Gen 7:12).
80. First and only universal flood (Gen 7:18-20).
81. First opening of the fountains in the earth (Gen 7:2,11).
82. First opening of the windows of heaven (Gen 7:11).
83. First global curse (Gen 7:21-23).
84. First destruction of every living substance (Gen 7:23).
85. First time God is said to have remembered someone (Gen 8:1).
86. First record of a drying wind (Gen 8:1).
87. First confirmation of newness of life following a curse (Gen 8:11).
88. First record of a deliverance (Gen 8:18-19)
89. First building of an altar (Gen 8:20).
90. First known sacrificial offering of multiple creatures (8:20).
91. First time God is said to have been pleased with an offering (Gen 8:21).
92. First promise of continued seedtime/harvest, summer/winter, day/night (Gen 8:22).
93. First Deliverance from the world (Gen 8:18).
94. First New beginning (Gen 9:21-22).
95. The first mention of animals fearing mankind (Gen 9:2).
96. The first addition to the human diet (Gen 9:3).
97. The first approval of eating meat (Gen 9:3-4).
98. The first prohibition of eating blood (Gen 9:4).
99. The first authorization of capital punishment (Gen 9:5-6).
100. The first covenant established with the seed of a principle person (Gen 9:9).
101. The first covenant with living creatures (Gen 9:10).
102. The first promise to never again cut off all living beings with a flood (Gen 9:11).
103. The first token of a covenant (Gen 9:12).
104. The first reference fo a rainbow (Gen 9:13-17).

