Genesis 28:14c-15 In you and in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed. 15Now, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back again into this land. Indeed, I will not leave you, until I have done what I have promised to you.”

Isn’t this an awesome text? But I have a feeling that why I think it is awesome and why you think it is awesome might be two different things. Why do I say that?

Because like most people you are probably all caught up in the dream, in thinking about and envisioning that stairway that reaches to heaven or in trying to see with your mind the angels, the numerous angels that dream shows ascending and descending on that stairway. Some of you might simply be caught up in the fact that at the top of those stairs stood the Lord God himself. How awesome that dream must have been. How inspiring to see these things, to see what surely must have been the majesty and perfection of God shining forth in this spectacular view of this stairway to heaven.

But if your focus is only on that stairway, in other words, only on what is seen then you have missed a whole bunch of awe. Don’t get me wrong, this dream is awesome. It was meant to be awesome. It was meant to convey the message of the power, majesty and control of God in this world. It was meant to help us grasp that everything going on in this world is done exactly the way God wants it done because that’s what those angels are up to. They are carrying out the will and purpose of God in everything for this world. And that is awesome, but it is not the most awesome thing of this dream of Jacob’s.

The most awesome thing is what the Lord God says. The most awesome thing is the Word of God, the Word of God that grants promises and blessings galore. And if you pay attention carefully you will realize that those promises and blessing are not just given to Jacob, those promises and blessings are even extended to us! We have a stake in this dream, because we are included in the Words and promises that God gives. Our theme for today will be: **THE PROMISES OF GOD.**

Now to grasp the importance of these promises it is best if we start out by first grasping what Jacob is doing out in the middle of nowhere. What has happened is that Jacob and his mother plotted to deceive Isaac, his father, concerning the blessing Isaac wanted to give to Esau. God wanted the blessing given to Jacob, but Isaac wasn’t listening. So Rebekah and Jacob took matters into their own hands. They should have trusted God to take care of it. Isaac should have been listening to God but wasn’t. Turmoil and strife, that’s what was going on in this family. And now this deception, this deceitfully getting the blessing causes even more turmoil and strife.

What kind of strife, you might ask. Well, Esau is filled with hatred for his brother and is threatening to kill him over this. So under the pretense that Jacob should not take a wife from the Canaanites as did Esau, Jacob is sent on a journey to Paddan Aram, the home of his ancestors. Paddan Aram is some 500 miles away. Jacob is sent on this trip. All indications are that Jacob is sent alone!

Mind you, Jacob is the son of a very wealthy man and yet it seems that Jacob is sent away on his own. No servants, no attendants are with him. I would imagine he has at least one pack animal with him that is carrying some supplies, but let it sink in, that Jacob is sent out alone. Get the feeling Daddy Isaac is not happy with him? Makes you wonder all the more about what is going on.

And then, grasp that Jacob is traveling quickly. Our understanding as to where the home of Isaac was and where this place of Bethel is, you are probably about two or three days out. Two or Three days out. And what you find is a Jacob so tired, so exhausted, so frazzled that he doesn’t take time to make camp or to properly bed himself down. He simply takes a stone as a pillow and collapses, in exhaustion, to sleep. All of this points to a young man under duress and stress, maybe a young man who thinks his brother is trailing him to kill him! Take all of this and contemplate it to get the full picture of the stress and duress Jacob is carrying.

That is when God determines to give a hand. Mind you, I don’t think Jacob is here by chance. I think God has been directing things all along. Did you know that Bethel is the very place where Abraham, his grandfather also received a vision and blessing of God, actually, the same kind of blessing that Jacob gets. God is out to encourage, uplift and put at ease the distraught heart of this soul. God does that by the promises and blessings that this dream gives to Jacob. Let’s look at those promises closer.

Please note that I like to divide these promises up into various parts. But first grasp the significance of the opening words of the Lord. He says, **“I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac.”** These words remind Jacob he is dealing with the true God, the only God there is. This is the God he had heard about. Heard about from Grandpa. Heard about from Dad. And now, Jacob himself is being blessed with a vision, a dream from God too! The impact is that this young man is lead to grasp all the more the truth and wonder of God. This God is not made up. This God was not a figment of his ancestor’s imagination. God is real. God is clearly awesome and powerful as the dream reveals. And this God is speaking to him, giving him promises and blessings just as he had his ancestors. What a blessing, just this appearance and these words alone bring to Jacob.

