

# “Jacob, John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathaniel, Jesus, & Me”

Genesis 28:12

June 20, 2021

## INTRO:

When were your **first & worst meetings with Jesus?**

- For some, neither times have happened yet...
- **For many, those times will be one in the same**
- For us, we are to **BE the Church** to **change that!**

## PRAAYER

## CONTEXT:

- **Series:** Show And Tell The Word of God...
- **Bible Cloth:** (see all & see #9 – Jacob’s Ladder)



- **Clear up** a puzzling part of Scripture...
- **Come & See** some key first meetings with Jesus

**BIG IDEA:** Jesus Christ reveals Himself  
to His faith-family... **for a REASON!**

**T/S:** ***Come and see...*** God’s Person, Plan, Purpose, People, Power & Proof

**PREVIEW:** We're going to unpack **Genesis 28:12**  
by using **John 1:35-51**

**TEXT:**

**Genesis 28:12**

He (Jacob) had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

**John 1:51**

Then He declared, "Truly, truly, I tell you, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

**T/S:** ***VISION is a KEY to VICTORY!*** - JDP

**VIDEO #1:** *God Has A Plan 1B*

**T/S:** You can literally see here **The Person & Plan of God**

- See Jesus revealing His **THEOLOGICAL plan**
- See Jesus revealing His **CHRISTOLOGICAL truth**
- See Jesus revealing His **EVANGELICAL way**

## **VIDEO #2:** *God Has A Plan 2B*

**T/S:** See that you & I need *“The Ladder” of Christ* to see the **PLAN & PURPOSES** of God & His Gospel...

## **VIDEO #3:** *God Has A Plan 3B*

**T/S:** I pray that you are beginning to see that **God’s Ladder/Stairway** have a **SINGLE & NARROW** path

- See the true faith-family of God (**His PEOPLE**)
- Followers **FOLLOW**
- Lovers **LOVE**
- Fishermen **FISH**

## **VIDEO #4:** *God Has A Plan 4B*

**T/S:** Are you starting to realize that ladders are not complicated... but they can be scary.

- See God’s **POWER!**
- Just tell the truth.... Don’t bite... **INVITE.**
- Never fish with **BAIT**...
- Fish with the “net” of The **GOSPEL’s** truth in love

## VIDEO #5: *God Has A Plan 5B*

T/S: I pray that you now see how everything ties together

1. Do you see with **ETERNAL EYES**?
2. Come and SEE God's undeniable & consistent **PROOF!**
3. Hear again: "*Come and see.*" (Jesus, Andrew, Philip...)
4. We too say: "*Come and see*" (Manifesto & web & book)

***Life IN the LORD is a life ON The Ladder!*** -JDP

5. Think about it... **What Jacob saw... we can/will see!**
6. What Jacob saw... we ARE SEEING in our faith-family!!!
  - a. God's gracious **Help, Hope, & Healing!**
  - b. God's transforming of **Heads, Hearts, & Hands...**
  - c. God **Informing, Inspecting, & Inspiring...**
  - d. God's **miracle, MESSIAH, & mission...**
  - e. God's **Plan, Promise, Purpose, People, Power & Proof**
  - f. God's blessing:

Our life-giving & loving-Ladder...  
gives His "little-L-ladders" His life & love  
...for a reason...  
Amen & **AMEN!**

**CLOSE:** ***"You aint seen nothing yet!"***

**Let's PRAY!**

## What is Jacob's Ladder?

The term "Jacob's Ladder" has become a common phrase—it has been used as a movie title, a book title, a name of a flower, and even as a name of an electrical device. But from where did this phrase originate?

**Genesis 28:10-12** first mentions "Jacob's Ladder" when it says, *"Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway/ladder resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."*

**It is in this passage that God reveals Himself to Jacob and reaffirms the covenant He made with Abraham, promising Jacob (who will later be named Israel) that his offspring will be many and that the Promised Land will one day belong to his descendants.**

**In this vision Jacob sees something similar to a ladder or a stairway (Hebrew word: *sullam*) which signifies a connection between God and man.**

In this instance, it was God who provided the means necessary to link Himself to man as opposed to the men of Babel in [Genesis 11](#) who tried to reach heaven by their own actions, aside from the help of God.

***These two passages of Scripture reflect differing schools of thought over the issue of salvation: One group tries to reach heaven based on their own actions aside from God's help, but the other group has access to heaven based on the provisions of God and only the provisions of God.***

***As Christians we see this dream of Jacob's as highly symbolic, representing the Mediator, Jesus Christ, who came to earth and became that ladder or stairway for us to reconnect the relationship with God that was severed because of sin.***

**Romans 5:1-2** says, *"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand."*

According to the Bible, Jesus was our ideal "Jacob's Ladder" who came to earth, from the line of Jacob, through the provisions of God, and redeemed us so that we may live in heaven for eternity.

## Jacob's Ladder

*"Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (**Gen. 28:14**)*

Moses turns his attention back to the history of Jacob's life in today's passage. On the way to the city of Haran in the region of Paddan-aram, Jacob stops for the night and lays on the ground in a place far from any large cities. Jacob places a stone "under his head" (**Gen. 28:10-13**) and prepares to stay the night there despite being alone and vulnerable. Yet we know Isaac's younger son has nothing to fear because **it is here that he first meets the Lord.**

Jacob's vision is of a "ladder" joining heaven and earth (v. 12). Most commentators believe stair steps are in view here as the Hebrew word used may be related to words used to describe towers with staircases. Thus, we may compare the tower of Babel (11:1-9) with Jacob's ladder.

**In Babel, arrogant sinners vainly attempted to climb up into heaven, but with Jacob, God in His grace takes the first step towards His chosen man.**

*Nothing indicates that Jacob was looking for the Lord; rather, God sought him and found him just as He finds all His people (Ps. 139:1-16; Luke 15:1-7; Rom. 8:29-30).*

**God's appearance to Jacob comes at a crucial point in his life.**

**Though he has received the good blessing from his father (Gen. 27:26-29; 28:1-5), he is homeless and his life is endangered.**

*The Lord's gracious visit thus assures Jacob that Isaac's words have not been spoken in vain.*

He is indeed the recipient of the promises of salvation made to his father and grandfather (28:13). His offspring will spread abroad to all the corners of the earth (v. 14)....

*...an early indication that Jacob's family (all those with faith in the Messiah, Gal. 3:29) will inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5).*

Moreover, Jacob can know all this will happen because God will be with him to accomplish His Word.

Matthew Henry reminds us:

*“Whom God loves he never leaves.”*

**Christ alone is the way to this same salvation (John 14:6); thus, He later compares Himself with Jacob's ladder (1:51).**

While we do not see Him with our eyes today, if we trust God's promises, we will see Him in the age to come (1 Cor. 13:12). John Calvin comments that Christ “is the medium through which the fullness of all celestial blessings flows down to us, and through which we, in turn, ascend to God.”

