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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2191 ~ Jacob Leaves Home.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

When Jacob was in his early 40s, his father Isaac told him not to take a wife from among the local Canaanite people but instead, to travel back to his mother Rebekah's family in Haran, to take a wife for himself from the daughters of Laban, who was Rebekah's brother. Isaac gave Jacob a parting blessing which was very similar to the one given to Abraham – the promise of fruitfulness and many descendants together with a promise of the land.

Jacob set out immediately on foot to travel the long distance. He also had an ulterior motive for leaving so quickly – his older brother Esau wanted to kill him for stealing his father's blessing, which was normally given to the firstborn son. So Jacob was happy to follow his father's instructions and visit Laban such a long way away from where Jacob's family lived in Be-er-sheba, in the south of Canaan.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound.](#)

One night as Jacob was making his way to Haran, he had a dream. In Biblical times, the Lord commonly appeared to people in dreams and He still does as His wishes to today. In his dream, Jacob saw a stairway reaching from earth to heaven, with angels going up and down it. The angels represented God's care and watchfulness over Jacob. Above the stairway stood the Lord Himself! Up to this point in his life, Jacob hadn't acknowledged God in a personal way as being his Lord. But when the Living God appears to a human being in a vision, it's a very personal experience!

In Genesis, Chapter 28, God spoke to Jacob and introduced Himself as the God of Abraham and Isaac, whom they worshipped and with whom God had made an eternal covenant. God now wanted to establish a covenant with Jacob and promised him the same as what God had promised his father and grandfather. The promises were the promise of the land, the promise of many descendants and the promise that all people would be blessed through Jacob and his offspring.

God concluded His covenant promises with the best promises of all. He told Jacob, "I will be with you", "I will keep you" and "I will not leave you wherever you go." And God's personal promise to Jacob was: "I will bring you back to this land." This promise would have sustained Jacob during the many years that he lived away from Canaan.

Jacob's dream changed his life. He realised that he had met the Lord and that his life would be very different from now on. So he took the stone he had used as a pillow for his head during the night and set it upright as a pillar or memorial to the Lord. Then he poured oil on the stone to consecrate it, and set it apart as a holy object or memorial to his meeting with God. Because the stairway in the dream seemed to lead up to 'God's house', Jacob named the place 'Bethel', which means 'house of God.'

Bethel became a place mentioned many times in the Scriptures up to the time of King Saul, when people wanted to meet with God, they travelled to Bethel, which was 9½ miles from Jerusalem.

Jacob also made a vow back to the Lord. It was common after a dramatic encounter or experience to make a promise to God, either out of gratitude or fear. Jacob made his vow conditional: "If God will go with me, then I will keep my vow." Jacob at that time didn't have complete confidence in God's promises. But after the 'stairway' dream, he thought that they might be fulfilled and if they were, he would be ready to acknowledge that the Lord was his God.

Jacob also promised that he would give to the Lord 1/10th of all his wealth. Jacob had been walking along with only the possessions he could carry, which wouldn't have been much. But Jacob acknowledged that everything he possessed came ultimately from the Lord, in accordance with His covenant promises.

So it is with us. Even as we are trying to escape God's claim on our lives, He is ready to meet us and provide for us a stairway to heaven through Jesus Christ. Jacob didn't suddenly become a perfect man after his meeting with God at Bethel, but he did change in his heart and his attitudes. He also made important commitments to God. And later in life, he returned to Bethel to rededicate that place to God. When we too, realise we have strayed away from that commitment that we have made to God, we should quickly return to Him, asking for His forgiveness, because He will always be ready to receive us.

As Jacob walked along the dusty tracks away from his home and all that he knew, there must have been time to reflect on his past. Although God had said that Esau would serve him, Jacob had been too impatient and wanted it to happen far sooner than God might have planned it. Jacob might also have regretted that he had been too greedy, by wanting his father's inheritance when he should have let God abundantly bless him with flocks and herds of his own instead. He should have been generous and let Esau have the family herds. Then Esau wouldn't be hunting his life and causing him to flee to such a faraway place.

