

Genesis 28:12

GOD'S GREAT LADDER

Text: Genesis 28:12: "He [Jacob] dreamed and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven; and behold the angels of the Lord ascending and descending on it."

And Jesus saith unto him: **John 1:51: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see HEAVEN OPEN, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."**

A giant mystery ladder is seen for the first time in the world which reaches to Heaven from the earth. The mystery is revealed to a man whom the Bible says: "*Jacob have I loved*". (Malachi 1:2) The world is being told by the Lord Himself of a man whom He loves. God had reason to say this, for this man wanted the Lord and His blessings more than anything else in the whole wide world.

I know there are many who teach the Bible who have said many inconsiderate and unkind things about Jacob. You cannot find even one word of condemnation of Jacob, however, anywhere in the Word of God. People have told us that Jacob is the founder of the modern bargain counter; that Jacob was always grabbing and getting; that he lived by his wit, genius, and tricky scheming.

Then sneaking in these few lines, they have tried to cover up the damage already done by concluding: "It's not our intention to insult anyone, and lest we injure Abraham's grandson . . . if we're wrong, our apology will gladly be given when we meet Jacob in glory." All I will say is: *Then* will be too late and can never be atoned for either. The difference between man's evaluation of a character and God's is simply this: Those who failed and did wrong in God's eyes, when asking

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The Bible brings Jacob into focus -- weary and lonely and at the end of the day laying down on the ground exhausted by a stone. He crawls up to it and tries to make it into his pillow for the night. He falls into a deep sleep and God begins to move on him by a most wonderful dream. His heavy heart is gladdened at the sight of this great ladder connecting the earth to Heaven. Then he sees angels ascending and descending on it. As his eyes sweep upward, he sees at the top the Lord Himself standing there.

Dreams like this come only from the Lord. And for the first time in his whole life, Jacob learned that God cares for the castaways. The Lord begins to talk to him and shows him sights that left Jacob surprised and happy. Jacob, like many of us, kept

too busy and close to earthly friends to hear from Heaven. God had to allow this separation from family and friends to happen so that He might bring this seeker closer to the reality of that for which he had been seeking. The Bible says: ¹⁵ *"In a dream, in a night vision, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; ¹⁶ Then He openeth the ears of men and sealet their instruction,"* (Job 33:15-16)

When we are too busy to tune in, the Lord is not too put out with us to communicate with us when we are resting. This is what the Lord said to him: *"I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; ¹⁴ And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. ¹⁵ And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee*

again unto this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Jacob suddenly awakes and cries out in **Genesis 28:16, 17b**: ***"Surely, the LORD is in this place; and I didn't know it not. ^{17b} This is none other but the House of God, and this is the Gate to Heaven."***

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The ladder Jacob saw in his dream is *a type* of the Lord Jesus. Look at the Gospel of John 1:51. Jesus is the same One Whom Jacob saw at the top of that ladder, and He has finally come down to earth and is explaining to Nathanael about the way to Heaven. He made a very direct reference to Jacob's ladder as being a figure of God Himself. He said: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."* (John 1:51)

This shows us that the ladder which Jacob saw, with the angels climbing up and down, is actually the Lord Jesus Himself, or THE ONLY WAY TO HEAVEN!

Jesus later said: **John 14:6**: ***"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."***

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I know there are many false teachers and preachers who say today that just as there are many roads that lead to Rome, so also there are many ways that lead to Heaven. But the Bible does not say that. Notice how Jesus put it: ***"I am THE Way . . . No man cometh to the Father but by Me."*** Jesus Christ is God's only appointed and authorized

way to Heaven. If you want to go to Heaven and to have eternal life and unending happiness, the only way to Paradise, the City of God, is by following Jesus -- because He is God's ***only Way*** there. There is no other.

This bright and shining Jesus ladder will take you up into God's eternal Home. Tell me, friends, what is a ladder composed of? Your answer: "Steps. A series of steps, preacher." Right! A ladder is composed of a connecting link of step upon step that leads upward. A ladder is made for people to climb up and reach the unreachable.

Do you know the steps to Heaven? Christ has marked out the steps very clearly for us. See *1 Peter 2:21*. It says, "**Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps.**" Christ, being the Way to Heaven, wants us to follow Him. He said in John 8:12. "**I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**"

Jesus did not just *tell* us how to go; He will *lead* the way. We will never go astray, for He said in *John 10:27-28*

27 "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My Hand."

