

JACOB'S LADDER
AND GOD'S COVENANTS WITH THE HEBREWS

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1. “Jacob’s **ladder**,” as it is called, stems from Genesis 28:12 where Jacob receives the reaffirmation of the covenant that God gave to Abraham and to Isaac.

2. God made a covenant with Abram who became the patriarch of a distinct people group known as the Hebrews. God made this covenant over a period of twenty-four years, from 1921BC to 1897BC:
 - a. The covenant included making of Abram a “*great nation*” and a blessing to “*all the families of the earth.*” (Gen. 12:1-8) 1921BC
 - b. God told Abram that He would give his descendants the land of his sojourning. (Gen. 12:4-7) 1920BC (?)
 - c. God reaffirmed His covenant again with Abram regarding the land and his descendants. (Gen. 13:14-18) 1918BC
 - d. **NOTE:** Abram met and paid a tax to Melchizedek in Salem. (Gen. 14:18-20) 1918BC
 - e. God promised Abram that he would have a son, an heir from his own body; and He ratified the covenant by accepting Abram’s sacrifices. Also, the extent of the land promised to Abram and his descendants was extended “*from the river of Egypt as far as the great river Euphrates...*” (Gen. 15:1-21) 1913BC
 - f. God reinforced His covenant with Abram (meaning: father of the high places) to Abraham (meaning: father of a multitude) in Genesis 17:4, stating that kings as well as nations would come forth from him. Then God instituted the ritual of circumcision, as the sign of this covenant between Himself and Abraham. (Gen. 17:1-14) 1897BC

3. God extended this covenant to Isaac, Abraham’s son:
 - a. God states that He would extend the covenant He made with Abraham to Isaac. (Gen. 17:19-21) 1897BC
 - b. The Lord appeared to Isaac and established with him “*the oath which I swore to your father Abraham,*” basically reaffirming the covenant God had made with Abraham. (Gen. 26:2-5) 1804BC
 - c. The Lord reconfirmed the covenant again at Beersheba, the well of seven blessings, telling Isaac that the covenant was established with him for the sake of Abraham. (Gen. 28:24) 1804BC

4. God again extended the covenant to Jacob, Isaac’s son:
 - a. Isaac sent his son, Jacob, from Beersheba to the town of Haran in the area known as Paddan-aram (meaning: field of *Aram*-Heb. or *Syria*-Greek), a district of Mesopotamia, to take a bride from the daughters of Laban, his uncle. Haran is about 450 miles north-east of Beersheba. (Gen. 28:1-9) 1760BC
 - b. As Jacob traveled north to Haran, because the sun had set, he spent the night at a certain place using a stone for a pillow. That night he had a dream, “*and behold a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven and behold, the angels*

