

Jacob's POV

Look at this place – full of stalls and beggars. There's the altar, the priest and the people all expecting their miracle, their special experience. It was a bit different then. My gosh it was different.

I was running, running for my life. My elder brother Esau, Esau the hunter, Esau my father's favourite, he'd sold me his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup. Talk about getting to a man through the stomach! But he was always the same; if he was hungry, he was starving... give me some of that he said – certainly... what will you pay? I'd replied. Me, the cunning younger brother that I'd always been. Always looking to assert my brain over his brawn. So he sold it to me.

Then my mother, Rebecca, always on my side, suggested we tricked my half blind father, Isaac, and so I got the blessing too... no wonder Esau was angry. No wonder he threatened to kill me. So I ran. Ran for my life, back to Rebecca's home, to her brother, Laban.

I got here about nightfall on the first day. My head was spinning, I was terrified of what Esau might do, how he might track me and hunt me down as I'd seen him do with wolves, deer and other animals.

I came here. But here was nowhere in particular. Just a clearing, high up, where I lay down to sleep. I found a flat stone to use as a pillow, and watched the stars, as I slipped into sleep. But what a dream I had.

I dreamed I saw a stairway, a stairway into heaven. Not a ladder, but a ramp, with angels going up and down, and at the top was the very doorway between earth and heaven. Behind the doorway was a light – and the light came down, and stood next to me.

'I am the Lord' I heard, as I lay paralysed with fear and awe.

And the Lord promised to be with me, to bless me and my family, and that he would bring me back, back home, eventually.

So I woke up. The place was just like any other clearing in the scrub, but I knew the lord was there. So, I built an altar, and named the clearing Beth-El, the Lord is here.

Here we are today, thousands of pilgrims looking for the Lord. But he finds you, and he's not here anymore than he's anywhere else.

Whatever else I took from that dream, it was that the Lord is with me. Beth-El is wherever I am. I just have to remember the Lord is here. Always.

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