Coram Deo

**Hebrews 13:5–8 makes it clear that the Lord who promised to be with Jacob is our Lord, and He will likewise never leave His people.**

**Have you been faithfully serving God and yet feel as if He is far away from you?**

Take heart and trust in His Word, for our Father has not left you but is sustaining you in your trials in ways you may not even realize.

*Remember always that our Lord is a covenant-keeping God, and thus He will never abandon those whom He loves.*

### Passages for Further Study

Deut. 31:1–8

1 Sam. 12:22

Jer. 51:5

John 14:18

**28:12** *stairway.*

Not a ladder with rungs, it was more likely a stairway such as mounted the sloping side of a ziggurat (see note on 11:4). *angels of God were ascending and descending on it*. A sign that the Lord offered to be Jacob's God. Jesus told a disciple that he would "see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' the Son of Man" (Jn 1:51). **Jesus himself is the bridge between heaven and earth (see Jn 14:6), the only "mediator between God and mankind" (1Ti 2:5).**

the one true God assured Jacob that he would always be with him wherever he went (see Dt 31:6 and note).

**28:10–15 *For the first time, and significantly while Jacob was on his way out of the land of Canaan, God revealed Himself to Jacob and confirmed the Abrahamic Covenant with him in all of its 3 elements of land, seed, and blessing (vv. 13, 14).***

**Later, God would remind Jacob of this event when He instructed him to return to the land (31:13) and Jacob would remind his household of it when he instructed them to cleanse their homes before they could return to Bethel (35:3).**

**28:12 a stairway . . . angels of God were ascending and descending.** A graphic portrayal of the heavenly Lord's personal involvement in the affairs of earth, and here especially as they related to divine covenant promises in Jacob's life (vv. 13–15). This dream was to encourage the lonely traveler. God's own appointed angelic messengers ensured the carrying out of His will and plans.

**28:15 *will watch over you . . . will bring you back.*** A most timely, comforting, and assuring promise which remained engraved on Jacob's heart during his sojourn in Harran (see 30:25). ***His forced departure from Canaan did not and would not abrogate any of God's promises to him.***

BARNES =

*And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.*

Jacob's dream and vow. Setting out on the way to Haran, he was overtaken by night, and slept in the field. He was far from any dwelling, or he did not wish to enter the house of a stranger. He dreams. A ladder or stair is seen reaching from earth to heaven, on which angels ascend and descend. This is a medium of communication between heaven and earth, by which messengers pass to and fro on errands of mercy. Heaven and earth have been separated by sin. But this ladder has re-established the contact.

It is therefore a beautiful emblem of what mediates and reconciles [John 1:51](#).

*It here serves to bring Jacob into communication with God, and teaches him the emphatic lesson that he is accepted through a mediator.*

"The Lord stood above it," and Jacob, the object of his mercy, beneath. First. He reveals himself to the sleeper as "the Lord" [Genesis 2:4](#), "the God of Abraham thy father, and of Isaac." It is remarkable that Abraham is styled his father, that is, his actual grandfather, and covenant father. Second. **He renews the promise of the land, of the seed, and of the blessing in that seed for the whole race of man. Westward, eastward, northward, and southward are they to break forth. This expression points to the world-wide universality of the kingdom of the seed of Abraham,** when it shall become the fifth monarchy, that shall subdue all that went before, and endure forever. This transcends the destiny of the natural seed of Abraham. Third.

***He then promises to Jacob personally to be with him, protect him, and bring him back in safety.***

This is the third announcement of the seed that blesses to the third in the line of descent [Genesis 12:2-3](#); [Genesis 22:18](#); [Genesis 26:4](#).

## CALVIN:

10. And Jacob went out. In the course of this history we must especially **observe, how the Lord preserved his own Church in the person of one man.** For Isaac, on account of his age, lay like a dry trunk; and although the living root of piety was concealed within his breast, yet no hope of further offspring remained in his exhausted and barren old age. Esau, like a green and flourishing branch, had much of show and splendor, but his vigor

was only momentary. Jacob, as a severed twig, was removed into a far distant land; not that, being ingrafted or planted there, he should acquire strength and greatness, but that, being moistened with the dew of heaven, he might put forth his shoots as into the air itself. For the Lord wonderfully nourishes him, and supplies him with strength, until he shall bring him back again to his father's house.

Meanwhile, **let the reader diligently observe, that while he who was blessed by God is cast into exile; occasion of glorying was given to the reprobate Esau, who was left in the possession of everything, so that he might securely reign without a rival. Let us not, then, be disturbed, if at any time the wicked sound their triumphs, as having gained their wishes, while we are oppressed.**

Moses mentions the name of Beersheba, because, as it formed one of the boundaries of the land of Canaan, and lay towards the great desert and the south, it was the more remote from the eastern region towards which Jacob was going. He afterwards adds Charran, ([Genesis 29:1](#),) where Abraham, when he left his own country, dwelt for some time. Now, it appears that not only the pious old man Terah, when he followed his son, or accompanied him on his journey, came to Charran where he died; but that his other son Nahor, with his family, also came to the same place. For we read in the eleventh chapter ([Genesis 11:1](#),) that Terah took his son Abraham, and Lot his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law. Whence we infer that Nahor, at that time, remained in Chaldea, his native country. But now, since Moses says, that Laban dwelt at Charran, we may hence conjecture, that Nahor, in order that he might not appear guilty of the inhumanity of deserting his father, afterwards gathered together his goods and came to him.

Moses here, in a few words, declares what a severe and arduous journey the holy man (Jacob) had, on account of its great length: to which also another circumstance is added; namely, that he lay on the ground, under the open sky, without a companion, and without a habitation. But as Moses only briefly alludes to these facts, so will I also avoid prolixity, as the thing speaks for itself. Wherefore, if, at any time, we think ourselves to be roughly treated, let us remember the example of the holy man, as a reproof to our fastidiousness.

## **12. And he dreamed.**

Moses here teaches how opportunely, and (as we may say) in the critical moment, the Lord succoured his servant. For who would not have said that holy Jacob was neglected by God, since he was exposed to the incursion of wild beasts, and obnoxious to every kind of injury from earth and heaven, and found nowhere any help or solace? But when he was thus reduced to the last necessity, the Lord suddenly stretches out his hand to him, and wonderfully alleviates his trouble by a remarkable oracle. As, therefore, Jacob's invincible perseverance had before shone forth, so now the Lord gives a memorable example of his paternal care towards the faithful.

### **Three things are here to be noticed in their order;**

1. first, that **the Lord appeared unto Jacob in a dream;**
2. secondly, **the nature of the vision** as described by Moses;
3. thirdly, **the words of the oracle.**

When mention is made of a dream, no doubt that mode of revelation is signified, which the Lord formerly was wont to adopt towards his servants. ([Numbers 12:6.](#)) **Jacob, therefore, knew that this dream was divinely sent to him, as one differing from common dreams;** and this is intimated in the words of Moses, when he says that God appeared to him in a dream. For Jacob could not see God, nor perceive him present, unless his majesty had been distinguishable by certain marks.

