

Feb 25, 2007 (LS)

**THE TRUE BABEL  
GENESIS 28.10-22**

God gives His image-bearers the pattern by which they are to bear His image. The way God acts and speaks is the way we are to act and speak. Sin distorts this image but does not eradicate. We still try to do the things that God does but for the wrong reasons and with the result of death. God must re-create the world and the man; and the new man must follow this pattern.

**1. YHWH ACTS AND DECLARES (10-15)**

**A. YHWH SETS UP A NEW MOUNTAIN (10-13A)**

*Retracing the steps of Abraham (10)*: This time out of the Promised Land into exile. (Note: Haran assoc. w/ death in 11.27ff.)

*A place (11)*: nameless (theologically), unformed, unfilled. (Used 3x in v. 11; 3x in vv. 16, 17, 19). Preparing for new creation.

*Darkness (11)*: “night ... sun had set.” cp. Gen 1.1-2, *darkness* covers the face of the unformed and unfilled world.

Corresponds also to Gen 15.12, covenant being made with Abraham.

*The head stone and sleeping (11)*: Jacob is not asserting himself. He is described “perfect” or “complete” (25.27). He obeys his mother and father (cf. e.g., 28.7). God will grant him further privilege and responsibility.

Jacob takes one of the stones *of that place*, and he puts it, literally, at the head-place. Stone becomes assoc. w/ Jacob’s head.

*Connecting heaven and earth (12-13a)*: dreams; a means of God’s revelation. (Jacob’s son, Joseph, will be a “dreamer” and an interpreter of them.)

Jacob sees what God has set up. God is setting it up and giving Jacob a pattern to follow.

“Ladder?” Better “stairway.” My estimation is that it is in the form of a pyramid or ziggurat. This is a holy mountain that connects heaven to earth.

Angels ascending and descending. Now the question is, “Why mention angels?” Jacob is leaving the confines or the boundaries that God has established in Beersheba. This is the place where God had established his people, His priesthood. Angels minister to God’s people in the wilderness.

Cf. Heb 1.14. Note that he will go into exile (the wilderness); when he returns from exile angels will minister to him again (32.1). Cp. Jesus after baptism -> wilderness -> angels ministering to him.

YHWH at the top of the mountain. This is His throne.

Jesus Christ is this new holy mountain, the connection between heaven and earth upon whom angels ascend and descend. Cf. John 1.51. Cp. Daniel’s vision of a stone cut out of a mountain without hands.

**B. YHWH DECLARES HIS BLESSING (13B-15)**

*Heir of the covenant (13b)*: God’s introduction has specific reference to what God is doing in the world through Abraham and his seed. Jacob is the heir of the covenant. This privilege and responsibility was given to Abraham and Isaac; now Jacob.

*Blessing for the people of “the ground” (13c-14)*: for “the land,” see Gen 15. Downpayment on the whole earth.

Also, Jacob and his seed will be given this mountain, the place where heaven and earth meet.

Jacob’s seed will be “as the dust of the earth.” (cf. 13.16) Adam is made from the dust of the ground and is made to rule over the ground. But when sin enters the world the ground begins to fight against Adam (because the ground is on God’s side). But God will eventually bring peace between man and the ground when man is restored. Then the man will rule as he ought over the ground.

Jacob’s seed will be that new man. Jacob’s seed will inherit the earth and rule over it.

His seed will fulfill the original mandate to fill the earth. God indicates that this will happen when He says that his seed will “spread abroad” or better “break through” to the west (lit. “the sea”), and the east, and the north, and the south. Contra Babel (11.4)

Through Jacob's seed, all the families of the earth, lit. "the ground," will be blessed. All the "dust people" will be blessed.

**God's promised presence in exile (15):** God must protect while Jacob is in exile in order to fulfill these promises. Even though Jacob, the promised seed, goes into the death of exile, he is assured that God will be with him there and will bring him back to life in the land. God will not forsake him, but He will do everything that He has promised him.

## 2. JACOB ACTS AND DECLARES (16-22)

### A. JACOB SETS UP A NEW MOUNTAIN (16-19)

**Recognition of YHWH's presence (16):** God is initiating.

**Holy fear (17a):** Jacob is *afraid* and this is a *fearful* place. God's presence at His holy mountain is a fearful place. We see this description, complete with the presence of angels, in Heb 12. There we learn that since we are receiving this unshakable kingdom, we are to worship God with "reverence and godly fear" (12.28).

This type of fear does not rule out joy in God's presence, but it bounds it properly with respect for the One in whose presence we abide. Jacob responds in holy fear of God, and rightfully so. This fear is the beginning of wisdom.

**The true Babel (17b):** The house of God = the place where God dwells. Tabernacle/Temple; God's throne.

"gate of heaven"= access into heaven and place of authority. Jacob is an inheritor of both.

"Babel" has a double meaning. The word literally means "gate of God." The "gate of God" turns into "confusion" for the disobedient. They were wanting to make a name for themselves (cf. 11.5), which constitutes making access for themselves and grabbing authority.

Jacob is promised the city/mountain and the name. He is the one who will have access to and authority with heaven. He has been given the keys to the kingdom.

**Setting up the pillar (18):** Jacob sees the pattern God has given and will now follow it. Cp. Tabernacle (cf. Exod 25.40; Heb 8.5) and the Temple (cf. 1 Chron 28.19).

This imitates what happens in original creation. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son out of heaven and puts the impress of heaven upon the earth. The man is then given the task of finishing the job by the power of the Spirit. Cp. Lord's Prayer.

*early in the morning* - This is the dawning of the new day. Light is being called out of darkness.

Stone at the "head-place," set up as a pillar, and oil poured, literally, on its "head". This is a dim reflection of the heavenly reality.

The stone is connected with Jacob's head. There is a correspondence between the mountain and the man (as w/ Christ). To anoint the mountain is to anoint the man. Jacob is being anointed as the priest and head of the people of God. He is the place where the world will meet God.

Oil is representative of the Holy Spirit and light. The Holy Spirit proceeds out heaven to earth bringing light. Oil is liquid light. This is seen in its association with the lampstand in the Tabernacle. "Anointed ones" are the "light of the world."

**Naming "the place" (19):** Names the "nameless" place (cp. Gen 1, 2). *Bethel* = "house of God." (Note: no one else in the world at that time knows that this is the name of the place. But what has occurred there has changed everything. Named in faith.)

### B. JACOB DECLARES HIS FAITH (20-22)

**Promise of dominion believed (20-22a):** Jacob is calling upon God to fulfill his promises. This is not a bargain with God.

**Tribute to the King committed (22b):** Once dominion is taken outside the land, the tithe will be brought back to the land as tribute—a token of loyalty—to the King. Cp. Gen 14.

- (1) The earth is to be formed after the pattern of heaven.
- (2) God's presence for dominion is promised to us at His house.
- (3) We are to return from our dominion with a tribute for the King.