Tell me, how do you climb a ladder. The way to climb a ladder is to take one step at a time. The way to Heaven is to follow Jesus, one step at a time. We have His example; we are to follow in His steps, "**Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:**" *1 Peter 2:22*. Going step by step means we are carefully taking the God-made plan of salvation, just like the Lord laid it down in the Word of God. I want you to notice these steps that Jesus made plain to us in His Holy Word.

1. The **first step** up this ladder is inscribed: **REPENTANCE**.

Jesus said:

- ***Mar 2:17: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."***
- ***Mark 1:15: "The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe the Gospel."***

- **Luke 15:7:** *"Likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine persons which need no repentance."*
- **Luke 24:47:** *"That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."*

The apostles preached the same way:

- **Acts 2:38a:** *"Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."*
- **Acts 3:19a:** *"Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out."*

During the times of this ignorance God winked, but NOW COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT; because - **Acts 17:31:** *"He hath appointed a Day in which He will judge the world in righteousness."*

Acts 20:21: *"Testifying both to the Jews, and also the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."*

The repentance we are supposed to do is to ask God for His forgiveness for breaking His laws and commandments.

If you will carefully notice, the repentance we are supposed to do is to ask God for His forgiveness for breaking His laws and commandments.

Then we come to the second step in this JESUS LADDER. It is included in this verse - *repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Acts 20:21).

2. The **second step** up this ladder is **FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

Believing in and accepting the Lord Jesus as our personal Saviour is the only way to get started to Heaven. Let me repeat that the supreme test of all Scripture is this one verse in **John 3:16.** *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

Everything depends on what you do with Jesus Christ. He is the only door to the Heavenly City, as we are told in *John 10:9a*. **"I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be *SAVED*."**

This tells me that Jesus, whom Jacob saw at the top of the ladder that reached to Heaven, cannot be bypassed in order to get into God's Heavenly and eternal Home. Here is what Jesus now says in this same Scripture. *"climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."*

John 10:1b

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There is climbing to do, but it will always have to be on the one and only stairway - Jesus Christ Himself. When the Apostle Paul answered a lost soul's question on "What must I do to be saved?" he answered with these words: **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."** (Acts 16:31) It is Life by believing. That is it. Simple and plain. Not by works, or joining anything as so many tell you to do today.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36

So, the second step to Heaven is - trusting Jesus through Faith in Him.

The third step on the spiritual mystery ladder to Heaven is:

3. The **third step** is **RECEIVING and ACCEPTING** the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart to be your our Savior.

John 1:12: "But to as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name:"

Then Jesus said: ***Mark 9:37b: "and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him (God Almighty) Who sent Me."***

John - 5:43: "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye receive me not: if another (the Antichrist) come in his own name, him ye will receive.

There is no hope of eternal happiness apart from receiving Jesus into your heart, just like it says in Revelation 3:20a: *"Behold, I stand at the door (your heart's door), and knock;:if any man hear My voice and open the door, I WILL COME IN."*

This coming in of Jesus gives you eternal life. *"He that hath the Son hath LIFE; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not LIFE."* 1 John 5:12

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4. The **fourth step** in knowing you are going in the right direction is to recognize **we must be converted to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.**

Matthew 18:3: "Except ye be converted . . . ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." This is the same truth as being born again. No one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven without taking this step of being converted, and this means **changed on the inside into a New Creature in Christ**, where old things are passed away and behold, all things are become new.

There is no way to enter into Heaven in our natural state for we are sinful.

There is no way to enter into Heaven in our natural state for we are sinful, lost, and separated from God and are no more fit for Heaven than a pig is for a parlor. We had to be born by a physical birth to enter into the world, and we must be born again, Jesus said, to enter into the Kingdom of God.

As there is no other way for us to enter into this physical world but by a birth, in the same manner there is no other way into the Christian life except by experiencing the spiritual birth. ***"Ye must be born again." John 3:7b.***

You can be born of the Spirit, like Jesus said, by yielding your heart over to the Spirit of God who comes to **'convict you of sin, righteousness and judgment to come'** (John 16:8). He produces a sense of the shamefulfulness of our sins and helps produce a sorrow for our past wrong doings. He helps us to make up our minds to turn from our sins, confess them, and then helps us to believe and receive

Christ as our only Lord and Saviour. Then He cleanses our hearts from all unrighteousness by His Blood. Then Jesus, by the Spirit, comes in and indwells our heart. Now we know we are saved.

Since it is the Spirit Who covers all our past by the Blood of the Lamb and imparts to us Christ's righteousness, we are now counted as though we have never sinned. We have a renewed heart, a new spirit, and new life, and this same Spirit of God will help and give us the power to obey God's commandments and to overcome sin.