And behold a ladder. Here the form of the vision is related, which is very pertinent to the subject of it; namely, that God manifested himself as seated upon a ladder, the extreme parts of which touched heaven and earth, and which was the vehicle of angels, who descended from heaven upon earth. The interpretation of some of the Hebrews, that the ladder is a figure of the Divine Providence, cannot be admitted: for the Lord has given another sign more suitable. [57] But to us, who hold to this principle, that the covenant of God was founded in Christ,

and that Christ himself was the eternal image of the Father, in which he manifested himself to the holy patriarchs, **there is nothing in this vision intricate or ambiguous.**

For since men are alienated from God by sin, though he fills and sustains all things by his power; yet that communication by which he would draw us to himself is not perceived by us; but, on the other hand, so greatly are we at variance with him, that, regarding him as adverse to us, we, in our turn, flee from his presence. Moreover, the angels, to whom is committed the guardianship of the human race, while strenuously applying themselves to their office, yet do not communicate with us in such a way that we become conscious of their presence.

**It is Christ alone, therefore, who connects heaven and earth: he is the only Mediator who reaches from heaven down to earth: he is the medium through which the fullness of all celestial blessings flows down to us, and through which we, in turn, ascend to God.**

He it is who, being the head over angels, causes them to minister to his earthly members. Therefore, (as **we read in John 1:51,**) **he properly claims for himself this honor**, that after he shall have been manifested in the world, angels shall ascend and descend.

If, then, we say that the ladder is a figure of Christ, the exposition will not be forced. For the similitude of a ladder well suits the Mediator, through whom ministering angels, righteousness and life, with all the graces of the Holy Spirit, descend to us step by step.

We also, who were not only fixed to the earth, but plunged into the depths of the curse, and into hell itself, ascend even unto God. Also, the God of hosts is seated on the ladder; because the fullness of the Deity dwells in Christ; and hence also it is, that it reaches unto heaven. For although all power is committed even to his human nature by the Father, he still would not truly sustain our faith, unless he were God manifested in the flesh.

And the fact that the body of Christ is finite, does not prevent him from filling heaven and earth, because his grace and power are everywhere diffused. Whence also, Paul being witness, he ascended into heaven that he might fill all things. They who translate the particle I (al) by the word "near," entirely destroy the sense of the passage. For **Moses wishes to state that the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in the person of the Mediator.**

**Christ not only approached unto us, but clothed himself in our nature, that he might make us one with himself.** That the ladder was a symbol of Christ, is also confirmed by this consideration, that nothing was more suitable than that God should ratify his covenant of eternal salvation in his Son to his servant Jacob. **And hence we feel unspeakable joy, when we hear that Christ, who so far excels all creatures, is nevertheless joined with us. The majesty, indeed, of God, which here presents itself conspicuously to view, ought to inspire terror; so that every knee should bow to Christ, that all creatures should look up to him and adore him, and that all flesh should keep silence in his presence.** But his friendly and lovely image is at the same time depicted; that we may know by his descent, that heaven is opened to us, and the angels of God are rendered familiar to us. For hence we have fraternal society with them, since the common Head both of them and us has his station on earth.

13. I am the Lord God of Abraham. This is the third point which, I said, was to be noticed: for mute visions are cold; therefore the word of the Lord is as the soul which quickens them. The figure, therefore, of the ladder was the inferior appendage of this promise; just as God illustrates and adorns his word by external symbols, that both greater clearness and authority may be added to it. Whence also we prove that sacraments in the Papacy are frivolous, because no

voice is heard in them which may edify the soul. We may therefore observe, that whenever God manifested himself to the fathers, he also spoke, lest a mute vision should have held them in suspense. Under the name yhvhJehovah God teaches that he is the only Creator of the world, that Jacob might not seek after other gods. But since his majesty is in itself incomprehensible, he accommodates himself to the capacity of his servant, by immediately adding, that he is the God of Abraham and Isaac. For though it is necessary to maintain that the God whom we worship is the only God; yet because when our senses would aspire to the comprehension of his greatness, they fail at the first attempt; we must diligently cultivate that sobriety which teaches us not to desire to know more concerning him than he reveals unto us; and then he, accommodating himself to our weakness, according to his infinite goodness, will omit nothing which tends to promote our salvation. And whereas he made a special covenant with Abraham and Isaac, proclaiming himself their God, he recalls his servant Jacob to the true source of faith, and retains him also in his perpetual covenant. This is the sacred bond of religion, by which all the sons of God are united among themselves, when from the first to the last they hear the same promise of salvation, and agree together in one common hope. And this is the effect of that benediction which Jacob had lately received from his father; because God with his own mouth pronounces him to be the heir of the covenant, lest the mere testimony of man should be thought illusive.

The land whereon thou liest. We read that the land was given to his posterity; yet he himself was not only a stranger in it to the last, but was not permitted even to die there. Whence we infer, that under the pledge or earnest of the land, something better and more excellent was given, seeing that Abraham was a spiritual possessor of the land, and contented with the mere beholding of it, fixed his chief regard on heaven. We, may observe, however, that the seed of Jacob is here placed in opposition to the other sons of Abraham, who, according to the flesh, traced their origin to him, but were cut off from the holy people: yet, from the time when the sons of Jacob entered the land of Canaan, they had the perpetual inheritance unto the coming of Christ, by whose advent the world was renewed.

14. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth. The sum of the whole is this, Whatever the Lord had promised to Abraham, Jacob transmitted to his sons. Meanwhile it behoved the holy man, in reliance on this divine testimony, to hope against hope; for though the promise was vast and magnificent, yet, wherever Jacob turned himself, no ray of good hope shone upon him. He saw himself a solitary man; no condition better than that of exile presented itself; his return was uncertain and full of danger; but it was profitable for him to be thus left destitute of all means of help, that he might learn to depend on the word of God alone.

Thus, at the present time...

*...if God freely promises to give us all things, and yet seems to approach us empty-handed, it is still proper that we should pay such honor and reverence to his word, that we may be enriched and filled with faith.*

At length, indeed, after the death of Jacob, the event declared how efficacious had been this promise: by which example:

*we are taught that the Lord by no means disappoints his people, even when he defers the granting of those good things which he has promised, till after their death.*

And in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed [58]  
This clause has the greater weight, because in Jacob and in his seed the blessing is to be restored from which the whole human race had been cut off in their first parent. But what this expression means, I have explained above; namely, that Jacob will not only be an exemplar, or formula of blessing, but its fountain, cause, or foundation; for though a certain exquisite degree of happiness is often signified by an expression of this kind; yet, in many passages of Scripture, it means the same as to desire from any one his blessing, and to acknowledge it as his gift. **Thus men are said to bless themselves in God, when they acknowledge him as the author of all good. So here God promises that in Jacob and his seed all nations shall bless themselves, because no happiness will ever be found except what proceeds from this source.** That, however, which is peculiar to Christ, is without impropriety transferred to Jacob, in whose loins Christ then was. Therefore, inasmuch as Jacob, at that time, represented the person of Christ, it is said that all nations are to be blessed in him;

but, seeing that the manifestation of a benefit so great depended on another, the expression in thy seed is immediately added in the way of explanation. That the word seed is a collective noun, forms no objection to this interpretation, (as I have elsewhere said,) for since all unbelievers deprive themselves of honor and of grace, and are thus accounted strangers; it is necessary to refer to the Head, in order that the unity of the seed may appear. Whoever will reverently ponder this, will easily see that, in this interpretation, which is that of Paul, there is nothing tortuous or constrained.

