

Genesis Chapter 28

Verses 1-2: "Take thee a wife from thence" Anxious for the safety of her son, Rebekah easily convinced her husband that the time had come for him to seek a non-Canaanite wife back in their homeland and preferably from near kinsmen (verses 2, 5), just as Rebekah had been sought for Isaac (see 24:1-4).

Genesis 28:1 "And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan."

"And Isaac called Jacob": Or therefore, because of what Rebekah had said to him, related in the latter part of the preceding chapter, he sent for Jacob to come to him from his tent or apartment where he was, or from the field where he was keeping the flocks; thus paying a great regard to what his wife Rebekah had suggested to him which appeared to him very right and reasonable.

"And blessed him": He did not send for him to scold and criticize him for his fraudulent dealings with him to get the blessing from his brother, much less to revoke it, but to confirm it. Which was necessary to prevent doubts that might arise in the mind of Jacob about it, and to strengthen him against the temptations of Satan.

Since he was about to be sent away from his father's house, alone and needy to go into another country where he was to be for a while in a state of servitude. All which might seem to contradict the blessing and promises he had received, and would be a trial of his faith in them. As well as a chastisement on him for the fraudulent manner in which he obtained them.

"And charged him, and said unto him, thou shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan": It was time that he was married; for he was now, as the Jewish writers say, seventy seven, years of age.

Being now declared the heir of the Promised Land, it was proper he should marry, but not with any of the Canaanites, who were to be dispossessed of the land of Canaan, and therefore their seed, and Abraham's, to whom it was given, must not be mixed. Isaac takes the same care, and gives the same charge concerning the marriage of his son Jacob, on whom the entail of the land was settled, as his father Abraham did concerning his (Genesis 24:3).

Isaac knew that this son, whom the blessings of God would flow through, should not be unequally yoked with these worldly women.

Abraham had sent a trusted servant away to find a wife, so Isaac would not marry one of these women. Isaac wanted the same for his son, whom the promise of God would come through. This plan of Rebekah's to get Jacob away was working fine, because it fit into Isaac's plans as well.

Genesis 28:2 "Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother."

"Arise, go to Padan-aram": Of this place (see Genesis 25:20). He is bid to go directly, in haste and alone. Perhaps by this time Rebekah had given Isaac some hint of the ill design of Esau against him, making Isaac the more urgent upon him to be gone. As well as it was high time he had took to himself a wife.

"To the house of Bethuel thy mother's father": Who though may be dead in all probability, yet the house and family went by his name.

"And take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother": who had unmarried daughters of which no doubt Isaac and Rebekah had knowledge, a correspondence being kept up between the two families, though at a great distance.

These girls would be a first cousin to Jacob. This family would be acceptable to God.

Verses 3-4: This extra patriarchal blessing unveiled where Isaac was in his thinking. He had come to understand that the divine blessings would go through Jacob, to whom the Abrahamic Covenant promises of posterity and land also applied – quite the reversal of prior wishes and understanding (27:27-29).

The lack of land possession at that time, described by the phrase “the land of your sojourning,” did not deter at all from the certainty of God’s promise.

Genesis 28:3 "And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;"

“God Almighty” Significantly, El Shaddai was the name Isaac chose to employ when blessing Jacob. It was the name of sovereign power with which God had identified Himself to Abraham in covenant reaffirmation (17:1), which must have been an encouraging factor to both him and his son.

Jacob would certainly need the help of a powerful tower of strength. Verse 4 explains that the land promised to Abraham (in 15:18-21), is now guaranteed to Jacob and his descendants (28:1-9).

Genesis 28:4 "And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham."

"And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee": Which was promised to Abraham, and was demanded upon Isaac and his seed, and now upon Jacob and his seed, which follows.

"That thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave to Abraham": The land of Canaan, which was given to Abraham by promise, but not in possession. He was a

sojourner and stranger in it, and so Isaac had been all his days, and now Jacob, who through the blessing was become heir of it.

But as yet neither he nor his posterity must enjoy it, but be strangers and sojourners in it. For the exercise of faith, and for the leading of their minds off of all earthly enjoyments, to the better and heavenly country God has provided for his people (see Hebrews 11:9).

Here again, was the patriarchal blessing passed from Isaac to Jacob. The blessings are listed all over again. Remember, this was the spiritual line of Abraham who would be blessed even unto our time.

Genesis 28:5 "And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother."

"And Isaac sent away Jacob": From Beer-sheba; not in anger, or in a dishonorable way, but took his leave of him no doubt in an affectionate manner. As it is clear he went with his blessing, and had his good wishes for a prosperous journey.

