A conceptual image showing a stone staircase that appears to be built on a cliffside, leading up to an open wooden door. The door is set against a bright, glowing light, suggesting a passage to heaven. The background consists of a vast, hazy mountain range under a clear sky.

**Sooke
Baptist
Church**
Sunday
October 1
2023
10am

Stairway From Heaven
Genesis 28:10-22

A vibrant, abstract visualization of a dream. It features a blue, stylized face with closed eyes, surrounded by colorful, swirling clouds in shades of red, orange, yellow, and green. Above the face, there are glowing, golden particles and lines, suggesting a complex, multi-layered dream world.

Coffee/Question:
Describe your strangest dream.

03:00

A conceptual image showing a stone staircase that appears to be built on a cliffside, leading up to an open wooden door. The door is set against a bright, glowing light, suggesting a passage to heaven. The background consists of a vast, hazy mountain range under a clear sky.

Genesis 28:10-22



Jacob set out from Beersheba, headed for Haran, 900 kilometers away, where his uncle Laban, his mother's brother... lived.

The length of the journey required him to spend many nights out in the open.

Our passage informs us of what happened on what seems to have been Jacob's first night on the road, when he camped near a city called Luz.

While Jacob slept, he had a dream.

In this dream God appeared to and spoke with Jacob.

One commentator writes, **"This dream presented Jacob with an alternate future, one with God at the center of his life."**

Before we proceed any further in the passage, we need to remind ourselves of several things.

Genesis 25:21-26 tells the reader about the birth of Esau and Jacob.

While the two babies were in her womb, the LORD told their mother Rebekah that the older son would serve the younger.

Esau was the older son... because he was born first.

But when Jacob, the younger son was born, he did something unusual.

As he left his mother's womb and entered the world, his hand grasped the heel of his brother.

The name Jacob means "he grasps the heel," and is a Hebrew idiom which also means "he deceives."

The next scene the reader is presented with was when Esau and Jacob had become men.

In Genesis 25:27-34 we read of how Jacob manipulated his brother into selling him his birthright for some bread and a bowl of stew.

What Jacob did... had been carefully planned and executed.

The next account is found in Genesis 27:1-40 that describes how Jacob was coached by his mom to deceive his father into giving him the blessing that belonged to the firstborn son.

Because of their deception, Esau was determined to kill Jacob when Isaac died.

When Rebekah became aware of Esau's intent, she coached Jacob as to what he should do... he was to flee to Rebekah's family in Haran and stay with her brother Laban until she sent word that it was safe for him to come home.

Rebekah then went to Isaac... and manipulated him to bring about her plan for Jacob.

In Genesis 28:1-5 Isaac called for Jacob to come to him.

Isaac commanded Jacob to not marry a Canaanite woman, but to immediately go in search of a wife from among the daughters of his uncle Laban, Rebekah's brother... who lived in Haran.

What is surprising is that Issac then spoke a second blessing upon Jacob, saying...

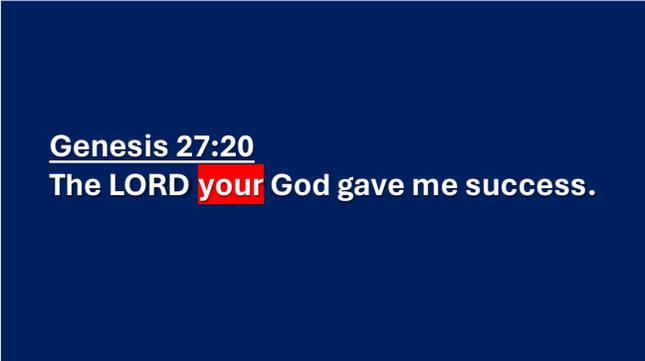
“May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples.

May He give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham.”

Genesis 28:3-4

But each of these four scenes, there is something missing: any mention of Jacob having a personal relationship with God.

When Jacob came to his father disguised as Esau, and his father asked him how he found the game so quickly, Jacob’s answer was telling.



Genesis 27:20
The LORD your God gave me success.

Jacob spoke of the LORD as his father’s God... but not his. This changed with the dream Jacob had...described in Genesis 28... where God revealed himself and his purposes for Jacob and his descendants.