**15. I am with thee, and will keep thee.** God now promptly anticipates the temptation which might steal over the mind of holy Jacob; for though he is, for a time, thrust out into a foreign land, God declares that he will be his keeper until he shall have brought him back again.

**He then extends his promise still further; saying, that he will never desert him till all things are fulfilled.**

There was a twofold use of this promise: first, it retained his mind in the faith of the divine covenant; and, secondly, it taught him that it could not be well with him unless he were a partaker of the promised inheritance.

16. And Jacob awaked. Moses again affirms that this was no common dream; for when any one awakes he immediately perceives that he had been under a delusions in dreaming. But God impressed a sign on the mind of his servant, by which, when he awoke, he might recognize the heavenly oracle which he had heard in his sleep.

Moreover, Jacob, in express terms, accuses himself, and extols the goodness of God, who deigned to present himself to one who sought him not; for Jacob thought that he was there alone: but now, after the Lord appeared, he wonders, and exclaims that he had obtained more than he could have dared to hope for. It is not, however, to be doubted that Jacob had called upon God, and had trusted that he would be the guide of his journey; but, because his faith had not availed to persuade him that God was thus near unto him, he justly extols this act of grace.

*So, whenever God anticipates our wishes, and grants us more than our minds have conceived; let us learn, after the example of this patriarch, to wonder that God should have been present with us.*

Now, if each of us would reflect how feeble his faith is, this mode of speaking would appear always proper for us all; for who can comprehend, in his scanty measure, the immense multitude of gifts which God is perpetually heaping upon us?

17. And he was afraid, and said. It seems surprising that Jacob should fear, when God spoke so graciously to him; or that he should call that place "dreadful," where he had been filled with incredible joy. I answer:

**although God exhilarates his servants, he at the same time inspires them with fear, in order that they may learn, with true humility and self-denial, to embrace his mercy.**

We are not therefore to understand that Jacob was struck with terror, as reprobates are, as soon as God shows himself; but he was inspired with a fear which produces pious submission.

He also properly calls that place the gate of heaven, on account of the manifestation of God: for, because God is placed in heaven as on his royal throne, Jacob truly declares that, in seeing God, he had penetrated into heaven. In this sense the preaching of the gospel is called the kingdom of heaven, and the sacraments may be called the gate of heaven, because they admit us into the presence of God. The Papists, however, foolishly misapply this passage to their temples, as if God dwelt in filthy places. [59] But if we concede, that the places which they designate by this title, are not polluted with impious superstitions, yet this honor belongs to no peculiar place, since Christ has filled the whole world with the presence of his Deity. **Those helps to faith only, (as I have before taught,) by which God raises us to himself, can be called the gates of heaven.**

## MacLaren's Expositories:

### THE HEAVENLY PATHWAY AND THE EARTHLY HEART

[Genesis 28:10](#) - [Genesis 28:22](#).

From Abraham to Jacob is a great descent. The former embodies the nobler side of the Jewish character, its capacity for religious ideas; its elevation above, and separation from, the nations; its consciousness of, and peaceful satisfaction in, a divine Friend; its consequent vocation in the world. These all were deep in the founder of the race, and flowed to it from him. Jacob, on the other hand, has in him the more ignoble qualities, which Christian treatment of the Jew has fostered, and which have become indissolubly attached to the name in popular usage. He is a crafty schemer, selfish, over-reaching, with a keen eye to the main chance. **Whoever deals with Jacob has to look sharply after his own interests. Self-advantage in its most earthly form is uppermost in him; and, like all timid, selfish men, shifty ways and evasions are his natural weapons. The great interest of his history lies in the slow process by which the patient God purified him,** and out of this 'stone raised up a worthy child to Abraham.'

We see in this context the first step in his education, and the very imperfect degree in which he profited by it.

1. Consider the vision and its accompanying promise. Jacob has fled from home on account of his nobler brother's fierce wrath at the trick which their scheming mother and he had contrived. It was an ugly, heartless fraud, a crime against a doting father, as against Esau. Rebekah gets alarmed for her favourite; and her fertile brain hits upon another device to blind Isaac and get Jacob out of harm's way, in the excuse that she cannot bear his marriage with a Hittite woman. Her exaggerated expressions of passionate dislike to 'the daughters of Heth' have no religious basis. They are partly feigned and partly petulance. So the poor old blind father is beguiled once more, and sends his son away. Starting under such auspices, and coming from such an atmosphere, and journeying back to Haran, the hole of the pit whence Abraham had been digged, and turning his back on the land where God had been with his house, the wanderer was not likely to be cherishing any lofty thoughts. His life was in danger; he was alone, a dim future was before him, perhaps his conscience was not very comfortable. These things would be in his mind as he lay down and gazed into the violet sky so far above him, burning with all its stars. Weary, and with a head full of sordid cares, plans, and possibly fears, he slept; and then there flamed on 'that inward eye, which is the bliss of solitude' to the pure, and its terror to the evil, this vision, which speaks indeed to his then need, as he discerned it, but reveals to him and to us the truth which ennobles all life, burns up the dross of earthward-turned aims, and selfish, crafty ways.

*We are to conceive of the form of the vision as a broad stair or sloping ascent, rather than a ladder, reaching right from the sleeper's side to the far-off heaven, its pathway peopled with messengers, and its summit touching the place where a glory shone that paled even the lustrous constellations of that pure sky. Jacob had thought himself alone; the vision peoples the wilderness. He had felt himself defenceless; the vision musters armies for his safety. He had been grovelling on earth, with no thoughts beyond its fleeting goods; the vision lifts his eyes from the low level on which they had been gazing. He had been conscious of but little connection with heaven; the vision shows him a path from his very side right into its depths.*

*He had probably thought that he was leaving the presence of his father's God when he left his father's tent; the vision burns into his astonished heart the consciousness of God as there, in the solitude and the night.*

## **The divine promise is the best commentary on the meaning of the vision.**

The familiar ancestral promise is repeated to him, and the blessing and the birthright thus confirmed. In addition, special assurances, the translation of the vision into word and adapted to his then wants, are given,-God's presence in his wanderings, his protection, Jacob's return to the land, and the promise of God's persistent presence, working through all paradoxes of providence and sins of His servant, and incapable of staying its operations, or satisfying God's heart, or vindicating His faithfulness, at any point short of complete accomplishment of His plighted word.

