

Tree of Life Messianic Ministries

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Message 11-28-09 VaYetze-And He Went Out Genesis 28:10-32:3 Hosea 11:7-14:9 (10) John 11:54

Introduction

This week's Parashah is called Vayetze, "and Jacob Left," a rather passive way of describing a man on the run, in flight from his parents' home in Beersheba, terrified of what his enraged brother (Esau) might do to him for his trickery.¹

Genesis 28:10-15

10 Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. **11** And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. **12** And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! **13** And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. **14** Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. **15** Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

This passage has usually been the highlight of this particular Torah portion and one story that many readers of the Bible remember. The sages of old say that this place that Jacob came to was where the future Temple would be built. As I tend to say this is a rabbinical opinion, so therefore, you can take it or leave it. On the other hand the story shared here is from the Bible, the accepted word of the Lord. That makes this story the honest-to-goodness truth. Some may dispute that but I don't. I accept the word of the Lord as the word of the Lord. It does not make any difference which translation of the Bible you use most of the time there is very little difference between translations. Was there really a ladder that bridged between heaven and earth with angels going up and down? Perhaps this is how God revealed it to Jacob, in a way he

¹ From Torah with a Twist of Humor

would understand? As Jacob was leaving his father Isaac's home to travel to the land where his mother had come from he stopped for the night in this place where he would encounter the Holy One of Israel in a one on one where the Lord would give him the same promise he had given to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac.

While the Lord would be with Jacob during his time in Laban's home Jacob still had trials to go through in order to win the hand of his beloved Rachel. He served 7 years for the hand of Leah, though he believed it to be Rachel and then another 7 years for Rachel. Jacob was not a weak man but his journey to become the man of God we find later in his story took many years. Jacob was a strong individual, much in the same way as Abraham and Isaac. Abraham had been called by the Lord to leave his home and then the house of his father and travel to Canaan because of a promise the Lord had made to him. Isaac had allowed his father to bind him and was prepared to die because this is what God had asked of his father Abraham. Jacob fled for his life from Esau's anger and travelled to his mother's home and people.

When he returned 20 years later he had four wives and thirteen children, twelve being sons who would become the father's of the twelve tribes of Israel. His encounter with the God of Israel was not that much different from the encounter of one who would come later – Moses.

Exodus 3:2 The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. **3** So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up." **4** When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." **5** Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." **6** He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Moses encountered God in the burning bush in much the same manner that Jacob had encountered him on the mountain in our Torah portion from this week. How many of us can say we have encountered the Lord like our Biblical ancestors did? We tend to take our relationship with the Lord for granted even if we do not believe we are. This is not the time to stop taking your relationship with the Lord seriously. Time is short, and even if the Lord tarries, time will not stop for any of us my friends. The time is short for us – all of us.

The clock is ticking and only the Holy One controls time. He did not spare His Son from the time He had to suffer before He gave up the Spirit. Why do you believe He will spare us from the hour of testing when He says He won't?

Matthew 13:20 "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; **21** yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

John 16:33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Romans 12:12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

We are not promised we will be kept from the time of testing or tribulation. This is part of the normal human existence. There is a specific promise to the congregation in Philadelphia that they will be kept from the Day of the Lord. Are we to be part of Philadelphia or one of the other congregations from Revelation? I think we need to be aware of where we are in our relationship with Yeshua because this is what determines where we wind up in God's kingdom. While there are three groups in God's kingdom, the bride, the guests, and the servants, all are part of His kingdom though obviously there is something that separates each level. Who or what determines which level you find yourself? I say only God can decide the final outcome. All we can do is exactly what Jacob did – we move forward, remembering where we came from and looking ahead to where we are going. Will we share in the vision of seeing angels ascending and descending from God on high or will we simply find a very hard bed to lie down on?

Hosea 12:13-15

13 By a prophet the LORD brought Israel up from Egypt, and by a prophet he was guarded. **14** Ephraim has given bitter provocation; so his Lord will leave his bloodguilt on him and will repay him for his disgraceful deeds.

Jacob grew in his walk with the Almighty and finally when he was returning to Canaan he encountered God. Some say it was not God he encountered but Satan or even himself. No matter who or what Jacob came into contact with it was a life changing experience and he was never the same after that. He was physically marked for the rest of his life and walked with a limp. He had become the man of God who would become a patriarch of Israel along with his grandfather Abraham, and his father Isaac. They prepared the way for the rest of us and showed us the way to God. They knew it was a one-on-one relationship with God that counted. How many of us understand this? Are we willing to compromise our own walk to help point another in the right direction?