"And he went to Padan-aram": Which from Beer-sheba, according to some, was four hundred and eighty miles. Unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian. Some versions make Laban to be the Syrian, others Bethuel. It is a matter of no great moment which is here so called, since they were both called Syrians (see Genesis 25:20).

"The brother of Rebekah": This refers to Laban, for Bethuel was her father.

"Jacob's and Esau's mother": Jacob is set first, not only as being most beloved by his mother, but as now having the birthright and the blessing.

Genesis 28:6 "When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;"

"And when Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob": Had conferred the blessing before given, or had wished him a good journey; which perhaps may be all that Esau understood by it, and so was not so much offended with it.

"And sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence": Which likewise might not be displeasing to him, partly as he understood it to be only on account of taking a wife, and not on account of his ill design upon him.

Which he might imagine his parents knew nothing of and partly as he would now be out of the way. And he might find means the easier to bring himself into his father's favor. And then get him to revoke the blessing, and settle the inheritance upon him.

"And that as he blessed him, he gave him a charge, saying, thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan": Or of the Canaanites, of any of the tribes or nations that belonged to that people, whether Hittites or others.

Genesis 28:7 "And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram;"

"And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother": As it became him and as it becomes all children to be obedient to their parents in all things lawful they command them. And it would have been well if Esau had been obedient to them also in a like case, the case of his marriage.

"And was gone to Padan-aram": As they had urged him, to take a wife from thence.

Genesis 28:8 "And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father;"

"And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father": Who he perceived was displeased with the daughters of Canaan, or that they were "evil in his eyes", offensive to him, and disapproved of by him, because of their ill manners. Rebekah is not mentioned, whose displeasure he cared not for.

Genesis 28:9 "Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife."

"Then went Esau unto Ishmael": Marrying back into the line of Abraham through the family of Ishmael seemed to have been a ploy to gain favor with his father (verses 6, 8), and show an obedience similar to his brother's (verse 7).

He hoped by such gratifying of his parents to atone from past delinquencies, and maybe have his father change the will. He actually increased iniquity by adding to his pagan wives (26:34-35), a wife from a family God had rejected.

In the Scriptures above, we see Jacob (the spirit child), pleasing his father and mother by taking a wife, who was from a family of similar belief. The other son, Esau, was a rebellious son.

Anything that displeased his parents was what he was interested in doing. He followed the desires of the flesh and married Ishmael's daughter. This tribe was of the flesh. Here, we see dual marriage practiced, as well.

"Mahalath" means sickness. "Nebajoth" means fruitfulness. This rebellion in Esau was a very bad sin in a Hebrew family. Rebellion was thought of as witchcraft, and a rebellious child was to be stoned to death. Such was not the fate of Esau, because Isaac loved him so much.

Verses 10-15: For the first time, and significantly while Jacob was on his way out of the land of Canaan, God revealed Himself to Jacob and confirmed the Abrahamic Covenant with him in all its 3 elements of land, seed, and blessing (verses 13-14).

Later, God would remind Jacob of this event when He instructed him to return to the land (31:13), and Jacob would remind his household of it when he instructed them to cleanse their homes before they could return to Beth-el (35:3).

Genesis 28:10 "And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran."

"And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba": Where Isaac and Rebekah now lived. From there he went alone, without any servants to attend him, though perhaps not without letters of recommendation from his parents, testifying their affection to him, and that he came with their knowledge and consent, and was their heir, as Isaac had been to Abraham.

Nor without provisions, at least not without money to purchase them by the way, as appears by the oil he had, Genesis 28:18,

"And went toward Haran": For thither he could not get in one day, being many days' journey (see note on 11:31; Gen. 28:5).

Genesis 28:11 "And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put [them for] his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep."

"And he lighted upon a certain place": Without any design to take up there, but as it were casually to him, though very providentially, after he had travelled forty eight miles; for so far it seems it was from Beer-sheba to Luz or Beth-el, as this place was called.

This place identified (in verse 19), as Beth-el, about 50 miles north of Beer-sheba, and about 6 miles north of Jerusalem. There he spent the night in an open field.

"And tarried there all night, because the sun was set": Which hindered his pursuing his journey any further that day and therefore took a night's lodging here.

"And he took of the stones of that place": One of the stones that lay there, as Aben Ezra and Ben Melech rightly interpret it, as appears from (Genesis 28:13).