We pass from the lone desert and the mysterious twilight of Genesis to the beaten ways between Galilee and Jordan, and to the clear historic daylight of the gospel, and we hear Christ renewing the promise to the crafty Jacob, to one whom He called a son of Jacob in his after better days, 'an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.' The very heart of Christ's work was unveiled in the terms of this vision: From henceforth 'ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.' So, then, the fleeting vision was a transient revelation of a permanent reality, and a faint foreshadowing of the true communication between heaven and earth. Jesus Christ is the ladder between God and man. On Him all divine gifts descend; by Him all the angels of human devotion, consecration, and aspiration go up. This flat earth is not so far from the topmost heaven as sense thinks. The despairing question of Jewish wisdom, 'Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? . . . What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?'-which has likewise been the question of every age that has not been altogether sunk in sensual delights-is answered once for all in the incarnate and crucified and ascended Lord, by and in whom all heaven has stooped to earth, that earth might be lifted to heaven. Every child of man, though lonely and earthly, has the ladder-foot by his side,-like the sunbeam, which comes straight into the eyes of every gazer, wherever he stands. It becomes increasingly evident, in the controversies of these days, that there will remain for modern thought only the alternative,-

either Jesus Christ is the means of communication between God and man, or there is no communication. Deism and theism are compromises, and cannot live.

The cultivated world in both hemispheres is being more and more shut up to either accepting Christ as revealer, by whom alone we know, and as medium by whom alone we love and approach, God; or sinking into abysses of negations where choke-damp will stifle enthusiasm and poetry, as well as devotion and immortal hope.

**Jacob's vision was meant to teach him, and is meant to teach us, the nearness of God, and the swift directness of communication, whereby His help comes to us and our desires rise to Him. These and their kindred truths were to be to him, and should be to us, the parents of much nobleness.**

Here is the secret of elevation of aim and thought above the mean things of sense. We all, and especially the young, in whose veins the blood dances, and to whom life is in all its glory and freshness, are tempted to think of it as all. It does us good to have this vision of the eternal realities blazing in upon us, even if it seems to glare at us, rather than to shine with lambent light. The seen is but a thin veil of the unseen. Earth, which we are too apt to make a workshop, or a mere garden of pleasure, is a Bethel,-a house of God. Everywhere the ladder stands; everywhere the angels go up and down; everywhere the Face looks from the top. **Nothing will save life from becoming, sooner or later, trivial, monotonous, and infinitely wearisome, but the continual vision of the present God, and the continual experience of the swift ascent and descent of our aspirations and His blessings.**

It is the secret of purity too. How could Jacob indulge in his craft, and foul his conscience with sin, as long as he carried the memory of what he had seen in the solitary night on the uplands of Bethel? The direct result of the vision is the same command as Abraham received, 'Walk before Me, and be thou perfect.' Realise My presence, and let that kill the motions of sin, and quicken to service.

**It is also the secret of peace.** Hopes and fears, and dim uncertainty of the future, no doubt agitated the sleeper's mind as he laid him down. His independent life was beginning. He had just left his father's tents for the first time; and, though not a youth in years, he was in the position which youth holds with

us. So to him, and to all young persons, here is shown the charm which will keep the heart calm, and preserve us from being 'over exquisite to cast the fashion of uncertain evils,' or too eagerly longing for possible good. 'I am with thee' should be enough to steady our souls; and the confidence that God will not leave us till He has accomplished His own purpose for us, should make us willing to let Him do as He will with ours.

2. Notice the imperfect reception of the divine teaching. Jacob's startled exclamation on awakening from his dream indicates a very low level both of religious knowledge and feeling. Nor is there any reason for taking the words in any but their most natural sense; for it is a mistake to ascribe to him the knowledge of God due to later revelation, or, at this stage of his life, any depth of religious emotion. He is alarmed at the thought that God is near.

Probably he had been accustomed to think of God's presence as in some special way associated with his father's encampment, and had not risen to the belief of His omnipresence. **There seems no joyous leaping up of his heart at the thought that God is here.** Dread, not unmingled with the superstitious fear that he had profaned a holy place by laying himself down in it, is his prevailing feeling, and he pleads ignorance as the excuse for his sacrilege. **He does not draw the conclusion from the vision that all the earth is hallowed by a near God, but only that he has unwittingly stumbled on His house;** and he does not learn that from every place there is an open door for the loving heart into the calm depths where God is throned, but only that *here* he unwittingly stands at the gate of heaven. So he misses the very inner purpose of the vision, and rather shrinks from it than welcomes it. Was that spasm of fear all that passed through his mind that night? Did he sleep again when the glory died out of the heaven? So the story would appear to suggest. But, in any case, we see here the effect of the sudden blazing in upon a heart not yet familiar with the Divine Friend, of the conviction that He is really near. Gracious as God's promise was, it did not dissipate the creeping awe at His presence.

*It is an eloquent testimony of man's consciousness of sin, that whensoever a present God becomes a reality to a worldly man, he trembles. 'This place' would not be 'dreadful,' but blessed, if it were not for the sense of discord between God and me.*

The morning light brought other thoughts, when it filled the silent heavens, and where the ladder had stretched, there was but empty blue. The lesson is sinking into his mind. He lifts the rude stone and pours oil on it, as a symbol of consecration, as nameless races have done all over the world. His vow shows that he had but begun to learn in God's school. He hedges about his promise with a punctilious repetition of God's undertaking, as if resolved that there should be no mistake. **Clause by clause he goes over it all, and puts an 'if' to it. God's word should have kindled something liker faith than that. What a fall from 'Abram believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness' ! Jacob barely believed, and will wait to see whether all will turn out as it has been promised. That is not the glad, swift response of a loving, trusting heart.**

Nor is he contented with repeating to God the terms of his engagement, but he adds a couple of clauses which strike him as being important, and as having been omitted. There was nothing about 'bread to eat, and raiment to put on,' nor about coming back again 'in peace,' so he adds these. A true 'Jew,'-great at a bargain, and determined to get all he can, and to have no mistake about what he must get before he gives anything! Was Jesus thinking at all of the ancestor when He warned the descendants, in words which sound curiously like an echo of Jacob's, not to be anxious 'what ye shall eat,' nor 'what ye shall put on'? As the vow stands in the Authorised Version, it is farther open to the charge of suspending his worship of God upon the fulfilment of these conditions; but it is better to adopt the marginal rendering of the Revised Version, according to which the clause 'then shall the Lord be my God' is a part of the conditions, not of the

vow, and is to be read 'And [if] the Lord will be . . . then this stone . . . shall be,' etc. If this rendering be adopted, as I think it should be, the vow proper is simply of outward service,-he will rear an altar, and he will tithe his substance. Not a very munificent pledge!

