

Genesis 27:41-28:22

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Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[0 : 0 0] Now we left last Lord's Day evening, the end of Genesis 20, not last Lord's Day, a fortnight ago, evening where we left with Genesis 27 where Isaac had inadvertently given the blessing to Jacob.

And the covenant blessing had gone with the headship of the family, although he didn't use explicitly the words of the blessing of God with it. It was very much a sort of earthbound blessing, but he had meant to give it to Esau.

He thought he was giving it to Esau, but he was the victim of a cruel deception perpetrated by Rebekah, his wife, and Jacob, his younger son.

And yet, and yet through it all, there is a sense in which God's providence overrules all these unkindnesses and all these deceptions.

Because if we were to look at verse 36 of chapter 27, where Esau says, Is not he rightly named Jacob? He hath supplanted me these two times.

[1 : 0 6] He took away my birthright, and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? Now, when he says he took away my birthright, Isaac doesn't say, what's this about a birthright?

I hadn't heard about that. So the implication would be that just as Rebekah hears what Esau clearly says, verse 41, in his heart, but clearly shares with other people as well, that goes around the camp pretty quick.

So the news of Esau having sold his birthright to Jacob, the end of chapter 25, then this too would have been known to Isaac.

It is not news to him when Esau says this. He doesn't say, what's this about a birthright? I never knew anything about this. He knew about it, and yet he still, perhaps with a blindness of love for a favorite, desired to give the blessing of the firstborn to Esau.

And yet God in his providence, with the birthright having been sold, with Esau's full consent at the time, the birthright having been sold, the blessing that went with the birthright, there was a sense in which it was only right and good, that that should be bestowed upon Jacob.

[2 : 2 6] None of that excuses the cruelty of what happened in that chapter to Isaac. And yet Isaac himself is not quite completely innocent in all of this, because knowing where the birthright had gone, he would have known that it was not entirely inappropriate, that the blessing likewise should then be upon Jacob.

However, we move on to verse 41, where we find Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him. And Esau said in his heart, the days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob.

Now, it's not entirely clear whether by doing this, or planning to do this, Esau intends that with Jacob dead, the blessing will simply revert back to him, or whether it is simply an act of vengeance to make himself feel better if he kills Jacob, who has deceived him, or at least once, and taken his birthright once as well, or whether he hopes then to head up the clan, or whether it is simply that he wants to take the place that Isaac, his father, intended for him.

Everything here, everything in this verse, and all the verses that we have around these chapters, indicates that Esau's love for Isaac is absolutely genuine, is verging on hero worship, but is absolutely earthbound.

There is nothing, there is not a hint that Esau desires, or has any concern for, the covenant blessing, which Jacob is now inheriting.

[4 : 11] His love for his father, for Isaac is such, that even though he now hates Jacob, with a murderous hatred, he is not going to grieve his father's heart, by killing Jacob, while Isaac is still alive.

He thinks Isaac is not long for this world, little does he know, as chapter 35 makes clear, verse 28, Isaac lives to be about 180, and he must be pretty much just over 100 at this stage, he's got another maybe 70, 75 years, still to go before Isaac actually dies, but Esau doesn't know this.

He thinks Isaac will be dead soon. Isaac himself thinks he will be dead soon, but Esau's love for Isaac is such, that much as he hates Jacob, he won't kill him just now.

He will wait, so that it will not grieve Isaac's heart. And likewise again, when we look into chapter 28, when Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, this is verse 6, and sent him away to Pananah, to take him away from then, that as he blessed him, he gave him a charge, saying, I shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Pananah, and Esau, seeing with the daughters of Canaan, pleased not Isaac his father, doesn't mention his mother, but pleased not Isaac his father, then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebiyoth, to be his wife.

He thinks that his father and mother just don't like his wives because they're not family. And if he can just go and get a wife from the family, even if it's from Ishmael's line, Ishmael who is not part of the covenant line, Ishmael who was sent away from Abraham's camp when he was still a young boy, his mother took him a wife, chapter 21, you see in Genesis, out of the land of Egypt, so even the connection with their own family is tenuous, and there is no sense of the covenant blessing, or perhaps worshipping the true God there, it's just a blood tie, and it's a pretty tenuous blood tie, that Esau thinks, this will please my father, this is what he's concerned about.

