



**#7 VaYetzei – Genesis 28:10-32:2(3)**  
**Torah Study**  
**by Moshe Schwab**

**Names**

Esav – Esau

Hevron – Hebron

Ya'akov – Jacob

Kefa – Peter

Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ in the Greek means to be smudged – anointed

Moshe – Moses

Rivkah – Rebecca

Shaul – Paul

Yeshua – Jesus' real name

Yĕhōvāh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)

Yitz'chak – Isaac

Yochanan – John

**Terms**

Cohen – priest

Haftarah – reading from the prophets

Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible

Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah

VaYetzei – 7<sup>th</sup> Torah portion

VaYetzei means, "and he went out." This portion begins with Ya'akov leaving Be'er-Sheva in the land of Canaan and heading north to the city of Haran which was in our southeastern Turkey near the Syrian border. On his way he came to a place where he had a dream of a ladder that reached from the ground to heaven with the angels of God going up and down it. During the vision, the Lord (Yĕ-hō-váh, יהוה) is suddenly next to him and speaks to him (in the CJB translation). In the New Testament portion, Nathanael had a similar experience. Yeshua says to Nathanael in John 1:51 NKJV, "And He said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'" Yeshua says of Himself that Nathanael will have that experience.

Since Yeshua was the presence of God on earth, we would expect this activity to be occurring wherever Yeshua was. Pagans teach there are special places on earth where spirits will communicate with us. These are just pagan ritualistic places where devil spirits have done something. God does not need a special place to communicate with us or do something because He is God and can speak to us wherever we are; this was the case with believers in the past as well; God doesn't need a special place to communicate to us. There are special places where people have encountered God like Ya'akov did, but God is not limited to a certain place; we do not believe in what the pagans believe. Like Ya'akov, when we experience God, we too may feel a particular encounter was a special place. He encountered God numerous times and places; we can encounter God many times and many places as well.

Yĕhōvāh promised Ya'akov the land of Canaan and his descendants. God tells him that he will have many descendants; the whole earth will be blessed through his descendants; and God will guard him and bring him back to the land. Ya'akov names the place where he had the vision Beit-El (Bethel which is about 10 miles north of Jerusalem); it was originally called Luz.

Ya'akov then vows that if God will guard him and bring him back in peace that God will be His God. As Ya'akov is traveling, he comes to a well and it happens that Rachel, Lavan's daughter, had just come there with their sheep. He waters her sheep and tells her who he is. Ya'akov stays with Lavan a month helping him with the sheep. Lavan then offers to pay him and Ya'akov offers to work for seven years for Rachel. Lavan tricks Ya'akov and he is married to Le'ah. He offers to work for another seven years for Rachel. Leah conceives six sons and one daughter: Re'uven [see, a son], Shim'on [hearing], Levi [joining], Y'hudah [praise], Yissakhar [hire, reward], Z'vulun [living together], and Dinah [controversy over rights].

Rachel is jealous of Le'ah and gives Ya'akov her maid Bilhah. Bilhah has two children, Dan [he judged] and Naftali [my wrestling]. Le'ah also gives Ya'akov her maid and Zilpah has two children: Gad [good fortune] and Asher [happy]. Finally Rachel has two children: Yosef [may he add] and eventually also gives birth to Binyamin [son of the right hand]. The model for marriage is one husband and one wife as seen in Genesis. After Yosef is born, Ya'akov asks Lavan if he can go back home. Lavan offers him the speckled and streaked sheep. The Lord speaks to Ya'akov and Ya'akov puts branches with streaks in front of Lavans sheep so that they have speckled and spotted lambs. Obviously, God is making this happen.

We find out that Lavan changed his agreement with Ya'akov frequently, but God favored Ya'akov and worked things out so that Ya'akov prospered no matter what they agreed to. Ya'akov ends up getting wealthy and Lavan's family is not happy with Ya'akov and they began looking at Ya'akov differently.

Then God speaks to Ya'akov and tells him to return home and he leaves with his family ; he had a three day head start. Lavan catches up with them, but God warns Lavan not to meddle with Ya'akov and his family. Ya'akov tells him that if he finds anything that is his that he can take it. Ya'akov said that whoever had taken Lavan's idols would be put to death. Rachel had taken his idols and put them in the saddle under her and she said she was having her period so Lavan did not look for his idols there. Ya'akov argues that he has served Lavan honestly and faithfully for 20 years and that God has given him favor. Lavan apparently considers everything his anyway, but they end up making peace and Lavan returns home. As the portion ends, Ya'akov meets some angels.

In this portion we see the enduring promise of God to Ya'akov. God (Yĕ-hō-váh, יְהוָה) meets him as Ya'akov begins his journey. God watches over him and leads him to Lavan and provides work for him and his family. God keeps him safe as he returns to Canaan and God warns Lavan to leave Ya'akov alone. At the end of the portion Ya'akov meets some angels. Ya'akov sees angels a couple of times in this portion. The book of Hebrews tells us that God sends His angels to help those who are called by God. Hebrews 1:14 NKJV says, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" God sends His angels to help us too.

The Haftarah is a relevant teaching from the prophets and writings. They became the primary method of teaching when the Torah was forbidden to be read during the persecution by the

Greeks in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. BC means *Before the Messiah (Christ)*. The abbreviation BCE is used by unbelievers to refer to *Before the Common Era*; in other words, before the Messiah came. If you are believer, it is perfectly fine to use BC.

The Haftarah for VaYetzei is Hosea 12:13-14:9. This portion is a prophecy against the northern tribes for committing idolatry. Israel is promised blessing later in these passages if they will return to God; perhaps we could liken this blessing to how Jacob returned to Canaan safely, or like how Israel was delivered from Egypt to worship the true God. Hosea 13:2 NKJV, says, "Now they sin more and more, and have made for themselves molded images; ... They say of them, 'Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!'"

All sin is very deceitful. We may think at times that we benefit from our sinful desires, but in the end it is just foolishness. God created the world and not mankind; God knows how best we should live. Sadly, Northern Israel's sin led to their complete destruction.

Ya'akov sees Yě-hō-váh and angels going up and down a ladder in a dream. All the patriarchs saw God. This was a special encounter for Ya'akov and he works out an agreement with God. God is with Ya'akov and favors him even though Lavan tries to steal his wealth. Lavan deludes himself into thinking everything was his. God tells Ya'akov to go back to Canaan and he returns with all his belongings and family. God worked out everything for Ya'akov and God can work out things for us because He is God. Trust in God. King David sings a song of praise about trusting in God. Psalm 28:7 NKJV says, "The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him."