And where in it is the surrender of the heart? Where is the outgoing of love and gratitude?

Where the clasping of the hand of his heavenly Friend with calm rapture of thankful self-yielding, and steadfastness of implicit trust?

*God did not want Jacob's altar, nor his tenths;  
He wanted Jacob.*

But many a weary year and many a sore sorrow have to leave their marks on him before the evil strain is pressed out of his blood; and by the unwearied long-suffering of his patient Friend and Teacher in heaven, the crafty, earthly-minded Jacob 'the supplanter' is turned into 'Israel, the prince with God, in whom is no guile.'

***The slower the scholar, the more wonderful the forbearance of the Teacher;***

*and the more may we, who are slow scholars too, take heart to believe that He will not be soon angry with us, nor leave us until He has done that which He has spoken to us of.*

## **Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary**

28:10-15 Jacob's conduct hitherto, as recorded, was not that of one who simply feared and trusted in God. But now in trouble, obliged to flee, he looked only to God to make him to dwell in safety, and he could lie down and sleep in the open air with his head upon a stone.

**Any true believer would be willing to take up with Jacob's pillow, provided he might have Jacob's vision.**

**God's time to visit his people with his comforts, is, when they are most destitute of other comforts, and other comforters.**

Jacob saw a ladder which reached from earth to heaven, the angels going up and coming down, and God himself at the head of it.

This represents,

1. The providence of God, by which there is a constant intercourse kept up between heaven and earth. ***This let Jacob know that he had both a good guide and a good guard.***
2. The mediation of Christ. He is this ladder; **the foot on earth in his human nature, the top in heaven in his Divine nature.** Christ is the

Way; all God's favours come to us, and all our services go to him, by Christ, **John 1:51**. **By this way, sinners draw near to the throne of grace with acceptance. By faith we perceive this way, and in prayer we approach by it.** In answer to prayer we receive all needful blessings of providence and grace.

***We have no way of getting to heaven  
but by Christ.***

And when the soul, by faith, can see these things, then every place will become pleasant, and every prospect joyful. He will never leave us, until his last promise is accomplished in our everlasting happiness. God now spake comfortably to Jacob. He spake from the head of the ladder.

*All the glad tidings we receive from heaven come through Jesus Christ.*

The Messiah should come from Jacob. Christ is the great blessing of the world. All that are blessed, are blessed in him, and none of any family are shut out from blessedness in him, but those that shut out themselves.

**Jacob had to fear danger from his  
brother Esau; but God promises to keep  
him. He had a long journey before him;  
to an unknown country; but, Behold, I  
am with thee, and God promises to bring  
him back again to this land.**

He seemed to be forsaken of all his friends; but God gives him this assurance, I will not leave thee.

***Whom God loves, he never leaves.***

## Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament

Jacob's Dream at Bethel. - As he was travelling from Beersheba, where Isaac was then staying ([Genesis 26:25](#)), to Haran, Jacob came to a place where he was obliged to stop all night, because the sun had set. The words "he hit (lighted) upon the place," indicate the apparently accidental, yet really divinely appointed choice of this place for his night-quarters; and the definite article points it out as having become well known through the revelation of God that ensued.

After making a pillow with the stones (תַּשְׁמַח, head-place, pillow), he fell asleep and had a dream, in which he saw a ladder resting upon the earth, with the top reaching to heaven; and upon it angels of God going up and down, and Jehovah Himself standing above it. The ladder was a visible symbol of the real and uninterrupted fellowship between God in heaven and His people upon earth.

The angels upon it carry up the wants of men to God, and bring down the assistance and protection of God to men.

The ladder stood there upon the earth, just where Jacob was lying in solitude, poor, helpless, and forsaken by men. Above in heaven stood Jehovah, and explained in words the symbol which he saw.

Proclaiming Himself to Jacob as the God of his fathers, He not only confirmed to him all the promises of the fathers in their fullest extent, but promised him protection on his journey and a safe return to his home ([Genesis 28:13-15](#)).

**But as the fulfilment of this promise to Jacob was still far off:**

God added the firm assurance,

***"I will not leave thee till I have done (carried out) what I have told thee."***

# ***“God Has A Plan!”***

John 1:35-51

January 19, 2014

**Intro: VIDEO:** John 1:19-34...

A. Explain the context BEFORE that text:

**1:1-18** Big Idea: ***God wants YOU to KNOW Him!***

- *In the beginning was the Word...*
- *The Word became flesh & dwelt among us*

...see God's glory... & our common ground...

1. ***Created by Jesus...*** (everything)
2. ***Called by Jesus...*** (many)
3. ***Confronted by Jesus...*** (all)
4. ***Cured by Jesus!*** (few/Church)

- *Receive & Believe = children of God!*

**Qt:** “The prologue is the most complete, indeed, the most explicit study of Christ's preexistence in the New Testament... He is God-in-descent, God stepping into the context of humanity... The prologue to John's Gospel is not about a message that offers hope, but about *THE* Message that is the *ONLY* hope.

- **NIV Commentary**

B. Revisit the video's 1:19-34 passage pillars...

**Big Idea: There is NO identity crisis in Christ!**

5 key Questions for us today:

**1. *Who are you?***

(Do you know who you're dealing with?)

\*\*\* Illustration: Bay Times article on  
Jehovah's Witnesses

**2. *What do you say about yourself?***

"I am a VOICE..." He is the WORD!

(Why do you do what you do?)

**3. *Who is Jesus?***

**4. *What do you say about Him?***

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away  
the sin of the world."

(Do you hear & head the Holy Spirit?)

**5. *Are you SURE?***

**T/S:** Let's move forward with Jesus on our journey...

**Qt:** “Today’s passage perfectly illustrates the biblical balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, as John records the call of Jesus’ first disciples to salvation. We meet first the seeking souls, and then the seeking Savior.” - John MacArthur

**VIDEO:** John 1:35-51

**T/S:** Don’t miss the progressive Gospel themes...

1:1-18	=	<i>Theological</i>
1:19-34	=	<i>Christological</i>
1:35-51	=	<i>Evangelical</i>

**Big Idea:** *God has a plan!*

**Preview:**

- A. God’s plan is TOLD... (vv.35-42)
- B. God’s plan is TESTED... (vv.43-48)
- c. God’s plan TRIUMPHS! (vv.49-51)

**T/S:** Let’s take a closer look at how God’s 7-point plan is “told” in John 1:35-42

1. Christianity is a perpetual continuation of BE-ing in-Christ & in “koinonia.”

***35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,***

2. The reality of Jesus requires a response to Jesus.  
(He is either a liar, a lunatic, or the LORD)

***36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and \*said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.***

The Reality of Jesus Requires a Response to Jesus...

Option “A” = Dedicate & Declare

or

Option “B” = Deny & Disobey

3. Most important: the Messiah measures what moves & motivates your heart.

**38** *And **Jesus turned** and saw them following, and \*said to them, "**What do you want?**" They said to Him, "**Rabbi** (which translated means Teacher), **where** are You staying?"*

NOTE: Jesus asks a "what" question and is looking for a "who" answer.

