

Genesis 28

Covenants with the Lord

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After his life was threatened by his brother Esau, Jacob was directed by his parents to travel to his mother’s homeland to find a wife. While journeying, he had a vision that led him to enter into the Abrahamic covenant with God. This lesson can help you feel an increased desire to make covenants with God in the temple.

Study the Scriptures

Your friend Joel has been meeting with the missionaries. To support him, you offer to attend a lesson. At the end of the lesson the missionaries invite Joel to be baptized. He says, “I don’t know. I guess I don’t see why I should. I live a good life. I know God loves me. What difference would baptism make?”

How would you respond to Joel’s question?

Jacob’s experience in [Genesis 28](#) teaches about the power of covenants in our lives. The story begins when Jacob is not yet married. His brother Esau planned to kill him, so his mother encouraged him to flee. Away from his parents and far from home, Jacob had a dream that changed him forever.

Read [Genesis 28:10–12](#). Mark the details of Jacob’s dream and then draw a picture in the space below of what he saw.

Read [Genesis 28:13–15](#). Choose a new color or style and mark the blessings the Lord promised Jacob.

What blessings did the Lord promise Jacob?

Why do you think these promises were meaningful to Jacob? What do you think these blessings taught Jacob about the Lord?

Study the following scriptures and statement and share how they deepen your understanding of the promises the Lord made to Jacob. You might consider linking each passage to [Genesis 28:15](#).

[John 14:18](#)

[Acts 17:27](#) (note the Joseph Smith Translation)

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:

As you walk the covenant path, from baptism to the temple and throughout life, I promise you power to go against the natural worldly flow—power to learn, power to repent and be sanctified, and power to find hope, comfort, and even joy as you face life’s challenges. I promise you and your family protection against the influence of the adversary, especially when you make the temple a major focus in your life. (“[Accessing God’s Power through Covenants](#),” Liahona, May 2023, 37)

Read [Genesis 28:16–19](#). Look for phrases you might tag as “temple.”

Learning tip. The word dreadful (in [verse 17](#)) is better translated as “awesome.” It may also be useful to check footnote 19a for the meaning of “Beth-el.”

Just as we make covenants in the house of God, so did Jacob. Tag the phrase “vowed a vow” in [Genesis 28:20](#) as “covenants.”

Read [Genesis 28:20–22](#). Mark God’s part of the covenant in one color or style. Then mark Jacob’s part in a different color or style.

What covenant did Jacob make with the Lord?

Activity A

What could the ladder that Jacob saw represent?

Look at the picture you drew. What could the ladder that Jacob saw represent?

President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) offered this explanation:

The covenants [Jacob] made with the Lord there were the rungs on the ladder that he himself would have to climb in order to obtain the promised blessings—blessings that would entitle him to enter heaven and associate with the Lord. (“[Temples—the Gates to Heaven](#),” Ensign, Mar. 1971, 16)

How can the covenants you make help you climb closer to God?

What choices can you make to help you prepare to make covenants in the temple?

Activity B

What can I expect on the covenant path?

President Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

[I] suggest that “one’s life ... cannot be both faith-filled and stress-free.” It simply will not work “to glide naively through life,” saying as we sip another glass of lemonade, “Lord, give me all thy choicest virtues, but be certain not to give me grief, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor opposition. Please do not let anyone dislike me or betray me, and above all, do not ever let me feel forsaken by Thee or those I love. In fact, Lord, be careful to keep me from all the experiences that made Thee divine. And then, when the rough sledding by everyone else is over, please let me come and dwell with Thee, where I can boast about how similar our strengths and our characters are as I float along on my cloud of comfortable Christianity.” ([“Waiting on the Lord,”](#) Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2020, 116)

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

The covenant path is our greatest hope for avoiding avoidable misery on the one hand and successfully dealing with the unavoidable woes of life on the other. ([“Why the Covenant Path,”](#) Liahona, May 2021, 117).

How can keeping your covenants help you deal with unavoidable difficulties?
