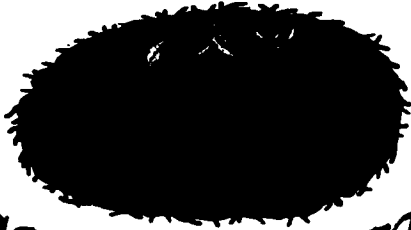
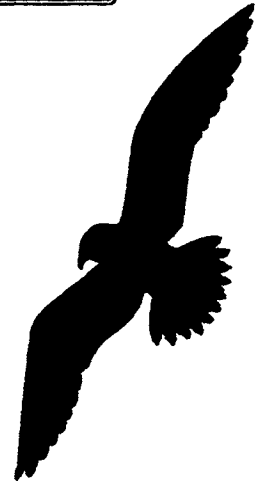


*'They shall
mount up...*

ON EAGLES' WINGS

*... with wings
as eagles.'*
Isaiah 40:31



AERY NUGGETS

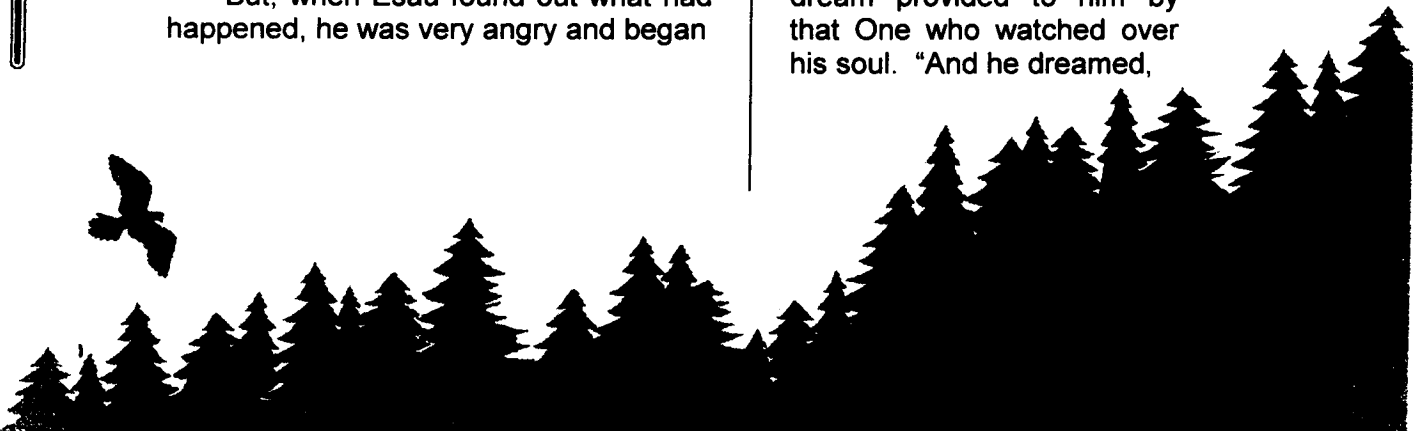
Bethel
Steven J. Faulkner
Genesis 28:10-19

Were you ever far from home and seemingly all alone in the world? I imagine that's just the way Jacob must have felt as he left his family home in Genesis chapter 28. As we open this portion of Scripture, we find Jacob fleeing for his life before the face of his brother Esau. In chapter 27, Rebecca, Jacob's mother, had persuaded Jacob to deceive his father Isaac into giving him the blessing of the first-born. Jacob, following his mother's direction, had put on Esau's clothes, and had placed goat's hair on the backs of his hands and on his neck so he could deceive Isaac into thinking that it was indeed Esau who was presenting his father savory venison; then, after eating, Isaac had given Jacob the blessing that he had promised to give Esau, the first born. It all had gone just like clock-work.!

But, when Esau found out what had happened, he was very angry and began

to make plans to kill Jacob. Thus Jacob got the blessing, but he had to flee for his life. In very short order, Jacob was dispossessed of his comfortable home, and he now became an out-cast and a wanderer, seeking refuge with his mother's relatives in Mesopotamia. In verses 10 and 11 we read, "And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep."

Though Jacob had received the blessing he wanted, he was now wandering alone through wilderness places, without resources, homeless, friendless, and unsure of the future. As he reached the end of what must have been a most disheartening day, the sun went down, and Jacob was forced to sleep on the bare ground, using the very stones of the place as his pillow. One can only imagine Jacob's thoughts as he looked up at the starry heavens and waited for sleep. But, the LORD was with Jacob, whether he realized this or not. On this night, Jacob had a most amazing dream provided to him by that One who watched over his soul. "And he 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. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of," (verses 12-15).

What a glorious dream! That night on the hard ground must have been easily forgotten after such a magnificent dream! A stairway to heaven, with the very angels of God ascending and descending, and the LORD standing at the top of the ladder speaking encouraging words to His downcast servant must surely have lifted Jacob's heart! This man who must have felt miserable and all alone in the world on this night, was suddenly and unexpectedly provided a direct message of promise and encouragement by the God of the universe. Not only was Jacob promised land, seed and blessing as his father Abraham had been promised, but in verse 15, he was assured of God's presence, care, and guidance all along the way. This outcast child of God seemed surprised to learn that even in his present distress and in this desolate place, God was there: "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven," (verses 16-17).

My dear friends, Jacob may have lacked the assurance of God's presence and direction in his life up to this night; but yet he was a child of God, and God graciously reached out and lifted Jacob up when he had seemingly hit rock bottom. You and I who have trusted the Lord Jesus as our Savior are definitely blessed and watched over by this same God of Jacob. Come what may in our lives, we can be certain of the Lord's constant presence and care for us. Remember the precious promises of our Lord Jesus: "...and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," (Matthew 28:20); "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," (Hebrews 13:5); and, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again,

and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also," (John 14:1-3).

When Jacob realized the presence and nearness of God, he was deeply moved and sought to remember the place. In verses 18-19, we read, "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first." I understand that the name of that place, "Luz" meant "separation." But, **nothing** can separate the Christian from God's love: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Romans 8:38,39). Jacob may have been an outcast from his family, and a wilderness wanderer; but despite issues in his past, and his present distress, he now realized the nearness of God, and God's grace and constant care. This place would now be remembered as "Bethel", the house of God, and I expect Jacob went away from that place refreshed and encouraged. May we as Christians walk in daily communion with our Lord, praying and reading His Word so that despite even the most difficult circumstances, we may be able to say with certainty, as Jacob of old, "surely the LORD is in this place."

But now, my dear friend, if you do not yet know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, these words may not comfort you. You will not know the blessing of moment by moment communion with the Lord, and your current circumstances may simply seem frightening and hopeless. If this is your case, then I want to assure you that, despite past failures, there is indeed a God in Heaven who knows you and loves you. He has sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, in order that you might become a child of God through faith in Him: "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*" (John 1:10-12).

*"Though like the wanderer, the sun gone down,
darkness be over me, my rest a stone;
yet in my dreams I'd be, nearer my God to Thee,
nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee."*

—Sarah F. Adams

For address correction or free new name addition,
write to:

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