

# Jacob's ladder

“Ordinary Object, Extraordinary Meanings”



*“And 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 God ascending and descending on it.” Genesis 28:12*

Jacob was running. He had stolen from his brother, Esau, and feared for his life. He stopped to rest for the night and put together a few stones to rest his head and fell asleep. He had no one to protect him. His only hope was the God that had protected his father and his grandfather. During the night he had a vision about a ladder that reached up to heaven. This wasn't just an ordinary extension ladder. It had angels on it and they were going back and forth from earth to heaven. As he dreamed God spoke to him and told him that he would do wonderful things and he would have many descendants. God would give him the land of Canaan. God promised that He would stay with Jacob until all the things He had told him would happen were fulfilled and God would never leave him. The story of Jacob's ladder is told in Genesis 28:10-17

When Jacob woke up, he said “Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.” Genesis 28:16 Then he made a promise that if God would provide food and clothing for him, he would always trust him and also that he would give a tenth of everything he received to God. As a sin to this, he took a stone, set it up as a pillar, poured oil on it and called the place Bethel.

Our choir often sings a song called “Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place”. It was written by Lanny Wolfe and has been adapted many times. The chorus speaks to me and I feel that we often don't realize that the Lord's presence is everywhere, not just in church on Sunday morning or with Jacob after his vision with the ladder. It is with us today everywhere. The chorus says

“Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.  
I can feel His mighty power and His grace.  
I can hear the brush of angel's wings.  
I see glory on each face.  
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.”

I look around as I'm singing this song and wonder if I can feel His mighty power and His grace. I know His grace is there for each one of us, but sometimes we don't allow ourselves to feel it. Sometimes we don't see the glory on our brother's face. Sometimes we don't feel His presence. If we do not, whose fault is it? His power and forgiveness are always there. We have to be willing to see them.

Is God the ladder? Is Christ the ladder? Since this takes place in the Old Testament, some say it is God. Others acquaint it with the New Testament and say it is Christ. Too often when we do this trying to “split hairs” we lose the beauty that God and Christ are one in the same. They are the same yesterday, today, and forever for us. It doesn’t matter what the “authorities” say. What matters is that we accept that God, through His son Jesus Christ has made a pathway for us to get to Heaven. Jacob was far from home. We don’t have to be in a special place to reach out to God. We can do it anywhere. It doesn’t have to be in a fancy place. It can be in the middle of a field as it was for Jacob. It can be in our home or in a very undesirable place. It can be in a church service or it can be in a time of need, frustration, or yes, even deep sin. The ladder to Heaven is always there for each one of us. No one can make us climb it. No one can take it away. Whether we think of it as a ladder, or a stairway, or just a path, the important thing is that we accept the way and follow Christ to eternal life. What a wonderful promise. God doesn’t make us go to a special place. He comes to us daily wherever we are.

Robert Frost wrote a beautiful poem that I think talks about our choices in life. It is called “The Road Not Taken.”

“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.”

Prayer: You are an awesome God. You come to us daily and wait for us to accept you. You never take the gift away even though we don’t deserve to have it offered to us. And, we know that we can’t see the angels as Jacob did, but we know You are always with us in many forms and even in the beauty of nature around us because You have made it all

and given it all to us. Thank You Lord. Please forgive our sins and help us to seek to do Your will every day. Amen.

1. Do we often only call on God when we are in fear as Jacob did?
2. When can you feel the power of God in your life?
3. Is there a time when you feel closer to God than other times?
4. What can you do to help you enjoy the peace and power of God's love?

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