

Jacob at Bethel

Read Genesis 28:10-22

Hagar was not the only troubled run-away to whom God paid a special visit. Jacob had also lived in a home where barrenness had been a problem and where tensions seethed. His mother, Rebekah, had longed for children for years before her twin boys, Esau and Jacob, were born. The rivalry between them had begun when they were in her womb and continued throughout their years at home. The situation was made worse by parental favoritism - Isaac favored Esau, and Rebekah favored Jacob.

Like Hagar, Jacob had not been innocent in his problems. He was a schemer. He had squeezed Esau for his larger portion of Isaac's estate. Then with his mother's help, he had used outright deception to take his father's blessing. Esau had vowed to kill Jacob after their father died, so Rebekah had talked Isaac into sending Jacob to far-away relatives, under the pretext of taking a wife.

Jacob was now on that long journey, alone, enduring the bitter taste of his own foolishness. As he slept one night out in the open, with only a stone for his pillow, he had a dream. He saw that right where he was, a ladder reached from earth to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. The message was clear: he was not alone. Almighty God was *with* him, even when he seemed so alone and unworthy.

God spoke to him personally - not with rebukes, but with promises:

- I am the God of your fathers (Genesis 28:13a).
- As I promised them, I am promising you: I will give this land to you and your descendants (v.13b)
- Your descendants will be many, and all families of the earth will be blessed through them (v.14).
- As you head off alone into a great unknown in a foreign land, I will be *with* you wherever you go. I will not leave you alone, and I will bring you back here (v.15).

Like Hagar, Jacob was gripped by the amazing reality of the presence and personal care of Sovereign God. He was *with* even the most undeserving - not just now, but every day and always. What's more, Jacob began to see that he was part of a plan and purpose far bigger than himself.

Listen & Sing: [Present Lord](#) (from [LNWhymns.com](#))