

The Ladder and the Blessing

WHAT WE FOUND

- Genesis 24 has no visible miracle and God's hand on every verse: a prayer at a well, a kindness extravagant enough to mean something, timing that was almost certainly not coincidence. Most providence looks like this, and is visible mostly in the rearview mirror.
- “The elder shall serve the younger” is spoken before the twins are born: election rests on God's free call, not résumés (Romans 9:10–12). The second-born getting the promise is the shape of grace, and Genesis will repeat the move.
- Chapter 27 has four people and no heroes. The fraud purchased nothing the oracle had not already promised. God ratifies promises, not methods.
- At Bethel, the Babel silhouette runs in reverse: heaven installs the staircase, angels on it, God speaking from it, to a fugitive liar asleep on a stone: “I am with you and will keep you wherever you go.” Beth-El, the gate given; Bab-el, the gate grasped.
- Jesus claims the ladder in person: “angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” (John 1:51). The meeting place of heaven and earth is not a location but a Person, and the Church's liturgy for the dedication of churches has long borrowed Jacob's waking words: “How awesome is this place.”.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Cyril of Alexandria · *Glaphyra on Genesis*

The servant sent to gather a bride for the son carries the Church's figure: faith is Rebekah's journey, love for a Bridegroom known so far only by the testimony of His servants, and a road taken on the strength of His word.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. John Climacus · *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*

The spiritual life is a ladder climbed rung by rung, one step of virtue at a time.

This study's reflection: the Ladder itself came down first. We climb only because Someone descended; every rung is grace before it is effort.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. Francis de Sales · *Introduction to the Devout Life*

True devotion never conflicts with one's vocation; it is lived out in the ordinary duties of one's state in life, and adorns every calling.

This study's application: devotion is for camel-watering people. God's will hides less in signs and wonders than in the duties and providences of your actual state in life.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Write down your Bethel: the season God was keeping you and you did not know it. Date it; thank Him aloud once this week.
- Do one Rebekah act: prompt, slightly extravagant, unrepayable, unannounced.
- Pray Genesis 28:15 daily, by name, over someone currently mid-flight from God.
- Read Genesis 29–33: watch what happens to the deceiver, and mark every time someone's name is asked.

MEMORY VERSE

“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 that of which I have spoken to you.” (Genesis 28:15)

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read Genesis 29–33 before next session.

Catechism references: CCC 302–308, 707, 2570–2571.