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5. The **fifth step** up the Ladder to Heaven is -
Obedience to all the leadings of the Spirit of the Lord.

"The Holy Spirit, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him." (Acts 5:32b)
Jesus put it like this. He said: *"But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."* (1 John 1:7)

This walking in the Light is just following the Spirit's leadings, *"For as many as are*

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led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14) Jesus said, *"Verily, verily I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open,"* (John 1:51a) Get that now -- an OPEN HEAVEN -- open to all that come to Jesus, but shut to all who reject Him.

Twenty-five times in the Gospel of John we read this *"verily, verily"*. It is Jesus' way of telling us that a great, important, tremendous Truth with far-reaching effect is being declared. Here Jesus gives the explanation of Jacob's dream at Bethel. It is a God-given Dream.

For the Lord is teaching early in the history of the world to let all mankind know that Heaven is OPEN and sinners are most welcome to come to Jesus for salvation.

The message is that the sinner is to come to *Christ*, not to the church, preacher, priest, rabbi, or bishop. Christ is the only way. **Jesus came down to be our ladder to the sky. This ladder connects earth and Heaven. This connecting link is Jesus.**

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Paul tells us in another way that Jesus is the only MEDIATOR between God and man, "*For there is One God, and One Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus who gave Himself a ransom for all.*" (1 Timothy 2:5-6a)

⁶ "*Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:* ⁷ *But made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men:* ⁸ *And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.*" (Philippians 2:6-8)

The Lord Jesus is the Living Word of God Who was with God, and the Word was made flesh to redeem us who were under the law and sentence of eternal death. Like the Good Samaritan who arrived at the scene of a badly beaten man who was left half dead by robbers, the Bible says: "*But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was:...he had compassion on him.*" (Luke 10:33)

In like manner did the Lord Jesus come where we sinners are down here on earth, that He might redeem us back to God by laying down His life for us; He died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and the third day rose for our justification.

When we are justified it simply means we are counted by God as though we had never sinned.

6. The **sixth step** on the Mystery Ladder is **Justification by Faith.**

When we are justified, it simply means we are counted

by God as though we had never sinned; our record of guilt is cleared and cleansed away by the Blood of Jesus, for the Blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all unrighteousness.

Justification is more than a pardon. It means to be declared righteous. A criminal is pardoned, but this is not regarded as his being righteous. We, as Christians by receiving by faith the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, are not merely pardoned criminals, but we are righteous - clothed in the righteousness of Christ Himself.

This is the most wonderful step on the spiritual ladder to Glory. Jesus our Lord is the proof of God's capacity to forgive all our sins, yet remain just to His Holy laws.

We are set free from the power and dominion of satan and sin and guilt, because of Jesus.

When Jesus came to bear our punishment, we are cleared of all guilt by trusting in His redeeming Blood. Even dictionaries which have tried to describe and define the meaning of this great act of God called "justification" are at a loss to know its full, truest meaning. All I know is, we are set free from the power and dominion of satan, and from sin and guilt because of Jesus.

Justification brings peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1) Justification frees us from all the past guilt; that is why we have the peace. All because Jesus paid the price of our sins. Anyone can have justification through faith in the Blood of Jesus, for it is free and provided for all.

Advice to all climbers:

1. Don't Look Back Or Down - You Will Get Dizzy.

"No one putting his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom."
(Luke 9:62)

"Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2)

2. Lay Firm Hold, With Both Hands, On Your Lord.

As Paul said, ^{12b} Lay hold on Eternal Life, (1 Timothy 6:12a)

1 Timothy 6:12

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

1 Timothy 6:19

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

3. Keep Going.

"I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life. (John 8:12) ²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know the, and they follow me: ²⁸ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish," (John 10:27-28

Let me put it in a very simple way so no one can miss the meaning of justification: We are all sinners, *"for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God!"* (Romans 3:23) There is none righteous, no, not one, the Bible says. Because we are all sinners, we are condemned and stand guilty before God, deserving only of hell and utterly unable to save our own souls by any effort of good works.

We are all in the same boat. No person can give himself a ransom for my soul. But God, in His great mercy, loved us and provided a Saviour for all the world. My soul has a death sentence hanging over it because of my sins, but Jesus came and has redeemed my life by giving His pure, spotless life for my transgressions. He offers me the pardon He has purchased with His Own Blood.

