



Summer 2017 – **Genesis 28: a rock, a hard place, a stairway and a gateway ... Part Two**
(14 May 2017, Paul Langham)

Reading: Genesis 28:1a, 3-5, 10-19 (NIV UK)

¹ So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. ... ³ May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. ⁴ May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham.' ⁵ Then Isaac sent Jacob on his way, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, who was the mother of Jacob and Esau. ...

¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. ¹¹ 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. ¹² He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ There above it stood the Lord, and he said: 'I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. ¹⁴ Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. ¹⁵ I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.'

¹⁶ When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.' ¹⁷ He was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.'

¹⁸ Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. ¹⁹ He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz.

²⁰ Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear ²¹ so that I return safely to my father's household, then the Lord will be my God ²² and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.'

Introduction – the type of preaching ...

1 Jacob's Journey

v. 10 He left a specific place (Beersheba) ... he's going to a specific place (Haran) ... stops along the way at 'a certain place' (any old place) ... God speaks a specific word ... Jacob continues on his way

What about us?

Where are we going? Do we have a specific destination in life? A purpose for which we are living?

Last week – are you sitting under a Word from the Lord or sitting on a Word from the Lord? Big difference ...

Take some time now to reflect on this ...

2 The setting of the sun

v. 11 There is a natural rhythm to the things of life

Same is true of church

So often we preach resurrection on Sunday, and practice resuscitation during the week ...

The ending of Monday Fellowship ...

What about you?

Take some time now to reflect on this ...

3 Gateway

Jacob arrives at this 'certain place' unaware that he is accompanied

He leaves it aware that he is accompanied

Not a bad definition of conversion

A meeting place

Under the New Covenant, we know that Jesus is the Gate (John 10); he is the point of meeting. We want people who do not know that they are accompanied, to become aware of that ...

- Emmanuel Hospice in Romania
- Falcon Camps in Wales
- Whole point of 'Thy Kingdom Come'

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement, which invites Christians around the world to pray between Ascension and Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus Christ. What started out as an invitation from the Archbishops' of Canterbury and York in 2016 to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer. The hope is that:

- people will commit to pray with God's world-wide family – as a church, individually or in other groups;
- churches will hold prayer events, such as 24-7 prayer, prayer stations and prayer walks, across the UK and in other parts of the world;
- people will be empowered through prayer by the Holy Spirit, finding new confidence to be witnesses for Jesus Christ.

Here at Christ Church, we are responding to this call in the following ways

Daily Prayer in Jacob's Well (or wherever you are – details overleaf) – **7.00 am, 12 noon, 7.00 pm**

From 25 May to 3 June, we will be praying three times a day – each half hour will focus on a different sphere of life or church outreach. Most days, there will be someone in Jacob's Well at these times – however, we know that many people will be away or otherwise unable to come to Jacob's Well during this time: please still answer the call to prayer wherever you are.

Pray

- for specific individuals, asking the Holy Spirit to supply the names (Zacchaeus)
- for our own witness ...

Each day, we will be sending out a 'Daniel's Windows' bible reflection to help us focus

Wednesday 24 May – We suggest that it would be good for us all to fast in some way on this day, as we prepare to pray for family, friends, neighbours and colleagues to come to know Jesus Christ.

Thursday 25 May (Ascension Day) – the Launch

7.00 am Launch – Prayer Breakfast focusing on politics and the General Election

7.00 pm Prayer Walking around Clifton

[small groups meeting during this week are encouraged to prayer walk their own communities]

Sunday 28 May – Sunrise Prayer over the City / Half Night of Prayer

5.00 am Sunrise Prayer over the City

8.00 am Communion at the 8

10.00 am Prayer Sunday Gathering at the 10

5.00 pm the 5 – leading into a half night of continuous prayer and worship til 11.00 pm

Sunday 4 June (Pentecost) – the Close

the 10: A focus on evangelism and further prayer for our witness and for people to come to faith

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this ... he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight ... Then they returned to Jerusalem ... and were constantly devoting themselves to prayer ... When the day of Pentecost had come they were all together in one place ... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit ... and that day about three thousand persons were added. (Acts 1 & 2)

In praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' we all commit to playing our part in the renewal of the nations and the transformation of communities (Archbishop Justin Welby)

4 Living in the Power of the Prophetic

Prophetic words over Bristol – explain background: a monthly gathering of church leaders from every shade and stripe, committed to honour one another and seek the Kingdom of God

DECLARATIONS FOR BRISTOL

We declare as Church Leaders in Bristol that we will recognise and affirm each other’s calling and allow the Holy Spirit’s equipping and releasing for works of service.

So therefore as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, we will clothe ourselves with purity, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. We will bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances we may have against each other and over all these virtues we will put on love, the bond of perfection.

We declare our intent to bring You joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose, doing nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility considering others better than ourselves.

According to Colossians 3 we declare that there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

We declare we will work for unity and justice in this City and seek reconciliation and equity across all current divides

The church in the Bristol region will tell the good news of Jesus, will have a voice in the market-place and will reach out to the un-churched, young and old, rich and poor.

We proclaim that Jesus is Lord in Bristol.

So we declare there is One Lord of One Church in One United City.

We declare:

Bristol, you are a city of Hope and Love

Bristol, you are a City of Faith

Bristol, you are a City of Healing

Bristol, you are a City of Reconciliation

Bristol, you are a City of Life and Freedom

Bristol, you are a City of Sanctuary

Bristol, you are a City of Welcome

Bristol, you are a City of Creativity

Bristol, you are a City of Resource

Bristol, you are a City of Pioneers

Bristol, you are a City of Mission

Paul Langham, May 2017