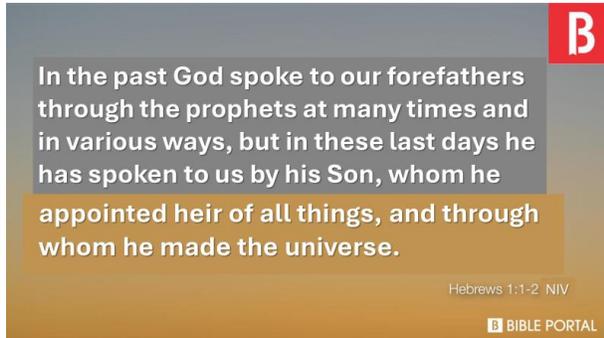
God intervened... Jacob was headed to a dead end... which is where life without God takes a person.

Similar to Jacob, the Bible speaks of some people having dreams and others having visions.

What is the difference?



In the past God communicated...

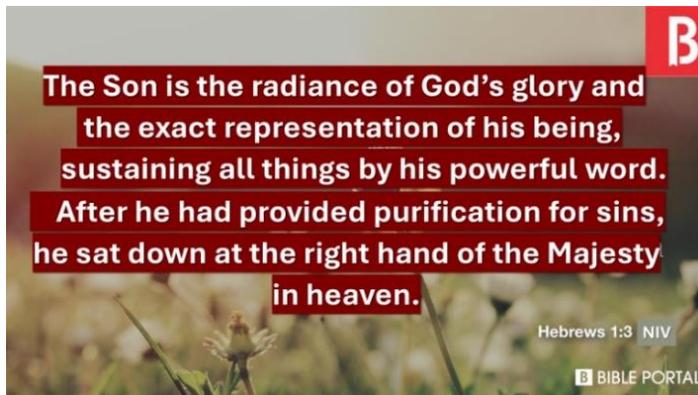


It could be easy to fixate on how God communicates and miss the marvel that in fact he is a speaking God.

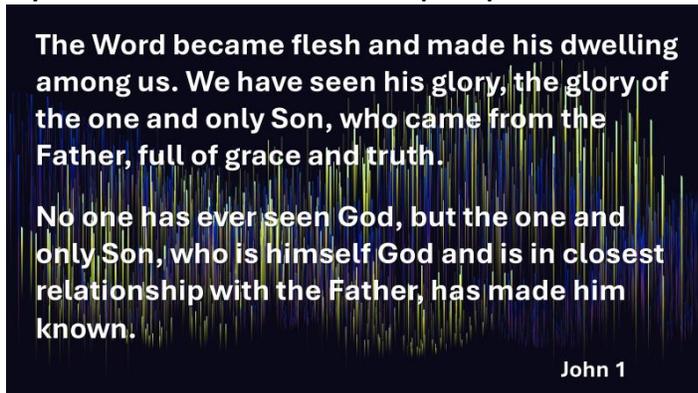
The tense of the verb in this verse is very important.

The LORD **has** spoken to humankind... by his Son.... the same Son through whom the Father created the universe.... and the same Son who is the heir of all things.

Jesus...through whom the Father has spoken... is the exact representation of God the Father.



When the Father revealed himself through Jesus and spoke...he did not do so in a dream, nor in a vision, but in a body. For thirty-three years Jesus was seen, he was heard, he was touched... by tens of thousands of people.



Jesus is the Father's ultimate revelation. There is nothing better or more complete than him.

In these last days, the norm is for God to communicate to men and women, in every nation... through His Word... which is powerful for the salvation of all who believe.

Does God still speak in dreams and visions? Yes... but as he chooses. When he uses dreams and visions they will always be in agreement with and never contradict his breathed out, written word.

In his dream Jacob saw a stairway, that came down from heaven and rested on the earth.



Was God's message to Jacob that he needed to "climb it?"

No.

What was shown to Jacob was that the angels of God descended and ascended the staircase... that they moved between heaven and earth... between the seen and the unseen realms.

The angels of God in Hebrews 1 are said to be ministering servants. God uses them to provide his help to his people.

As significant as the reality of the angels were, it was God's revelation of himself that is meant to astound us.

In the dream Jacob didn't just see a supernatural being.

Nor was he left to figure out who this "being" was.

God spoke to Jacob... in Jacob's language... and identified himself to Jacob by his name.

**"I am the LORD,
the God of your father Abraham
and the God of Isaac."**

God further revealed himself to be a God of relationship.

"I am the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac."

It is the LORD's desire that humankind live in fellowship with Him.
This is why he searches after us and calls us into a relationship with him.