The Shaliach Shaul (Apostle Paul) was willing to give up his own salvation if he could bring his people to Yeshua. His was a love greater than the love we know. Love is a component in the mix of faith in Messiah and following Torah. It is like the mortar that holds the bricks together. It has an important part to play but we must never, ever, put it above faith in Messiah Yeshua. As important as Torah is in the walk Torah never saved anyone. There are some who believe this and **I am not one of them!** Even before Yeshua arrived on the scene 2,000 years ago there were Tanach personalities who had encounters with Him. Adam and Chava were there in the Garden with Him. Abraham saw him while sitting by his tent. Jacob encountered Him at the top of the ladder and when he struggled with Him before meeting Esau. Joshua fell down at His feet.

He walked the pages of the Tanach and so many missed Him as He passed on by. How much more are we blessed to encounter Him in the pages of the Apostolic Scriptures where He has been revealed for us? What about all of those who found their way to Him in the Tanach? What point is there to our lives if we live our lives without the one who made it all possible? We strive in our lives to make a living and take care of our families but have we given them the most important thing of all – faith in Yeshua? No matter what we do in our lives it all means nothing without Him. Whatever we have we owe to Him and shouldn't we want to give back to Him for all He has done for us?

A little way back, in our congregation during Bible study, the question came up about tithing. Tithing seems to be one of the thornier issues with Believers. As we were discussing tithing one person said they had to take care of their families first, pay the mortgage, food, etc. and then

they would give to God is there was anything left over. My position has always been that everything we receive comes from God and He asks for us to give 10% from our increase and not from what is left over. So many people who say they believe in God but refuse to hand over the control of their lives to His care. To walk in faith is to surrender everything to Him. The Father gave up all that He had when He asked His Son to lay down His life for us. Yeshua was not the Father's 10%, it was 100% of what the Father cherished above all else.

He did what He had asked Abraham to do. Jacob faced death several times in his life especially at the hands of his brother. His son Joseph went through the same thing where most of his brothers wanted to kill him but sold him into slavery instead. While they believed they were getting back at Joseph for his special status with their father, unknowingly, they were doing what God wanted. Joseph would be a type of Messiah and where his brothers wanted to kill him Yeshua's brethren, Israel, wanted Him killed. Instead God used this for His plan to come to fulfillment and to teach us a lesson that we sorely needed.

John 11:54

54 Yeshua therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

Yeshua was from Judah and takes refuge in Ephraim. How ironic is this? While most everyone connected with Judah rejects the reality of Ephraim here we find our Messiah, a Jew, going to a town called Ephraim to bide His time until it was time for His Father's plan to unfold. Ephraim would hide the Jewish Messiah showing that He was for all of Israel and for mankind as well. Ephraim was scattered throughout the nations of the earth only to lose who they were. They were to become like the Gentiles in all ways possible, yet He would use them when the time was right for His plan.

The irony should not be lost on us. Our God is great and He does have a sense of humor. He hides His plan right out there in the open for us to see if we will just slow down enough to look. He used the nations for His purpose. He used the northern ten tribes for His purpose. He uses all of us for His purpose.

Psalms 62:3 How long will you assail a man, that you may murder *him*, all of you, like a leaning wall, like a tottering fence? **4** They have counseled only to thrust him down from his high position; they delight in falsehood; they bless with their mouth, but inwardly they curse. Selah. **5** My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. **6** He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken. **7** On God my salvation and my glory *rest*; the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. **8** Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.

Where is your faith – your trust – your belief? Do you trust only in yourself or in other men rather than in the Rock of your salvation? Our time is short my friends, how are you going to spend the time you have left – the time that has been allotted to you? I do my best to serve the Holy One of Israel. I have failed in that but I have tried. My desire is to walk with Him and to be with Him in eternity. Will you be among those who enter into Shemini Atzeret – the Eighth Day of Assembly with Him – into eternity? Only you can answer that question so please be honest with yourself because you are not fooling God, you are only fooling yourself and when you consider the alternative when are you going to stop it?

Proverbs 14:8 The wisdom of the sensible is to understand his way, but the foolishness of fools is deceit.

Avimelech takes Esther out to a kosher Chinese restaurant on their fifth date. Studying the menu, he asks his date, "How would you like your rice – fried or broiled?" Looking him straight in the eye, she replies, "Thrown."²

May the Lord bless you and yours... *Mordecai Silver*

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² From Torah with a Twist of Humor