*"What do you want?"*     *Anything but Him is damning...*

**Qt:** = "When the two disciples began to follow Jesus, He asked them, "What do you want?" Following Christ is not enough; we must follow Him for the right reasons. To follow Christ for our own purposes would be asking Christ to follow us—to align with us to support and advance our cause, not His. We must examine our motives for following Him. Are we seeking His glory or ours?"

- Life Application Study Bible.

**Qt: (MacArthur):** "Jesus' immediate response to them, "Come, and see," was the invitation Andrew and John were hoping for. But Jesus "is in fact bidding these men do something more than discover where He is staying for the night; He is inviting them to come and gain from Him an insight into the mind and purpose of God Himself." Jesus knew their hearts, that they were honest, sincere seekers. They had already been drawn to Him by the Father ([6:44](#)) and convicted of their sin by the Holy Spirit (cf. [16:8](#)). The honest seeker will always find Him ([Deut. 4:29](#); [1 Chron. 28:9](#); [2 Chron. 15:2](#); [Jer. 29:13](#)) because, as He promised, "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself" ([John 7:17](#)). On the other hand, Jesus will not commit Himself to the insincere and hypocritical, no matter what their outward profession may be..."

4. The gospel's blood-bought invitation is ALWAYS (both) personal AND experiential.

**39** *He \*said to them, "**Come, and you will see.**" So **they came** and saw where He was staying; and **they stayed** with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.*

**Qt: (NIV Commentary)** "Throughout the Gospel many people will be challenged to "come and see." Conversion is not about knowledge alone; it is about coming yourself and appropriating a relationship with Jesus personally. John's theology in this chapter stands against such emptiness. On the one hand, we are called to be like

John the Baptist, Andrew, Peter, Nathanael, and Philip—people who have a personal experience of Christ, who "come and see," who do not simply have a scholastic understanding of the Christian faith, but who remain where he is and are transformed by being with him. In other words, these are people who have an experiential dimension to faith, whose heart is engaged, and who "love God" and enjoy a depth of piety and devotion.”

Don't miss the compassion found in the parallels between Christ's calls to "*come and see*" and "*come unto Me.*" - JDP

5. God's grace knows no bounds... the gospel's invitation is for anyone & EVERYONE!

***40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.***

(John the Baptist & his dad...)

(Andrew is an everybody)

(Peter is a peaks & valley guy)

6. Following means finding...

**41** He *\*found first his own brother Simon and \*said to him, "We have found the **Messiah**" (which translated means Christ).*

NOTE: Andrew's always bringing somebody to Jesus!

The found GO Find...

Following Christ means finding Christ's ones. - JDP

7. Lastly, Christians help people meet Christ...  
...and Christ makes Christian people!

**42** He *brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; **you shall be called Cephas**" (which is translated Peter).*

Christ's ones bring others to Christ!

We bring 'em to Jesus!

Christ will change His Christians

Jesus gives us our purpose, potential & power...  
to BE all that He has called & created us to be - Amen!

**Qt: = Simon renamed Peter...**

Jesus saw not only who Simon was, but who he would become. That is why he gave him a new name—*Cephas* in Aramaic, *Peter* in Greek (the name means "a rock"). Peter is not presented as rock-solid throughout the Gospels, but he became a solid rock in the days of the early church, as we learn in the book of Acts. By giving Simon a new name, Jesus introduced a change in character.

- **Life Application Study Bible.**

**(see Christianity's perpetual continuation in Christ...)**

**T/S:** God's plan is about to be tested...

vv.43-51 = (sets blueprint in place for the rest of the Bible)

In v.43 watch how the plan is repeated & proved...

**43** *The **next day** He purposed to go into Galilee, and **He \*found Philip.** And Jesus \*said to him, "**Follow Me.**"*

**NOTE: Find the Lost, Grow Found**

- a. "*The next day*" = perpetual continuation...
- b. "*He purposed*" = gracious, providential plan of salvation
- c. "*to go*" = Jesus models missionary ministry!
- d. "*He found*" = all of grace!
- e. "*Philip*" = personal salvation...
- f. "*...Jesus said to him*" = compassionate command
- g. "*Follow Me*" =
  - *Follow* = Full, "all-in," faithful obedience
  - *Me* = Christ alone (vs. counterfeits)

When following we're finding... &  
When we're finding we're following!

Going to others... won souls = our "crowns" (Thess.)

EZ. 16:49 = Sodom & Gomorah being wrathed for living in ease & neglect...

Parable of the Talents!!! (God's blessings call for a response - Chuck Swindoll)

Acts 20:23-24 = going

**T/S:** \*\*\* v.45-51 = 2nd generation tested...

1. The found go find...
2. Not every encounter will be easy...

**45 Philip \*found Nathanael and \*said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—*Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*"**

NOTE: Followers Find....

**ILLUSTRATION: Like matches catching fire!**

Note: (Philip to Nate)

- Philip went in faithful obedience
- Philip shared with passion
- Philip declared Jesus: Messiah!
- Philip did not edit for "looks"

Note: v46a (Nate to Philip)

**46 Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"**

- Nate shows prejudice
  - \* "You make beautiful things"
  - \* "ashes to miracles"
  - \* "Saul to Paul"
  - \* "old you to new you"
  - \* "Dead... to Born again!"
- Nate shows OT knowledge

Note: 46b (Philip back to Nate)

*Philip \*said to him, "**Come and see.**"*

- textbook evangelistic response:
  - \* "Don't bite... Invite!"
  - \* "Debate leads to hate."
  - \* "Come and see!"

v47 = Bring 'em to Jesus... and the rest is up to Him/them.

**47** *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and \*said of him, "**Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!**"*

- "Behold" = Jesus calls everyone's attention (wow)
  - "an Israelite indeed" = He classifies N as a true child of Abraham... (an O.T. biblical believer)
  - "in whom...no deceit" = he is a committed truth-teller:
    - No deceit does not mean no sin...

- lives on high, hard road
- no political correctness
- a true friend, brother!
- a standard protector (but not "setter" - that is God's job per His Word)

- We're "voices" He is the Word
- Jesus always initiates:
  - \* He sent Philip/us
  - \* He prepares the heart...
  - \* He lets us know He knows us!
  - \* He REALLY does know us
  - \* He measures holiness & heart

**Qt:** (on Nathanael) *“Some things weak, imperfect, and sinful, are found in all, but hypocrisy belongs not to a believer's character.”* - **Matthew Henry**

v48 = Note the transfer of doubt from the Christians to the Christ...  
(normal)

**48** Nathanael \*said to Him, **“How do You know me?”** Jesus answered and said to him, **“Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”**

- Jesus answers the ordinary with the extraordinary...
- Jesus handles the natural with the supernatural
- Christ makes Christians by showing/proving He IS Christ.