Jacob was not chosen by God because of his stellar life.
Like all of us, the scoundrel in him, ran strong... as we have seen...
repeatedly.

Jacob was chosen by God... because of God's grace.

As I said last time... the family line of the Rescuer, without exception,
demonstrate humanity's great moral need and spiritual poverty... there
is not one person who doesn't need to be rescued by God.

God not only came to save Jacob from himself, he also gifted to him a
future.

- **"I will give you and your descendants this land."**
- **"Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth."**
- **"All peoples on the earth will be blessed through you and your offspring."**

The LORD spoke to Jacob of his purposes for him that stretched into the
future...

... of a time when Jacob's descendants ... would become a great nation
numbering in the millions, who would stretch out to the north and
south, the east and the west... and would settle in the land of Canaan, a
land given to them by God.

But God's promises to Jacob reached even further into the distant future...

... and spoke of a time when His Rescuer, a descendant of Jacob would be born upon the earth and through whom all peoples on the earth would be blessed.

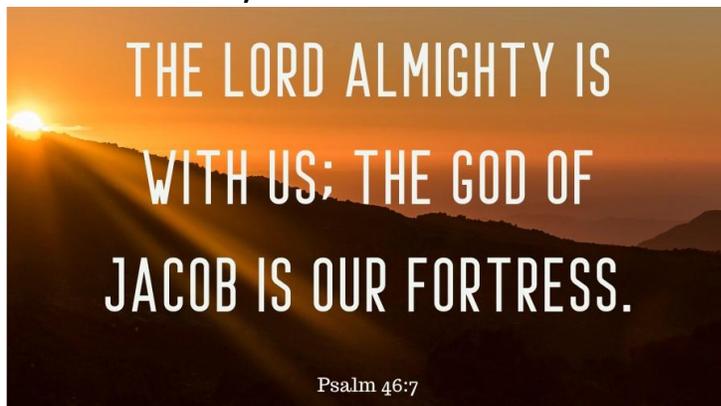
But God also spoke promises to Jacob... that specifically pertained to his lifetime... that defined for him... what it entailed... to be in covenant relationship with God.

**"I am with you'
"I will watch over you wherever you go."
"I will bring you back to this land."
"I will not leave you until I have done
what I have promise you."**

These promises spoke, not only of who God was to Jacob, but also of who the LORD is to those who live in a covenant relationship of fellowship with him.

The LORD is near to those who are in relationship with him.
Near in what way?

Psalm 46:7 says...



The LORD is the God who never sleeps.
The LORD is never preoccupied or distracted.
He watches over those he calls to himself... wherever they are...
whatever their circumstances.

People may have failed you.
But if you belong to the LORD... he never will.
He is faithful and he will do what he has promised.
He will complete in you that which he has begun.

In the Christian life, from start to finish, the LORD deals with us
according to his grace.
We are saved by grace; we are being transformed by grace and we will
ultimately be sanctified, body, soul and spirit, by grace.

Jesus spoke of this in John 10... when he said... that no one can snatch
from his hands ...nor the hands of his Father... those who are his.

I give them eternal life,
and they shall never perish;
no one will snatch them out of my hand.
My Father, who has given them to me,
is greater than all;
no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.
I and the Father are one.

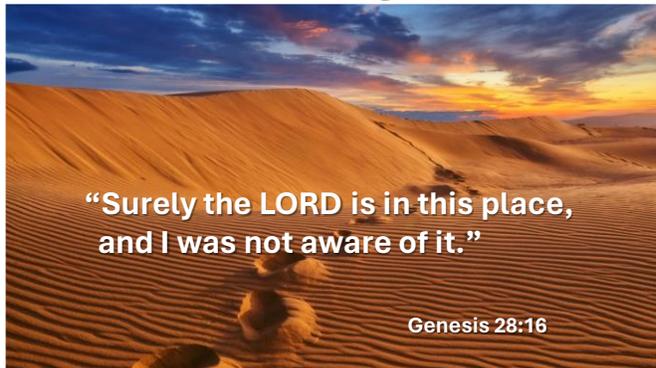
John 10:28-30

dailyVerses.net

In this matter, regarding his followers, as in all matters, the triune God,
Father, Son and Spirit... are in complete agreement.
Those he saves... he keeps.

This is who God is.
The God of Jacob is our God.