"And put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place and slept": Being weary with his journey though he had no other bed than the earth, and for his pillow a stone, and for his canopy or curtain the open heaven. A different lodging this from what he had been used to in his father's house, and under the indulgence of his mother.

Genesis 28:12 "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it."

“A ladder ... angels of God ascending and descending”: A graphic portrayal of the heavenly Lord’s personal involvement in the affairs of earth, and here especially as they related to divine covenant promises in Jacob’s life (verses 13-15).

This dream was to encourage the lonely traveler. God’s own appointed angelic messengers ensured the carrying out of His will and plans. More than likely, the angels traversed a stairway rather than a ladder.

“A ladder set up on the earth”: This would be better understood as a ramp or staircase. It is related to the mound thrown up against a walled city (2 Sam. 20:15). The streams of God’s angels “ascending and descending on it” indicate the appropriateness of this depiction.

Jesus took this figure of a means of access between heaven and earth as a picture of Himself (John 1:51). Jacobs response to this vision (verses 16-17), suggests that he may have become a true believer on this occasion.

Genesis 28:13 "And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I [am] the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;"

"And behold, the Lord stood above it": Ordering, directing, and overruling all things in Providence, for the glory of his name and the good of his people.

And may signify, as the ladder may be a figure of Christ, that Jehovah the Father, is above him, as man and Mediator, and makes himself known in and by him, and delivers out all his blessings and promises through him, both temporal and spiritual, and such as follow.

"And said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac": Their covenant God and Father in Christ, who had made promises unto them, and bestowed blessings upon them; and the same was and would continue to be the God of Jacob, which is strongly intimated.

"The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed": Meaning not that small pittance of land only on which his body then lay, and which it covered, but all the land of which it was a part, even the whole land of Canaan.

Hereby entailing it on him and his seed, and so explaining and confirming the blessing of his father Isaac. And by which it appears, that all that had been done was under a divine direction, and according to the will of God.

Genesis 28:14 "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

"And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth": Innumerable (see Genesis 13:16).

"And thou shalt spread abroad to the west": Or "the sea", the Mediterranean Sea, which was west of the land of Canaan.

"And to the east, and to the north, and to the south": Not of the whole world, but of the land of Canaan. The meaning is, that his posterity should be numerous, and break out and spread themselves like a flood of water, and reach to the utmost bounds of the land on all sides.

"And in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed": That is, in that eminent and principal seed that should spring from him, the Messiah. In whom some of all nations should, as they have been, be blessed with all spiritual blessings, as redemption, peace, pardon, justification, adoption, and eternal life. The same promise had been made to Abraham, was renewed to Isaac, and now confirmed to Jacob (see Genesis 22:18).

This was a special place, a place of meeting God. God spoke to many of His people in dreams, not only in the past, but even now, speaks to us, if we will listen. Dreams are just another way to know God's will in our lives. Take note here that: Jacob had been obedient to his parents, He was alone.

He had left his family and friends behind. He had an unknown future going into strange lands. He had no idea whether they would receive him well, or not. These are the times that God comes and helps us, when we cannot help ourselves.

The angels are going and coming all the time as God sends them to minister to us here on this earth. Each of us has angels helping us along the way.

When God makes a promise, it is forever. He reiterates these promises He made to Abraham, then Isaac, and now Jacob. God never changes His plan.

Genesis 28:15 "And, behold, I [am] with thee, and will keep thee in all [places] whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done [that] which I have spoken to thee of."

"Will keep thee ... will bring thee again into this land": A most timely, comforting, and assuring promise which remained engraved on Jacob's heart during his sojourn in Haran (30:25). His forced departure from Canaan did not and would not rescind any of God's promises to him.

It does not matter how far from home a Christian goes, God is with him. He will never leave us, or forsake us.

Psalms 46:1 "God [is] our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

You see, God is with us wherever we are, for He is in us. He knows the end from the beginning. He was telling Jacob he was with him, and would bring him back to the land of promise. Even though Jacob had problems, God was present to help him. He says that to the Christians, as well. He is with us. He will help us. We must trust Him to do just that.

Genesis 28:16 "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew [it] not."

"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep": Which had been sweet unto him, and out of his dream, it being now over. Having left such a weight upon his mind, and such an awe upon his spirits, it might tend the sooner to awaken him. What time it was is not said, perhaps it was in the middle of the night or towards morning, since after this it is said that he rose early in the morning.

"And he said, surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not": God is everywhere, in a general way, upholding all things by his power, as he is immense and omnipresent. But here he was in a special sense, by some signal token of his presence; by a stream of light and glory darting from the heavens.

