

**Session 2 (December 9, 2018)**  
**Genesis 27:41-28:22 – Not Alone**

**Theme:** God gives purpose.

**Introduction**

Sometimes in life, crises come. In those moments, God's presence can be felt in new and significant ways. In Genesis 28, Jacob experiences the presence of God in a powerful way. What would be the result?

**Purpose Revealed** (Gen. 28:10-15). To understand fully what is taking place in our focal passage, Gen. 28:10-22, one must remember the immediate context. Jacob is in the midst of a journey. The purpose of this journey is two-fold: to flee from his brother Esau, who has determined to kill him (Gen. 27:41-46) and, to find a wife (Gen. 28:1-9). Jacob's destination is Haran (Gen. 27:43). Haran was the city mentioned at the end of Gen. 11 where Terah, Abram and Sarai, and Lot settled. Haran is also the home of Jacob's mother, Rebekah. This is the primary reason that Jacob is going there.

As he journeyed, Jacob came to an area where he needed to rest. In this place, something unexpected happened: he met God (Gen. 28:16). As Jacob dreamed, he saw a stairway that reached up to the sky. On the stairway, angels were ascending and descending. Then, the text explains that "The Lord was standing there beside him . . ." (Gen. 28:13). The Hebrew name used to describe God here is the most holy name used for God in the Old Testament. God appears to Jacob and makes him a promise that includes three parts: 1) He tells Jacob that He will give him and his descendants the land where he is lying (Gen. 28:13); 2) God explains that Jacob's descendants "will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out toward the west, the east, the north, and the south;" and, 3) the people of the earth will be blessed by Jacob and his family (Gen. 28:14). After all that he had been through recently, it must have meant something for Jacob to hear the voice of God.

**Presence Realized** (Gen. 28:16-19). Not only did God make a promise to Jacob, He also affirmed that promise (Gen. 28:15). When Jacob woke up, he acknowledged that God's presence was in that place (Gen. 28:16). This realization prompted two responses. First, Jacob is described as being afraid. Having known the presence of God in such a clear way certainly had an impact on him. The Hebrew word translated "afraid" here is the word that can mean "fear" or "awe." The second response was one of worship. The recognition of God's presence in this place caused Jacob to set up a memorial to honor this fact. Jacob set up the stone that he slept on and poured oil on it. In addition to this, Jacob named the place Bethel. This Hebrew word means the house of God.

**Commitment Made** (Gen. 28:20-22). God had made Jacob a promise. What would be Jacob's response? Based on God's promise, Jacob makes a commitment of his own. Jacob's commitment is expressed in two statements. In the first statement, Jacob affirmed his dedication to God (Gen. 28:20-21). In the second statement, Jacob committed to returning to God a tenth of what God gave him (Gen. 28:22).

## **Conclusion**

Jacob's experience with the Lord provides a helpful example for modern believers as we walk with Him. When we meet the Lord and experience His presence, we are led to make fresh commitments to Him. Thank God for His presence and His promises.