[6 : 39] And as we mentioned four nights ago, and we must look at this, Esau just doesn't get it. His concerns are entirely earthbound. He wants the blessing of his father, Isaac, because he loves his father, Isaac.

He is devoted to his father, Isaac. Isaac loves Esau as his favourite, and Esau reciprocates that love, absolutely, but that's as far as it goes.

He doesn't really care about any covenant blessings, he doesn't want the blessing of Abraham and Isaac, and all the patriarchs, he wants Isaac, his dad, to love him, to bless him, he wants to be the man that Isaac wants him to be.

It is entirely earthbound, and thus far, it is entirely understandable, and to every generation, though it be those to whom it is entirely familiar.

But it is not enough. And when he thinks he sees what will please his father, he acts on his own initiative to add, even to the pagan wives that he's got, another who is practically pagan as well, because she's vaguely related in blood, and he thinks that will be enough.

[7 : 54] He just doesn't get it. You have to pity Esau in a way, but at the same time, his murderous intention against his brother is genuine.

He intends to kill Jacob, and considers that he is right to do so. Thus far is Esau's response. He does not grasp the concept of eternity.

He does not grasp the relationship of his own family as the covenant line with the living God, Jehovah. He does not see that in the blessing of his father upon the firstborn, in inverted commas, that the covenant line is continued, and the blessings of God Almighty go with that blessing.

All he wants is his father's blessing, and because he has been deprived of that, he is ready to do murder, just as Cain did murder upon his younger brother.

These words of Esau, her elder son, were told to Rebekah, and she sent and called Jacob, her younger son, and said to him, Behold, thy brother Esau is touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.

[9 : 06] Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee thou to Lavan, my brother, to Haran, and tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away, until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done.

Then I will send, and fetch thee from hence, why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? Now here we have a couple of things here. First of all, Rebekah is saying, I don't want to lose you both.

She still loves Esau, even though he's not the favourite. I don't want to lose you both in one day. Why would you lose them both? Because if Esau kills Jacob, then the law of that time and culture, and indeed coming down from the Lord, codified later in the laws of Moses, was that the family or the nearest blood relative must kill the one who commits the murder.

For whoever sheds man's blood, but for him shall man's blood be shed. He himself will pay with his own life for the murder he has committed. So if Esau kills Jacob, the family will gather round, the clan will gather round and kill Esau.

And then she loses both her sons. And she knows this, and she doesn't want to lose them both. She wants to lose either of them. She wants to protect them both. We've got another instance of this in 2 Samuel 14, chapter 14, verse 4, when the woman of Tekoa speak to the king, that is the king David.

[10 : 30] She fell on her face to the ground and did obeisance and said, Help, O king. And the king said, I don't want equal the three. And she answered, I am indeed a widow woman and my husband is dead.

And thy handmaid had two sons. And they two strove together in the field and there was none to part them, but the one sm Hare■■■■ smoked the other and slew him. And behold, the whole family has risen against thy handmaid handmaid and they said deliver him that smote his brother that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew and we will destroy the air also now they're acting entirely in line with justice their son is a murderer killed his brother he's got to die but as she says we will destroy the air also so they shall quench my coal which is left and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth in other words if i lose both my sons who's going to look after me the wider family that's so concerned to kill my other son they're not going to look after me they're not going to provide for me my husband's dead i've got nobody to care for me i have my two sons one is dead they want to kill the other one i'll be left with nothing and i know it's the law and i know that it's justice but she's pleading with the king to intercede to overturn or to rule the law as it would stand the law is perfectly just but justice has to be tempered with mercy in this particular case which is in fact itself a kind of deceit against king david nevertheless the case is illustrated that she could lose everything if she loses one son at the hand of the other because justice demands the life of the killer and that's what rebecca means when she says well why should i be deprived of you both in one day not only will she lose her sons but there would be nobody to carry on her husband's name that's what the widow woman of techoa is concerned with and that is what rebecca is really referring to if jacob dies esau will die too and if esau dies she's got nothing she's got nobody it took 20 years before she could even conceive children and then she had twins and there was no more since and if she loses them both then she's got nothing and her husband will die as she thinks pretty soon and what is she to do why should i be deprived also of you both in one day so this is the the idea this is the reality she wants to get jacob as far away as he can safely go from esau so that he won't be killed but when she speaks to isaac she puts a different spin on it rebecca said to isaac i am weary of my life because of the daughters of heth now they were both were grieved by the by the the wives that esau had taken chapter 26 the last verse which were a grief of mind unto isaac and to rebecca i'm weary of my life because of the daughters of her if jacob take a wife of the daughters of her such as these which are the daughters of the land what good shall my life do me now we might think well you know it's none of our business to esau marries but remember the culture is different the men lived pretty much separately from the women and husbands had the right to visit their wives in their tent and the mother here says she sends for her son jacob and then when she she calls him verse 42 she sent and called jacob a younger son why didn't you speak to me she's going about her daily task because the men lived separately from the women in the camp and she is lumped in with the women of the family which means that she is living cheek by jowl with esau's pagan wives day after day they have no knowledge of the lord no love for the lord they don't have clearly much respect for her or for isaac she hates living with them she hates the fact that she is thrown together with them in the women's tents in her doing the the cooking