Hence Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it, "the glory of the Lord, and the glory of the majesty of the Lord.

A mind and will, and grace to Jacob, and that communion he had with him in his dream, of which he was very sensible: for when he says, "I knew it not", the meaning is, he did not think or expect to meet with God in such a place. He did not know that God ever appeared anywhere but in the houses of his people, such as his father's house.

Or in the congregation of the faithful, or where the saints met for public worship, or where an altar was erected for God: though sometimes God is present with his people, and they are not sensible of it; as the church (in Isaiah 41:10); and as Mary, when Christ was at her elbow, and she knew him not (John 20:13).

Genesis 28:17 "And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful [is] this place! this [is] none other but the house of God, and this [is] the gate of heaven."

"And he was afraid": Not with a humble but respectful fear. Not with a fear of the wrath and displeasure of God, but with a fear of his grace and goodness. Not with a fear of distrust of it, of which he had just had such a comfortable assurance; but with an awe of the greatness and glory of God, being conscious of his own unworthiness to receive such favors from him.

"And said, how dreadful is this place!" Not terrible and horrible, being not like Mount Sinai, but like Zion. Not as the suburbs of hell, but as the gate of heaven majestic and distinguished, because of the glory of God that appeared in it, whose name is holy and reverend and because of the holy angels here present.

And so the church, of which this was an emblem, is a solemn assembly, awful and respected; a city of solemnities, (defined as the state or quality of being serious and dignified) because of the worship of God in it, and his presence there.

Who is to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are about him; and where persons should behave in a serious and solemn manner.

“This is none other but the house of God”: Wherefore he afterwards called it Beth-el, which signifies the house of God; and so the church of God is often called (Psalm 23:6). Which is of God's building, where he dwells, and his family is, of which he is the master and governor; which he beautifies and adorns, fills, repairs, and defends.

"And this is the gate of heaven": Mr. Mede renders it "the court of heaven", because of the angels. Since in gates justice was administered by kings, attended with their staff; but royal courts were not kept there, only courts of justice. This place seems to be so called, because the heavens were opened and the glory of God was seen, attended by his angels, who were passing and repassing, as people through the streets of a city.

And was an emblem of the church of Christ, who is figured by the ladder set on earth, whose top reached to heaven, the door, the gate, the way of ascent to it; here he is preached in the word as the way of salvation, the way to heaven and eternal happiness.

Here He is held forth in the ordinances; here He grants his presence to his people, and indulges them with communion with him, which makes it like and next to heaven unto them. And, generally speaking, though not always, God brings his people to heaven this way, through a Gospel church state.

And by means of the word and commands; and here angels also attend (1 Corinthians 11:10).

This word "dreadful", above, has to do with reverence. I am sure Jacob felt as Moses did, that this is a very Holy place. Anywhere God is, is Holy. This was in the same area where many followers of God encountered this presence of God.

Genesis 28:18 "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put [for] his pillows, and set it up [for] a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it."

“A pillar” Marking a particular site as of special religious significance by means of a stone pillar was known practice. A drink offering, a change of place-name, and a vow of allegiance to the Lord in exchange for promised protection and blessing completed Jacob’s ceremonial consecration of Beth-el, i.e., “House of God.”

“Pillar” and “oil” are the symbols normally used for a memorial (Deut. 27:2-4; Isa. 19:19), and consecration (Lev. 8:10-11). The pillars that were later forbidden were related to Baal worship (Deut. 12:3), and objects of that worship (Mica 5:13).

Genesis 28:19 "And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of that city [was called] Luz at the first."

“Beth-el” means House of God.” It was the name given by Jacob to the place where he met God. It was also called Luz. The city itself was on the boundary between Benjamin and Ephraim in the time of ancient Israel. Its location was identified in the nineteenth century by E. Robinson as Tell Beitin, 12 miles north of Jerusalem.

The site was later excavated by William F. Albright and others, revealing a Canaanite settlement dating from 2000 B.C. Toward the end the Middle Bronze Age the city was fortified by a wall 11 feet thick.

Beth-el later became a prominent Hyksos fortress about 1600 B.C. the burning of the city during the Israelite conquest (Joshua 12:7-16), has been verified by a level of charred debris as much as five feet thick. It was later rebuilt and served as a royal sanctuary for Jeroboam's cult worship in the early monarchy (1 Kings 12:26-33; 2 Chron. 13:8-9).

