

Introduction

Michelangelo's picture of God's finger and the finger of man

I. On the Way

1. Jacob's life
 - A. Came into world holding Esau's heel
 - B. Swindled Esau out of birthright
 - C. Stole blessing
 - Bad blood
 - D. Ran away - helped by his mom Rebekah
 - E. Lonely, rejected, guilty
 - into a future he doesn't understand - uncertain
 - drags a ball and chain of guilt
2. God speaks
 - A. Happens unexpectedly
 - between places
 - a *non-place*
 - nothing expected to happen
 - B. Happens during sleep
 - no control
 - C. To a *non-person*
 - exiled
 - without a home
 - a fugitive
 - D. In a dream
3. Rebekah would have you believe that he was going to find a wife

II. God Gives A Dream

1. Dreams might be
 - A. Fears
 - hopes/ frustrations
 - expectations
 - worries
 - B. Freud
 - Dreams are repressed desires - instincts
 - C. Dreams are in Bible - vehicles of communication
2. Time of stress - had times - extreme conflict
 - needed reassurance - deserve reassurance? No
3. God gives words of extreme comfort (verse 15) - 3 promises
 - A. "I am with you"
 - 1) First promise is about presence
 - 2) Awesome promise that God will come close
 - 3) Mt. 28:20 - "I am with you always"
 - B. "I will keep you"

- 1) Second promise is about action
 - 2) Old Testament history of “keep”
 - Adam - dress and “keep”
 - Psalms - a shepherd “keeps” the sheep
 - Protector
 - The Lord is my “keeper”
 - 3) Can refuse to be “keeper”
- C. “I will take you home”
 - 1) Third promise is about victory
 - 2) I will take you home
- 2. Context of the promises is a ladder dream - Why a ladder?
 - A. A ladder is access
 - One level to another
 - One place to another
 - One plane to another
 - B. God reaches down - God opens a doorway
 - C. Not far to heaven
 - “Walls between heaven and earth are very thin”
 - D. Unseen worlds
 - 1) A world of demons/ angels/ principalities and powers
 - 2) Greed and selfishness
 - 3) Faith, love and hope
 - E. It’s not far to heaven - all you need is a ladder
- !!). 3. Stairway vs ladder - the Hebrew can be either one
 - NEB - ladder
 - NIV - stairway
 - LB - stairway
 - KJV - ladder
 - RSV - ladder
 - NASB - ladder
 - *must be a stairway because it is wide enough for them to pass up and down
 - *dreams are surreal
- 4. Jacob’s vow (20-22)
 - A. Obviously he does not understand who God is -
 - so, he does what Jacob does... he bargains with God
 - verse 20 is an “if - then” statement
 - B. Three parts... response to God’s threefold promises
 - 1) You will be my God
 - 2) I will build you a house of worship
 - 3) I will give you a tenth
 - C. Understand where Jacob is...

III. Jesus is Our Ladder

*Can best understand the Old Testament through the lenses of the New Testament

1. John 1:51

- the New Testament
- see heaven and earth

- on Jesus
- our ladder!
- 2. Jesus is our:
 - A. Point of contact
 - in Jesus man meets God
 - place God comes down
 - he is our access - prayers through Jesus
 - B. Channel of revelation
 - through which truth
 - Jesus said - "I am the truth"
 - communication between heaven and earth
 - highway is open
 - I am the way! What way? Way of access.
 - I am the door
 - C. Channel of blessing
 - 1) All the promises of God are yes and amen - in Jesus
 - how does it happen? Through Jesus and all who belong
 - 2) Promise to bless Jesus and all who are "in him"
 - D. Jesus is our "way"
- 3. How does God bless us?
 - through Jesus
 - How do we achieve heaven? - through Jesus
 - How do we become? - through Jesus
- 4. All the images in Gen. 28 are fulfilled in Jesus:
 - "Bethel" - house of God, - Jesus "tabernacled" with us
 - "Anointing" - Jesus was "Messiah" which means "anointed"
 - "Rock" - that upon which he rests becomes a remembrance
 - we rest on Jesus, then He becomes our anointed Rock, where the church is built

Conclusion

- 1. Just like Jacob
 - God says
 - I am with you
 - I will keep you
 - I will take you home
- 2. Where does God meet man?
- 3. Jesus is our ladder