When he woke up what did Jacob do?
This was his first thought.



Before God made himself known to us, we may have... acknowledged there was a Creator.

But we didn't know his name.... Jesus.

We didn't know he desired a covenant relationship with us.

We didn't know he had come to the earth to save us from our sins.

We didn't know he had died the death we deserved in order to give to us the gift of life that never ends.

Like Jacob we too were unaware.

And like Jacob, God came to us; God broke into our life; God shone truth into our darkened minds and brought life into our hard hearts.

Jacob's encounter with God left him afraid.

Afraid in what sense?

Afraid of the awesomeness of the LORD.

The LORD is completely Other.

His holiness is so brilliant that it would consume us if it were not for the righteousness of Jesus that has paid in full for our sin and credited us with his goodness.

This is why we can come near to God.

Having been gripped by awe of God's person, early the next morning, Jacob worshiped the LORD.

Worship always is a response of gratitude... to God for what he has done in our favor.

It is the LORD's commitment to those he saves... that moves his people to commit themselves to him.

We love him because he first loved us.

The stone on which Jacob had slept was turned into an altar, on which he poured out oil as a gift to the LORD.

There in that place where his eyes had perceived the seen and unseen realms, Jacob made a vow to the LORD who had made great and precious promises to him.

"If God will be with me
and will watch over me on this journey I am taking
and will give me food to eat
and clothes to wear
so that I return safely to my father's household...

...then the LORD will be my God
and this stone that I have set up as a pillar
will be God's house,
and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."

At that moment, Jacob didn't know that it would be 20 years before he returned home... nor all that would happen to him over the next 20 years.

But he didn't need to.

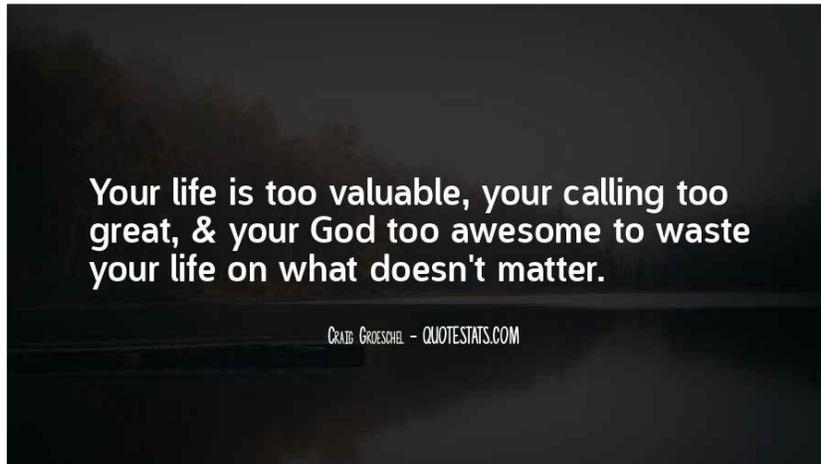
The LORD with him was his assurance and hope.

As the LORD had chosen him, Jacob chose the LORD.

This you could say was the beginning of the second chapter of his life, where he walked with the LORD.

Up until this point, Jacob had pursued his own agenda for his life. Now he began to pursue God's; though not perfectly. For Jacob it would prove to be a long obedience, with many detours. But the LORD was faithful and kept him on track.

We follow the same God; the God of Jacob is our God. I so appreciate what Criag Groeschel wrote:



The reason our life is valuable... is because we are created in the likeness of God and have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus.

The reason our calling is great is because of the One who calls us into relationship with Himself.

And the God who never changes... is as awesome as he was when he appeared to Jacob.

Remember the song?

***Our God is an awesome God, He reigns from heaven above
With wisdom power and love, Our God is an awesome God.***

This passage encourages.

It reminds Jesus' followers of who it is we follow... the One who promised, Matthew 28:20, **"I am with you always to the very end of the age."**

And to those not yet in relationship with him, this is his invitation:
“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Remember the quote I shared with you at the beginning?

“This dream presented Jacob with an alternate future, one with God at the center of his life.”

The gospel of Jesus presents you with an alternate future that has God at the center of your life.

The God of Jacob loves you and.... in Jesus made the way for you to come home to him.

Haven't you wasted enough years?

If you have heard his call in your heart, then come to him today.

And in coming to him begin the second chapter of your life where you walk with the Creator who became your Savior and who calls you into fellowship with him.