

D) Jacob, using the best knowledge of the day for multiplying his flocks (30:37-43), clearly credits God for multiplying his wealth and the flocks (31:12).

E) Seeing Laban's hostility over the abundant wealth which Jacob is generating and hearing God's voice calling Jacob back to Canaan, Jacob flees Haran with his wives, children, and substantial flocks without telling Laban (31:21).

F) Laban pursues Jacob, but is told by God to neither curse/harm or bless/help Jacob (31:29). After a testy exchange, Laban & Jacob establish the "Mizpah Covenant" (31:43-55).

#### **5) The Journey Back To Bethel With el-Beth-el**

A) After 20 years, Jacob returns to Canaan filled with fear at the thought of seeing his brother, Esau (32:7). In his darkest night, an unknown assailant attacks Jacob and begins to wrestle against him -- all night long (32:24).

B) As daybreak nears, Jacob's unknown assailant dislocates Jacob's hip with a simple touch (32:25). Sensing the supernatural, Jacob helplessly holds onto his opponent asking (in tears, cf. Hosea 12:4) for a blessing.

C) The unknown man asks for Jacob's name, and then, in a magnificent grace-filled moment, Jacob's name is changed to Israel ("God strives," "God prevails"), thus revealing it was God with whom Jacob was wrestling (32:24-32).

D) After Jacob reconciles with Esau (33:1-17), he returns to Bethel, where God appears to Jacob once again to reinforce his new name, Israel -- the beginning of a nation (35:9-12).

# Stairway To Heaven

Long Beach Alliance Church • June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**GOD SAID TO HIM, "YOUR NAME IS JACOB; YOU SHALL NO LONGER BE CALLED JACOB, BUT ISRAEL SHALL BE YOUR NAME." THUS HE CALLED HIM ISRAEL. GOD ALSO SAID TO HIM, "I AM GOD ALMIGHTY; BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY; A NATION AND A COMPANY OF NATIONS SHALL COME FROM YOU, AND KINGS SHALL COME FORTH FROM YOU. "THE LAND WHICH I GAVE TO ABRAHAM AND ISAAC, I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU, AND I WILL GIVE THE LAND TO YOUR DESCENDANTS AFTER YOU."**  
**~GENESIS 35:10-12 (NASB)**

#### **1) The Journey Away From Bethel With Beth-el**

A) Fleeing Esau's murderous intentions (Genesis 27:41-45) and being sent by his parents to find a wife from his own family (27:46-28:5), Jacob heads North for Haran (28:10).

B) Stopping for sleep, Jacob dreams about a ladder which connects heaven and earth (28:11-12). In the dream, God speaks to Jacob (for the first time) about the covenant promise (land, descendants, blessing -- 28:13-15).

- C) Jacob names the location Bethel (house of God), and makes a vow to God which illustrates Jacob's complete dependence on God for success (28:16-22).

## 2) The Multiplication Of Jacob's Wives

- A) Jacob arrives in Haran, falls in love with the first girl he meets (Rachel), flirts with her (impressively), and after a month, asks his uncle (Rebekah's brother) Laban, to work for seven years in order to win/earn Rachel as his wife (29:9-19).
- B) Jacob serves his seven years (quite romantically -- 29:20), at which point a wedding feast (commonly a week long) is begun. On the first night of the feast, Laban brings his daughter to Jacob to consummate the marriage (29:21-22).
- C) Shockingly, Laban brings his oldest daughter to Jacob to consummate the marriage (29:23). Jacob sleeps with Leah, but doesn't realize it until morning (29:25)! Once again, the deceiver has been deceived by family!
- D) Jacob confronts Laban with his deception only to be rebuked with information on local customs (29:26), but is assured he can also have Rachel as his wife if he will complete another seven years of service (29:27).
- E) Jacob finishes the wedding feast week and is given Rachel as his second wife (29:29). A sad epilogue in Genesis 29:30 notes that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah -- a painful foreshadowing of favoritism in Jacob's family.

## 3) The Multiplication Of Jacob's Descendents

- A) Having mercy for Leah's plight, God gives her children (a significant blessing -- 29:31. Leah has a total of six sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.
- B) Rachel, jealous of her older sister's blessing, gives her maiden (Bilhah) to Jacob as a surrogate mother. Bilhah has two children, Dan & Naphtali.
- C) Leah, seeing that she had stopped having children gives her maiden (Zilpah) to Jacob as a surrogate mother. Zilpah has two children, Gad & Asher.
- D) God eventually blesses Rachel with a child of her own, and Rachel has her first son, Joseph. Much later, Rachel dies during the birth of her second son, Benjamin (35:16-20).

## 4) The Multiplication Of Jacob's Wealth

- A) After the birth of Joseph, Jacob asks Laban to depart back to Canaan (30:25-27), but Laban objects because he knows that Jacob's presence has resulted in great wealth for Laban (a fulfillment of Genesis 12:3).
- B) Laban asks Jacob what he wants for his wages (30:28). Jacob asks for his wives, his family and for all of the weaker goats in the flock (probably around 20% of the total flock).
- C) Laban, making every attempt to limit Jacob's wealth (30:34-36), allows the agreement for payment to proceed, but never gives permission to Jacob to leave.