105. The first reference to God remembering a covenant He made (Gen 9:15-16).
106. The first reference to a husbandman (Gen 9:20).
107. The first reference to a vineyard (Gen 9:20).
108. The first reference to wine (Gen 9:21).
109. The first reference to a person becoming drunk (Gen 9:21).
110. The first curse uttered by a man (Gen 9:25).
111. The first blessing uttered by a man (Gen 9:26).
112. The first reference to a servant (Gen 9:25-26).
113. The first reference to the enlargement of one's territory (Gen 9:27).
114. The first mention of the "Gentiles" (10:5).
115. The first mention of "nations" (10:5).
116. The first mention of "families," tribes, or classes of people (10:5,18,20,31,32).
117. The first mention of "isles," or maritime countries (10:5).
118. First mention of a hunter (Gen 10:9).
119. First mention of a kingdom (10:10).
120. First mention of Babel (Gen 10:10).
121. First mention of Nineveh (Gen 10:12).
122. First mention of Canaanites (Gen 10:18).
123. First mention of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 10:19).
124. First mention of "tongues," or languages (Gen 10:5,20,31).
125. The first mention of different nations "divided in the earth" (Gen 10:32).
126. The first mention of a group of people traveling (Gen 11:2).
127. The first example of agreement among men (Gen 11:3).
128. The first mention of "brick" (11:3).
129. The first mention of "mortar" (Gal 11:3).
130. The first mention of the tempering of brick (11:3)
131. The first mention of a "tower" (11:4).
132. The first mention of a fear of being "scattered" (11:4).
133. The first mention of the Lord coming "down" (11:5).
134. The first mention of human potential (11:6).
135. The first record of God's assessment of a collective work (11:5-6).
136. The first record of God's response to a collective work (11:6-7).
137. The first record of God scattering a people (11:8).
138. First Judgment of a human project (11:8).
139. First Dispersion of humanity (11:8).
140. First record of a son dying before his father (11:28).
141. The first barren woman (11:30).
142. The first mention of the land of Canaan (Gen 11:31).
143. First Calling from one place to another (Gen 12:1)
144. First Divine direction concerning a move (Gen 12:1)
145. First Covenant of blessing (Gen 12:2-3)
146. First mention of a Divinely created nation (Gen 12:2)
147. First mention of acquired wealth (Gen 12:5)
148. First mention of servants, or slaves (Gen 12:5)
149. The first time God is said to have "appeared" to anyone (Gen 12:7).
150. First Famine (Gen 12:10)
151. First trip from Canaan to Egypt (Gen 12:10)
152. First person to treat another person well for the sake of another person (Gen 12:18)
153. First example of God cursing those who cursed Abram (Gen 12:17)
154. First examples of plagues coming from the Lord (Gen 12:17)
155. First trip from Egypt to Canaan (Gen 12:20-13:3)
156. First man mentioned who was rich: Abram (Gen 13:2)
157. The first example of a territory being unable to sustain those in it (Gen 13:6)
158. The first example of a dispute among employees (Gen 13:7)
159. The first separation of kindred spirits (Gen 13:8-12)
160. The first commanded perusal of the land of Canaan (Gen 13:17)
161. First use of the word "Hebrew" (Gen 14:13)
162. The first military initiative by a man of faith (Gen 14:14-15)

163. The first mention of Melchizedek (Gen 14:18a)
164. The first mention of a “priest of the most High God” (Gen 14:18b)
165. The first mention of a king who was also a priest (Gen 14:18)
166. The first mention of “bread and wine” (Gen 14:18)
167. The first mention of enemies being delivered into ones hand by the Lord (Gen 14:20a)
168. The first mention of “tithes” (Gen 14:20b)
169. First Vision (Gen 15:1).
170. First record of the words “Fear not” (Gen 15:1)
171. First revelation of God in a protective capacity (Gen 15:1).
172. The first reference to God as a “Reward” (Gen 15:1).
173. First reference to someone believing God (Gen 15:6).
174. First mention of righteousness (Gen 15:6).
175. First mention of man inheriting something (Gen 15:7).
176. First prophecy of a being judged (Gen 15:14).
177. First reference to iniquity being “full” (Gen 15:16).
178. First use of the word “handmaid” (Gen 16:1).
179. First mention of “Hagar” (Gen 16:1).
180. First mention of God restraining a woman from bearing children (Gen 16:2).
181. First time a wife’s handmaid bore children to her for her husband (Gen 16:4).
182. First mention of an angel (Gen 16:7).
183. First mention of “the angel of the Lord” (Gen 16:7),
184. First message delivered by an angel (Gen 16:8-12).
185. First time a name was given to a child according to revelation (Gen 16:11).
186. First time someone gave a name to God (Gen 16:13).
187. First time “Almighty” is mentioned (Gen 17:1).
188. First time God is expressly said to have “talked” extensively with someone (Gen 17:3-22).
189. First time a person was told he would be the father of “many nations” (Gen 17:4-5).
190. First time someone was told “kings” would come out of him (Gen 17:6).
191. First time Abraham was told Sarah would bear the heir (Gen 17:19,21).
192. First time “circumcision” is mentioned (Gen 17:10-13).
193. First mention of “Isaac” (Gen 17:19).
194. First time circumcision was performed (Gen 17:23-27).
195. First example of more than one heavenly messenger appearing at a time (Gen 18:2).
196. First example of hospitality (Gen 18:4-8).
197. First example of entertaining angels unawares (Gen 18:2).
198. First reference to a godly man commanding his children and household (Gen 18:19).
199. First example of intercession (Gen 18:23-32).
200. First mention of mocking (Gen 19:14).
201. First record of angels being sent to destroy cities (19:19-38).
202. First record of the sin of sodomy (19:5).
203. First record of someone being struck blind (19:11).
204. First record of someone being cursed for looking back (19:26).
205. First record of a dream (Gen 20:3).
206. First record of a heathen reasoning with God (20:4-5).
207. First use of the word “prophet” (20:7).
208. First reference to a husband being a “covering” for the wife (20:16).
209. First reference to a person being “reproved” (20:16).
210. First time the word prayer is mentioned in any of its varied forms “prayed” – pray, prays, prayer, prayed, prayers, prayeth (Gen 20:16).