and the the tasks day by day that she has to oversee she is having to live right with them in her face every day it's not like unculturing time where families live quite separate from each other in their own homes or different parts of the country no they all be together but the men separate from the women and the only interaction there would be would be between those who were married couples so she is having to live with this reality now if jacob then takes a wife of the daughters of the land what good shall my life do to me i don't want to live any longer if that's going to be the case now this is a slight suffrage it's a slight spin as we know her main concern is just to get jacob away that's what she says go and live with my brother laban to haram time with him a few days until thy brother's fury turn away that's her objective you know any talk about a wife or anything like that that's there's no mention of that to jacob but this is the spoon that she puts on it for isaac she knows how isaac had a wife was sent for for him herself all those years ago he sent a servant she doesn't want it to send her servant she wants it to send jacob himself isaac has been fooled once before he's probably not so blind as he physically is at this stage he knows probably what the reality is but he acts on it isaac called jacob and blessed him and charged him and said thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of cana it's worth noting in passing that rebecca's plan here which is a response to what she herself initiated we could perhaps say she's beginning to turn it around slightly verse 45 until thy brother's anger turn away and he forget that which thou has done to him what you did to him jacob you know forget the fact that i put you up to it and i made it all happen and i arranged it all and i set you up for it but you know you did it to it maybe she's covering herself a wee bit but the point is we never actually hear of rebecca again after this instance references made to her jacob arrives at laban's house and he is described as rebecca's son she's mentioned there when deborah rebecca's nurse dies there's mention of rebecca there as deborah rebecca's nurse but rebecca herself does not appear in the story again she never does send for jacob to call him home maybe she dies before then maybe it's just that esau's anger never does diminish and he's always still waiting for jacob to come back so that he can kill him the fact of the matter is that is um chapter uh 31 tells us in verse 38 that jacob is in fact away for 20 years before he comes back it's not just a few days it's 20 years he's away for and esau still remembers what is being done so rebecca disappears from the story after this this is her last act to send jacob away for safety under the guise of seeking a wife of the covenant line belonging to their family that's what she does this is her response this is the cleanup operation if you like but it's the last thing she does if jacob take a wife of the daughters of heth such as these which are the daughters of the land what good shall my life do me i might as well be dead but as far as the narrative is concerned these are the last words she speaks and after that she doesn't appear at all we've had esau's response to the situation we've had rebecca's response to the situation now we have isaac's response mentioned how isaac had perhaps been a wee bit guilty of wanting a blessing to go on