The simple condition of my receiving that pardon is just believing that His death is a sufficient sacrifice and ransom for my sins; and I now, here, bring it before the

Throne of God in prayer, in complete, trusting faith - and plead that Blood on my behalf. When I do so, my faith in this sacrifice will be accepted by God and He will forgive and pardon me of all my past, and count me as right in His sight. He then gives me His Holy Spirit as His seal that the work is done, and I am accepted into the family of God through faith in Christ who bought my soul at Calvary, by His death. We are brought back into fellowship with God through the death of His Son, as told in Romans 5:10: *"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His Life."*

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If we even try to reach God from any other way than Jesus, we are wasting our time. Our efforts are doomed to failure and disappointment. Common sense will tell us: if angels can make the journey to Heaven, and then come down this Heavenly Stairway to help us -- then this tried and proved way will work for us, too.

Jacob had to be put to sleep in order to see. We also may be too busy, seeing the *unimportant* things in life, and miss the tremendous sight. In sleep, Jacob lost sight of himself and got away from his peanut brain. From earthly sights, he was led by God into glorious insight, into Heaven itself and then to the Heavenly Door - Jesus - standing as the One and Only Entrance Way. God's secret began to come alive to the weary pilgrim. He learned of the Lord's nearness and care for even one person.

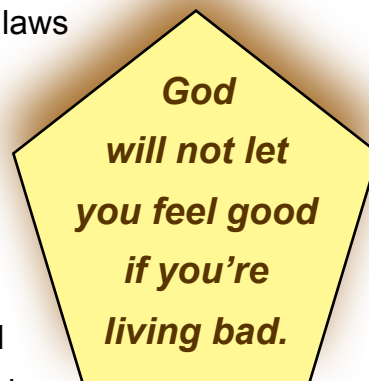
When we have broken His laws and commandments, and then come to church, we feel awful in the Presence of God. It should be this way.

Jacob cries out: *"How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven."*, cries Jacob. (Genesis 28:17) Why?? Why would Jacob call this place the House of God, the Gateway to Heaven, so awful a place? In the company of angels ...

seeing Jesus ... What is so awful about this Heavenly company? Nothing.

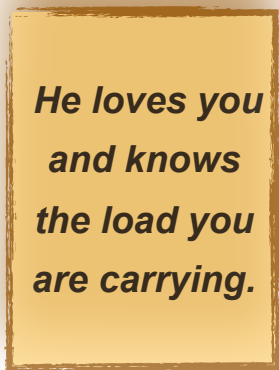
This man, who had just lied to his father a half dozen times, cheated his brother out of the birthright -- a blessing, feels only unclean now by being brought near God and this Heavenly host.

Isaiah felt the same way when He saw the Glory of the Lord. You and I will feel this way about Church and God's people and about Heaven when our hearts are not right with God. When we have broken His laws and commandments, and then come to church, we feel awful in the Presence of God. It should be this way.



God will not let you feel good if you're living bad. Jacob's conscience began to pinch him when God's Presence came near, and it led him to see how good God is, and how merciful He is to the unworthy and sinful. God came to *him*. Jesus came, also, to seek and to save that which was lost.

Jacob and Esau were ordinary people like you here today. They were the children of a fairly religious father who was partial toward his oldest son, and who loved to eat, especially in his latter years. His mother was partial to the younger boy, and very crafty about it. Esau differed from Jacob, mainly in letting his belly be his god in half of his make-up; and the other, with no sense of spiritual values. Jacob, on the other hand, had a strong desire toward the spiritual side and wanted the blessings of God at any price.



On this night, he lays down in a wilderness, seemingly forsaken, away from home and smitten with remorse. God begins to deal with his heart, and to show him the Way is open to restored fellowship with Heaven. God bridges the gulf, and sends down this Heavenly ladder.

No man had taken pity on Jacob; no one took knowledge of his state of affairs - no one but the Lord in Heaven. He loves you, too, and knows the load you are

carrying. Like Jacob, there is a lot of good in you, and yet you are being spoiled and ruined by a sinful heart. God has provided salvation for you in Jesus.

This revelation God gave Jacob is a truth that is to be declared to all generations in a fuller and deeper sense. If we take the Bible as our guide and search deeper into this experience, we will find it in its true fulfillment in Christ. Jesus is that Ladder between earth and Heaven, bridging the gap between our Father above and us.

This Jesus-Ladder is the one Job pleaded for in 9:33. *"Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay His hand upon us both"*. He brings us back together again. Paul calls this needed Daysman the **Mediator**, in 1 Timothy 2:5, *"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus;"*

There is absolutely no way to approach God but through the Mediator. Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." You can get to God, right now, through this miracle ladder, Jesus. He awaits your coming!

