

Home, Sweet Home

Jesus made 25 "Truly, truly" statements in John's gospel, and the first one stood out to me recently.

"Nathanael answered him, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered him, 'Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man'" (John 1:49-51).

What does Jesus mean by this last statement? I believe he's pointing Nathanael back to Genesis 28 in the story of Jacob's fantastic dream. First, Jacob saw the heavens open and angels ascending and descending on a grand stairway. Then, the Lord spoke from heaven and reiterated his promises to Abraham and Isaac. And there, Jacob said, *"*Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it ... How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven"* (Gen. 28:16-17).

Jesus points back to this story to highlight that he is now the house of God, the gate of heaven where the Lord dwells.

Jesus — Our Bethel

- Jesus is Our Temple (John 2:18-22)
- He's the Fullness of Deity (Col. 2:9)
- He's the Awesome One (Luke 24:32)

Big Idea: Jesus' grace, friendship, and guidance make our lives worth living!

How Does Christ Change Us?

- **Affection** — Where God's Grace is Extended
 - God didn't have to extend these blessings to Jacob. Jacob wasn't the man of strong faith that he'd eventually become at this moment in his life. But God comes to him at Bethel to show his mercy and love, even while he wasn't worthy.
 - Jesus came to us in our weakness, extending God's grace and love to us, even while we were sinners (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8). What a life-changing thought to know how much God cares about his enemies!
- **Connection** — Where We Encounter God
 - Bethel is where Jacob encountered God. Though it was a dream, Jacob knew there was more to it than that. He saw the deeper meaning that God was with him, as he promised in his blessing.
 - Jesus is our connection to God the Father! He's the doorway to God — our sole access point into the Lord's presence. He mediates for us and connects us to the Father directly through himself (John 14:1-7; Heb. 4:14-16). Praise God for providing us with such intimate access through Christ!
- **Direction** — Where Truth and Purpose Are Revealed

- Jacob was on the run after the events back home with Esau and his parents. He was aimless and had no purpose or direction. But when God appeared, Jacob's life began to make sense. He realized his need for a relationship with God, and his faith in the Creator grew stronger.
- Jesus gives our lives direction. We don't have to grope around aimlessly for meaning when he calls us to abide in him (John 14:21-24; 15:1-5). What an awesome way of life we're called to!

Conclusion

When Jesus is in our presence, what a wonderful life we live! But if you're not connected to the Father through His Son, are you feeling lost and aimless? Come to Him and find meaning! Welcome home, to that wonderful place of rest to which he's called you!