esau even though he knew that esau had sold his birthright but now isaac acts the part of the head of the family he calls jacob he says to him arise go to padan to the house of bethiel thy mother's father take thee a wife from this or the daughters of laban thy mother's brother and god almighty bless thee now this is the first indication that isaac is bestowing the blessing of jehovah on jacob if you go back to the blessing that he gives him in chapter 27 when he thinks it's esau we see in verse 27 see the smell of my son it says the smell of a field which the lord hath blessed therefore god give thee of the Jew of heaven and the fatness of the earth and plenty of corn and wine let people serve thee and nations bow down to thee the lord over thy brethren let thy mother's sons bow down to thee cursed be everyone that cursed thee and blessed be he that blessed thee it's very earthbound and the opening part of it is not that different from the blessing he gives esau just turned around slightly if you look and compare it with verses 39 and 40. so it's a very earthbound blessing before but now as he sends him away now it's as though he is finally acknowledging this is the recipient of the covenant line the covenant blessing god almighty bless thee first mention of god first mention of his blessing god almighty bless thee and make thee fruitful and multiply thee that thou mayest be a multitude of people and give thee the blessing of abraham to thee and to thy seed with thee that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger which god gave unto abel this is completely different to the previous chapter this is now conveying the blessing the inheritance the heritage of the covenant line it is god's blessing that is isaac is bestowing now upon jacob it is an acknowledgement that the game has changed that not only has the birthright been bought and sold but that the one who bought it is now the recipient of his father's blessing perhaps deceitfully but now he is the recipient of god's blessing ministered through his father openly isaac is acknowledging that things have changed that god is to be the god not merely of abraham and isaac but abraham and isaac and jacob and that trilogy is always mentioned together notice that we don't we don't usually we don't ever have in scripture mention of uh of harry's not the god of abraham but of terra and of shem and and all these others going all the way back they don't they don't enumerate every instance on the genealogy it's abraham isaac and jacob it doesn't then go into the god of judah and joseph and dan and levi and jacob's sons but it's those three who are taken as being the core the hub of the israelite nation that follows so the blessing of god almighty the blessing of abraham to thee and to thy seed with thee that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger which god gave unto abraham jacob is now in a completely different position and isaac sent away jacob and he went to padan and adam to laban son of bethuel the syrian the brother of rebecca jacob and eeson's mother so this now is isaac's response isaac has changed isaac recognizes the reality and he has submitted at last to the lord now we don't really hear much about isaac again except that when jacob comes back from his exile and he comes back at the end of chapter 35 verse 27 jacob came unto isaac his father unto

manra to the city of arba which is hebron where abraham and isaac sojourned and the days of isaac were 104 store years and isaac gave up the ghost and died and was gathered to his people being old and full of days and his sons esau and jacob buried him but you don't hear anything about what isaac does in the meantime so these next 20 25 years are silent as far as isaac is concerned but that doesn't matter because by then he has done what he came onto this earth to do he has inherited the covenant blessing he has raised up the next generation and he has bestowed the blessing on the next recipient not the one he wanted not the one he expected not the one he thought but he has finally obeyed the lord and conveyed the blessing on that is what he came to do so even though yes he spared for many years and though yes he dies in a good old age full of days he has done what he came to do and the rest is just a bonus that is then isaac's response so we've had esau's response we've had rebecca's response we've had isaac's response we could say that the next section then is concerning jacob's response but i think before we go on to jacob's response there's somebody else more important here jacob begins his journey then we have god's response god's response to what has happened to the circumstances that have arisen we don't read anywhere that god approves how jacob deceived his brother with the mess of potage to get his birthright or that god approves of the methods that rebecca and jacob used on old isaac we don't read that god approves of isaac's preference for esau we don't read that god condemns esau for the choices he made esau just isn't concerned with god and god in one sense isn't concerned with esau esau has chosen his lot and it is earthbound and god in his mercy gives him exactly what he wants but for jacob god has something else in store and as jacob obeys his father and begins his journey he alighted upon a certain place and tannied there all night because the sun is set took up the stones of the place put them from his pillows and lay down in that place to sleep now when men sleep they are vulnerable they are helpless and i would suggest to you it is no accident that it is when jacob is not only far from home not only alone but at his most vulnerable he is asleep he is completely helpless that god comes to him then now it is not for nothing that in our own particular tradition of the church and as we would see it according to the scripture when we uh bestow upon little children the sacrament of baptism they receive it in infancy usually in infancy when they themselves are helpless when they cannot do anything to merit it good or evil when they cannot have achieved anything or done anything or professed anything it is a state of complete helplessness that they passively receive the sign and seal of the covenant of grace and here jacob now about to be the recipient of god's message to him is at his most helpless yes he's a grown man but he is effectively a fugitive he's a runaway he is alone he is in a strange place it's night and he's asleep anyone who wants could come and creep up with him and kill him or rob him or do anything to him but instead he meets not with robbers and thieves and bandits and strangers he meets with god at his most vulnerable and that his most helpless he lay down in that place to sleep