Just as his father and grandfather before him, Jacob built an altar to God. Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone. He is the Rock that we must build our faith upon. This oil represents the Holy Spirit. "Beth-el", as we mentioned before, means house of God. "Luz" means almond tree. This city was near, not at the exact spot.

Genesis 28:20 "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,"

"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying": Which is the first vow we read of in Scripture.

"If God will be with me": The word if is not a sign of doubting, but is either an adverb of time, and may be rendered, "when God shall be with me"; or as a supposition, expressive of an inference or conclusion drawn, "seeing God will be with me".

Which he had the utmost reason to believe he would, since he had not only promised it, but had so lately granted him his presence in a very singular and remarkable manner, referring to the promise of God (Genesis 28:15).

"And will keep me in this way that I go": As he had said he would, and as hitherto he had, and for the future he had reason to believe he still would.

"And will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on": Which is included in that clause, "I will not leave thee", etc. (Genesis 28:15), even not without food and raiment; which is all men can desire or use, and therefore with them should be content.

Genesis 28:21 "So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:"

"So that I come again to my father's house in peace": In safety from Esau, and all other enemies, as God promised him he should.

"Then the Lord shall be my God": Not as if he should not be his God if he did not do all this for him; which would savor not only of a mercenary spirit, but of great lack of reverence; neither of which were to be found in Jacob.

Meaning that he should not only continue to own him as his God, and to worship him, but having fresh obligations upon him, should be stirred up more eagerly and devoutly to serve him in a very singular way and manner, and particularly by doing what is expressed (in Genesis 28:22).

Some think he has respect to the Messiah, owning him to be the true God with the Father and the blessed Spirit, who had appeared to Abraham, and was the fear of Isaac, and whom Jacob now owned as his God. This receives some confirmation from Targum of Jonathan, which begins the paragraph thus, "if the Word of the Lord will be my help, etc., then the Lord shall be my God.

Genesis 28:22 "And this stone, which I have set [for] a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

"I will surely give the tenth": Tithing, though not commanded by God, was obviously already known and voluntarily practiced, and served to acknowledge God's providential beneficence in the donor's life (see note on 14:20).

Jacob may have been bargaining with God, as if to buy His favor rather than purely worshiping God with his gift, but it is best to translate the "if" (verse 20), as "since" and see Jacob's vow and offering as genuine worship based on confidence in God's promise (verses 13-15).

This was voluntary on Jacob's part; God had not commanded it (14:20, where Abram's "tenth" to Melchizedek was also voluntary).

It was not a requirement until the Law was given to Israel; and then two tithes were to be given, not one, as many assume (the annual tithe for the maintenance of the Levites in Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:21; and one for the lord's feast in Deut. 14:22).

It may be that every third year the second tithe was not brought to the sanctuary, but was kept at home and used to feed the Levites and the poor according to (Deuteronomy 14:28-29). If not, then there was a third tithe every third year. Thus, a consistent Israelite might give 23-1/3 percent annually, plus offering for sin, and so forth.

Jacob did not ask for his wants, he asked for his needs. He had already recognized God by building the altar.

Matthew 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you".

This is what Jacob had done. He pleased God.

Tithing pleases God, as well. Even now, God will bless those who give 10% of their income, or more to Him. The tithe is important because most people worship money, and God wants us to give up the things we worship. This was Jacob making an agreement with God. The other was God establishing His agreement with Jacob; the blessings passed on from Abraham.

Genesis Chapter 28 Questions

1. When Isaac blessed Jacob, what did he tell him not to do?
2. What had Abraham done for Isaac that Isaac now wanted for Jacob?
3. Where did Isaac send Jacob?
4. Who was Bethuel?
5. Whose daughter was Jacob to choose a wife from?
6. What relation would they be to Jacob?
7. What was the blessing passed on from Isaac? Three things
8. Which line of Abraham was Jacob in?
9. What nationality was Laban?
10. Why did Esau choose Ishmael's daughter to marry?
11. What was her name?
12. What punishment was the custom for this sin?
13. What was rebellion called?
14. Who was Haran named for?
15. What did Jacob use for a pillow?
16. What did Jacob dream about?
17. Who was going up and down?
18. Who was waiting at the top?
19. Does God speak to His people in dreams now?
20. Name four things about Jacob when he had the dream.
21. How long does God's promises last?
22. Tell us what Psalms 46:1 says.
23. When Jacob woke, how did he feel?
24. What does dreadful mean here?

25. What did Jacob do with his pillow?
26. What is the oil symbolic of?
27. What means house of God?
28. What did Jacob ask God for?