**Qt:** Jesus knew about Nathanael before the two ever met. Jesus also knows what we are really like. An honest person will feel comfortable with the thought that Jesus knows him or her through and through. A dishonest person will feel uncomfortable. You can't pretend to be something you're not (with the Holy Spirit). God knows the real you and wants *you* to follow him. - **Life Application Study Bible.**

v48 = before you were sought (by one who has experienced God), you were in fact seen by God (who sent your seeker!)

**Key take away = Jesus** demonstrates His omnipresence & omniscience (deity)

v49 = Saving faith responds faithfully

***49 Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."***

- a. Respect ("Rabbi") "teach me "
- b. Redeem (Son of God) save me
- c. Relinquish (King) "lead me "

v49 = biblical believer's response:

"Rabbi/Teacher" =

- Respect.... the One calling
- Expect..... to be changed

"You are the Son of God!"

- there is no other name...
- must be full Christology
  - \*Not just who He is...
  - \*But also, what He's done

"You are the King of Israel!"

- Note: modern geo-politics
- sees Him as O.T. Messiah
- affirms deity again...
- acknowledges divine power
- \*\*\* see Zephaniah 3:15b!!!
- \*\*\* Matt. 27:42-43 (both titles applied to Him in mock)

v50 Jesus probes & promises:

***50 Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these."***

- a. Jesus rewards repentance & redeeming responses
- b. Mustard seed faith will see mountain-moving feats...
- c. "You ain't seen nothin yet!"

## **This verse speaks to the blessing of having "Eternal-Eyes"**

**T/S:** John ends this exposition on evangelism with Christ's own Christian crescendo!

**51 And He \*said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."**

While one might think that Jesus is still talking with Nathanael in [1:51](#), the verb changes from the singular to the plural, "You will see...." Jesus is making a pronouncement to all of his disciples—and to his readers too—that culminates all that has been revealed about him these four days.

"Truly, truly" = emphatic emphasis

### **Spiritual Vision for Nathanael (V. 51 per Kent Hughes)**

That statement took Nathanael back almost 2,000 years to the time of Jacob. To understand its meaning, we must first know its context—[Genesis 28](#). Jacob had just stolen the birthright from Esau. He was a scoundrel, a rascal who also loved spiritual things. Because of his fear of Esau's wrath, Jacob, the conniver, was fleeing for his life. At this point it seemed that his only friend was his mother.... Under that ominous Syrian sky God gave him a vision of encouragement. "Look, Jacob, do you think you are all alone out here? There is traffic between heaven and earth on your behalf. Let that comfort you." That was the dream Jesus referred to when speaking to Nathanael...

**The finest Greek scholars, from J. H. Bernard to C. K. Barrett, say this means Jesus is the ladder! What a tremendous truth! The ladder is Christ! "Nathanael, you have not seen anything! As you enter into the fullness of your relationship with me, and as your spiritual vision is broadened, you are going to see swarming angels and hear the rustle of their wings as they move on that ladder between heaven and earth for you." And this is actually what happens on behalf of believers today. We need to hold on to this and understand it and believe it until we can almost hear the rustle of their wings.**

We learn from Jacob's vision that God is active in our lives when we are in the wilds. And we see that angels really do minister on our behalf! [Hebrews 1:14](#) says, "*Are not all angels ministering spirits sent out to serve those who will inherit salvation?*"

([2 Kings 6:14-17](#)). Elisha and his servant were surrounded by the enemy, and Elisha prayed that his servant's eyes would be opened. Then his servant saw flaming chariots of fire and the armies of God all around. He saw the reality of ministering spirits. That same reality is ours. Someday we will actually see heaven opened and "the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

"Truly, truly" = emphatic emphasis

**Qt: (NIV Commentary)** "[John 1:51](#) introduces Jesus' first use of the "*amen, amen*" formula (obscured in the NIV's "I tell you the truth"). Literally Jesus says, "Truly [*amen*], truly [*amen*] I say to you. ... " In the Synoptic Gospels *amen* occurs only once when the expression is used, but it is characteristically doubled throughout the Fourth Gospel (used twenty-five times). The word... implies certainty or confirmation and generally was appended to corporate prayers ([1 Cor. 14:16](#); cf. [Ps. 41:13](#)). Jesus uses it to *introduce* sayings that for him are solemn or significant..."

- "I say to you" = God talks to man
- "you will see" = guaranteed to be
- "heaven opened" = unimaginable
- "and the angels of God" = (army)
- "ascending" = carrying us up...
- "and descending" = to join fight
- "on" = shows Jesus is THE Ladder
- "the Son of Man." = the God-man

Key Son of Man v's in John: 3:14; 5:27; 6:27; 9:39

[see prophecy: Daniel 7:13-14](#)

[see Matthew 26:64](#)

[link in Hebrews 10:19-39!!!](#)

See Platt's Radical @experiment" #1... Jesus was not concerned about the lost not coming to church, but rather, that the church would not go to the lost...

**Qt:** (MacArthur) “This is the first of thirteen occurrences in John's gospel of the title **Son of Man**, Jesus' favorite way of referring to Himself (He did so about 80 times in the gospels). In John's gospel, it is associated with Jesus' suffering and death ([3:14](#); [8:28](#); [12:34](#)), His provision of salvation ([6:27](#), [53](#)), and His authority to judge ([5:27](#); [9:35](#), [39](#)).”

**“This passage, which records Jesus' call of His first disciples to salvation, pictures the balance of salvation taught throughout Scripture. Salvation takes place when seeking souls come in faith to the Savior who has already sought them.”**

- The MacArthur New Testament Commentary

## Close:

John is claiming that discipleship has two essential elements: Disciples must know who Jesus is, and they must have a personal experience that completely reorients who they are.

One of the striking features of this story is that people who become disciples of Jesus know what to call him. Within the story there is a litany of titles that could almost serve as an index to the New Testament list of names for Jesus:

- The “Word”
- Creator (Word)
- Sustainer (Word)
- Messiah ([vv. 20, 41](#))
- the Prophet ([v. 21](#))
- Jesus ([v. 29](#))
- Lamb of God ([v. 29, 36](#))
- one who baptizes with the Spirit ([v. 33](#))
- chosen [Son] of God ([v. 34](#))
- rabbi/teacher ([vv. 38, 49](#))
- Christ/anointed one ([v. 41](#))
- son of Joseph ([v. 45](#))
- Nazarene ([v. 45](#))
- Son of God ([v. 49](#))
- King of Israel ([v. 49](#))
- Son of Man ([v. 51](#))

No other chapter in the New Testament provides a comprehensive list like this... These names add an anticipatory element to our reading. We are eager to watch them unfold as the story unfolds, as they are picked up again and again and their meaning is enriched. Like the table of contents in a book, this list of names forces us to look ahead at how this remarkable person named Jesus will be explained in the following twenty chapters.

Let's Pray!