[26 : 56] and he dreamed now this dream is not an accident it's not just his own thoughts 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 now when we say a ladder we tend to think in terms you know like a painter's ladder only wide enough for one person to go up and down and so on even if it's a big wide ladder then we sort of struggle to go up and down it at the same time think more in terms of a staircase think of a stairway to heaven and back down again the angels of god are coming up they're going down there is constant intercourse between heaven and earth this is what jacob sees the angels of god ascending up from earth to heaven and descending coming down with messages and going back up with messages remember the word angel means messenger so there's this constant interaction between heaven and earth and the top of it reached to heaven this stairway to heaven and behold the lord stood above it doesn't say that jacob saw god or what he looked like or anything he was just conscious in his dream and we all know that in dreams you can be conscious of something that you can't necessarily specify or you can know that things are the case in a dream but things are happening in a dream even if you can't see clearly in your dream you know a certain second a certain person to be there or whatever and the lord stood above it the lord stood above it and said i am the lord god of abraham my father and the god of isaac the land when on thou liest to thee will i give it to thy seed thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth 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 now there is the key blessing this is not coming from isaac this is coming direct from the lord and he is giving it to jacob just as he gave it to abraham in chapter 12 at verse 3 and gave it to isaac in chapter 26 uh at verse uh verse 4 i think it is uh or 14 when the lord blesses him very funny it's it's at verse 4 and these shall all the nations of the earth be blessed so he has given it to abraham he's given it to isaac now he's giving it to jacob what is key about this blessing is it is the messianic blessing it is the statement that through the descendants of abraham isaac and jacob the messiah will come and the messiah will be the means of bringing blessing to all the families of the earth not just to his immediate descendants not just to jacob's physical descendants or abraham's descendants but all the families of the earth will be blessed this means it's not a bloodline thing it's not a blood tie it's not a nationality thing it's not a racial thing it's something which will transcend all of these things and which will bring a spiritual blessing to all the nations of the earth we now know with hindsight that that is the messiah jesus which is being spoken of in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed and behold and this goes hand in hand with the covenant blessing i am with thee and will keep thee in all places where 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 now you've got to understand this word until it doesn't mean well once i've done it that's it and then you're on your own jacob after that i'm finished with you i've done what i came to do off you go you're on your own it doesn't mean that there comes a time when i will leave you it means that i will be continually with you and i'll carry on being with you and i'll fulfill

everything that i have said and you will know that i'm with you right through until it has all come to pass and god never leaves or forsakes his children so the until is a guarantee of fulfillment it is not a statement of limitation he's not saying and when that time is up then you're on your own after that but rather i will carry on with you right through to all that will befall until i have done that which i have spoken to thee of you will see it fulfilled esau's response rebecca's response isaac's response god's response god's response to jacob who if ever there was a character from whom we might recoil and say well why on earth would god choose to bless this one this deceiver this twister this chancer this one chosen of the lord the lord chooses all kinds to work through and that includes the likes of you and me one reason also that we know that jacob is um having a messianic dream or blessing here is because some of you may remember that what we read of in verse 12 a ladder set up on the earth the top of it reached to heaven behold the angels of god ascending and descending on it this is a vision of the messiah himself the means by which heaven is joined to earth and the communication between heaven and earth is guaranteed the messengers of god the angels going up and down on the ladder the uniting of heaven to earth this is a work that the messiah jesus accomplishes how do we know that because he himself says so he says to nathanael in john chapter 1 verse 50 because i said to thee i saw thee under the big tree believe this thou shalt see greater things than these and here we go verse 51 of john chapter 1 he said to him verily verily i say unto you hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of god ascending and descending upon the son of man now how can angels go up and down on top of a person how can we climb up to heaven and come back down on a person jesus is making reference to this vision that jacob has here in chapter 28 and just as the ladder so jacob's ladder is traditionally referred to is that um that uniting of heaven to earth that opening of the channels between heaven and earth so jesus himself is the means by which god's word is brought to man and man's prayers are carried up to god he is the one who bridges the divide he is the one that brings heaven down to earth and raises mankind up to heaven upon him the angels ascend and descend because he is the way as he says himself he is the staircase to heaven he is the bridge which unites the two it is no accident that he quotes that he's not just saying and here's a little vision for you to think about nathaniel and all the rest of you you'll see the angels climbing up over me to get to heaven and coming but no he is referring to jacob's ladder he's referring to this vision that jacob has uniting heaven to earth you will see the angels ascending and descending upon the son of man it is a vision of the messiah and what he has come to do to bring heaven to earth to unite man's communication to god and vice versa and that bridging of the divide one can only do who is both of the heaven and of the earth who is both god and man only god and only man in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed and i will be with you god's response to the situation

