

Jacob's Dream

(Genesis 28)

Pre-Session Warm Up

When you sleep do you ever dream? Sometimes we have good dreams and sometimes we have scary dreams. (Let the children talk about their dreams.) Sometimes God speaks to people through their dreams. Well, this morning we're going to learn about Jacob's beautiful dream and the special meaning it had for him.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for speaking to us in so many ways. You are always so faithful to let us know what's on Your heart. This morning, I pray that we can hear Your voice through reading Your word, the Holy Bible. Give us good listening ears. Help us to listen with our hearts because I know You want to speak to each of us in a special way this morning. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

If we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (1John 1:9)

Lesson

We've been learning about the children of Israel.

Let's review:

1. Who was the first Jew? (Abraham)
2. What was the promise God made to him? (That his descendants would be a great nation)
3. Who was Abraham's first descendant? (Isaac)
4. Who were Isaac's descendants? (Esau and Jacob)
5. Which one of the twins did the blessing go to? (Jacob)
6. Did Jacob deserve to be blessed by God? (No!)

7. What's that a picture of? (How none of us deserves God's blessings, but we get them anyhow because God chooses to love us in spite of the fact that we fall short of perfection.)

Last week we left the story with Jacob having tricked his father into giving him the special birthright blessing. And when Esau came home and found out that Isaac had given the blessing to Jacob, he wanted to kill Jacob. So, Rebekah told Jacob to run for his life.

Let's open our Bibles this morning to where we left off.

Genesis 28:1-2

So Isaac called for Jacob, blessed him, and said, "You must not marry any of these Canaanite women. Instead, go at once to Paddan-aram, to the house of your grandfather Bethuel, and marry one of your uncle Laban's daughters."

Remember that Abraham had felt the same way about Isaac as Isaac now feels about his son, Jacob. These fathers didn't want their sons to marry a woman of another faith. When it's time for you to get married, your parents aren't going to want you to marry someone who's not a Christian.

So, Isaac sent Jacob off with his blessing.

Genesis 28:3-4

"May God Almighty bless you and give you many children. And may your descendants multiply and become many nations! May God pass on to you and your descendants the blessings He promised to Abraham. May you own this land where you are now living as a foreigner, for God gave this land to Abraham."

Jacob went to his mother's family, to his uncle Laban's home in Haran.

Genesis 28:5

So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-aram to stay with his uncle Laban, his mother's brother, the son of Bethuel the Aramean.

Think of how sad and lonely Jacob was. Jacob must have been very sorry for his sins. His decision to deceive his father and get the birthright blessing from his brother, Esau, tore up his family. His father must have been really upset with him. And now, he was running away from home because his brother wanted to kill him. He was out on the road all by himself; completely alone.

Genesis 28:10-11

Meanwhile, Jacob left Beersheba and traveled toward Haran. At sundown he arrived at a good place to set up camp and stopped there for the night. Jacob found a stone to rest his head against and lay down to sleep.

One evening he stopped to camp along the way. He didn't even have a bed to sleep in, no fluffy pillow to lay his head on. He had to find a smooth stone for a pillow and lay down on the ground to sleep. He must have been at the lowest point in his life.

Let's read how God comforts Jacob in a beautiful dream.

Genesis 28:12

As he slept, he dreamed of a stairway that reached from the earth up to heaven. And he saw the angels of God going up and down the stairway.

He dreamed that a stairway reached from the ground all the way into heaven. And on the long ladder he saw angels going up and down! And who do you think was at the top of the stairway?

Genesis 28:13-15

At the top of the stairway stood the LORD, and He said, "I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham, and the God of your father, Isaac. The ground you are lying on belongs to you. I am giving it to you and your descendants. Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will spread out in all directions—to the west and the east, to the north and the south. And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants. What's more, I am with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. One day I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have finished giving you everything I have promised you."

Wow, God spoke to Jacob in his dream and gave him the same blessing he had given to his grandfather, Abraham, and his father, Isaac.

God told Jacob that the ground he was lying on would be his for as far as he could see. And that through him all the people of the whole world would be blessed.

Who knows which one of Abraham's offspring God was speaking of? (Jesus!)

