

GENESIS 28:10-19 AMAZING GRACE

¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. ¹¹ When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. ¹² He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. ¹⁴ Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.

¹⁵ I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

¹⁶ When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." ¹⁷ He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

¹⁸ Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. ¹⁹ He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz.

Esau has despised his birthright, married Hittite women and lost his blessing to Jacob. When he threatens to retaliate, Rebekah has Isaac send Jacob off to her brother Laban in order to find a proper wife. Jacob escapes young, alone and guilty of deceiving his father and twice robbing his brother. When night falls in the wilderness there is nothing for Jacob to do than pull up a stone and make the best of it. What happens next is nothing short of amazing grace.

The Lord appears to the deceiver and assures him not only of the Father's presence that night and always, but also that he is the next one through whom God's promise will be manifested. Jacob is also guaranteed through the promise that his search for a proper wife will meet with success ("*Your descendents will be like the dust of the earth*"), and he will return home ("*I will bring you back to this land*").

It is the nature of God's grace that he does not wait until the recipient is spiritually mature or achieves righteousness before he reaches out to him with his promise. It was while we were still sinners that Jesus died for us so that we might have the promise of eternal life (Romans 5:8). The Good News that Jacob experienced in the wilderness is that same Good News made available to us in our lives. We are children of his promise not because we are good enough, but because God is so unbelievably gracious and merciful.

You, O Lord, are the source of my life and my salvation. Thank you for graciously reaching into my life with your promises and giving me meaning and significance. Grow my faith so that I might increasingly receive your grace and live as your child. Amen.