what then is jacob's response to all that happens well first of all it is fear naturally enough he awaked out of his sleep and said surely the lord is in this place and i knew it not that might seem to us like a surprising thing to say we think of god as filling the heavens and the earth jacob probably in his culture and time frame thought of god as worship within a limited geographical area people tended to think of gods as inhabiting particular locations a god of this particular hill or a god of this particular lake or a god of this particular rock or a god of this particular bay or whatever it happened to be there was little local gods all over the place and he perhaps had thought that that the lord with jehovah was the god of the place where his father isaac dwelt or at the very least that where isaac and the camp moved the worship of god moved with them but that god confined himself to where his people were and worshipped him it is a shock to jacob to recognize that the lord might operate out with such constraints in other words that the lord is not confined by anything that man can do the lord is in this place and i knew it not he is even when i have gone out from my father and from the place where jehovah is worship god is still there and we go from psalm 139 no if i go to the the ends of the heaven thou art there if i make my bed in hell behold thou art there i take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea even there shall thy hand fold me thy right hand shall lead me there is nowhere that we can go that will escape the presence of the sight of the lord it is true yes that in hell we will be deprived of the comfortable presence of the lord but that is because the lord has withdrawn his blessing and his presence from that place it's not because he is somehow forbidden to go there or there's a no-go area where god cannot enter god has the perfect power to storm the gates of hell if he so chose to do but he has chosen to withdraw his comfortable presence from there he still sees and knows all that takes place he's still in ultimate oversight of heaven and hell and the earth and all things but he has withdrawn his blessing he's withdrawn his comfortable presence from hell that is why it is such a hell as it is but there's nowhere god cannot go nowhere he cannot be surely the lord is in this place and i knew it not now this should be good news for us it should be good news for those who think that god has nothing to do with them should be no good news for those who think well if i'm a good church going person or if i were like i can't be so and so or if i were like mr so and so that they are devout and they're good and they're godly i can see how god is in their lives but he's not going to be in my life he's not going to be where i am it doesn't matter where you go god is only a breath a prayer away he is there seeing you wherever you are he has overseen all the activities and words and deeds of your life there is nothing you have done he doesn't know about there's nothing you've said that he hasn't heard there's nothing you've thought that he hasn't known about wherever you go you will find the lord is in this place whether you knew it or not he is there to be called upon there to be received 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 this is the gate of heaven and it's not that god is something to be recoiled from it's just that if you're in the presence of the divine then the natural response

is fearfulness is consciousness of one's own filthiness one's own unworthiness this is none other but the house of god this is the gate of heaven you probably thought this is the opening that i've seen the vision of this is where they ascend and descend this is where the lord has appeared jacob rose up early in the morning so his awakening is still at night still in the dark and he's terrified he rose up early in the morning took the stone that he had put for his pillows and set it up for a pillar poured oil up on the top of it he called the name of that place beth-el which in the hebrew means house of god beth meaning us I the genetic term for god but the name of that city was called luz at the first couple of things this shows to us first of all as he sets up the pillar in the morning he wants to commemorate the place where he has encountered god probably wasn't a huge big megalith you know standing stone like a calanish or whatever just a great big boulder and he sets it up on its end or whatever and he pours oil on it this means that however much he may be traveling with he's got oil with him oil it would be used for anointing or for perhaps freshening up with or whatever but there wouldn't be much of it and it would be an extremely precious commodity oil was probably the most precious commodity he had with him and he wouldn't have a huge amount but he takes it what he has and he anoints the pillar with it in order to symbolize the sacred nature not of the stone but of his encounter with god he poured oil up on the top of it he's got oil with it he doesn't have much he won't have much but what he's got he uses it to sanctify the memory of this encounter and he called the name of that place beth-el house of god but the name of that city was called laz of the first now that this means that he was obviously lying down to sleep outside of a particular walled village or town called a city of it and walls called laz who would inhabit the town of lust well we don't know but we know they would be pagans we know that they would worship false gods they wouldn't be the people who worship the god of abraham and isaac they would be heathens they'd be idolaters they'd be pigs whenever we encounter the lord whenever we meet with him and whenever he calls us to a new journey or or a commitment or whatever it is that he calls us for it will always be in the midst of an unbelieving world it will always be in the midst of pagans and heathenism which has got there first the name of that city was called laz at the first but after jacob encounters god there it becomes beth-el and beth-el is a name that recurs again and again throughout the scriptures in the old and new testament the house of god the place where jacob encountered jehovah the name laz fades away the pagan implications fade away but the fact of the matter is when this one fugitive encounters the living god the effect of that encounter outlasts all the idolatries of the world what the lord calls you to do where the lord meets with you it will be where paganism flourishes just now you will always be surrounded by heathenism and unbelief and idolatry in this world you're not going to be able to go away to some blessed desert island where there's no such temptations or difficulties and there you can just come in with the lord in sweet isolation

