

How Awesome is this Place?

This weeks reading is from Parashat Vayetze (*Bereshit / Genesis 28:10-32:2*). Jacob flees from his brother Esav from Beersheba toward Haran and falls asleep. The Lord speaks to Jacob in a dream (ויִחַלֵּם) reaffirming the covenant He made with Jacob’s fathers (*Bereshit / Genesis 28:10-19*). Jacob travels to Haran and meets Laban his mother’s brother (*29:9-14*) and also meets Rachel Laban’s daughter (*29:6-8*, וְהִנֵּה רָחֵל בְּתוֹ בָּאָה). Jacob makes a deal with Laban to work 7 years for Rachel his daughter to be his wife (*29:18-21*). Laban tricks him and gives the older daughter Leah instead and Jacob must work another 7 years for Rachel (*29:22-28*, אֶעֱבֹדָךְ). Jacob’s children are born by Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah, (*29:31-30:27*). Jacob and Laban agree on Jacob’s wages (*30:28-43*) but Laban and his sons are upset that he has become so wealthy (*31:1-3*, וַיִּפְרֹץ הָאִישׁ מְאֹד מְאֹד). As a result, God speaks to Jacob, and he takes his family and all he owns and returns to the land of Canaan (*31:4-21*) and Jacob makes a covenant with Laban to not do each other harm (*31:22-32:2*). A lot takes place in this week’s Parashah. In the opening verses of the Parashah, the Lord speaks to Jacob in a dream and he has a vision of angels ascending and descending upon a ladder and of the God of his father in the place called Luz. According to the biblical text, this is the first time that God has spoken to and revealed Himself to Jacob. As God reveals Himself to Jacob, He reiterates the covenant that He made with his father’s Abraham and Isaac (הַאֲדָמָה) וַנְּבָרְכוּ בָּךְ כָּל-מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה). As a result Jacob renames the place he is laying to be בית-אל “Beit-El” (בֵּית-אֵל, Bethel) meaning “House of God” because God was in this place and He did not know it. God promised Jacob that He would be with him. Today, the Lord promises He will remain with you too if you trust and obey Him in His Son Yeshua the Messiah.

כתבי הקודש / The Holy Scriptures	
<p style="text-align: center;">ספר בראשית פרק כח</p> <p>יג וְהִנֵּה יְהוָה נֹצֵב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ אָבִי וְאֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לְךָ אֶתְנַנֶּה וְלִנְרָעָדָּ: יד וְהִנֵּה וְרָעָד כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרָצְתָ יָמָה וּקְדָמָה וְצַפְנָה וְנִגְבָּה וְנִבְרָכוּ בָּךְ כָּל-מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה וּבְנֵי רָעָדָּ: טו וְהִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי עֹמֵד וְשֹׁמְרֵתִיךָ כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-תֵּלַדְךָ וְהִשְׁבַּתִּיךָ אֵלַי-הָאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעֱזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם-עָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתִּי לְךָ: טז וַיִּיקָז וַיִּעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲכֹן יֵשׁ יְהוָה בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי: יז וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מֶה-נִּוְרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם-בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם:</p>	<p><i>Bereshit / Genesis 28:13-17</i></p> <p><i>28:13 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, ‘I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. 28:14 ‘Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 28:15 ‘Behold, 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 promised you.’ 28:16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.’ 28:17 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.’ (NASB)</i></p>

According to *Bereshit / Genesis 28:16-17* Jacob said *28:16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.’ 28:17 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.’ (NASB)* Jacob woke up and declared *מֶה-נִּוְרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה “How Awesome is this place!”* Have you ever considered the magnificence of the place that God has prepared for Himself and what He has done? The Scriptures tell us in *2 Samuel 7:10 ‘I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum Pseudo Jonathan states קדמי אֲתָר מְתַקֵּן קדמי וְאֲשִׁי אֲתָר מְתַקֵּן קדמי “I will establish a sacred place” making reference to “having a close relationship to a king” (קדמי). In addition to this, the Apostle Peter speaking to the Sanhedrin said *Acts 7:48 ‘However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says: 7:49 ‘Heaven is My throne, And earth is the footstool of My feet; What kind of house will you build for Me?’ says the Lord, ‘Or what place is there for My repose? 7:50 ‘Was it not My hand which made all these things?’ (NASB)* The Lord does not dwell in houses made by human hands. David said in his Psalm, *Tehillim / Psalms 139:14 “I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.” (NASB)* And the Apostle Paul wrote in *1 Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 6:20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (NASB)* Studying these verses, can you declare like Jacob did *מֶה-נִּוְרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה “How Awesome is this place!”* The magnificence of the place that God has prepared for Himself is that God’s throne is in our hearts, and our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are the house of God (the Holy Spirit), our bodies were not built by human hands, but formed inside the womb by the wisdom of God. In addition to this, God loved us so much that He brought atonement for body, soul, and spirit, He sanctified us, set us apart for His purposes. As a result of these things, Paul said in *Romans 12:1* to offer to God our bodies as a living sacrifice. We are to consciously offer our entire spirit, soul, and body completely to the Lord in devotion and obedience to His word to do His will and not our own. Take the time today and ask the Lord for His help to recognize *מֶה-נִּוְרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה “How Awesome is this place!”* our bodies and to begin living in such a way so as to bring glory to His Name! Halelluia!