Genesis 28:16-17

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I wasn't even aware of it!" But he was also afraid and said, "What an awesome place this is! It is none other than the house of God, the very gateway to heaven!"

Think how wonderful it must have been for Jacob to hear the voice of the Lord! He knew he'd sinned by tricking his brother and deceiving his father. But now, to hear from God personally, he knew that God loved him and forgave him.

Genesis 28:18-19

The next morning Jacob got up very early. He took the stone he had rested his head against, and he set it upright as a memorial pillar. Then he poured olive oil over it. He named that place Bethel (which means "house of God"), although the name of the nearby village was Luz.

Jacob never wanted to forget this beautiful dream and the special meaning it had for him.

Genesis 28:20-22

Then Jacob made this vow: "If God will indeed be with me and protect me on this journey, and if He will provide me with food and clothing, and if I return safely to my father's home, then the LORD will certainly be my God. And this memorial pillar I have set up will become a place for worshiping God, and I will present to God a tenth of everything He gives me."

As Jacob continued his journey down the path to the strange, new, far-off land, Jacob felt like a different person inside because God had told him He would never leave him (vr 15). He knew that he was not alone anymore.

When you sin against someone, it's not enough to ask forgiveness from that person. You won't feel completely restored until you hear from God and know that He loves you and forgives you. That's why it's so important to remember our memory verse for this week! *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to*

cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9) God is ready and able to forgive you. All you need to do is tell Him all about it. He already knows everything about you anyway. He's just waiting for you to come to Him and ask for His forgiveness. And you will be cleansed! When God forgives your sins, He remembers your sin no more. He forgets about it as far as the East is from the West. You may remember it, but God will see you as if you'd never done it! He loves you with an everlasting love!

Let's pray....

CLOSING PRAYER

Father thank You for Your love. Thank You that we are never alone. Even when we're naughty, You never leave us. Thank You that You are always willing to forgive us. Help us to learn our memory verse this week so that we will always remember how faithful You are towards us. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

GAME CENTER

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

Review Questions

1. Who was the first Jew? (Abraham)
2. What was the promise God made to him? (That his descendants would be a great nation)
3. Who was Abraham's first descendant? (Isaac)
4. Who were Isaac's descendants? (Esau and Jacob)
5. Which one of the twins did the blessing go to? (Jacob)
6. Did Jacob deserve to be blessed by God? (No!)

7. What's that a picture of? (None of us deserves God's blessings, but we get them anyhow because God chooses to love us in spite of the fact that we fall short of perfection.)
8. Why did Jacob have to flee from home? (His brother, Esau, wanted to kill him.)
9. When Jacob was traveling to Haran, what did he use for a pillow one night? (A stone)
10. What did Jacob dream about that night? (A ladder was set up on earth that reached to heaven and angels were going up and down the ladder.)
11. Where did the dream stairway lead up to? (Heaven)
12. Who was on the stairway in the dream? (Angels)
13. What were the angels on the stairway doing? (Ascending and descending; going up and down.)
14. Who was at the top of the ladder? (God!)
15. Where was the bottom of the stairway? (On earth.)
16. Who talked to Jacob in his dream? (The Lord God.)
17. How did God identify himself to Jacob? That is, who does God say that He is? (The Lord, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac.)
18. What did God say that He would give to Jacob? (The land on which he was lying.)
19. What did God promise that Jacob's descendants would be like? (The dust of the earth.)
20. Who will be blessed through Jacob? (All peoples on earth everywhere.)
21. Who was with Jacob while he was running from home? (The Lord God.)
22. How did Jacob feel when he woke up from the dream? (Afraid)

23. What is our Memory Verse for today?
24. What are two of the three ways that Jacob described the place where he dreamed. (Awesome; the house of God; and the gate of heaven.)
25. In the morning, what are the two things Jacob did with the stone he had slept on? (Set it up as a pillar; poured oil on it.)
26. What are the two important things that Jacob vowed or promised to God? (The Lord will be his God; he will give God a tenth of all that God gives him.)
27. What two things did Jacob expect God to give him on his journey? (Food and clothes.)
28. Where did Jacob expect God to bring him back to? (His father, Jacob's house.)
29. How did Jacob feel when he awoke from the dream? (He felt loved and forgiven by God. He felt like a new person inside because God had told him he was not alone.)