the lord is not going to call you to that he's going to call you to follow him in the midst of this heathen unbelieving generation laz is right there in your face full of heathens but beth-el is right there opening heaven before your face with the presence of god which are you going to follow jacob has already made his choice he's not bedding down inside the walls of laz he's outside with the stone for his pillows encountering god anointing it with such little oil as he has this is the house of god this is the gate of heaven the house of god is going to be planted in the midst of unbelief and heathenism that was true for jacob it is true for us and finally we have this jacob bowed a vow saying if god will be with me and will keep me in this way that i will go and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on so that i come again to my father's house in peace then shall the lord be my god and this stone which i have sent for a pillar shall be god's house beth-el and of all that thou shalt give me i will surely give the tenth unto thee a couple of points here as we finish first of all just as we had to look briefly at the word until there back again in verse 15 so we have to recognize that this word if is not a conditional it is rather a statement of fact it's more like as god will be with me or since god will be with me and will keep me he's promised to do it so it's not available what god has said he's going to do is not open to question it's not a if maybe he will maybe he won't it's rather since he has stated this fact if god will be with me since that's going to be the case and the way that i will do bring me back so i come again to my father's house in peace then shall the lord be my god and it's not a condition well i'll wait and see if he does it and then maybe i'll commit to him after it no it's a sense because god will be with me he likewise will be my god now it's it's not a case that well i'll choose him amongst all these other ones he already knows about the lord from his father isaac from his grandfather abraham he knows that this is the god they worshipped but he himself now is resolving to commit to the living god jehovah as his personal god his personal savior now we're familiar with that setup aren't we i mean people grow up in a comparatively shall we say christian in inverted commas background maybe members of their family of believers maybe they're adherents but not professing members of christ's church they're surrounded by the influence of the gospel but they themselves have not committed to it so they haven't taken christ as their savior they haven't acknowledged him as their god yet yes they may outwardly worship and they may they may run shoulders with those who do profess him receive christ but he's not their savior in the way that he is other people and this is what jacob is committing to here since god has undertaken this for me then that shall the lord be my god in other words i believe that he's going to do these things it's going to be too late after we've waited all the years to see if god will bless me and see if he'll bring me back in peace and see if this will happen say okay fair enough now i'll believe in you no he has to make this commitment to god now he has to commit to the lord at the beginning not at the end so that he has the lord with him as his god through all the adventures and difficulties and problems that will arise this word if is not a variable it's not a question mark it's a because as since this is the case then shall the lord be my god and this god which he will

[47 : 15] worship and serve it's not a one-off commitment 50 years ago and that's me now so i don't have to think about it now in promising to give the lord a tenth of everything jacob is anticipating that his situation will improve you know he says later on i crossed this river jacob here with my staff across the jordan with my staff and now the lord has made me two bands he's divided up his family his flocks and his herds into two groups the lord has blessed him with children with men's servants with maid servants with cattle and sheep and so on but what he's saying is that if i get 10 cattle one of them will be the lord's if i get 30 sheep three of them will be given to the lord if i get a hundred shekels 10 of them will be the lord's and everything that he receives he will siphon off a portion to give to the lord because this is an ongoing living relationship that is what he is committing to not a once-off that's it done and dusted now i can get on with the rest of my life this is an ongoing relationship as he is blessed so he will give all that he receives he will give the tithe back to the lord this is indicative of a living relationship with a living god we've had esau's response rebecca's response isaac's response god's response to jacob and now at last we have jacob's response to god and this is where we live and this is the response that we ourselves are called you you you you you you you