

Jacob's Ladder:

Genesis 28:10-22 - ¹⁰Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. ¹²Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder *was* set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

¹³And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: "I *am* the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. ¹⁴Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. ¹⁵Behold, 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 spoken to you."

¹⁶Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know *it*." ¹⁷And he was afraid and said, "How awesome *is* this place! This *is* none other than the house of God, and this *is* the gate of heaven!"

¹⁸Then Jacob rose early in the morning and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. ¹⁹And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. ²⁰Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, ²¹so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. ²²And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Introduction:

- Raise your hand if you have ever been or are currently in a "hard place". If I google the word "rock" would your Instagram profile pop up?
- Brief story of Jacob:
 - o Son of Isaac - born seconds after Esau – came out of the womb "**holding on**" to his brother's heel
 - o **Jacob** - Jacob is a classic and popular boy name. It comes from the Old Testament and means "supplanter," which is often interpreted as someone who seizes, circumvents, or usurps.
 - o From the onset of his life he always struggled to go higher in life, evidently it was always a struggle.
- He sought to steal his brother's birthright. His mother conspired with him and dressed him in animal fur (Because Esau was hairy) to deceive Isaac in his old age and blindness.

- After stealing the blessing Esau sought to kill Jacob, so Jacob was on the run with his family. He finally reaches the end of his rope and sends his family away.
- He laid down in a “certain place” – vs. 10

1. HARD PLACES ARE OFTEN HOLY PLACES

- He did not know that this was a special place where God would meet him and change his life.
- Later he named this place “Bethel” – “the House of God”

2. HARD PLACES BRING YOU TO THE END OF YOURSELF

- He laid his head upon the rock...
- Until you learn to turn your stone into a pillow you will not see what God has in your future
- He was not whining on the rock, complaining, etc.
- The audacity to learn to rest in hard places unlock heaven over your life and causes angels to move into operation on your behalf.

3. HARD PLACES PRECEDE HIGH PLACES

There is a continual narrative throughout the scripture:

- A desert before promise lands
- A drought before the rains
- A battle before victory
- A crisis before a breakthrough
- A Jezebel before an Elijah
- A Haman before an Esther
- A Goliath before a David
- A cross before the empty tomb

What this pattern teaches us is that you measure the miracle that is headed your way by evaluating the mess that you are currently in!

- **You are not defined by the hell you are going through; you are defined by the heaven you are going to!**
- **The hard place does not define you; it reveals who you really are!**

4. HARD PLACES PRODUCE HIGH DREAMS

- Before we can climb the ladder of destiny into higher and newer dimension we must encounter the hard place.
- Dreams are important – **Dreams are Destiny’s GPS**
- Joseph had to learn this for himself in Genesis 37

- He learned that **THE BRIDGE BETWEEN YOUR PIT AND YOUR PALACE IS YOUR DREAM**
- Sometimes all you have left is a dream:
 - **Don't let people minimize your dream**
 - **Don't let people kill your dream**
 - **Don't let problems kill your dream**

Important Points:

- Right now, the world is struggling, people are struggling, economies are struggling, families are struggling, morality is struggling, religion is struggling, the church seems to be struggling... But contrary to the pundits and so-called experts of the day (even the preachers) I'm not drinking the cool-aid that is intoxicating the rest of the world that the Church is going to slide off into oblivion and irrelevance. My Bible said that upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Joel prophesied about our time that in the hardness of the moment God will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh and prophetically ignite a remnant of dreamers who have been holding on to a promise of divine, heavenly, holy visitation in the earth.
- If you are in the hard place right now you ought to shout unto God with great expectation. God is positioning you to move into things you have only dreamed about.

Conclusion:

Psalm 65:11 (NLT) - You crown the year with a bountiful harvest; even the hard pathways overflow with abundance.

Psalm 37:19 (NLT) - They will not be disgraced in hard times; even in famine they will have more than enough.

Psalm 71:20 (NLT) - You have allowed me to suffer much hardship, but you will restore me to life again and lift me up from the depths of the earth.