Where could Jacob turn to for forgiveness of his rashness? He couldn't ask Esau to forgive him, because his deception had been pre-planned. This is one of the questions people ask about forgiving someone who's not interested in being reconciled to them. A Jewish woman, who'd suffered and survived the terrible conditions of a prisoner-of-war camp in Europe during World War II, emigrated to the United States. Her faith in God was still strong at that time, but she knew that she needed to forgive those people who had treated her and many other prisoners so cruelly, or even worse!

The Lord Jesus taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, Chapter 6, and Luke, Chapter 11. The condition for us asking God to forgive our sins is that we forgive those who have wronged us. How could this lady forgive and forget her terrible past and the atrocities that she had witnessed and endured? In Colossians, Chapter 3, it says: "Forgive as the Lord forgave you." It's possible to say that we've forgiven someone but use this as only a cover for the hurt that resides still deep inside. We must give our hurt to God and ask Him for healing of the past, and especially when the perpetrator is already dead or released from prison. Such healing of the past is a process that takes time, and during this time, the wounded person needs comfort and support from the Lord and kindly friends.

In Matthew, Chapter 18, the Lord Jesus taught a parable about forgiveness and explained why we need to show Christ's forgiveness and mercy to our enemies. Forgiveness is such an important part of His plan to draw the world to Himself. Yet we must ask ourselves: who will get the glory and praise for our acts of forgiveness? Will it be us or the Lord?

The parable went like this: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. One man owed the king a lot of money but he wasn't able to pay up. So the king ordered his family to be sold as slaves to repay the man's debt. The servant begged desperately for more time and promised to repay all his debt. So the king took pity on the man and cancelled his debt and let him go. All his debt was forgiven.

But that very same servant went out and found a fellow servant who owed him a small amount of money. The forgiven servant treated the other servant badly and demanded to be repaid the money owed immediately. Naturally, the servant owing only a little asked for more time too and he said that he would repay all of his debt as well. But the forgiven servant refused to wait. He had his fellow servant thrown into prison until he could pay.

The other servants of the king were distressed when they saw what had happened and they reported it to the king. Then the king called the unjust forgiven servant in. "You wicked servant," he said, "I cancelled all your debt because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" In anger, his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all that he owed. Jesus finished the parable with: "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

Jesus defines forgiveness as the passing onto those who have sinned against us the same forgiveness and mercy that we ourselves have received from God. What is God's mercy to us? His mercy, as illustrated in the parable, was that *the king bore the debt himself*. The debt didn't just disappear. It was real money that someone had to pay. So the king paid it when he forgave his servant. And the servant, once forgiven, should have treated his debtors the same way that he'd been treated.

Why was the wicked servant thrown in jail to be tortured? Many will say that the unjust servant should have been more generous to his fellow servant. The king forgave the unjust servant a big debt that was too large for him to pay in his lifetime, so the least he could do was to forgive his fellow servant for his small debt." The forgiven servant is a 'wicked' servant because *through his actions, he hid the work of the king, who bears the servant's debt in himself*.

What would have made the forgiven servant a 'good' servant? Goodness would have shown through by the servant not just forgiving the debt owed to him by his fellow servant, but by forgiving the debt in the same way as the king – with a generous character that reflected the king's very kind forgiveness of him. If all the forgiven servant did was to forgive the debt of his fellow servant, he would still be missing the point. He would simply be drawing attention to his own generosity. But if he had said, "My fellow servant, I forgive your debt – I bear the cost myself – because our master the king is generous, and today he has forgiven me, and he bears my debt in himself," that would draw attention to the work and character of the king. And that would make the forgiven servant no longer a wicked servant.

Jesus taught this parable because his disciple, Peter, had asked him how many times he should have to forgive his brother's sins. Peter had suggested seven times, which seemed generous to him. But in Matthew, Chapter 18, Verse 22, Jesus said: "Up to seventy times seven." Let generous forgiveness as God has given us, be a mark of our characters as we grow in maturity in our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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