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- of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold the Lord stood above it*” and spoke to Jacob confirming to him the covenant that He had made with Abraham and Isaac before him. (Gen. 28:10-22) 1760BC
- c. Jacob said, “*This is none other than the **house of God**, and this is **the gate of heaven**.*” He called this place **Bethel** (meaning: house of God). (Gen. 28:17)
- (1) Jacob not only had a confirmation of God’s covenant with him, but also God’s promise to never leave him until He had done all He had promised him. (Gen. 28:15)
 - (2) He apparently had a glimpse of the future in seeing “*the gate of heaven*,” a possible picture of the access to “*the heavenly Jerusalem*” during the **Millennial Kingdom**. (Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22-24; Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 19)
 - (3) Jacob had this dream at Bethel, which is about 10 miles north of Jerusalem and 10 miles south of Shiloh; and it was located on what will be “*the highway of holiness*” in the **Millennial Kingdom** leading to the temple. (Isa. 35:8; Ezek. 40:48-41:26)
 - (4) The only other reference to such a portal into heaven is given by Jesus. (John 1:51) This prophecy has yet to be fulfilled!
 - (5) The difference between the two pictures is that Jacob saw the angels ascending and descending on the **ladder** with the Lord at the top; whereas, Jesus said that the angels would be ascending and descending upon the Son of Man on earth, at the bottom! (John 1:51; Isa. 24:23; Ezekiel 37:26-28; 43:7, 9; Ezek. 48:35; Joel 3:21; Zech. 2:10-13)
5. Jacob took Leah and Rachel, as well as their maids Bilhah and Zilpah as wives from the household of Laban in Haran in the district of Paddan-aram. It turned out that Jacob stayed in Haran and worked for Laban for 20 years, and finally departed for his father’s house at the command of “*the angel of God, ... the God of Bethel.*” (Gen. 31:11-13; cf. 31:1-43) 1740BC
6. Jacob left Haran and the house of Laban, who had animosity toward Jacob; but the two made a covenant of peace at *Jegar-sahadutha* (Aramaic, meaning; a stone heap of witness), named by Laban or *Galeen* (Heb., meaning: a witness pile), named by Jacob. Laban further called it the *Mizpah* (Heb., meaning: the watchtower). (Gen. 31:44-55) 1740BC
7. On Jacob’s return from Paddan-aram to Gilead, he encountered a man just north of the Jabbok river, about 30 miles northeast of Bethel and wrestled with him all night until daybreak. (Gen. 32:24-32) 1740BC
- a. The man was apparently none other than the **Angel of the Lord**, the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. He dislocated Jacob’s thigh and caused him to have a limp.
 - b. When Jacob discovered that he had wrestled with God, He called the name of the place, **Penuel** (Heb. meaning: the face of God).

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- c. Because of this encounter, God changed Jacob's name to *Israel* (Heb. the one who struggles with God or the one who struggles for God) because he had struggled with God and with men and had prevailed. (Gen. 32:24-32) 1740BC
8. Jacob then traveled to *Succoth* (Heb. meaning booths) and built a house and booths for his livestock and remained there for a while, then finally moved on to Shechem. (Gen. 33:17-20) 1739BC
- 9 Because of the disgraceful rape of Dinah by Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, and the ensuing slaughter of the men of Shechem by Simeon and Levi, God told Jacob to "*arise, go up to Bethel and live there.*" (Gen. 35:1-8) 1739BC
10. Finally, Jacob and all the people who were with him went south to Bethel.
 - a. God appeared to Jacob and renewed the covenant which He had made with Abraham, Isaac, and previously with Jacob some 28 years earlier at this same location. Gen. 35:9-13) 1732BC
 - b. "*Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone and poured out a libation (a drink offering) on it; he also poured oil on it.*" (Gen. 35:14) 1732BC
11. God re-established **the land grant portion** of the Abrahamic Covenant with Moses. (Deut. 30:1-10) 1451BC
12. God re-established **the royal lineage portion** of the Abrahamic Covenant with David. (2 Samuel 7:8-16; 1 Chronicles 17:7-14) 1042BC
13. God promised to make a **New Covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. The **New Covenant** extends the **Abrahamic Covenant** and provides for the yet-future spiritual regeneration of Israel in preparation for the **Millennial Kingdom**. (Jer. 31:31-40; Ezek. 34:24-31) 606BC
14. The ratification of **the New Covenant** was made by Jesus at the last supper. (Matt. 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)
 - a. Jesus Christ is our **drink offering**. (Luke 22:20) 30AD
 - b. The **New Covenant** has application for the church because it provides the forgiveness of sins and a spiritual dynamic that is not exclusively reserved for the nation of Israel. (Matt. 26:27-28; Luke 22:20; 2 Cor. 3:4-6)
 - c. There are no covenants made with the church; however, believers, in the dispensation of the church age, receive the benefits of the **New Covenant** that relate to salvation from sin through the adoption of Christ. (Rom. 8:15, 23; Rom. 9:3-8, 23-24; Gal. 4:4, 5; Eph. 1:5)