Then comes the first part of the promise. God says, **“The land on which you are lying, I give to you and your descendants. Your descendants will 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.”**

Dear people, this is personal blessing. First, Jacob is told that where he is lying will one day be the home of his descendants. Let that sink in. He is on the run. He is all alone. He fears for his life. God tells him he is going to have descendants. Do you get it? He is going to live. He is going to have children and children’s children. He is told his descendants will be like the dust and will spread out on this land everywhere. God’s first blessing simply assures Jacob of life and Jacob of many blessings and children to come. Now who wouldn’t be uplifted by such a promise and blessing from God!

There is more. God says, **“In you and in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed.”** Here is the heart of everything Jacob will be. He will be the carrier of the promise of the seed. This seed promise is first given to Eve, then carried to Abraham and Isaac. It is the promise of a Savior to come. The promise of one who will defeat and break the power of the devil and the force of sin the devil brought to this world by his deception of Adam and Eve. In these words Jacob grasps the promises of salvation and eternal life. That’s what this seed to come was all about. Yes, the word seed is singular. It is referring to one, one descendant of Abraham, Isaac and now Jacob who will bring a vast blessing upon all the earth. Mark that, “all the earth!”

Dear people, this is spiritual blessing, the blessing of the Savior. Here is the promise of Jesus and what he will do. Here is the one who will atone for sin, break and defeat sin, death and the devil. Here is the One who will clothe us with righteousness and grant us the status as “children of God.” Here is the heart and core of all that the Scripture is about: the salvation of mankind from the weight and destruction of sin. God promising to save. God promising the Savior who will bless with eternal life.

There is more. God says, **“Now, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back again to this land. Indeed, I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised to you.”**

Here is what I consider God’s second blessing for all. Now, first, this blessing applies to Jacob. God is going to be with him. God says he is going to watch over him wherever he goes. Just think of how Jacob’s life will unfold. He will find his relatives and although these relatives work to cheat and steal from Jacob, they just can’t get the upper hand. Jacob will marry sisters, the first by fraud and the second by bargain. Jacob will come away with flocks galore. Even though Laban will change the contract again and again, every time Laban does that, God intervenes and Jacob is blessed. Didn’t matter if it was spotted and speckled sheep or solid colored ones that was to be Jacob’s pay, God saw to it that Jacob became a wealthy and influential man. There is no doubt that God had been and was watching over the life of Jacob.

But I also believe these promises extend to us and I do so because you find the very same type of promises extended to us in Christ Jesus our Savior. Remember Jesus is the seed! Do you know those promises?

Did not Jesus say to his disciple and thus to all who believe: **And surely I am with you always to the end of the age.”** And seriously, as you look at your life, are you going to try and tell me God has not been with you? Oh, it might be true, that at times WE have abandoned and turned from the Lord but in truth, our Savior has never abandoned or left us. In grace and love he works to restore us and renew a right spirit in our hearts. Jesus persistently calls us through his gospel love to be those who trust and believe in Him. No doubt, Jesus is with us.

Are we not promised that God will take care of us? God declares to us in Romans 8, **“We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose.”** Those words are reminding us that God is with us, watching over us and that God will make everything serve for our good, our eternal good. Or think of what we hear about in 2 Corinthians 4: **“We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; perplexed, yet not despairing; persecuted, yet not forsaken; struck down, yet not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of our Lord Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”** These words and many more tell us how God takes care of us always for our eternal good. Seriously, just think of what you heard in last week’s Epistle reading: **“If God is for us, who can be against us?”** We are so blessed as the children of God and heirs of eternal life.

And please note that this section ended with the promise that God would fulfill all that he has promised. Again what do we hear and learn as the children of God? Ephesians 1 says to us, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. He did this when he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ. He did this in accordance with the good purpose of his will, and for the praise of his glorious grace, which he has graciously given us in the one he loves.”** This section goes on and reminds us of the inheritance of eternal life that we have in Jesus. If you would, dear people, that is the spiritual side of God’s promise to deliver to the “land of promise.” And God will see to it that we get there because of his great love for us.

Yep, the dream of a stairway to heaven is pretty awesome, but the promises that accompany that dream both for Jacob and for us is absolutely more awesome in every way. And it has all come true. True in our Savior Jesus. True because we have an eternal Savior given by the promise of God. God always keeps his word of promise. God did for Jacob and he will for us. Amen.