211. First reference to healing (20:17).
212. First reference to God closing the wombs of an entire household (20:18).
213. First miraculous birth (Gen 21:1).
214. First mention of an eight-day-old child being circumcised (Gen 21:4).
215. First mention of a child being “weaned” (Gen 21:8).
216. First mention of someone being cast out of the house (Gen 21:10).
217. First mention of Beersheba (Gen 21:14).
218. First mention of God opening someone’s eyes (Gen 21:19).
219. First mention of an “archer” (Gen 21:20).

220. First mention of “the wilderness of Paran” (Gen 21:21).
221. First mention of a wife being “taken” for someone else (Gen 21:21).
222. First mention of Philchol, Abimelech’s captain (Gen 21:22).
223. First mention of swearing, s in taking an oath (Gen 21:23).
224. First example of a covenant being made between two men (Gen 21:27).
225. First mention of a person planting a grove (Gen 21:33).
226. First mention of “Everlasting God” (Gen 21:33).
227. First reference to someone being “tried, “tested,” “tempted,” or “proved” by God (Gen 22:1).
228. First time God required a man to sacrifice his son (Gen 22:1-2).
229. First mention of a “burnt offering” (Gen 22:2).
230. First time the word “Moriah” is mentioned (Gen 22:2).
231. First time the word “worship” occurs (Gen 22:5)
232. First record of an angel stopping a person from doing something (Gen 22:11).
233. First record of a substitutionary offering (Gen 22:13).
234. First use of the expression “the mount of the Lord” (Gen 22:14).
235. First time the age of a woman at death is mentioned (Gen 23:1-2).
236. First mention of “Kirjatharaba” (Gen 23:2).
237. First record of a man’s wife dying (Gen 23:1-2).
238. First mention of a “sepulcher” (Gen 23:6).
239. First record of a burial (Gen 23:19).
240. First mention of something that was purchased (Gen 23:9-16).
241. First mention of a “burying place” (Gen 23:9).
242. First mention of the “worth” of something (Gen 23:9,15).
243. First mention of a man burying his wife (Gen 23:19)
244. First mission to find a wife (Gen 24:1-8
245. First time the phrase “in all things” is mentioned (Gen 24:1).
246. First time the phrase “the God of the earth” is mentioned (Gen 24:3).
247. First time the word “beware” is used (Gen 24:6).
248. First time the phrase “the Lord God of heaven” is used (Gen 24:7).
249. First prayer requesting a sign from God (Gen 24:12-14).
250. First immediate answer to a prayer (Gen 24:15).
251. First mention of a “virgin” (Gen 24:16).
252. First mention of a person bowing their head in worship (Gen 24:26).
253. First occasion of a father giving his son everything (Gen 25:1).
254. First mention of giving up the ghost (Gen 25:8).
255. First mention of being gathered unto one’s people in death (Gen 25:8).
256. First time something was “purchased” (Gen 25:10; 23:16-20).
257. First mention of the Lord being “entreated” (Gen 25:21).
258. First record of a woman praying, or inquiring of the Lord (Gen 25:22).
259. First Twins mentioned (Gen 25:24).
260. First mention of a “birthright” (Gen 25:31).
261. First occasion of something being “sold” (Gen 25:33).
262. First example of someone despising their birthright (Gen 25:34).
263. The first commandment of God not to go down to Egypt (Gen 26:2).
264. The first reference to God performing His oath (Gen 26:3).
265. The first reference to God blessing one person because of the obedience of someone else (Gen 26:5).
266. The first record of a “hundredfold” harvest (Gen 26:12).
267. The first record of wells being stopped up by men (Gen 26:15).
268. The first record of stopped wells being re-dug (Gen 26:18).
269. First reference to spring water (Gen 26:18).
270. First record of God making room for someone (Gen 26:22).
271. First record of one being multiplied for the sake of someone preceding them (Gen 26:24).
272. First expression stating someone else hated the individual (Gen 26:27).
273. First record of a man or woman being grieved (Gen 26:35).
274. First record of one appearing disguised as another (Gen 27:1-19).
275. First record of a man unknowingly making the right choice (Gen 27:27-28).
276. The first record of kissing (Gen 27:27).
277. First mention of “the blessing of Abraham” (Gen 28:4).

- 278. First mention of a daughter of Ishmael (Gen 28:9).
- 279. First glimpse of interaction between heaven and earth, with angels ascending from and descending to the earth from heaven (Gen 28:12).
- 280. First expression of a place on earth being identified as “the house of God” and “ the gate of heaven” (Gen 28:17,21).
- 281. First record of pouring oil on anything as act of dedication (Gen 28:18).
- 282. First record of a vow being made to God (Gen 28:20).
- 283. First reference of anyone giving the tenth of what he had to the Lord (Gen 28:22).