

DECEMBER 5, 2019

*Parashat Vayetze (Genesis 28:10–32:3)*

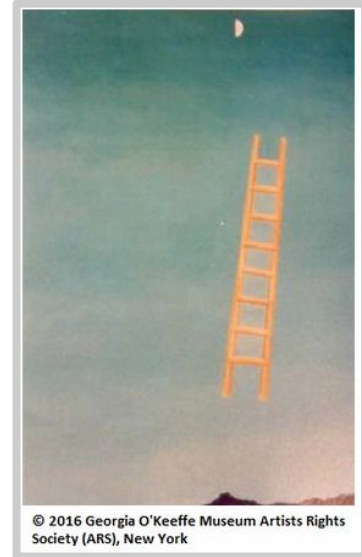
Taught By: Liam & Noah

### SUMMARY

At the beginning of *Vayetze*, *Ya'akov* runs away from home after tricking his father, *Yitzhak*, into giving him a blessing that was meant for his brother *Esav*. As he's travelling on his way to *Haran*, to live with his Uncle *Lavan*, he stumbles across a mysterious place where he spends the night. He uses stones for a pillow and, that night, he dreams of angels going up and down a ladder. In the dream G'd speaks to *Ya'akov*, promising to always be with him, and to give him many descendants who will inherit the land on which he is sleeping.

*Ya'akov* wakes up suddenly from his dream--in surprise and feeling G'd's presence. He takes a stone and sets it up as a marker, calling the place *Beit El*, or House of G'd. *Ya'akov* promises to be faithful to G'd if G'd will provide him with shelter, clothing, and food.

*Ya'akov* continues along his way. When he arrives at his mother's birthplace, he meets *Rahel* at a well and falls in love with her. His uncle, who is *Rahel's* father, agrees that *Ya'akov* and *Rahel* should get married. *Ya'akov* then works for *Lavan* for seven years. When it is time for him to marry *Rahel*, *Lavan* tricks him into marrying *Rahel's* sister *Leah* instead. After a week *Ya'akov* marries *Rahel*, too--then works for his uncle *Lavan* for seven more years. *Rahel* and *Leah* and their servants give birth to the sons who will become the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. At the end of *Parashat Vayetze*, *Ya'akov* leaves *Lavan* and returns with his family to the land of *Canaan*.



**1) After leaving Be'er Sheva, Ya'akov happens to run into a particular place where he sleeps. He gathers stones from that place and puts them under his head, then lays down and dreams about a ladder reaching from the earth up to the heavens. He sees angels going up and down on the ladder. The *Torah* doesn't give us a name for this place, but the dream that Ya'akov had and his comment about this being a place where G!d is would seem to hint that there is something special about this place. What do you think might make this place special?**

**LIAM:** The medieval commentator *Rashi* teaches us that this place of Ya'akov's dream is Mt Moriah--the place in Jerusalem where the Temple would be built, but this was long before there was a Temple there. This makes sense to me because I think the dream is about Ya'akov feeling connected with G!d and this is a place where a ton of Jewish history happened. It might be a place where people feel closer to G!d and so maybe G!d led Ya'akov there so G!d could connect with him.



**Unknown artist--Sarajevo  
Haggadah: Jacob's Dream, c. 1350**

**2) What do you think was the message of Ya'akov's dream of the ladder connecting the Earth and the heavens and the angels travelling up and down? What did the ladder, and the moving angels symbolize?**

**LIAM:** Maybe the ladder and angels are a way of telling Ya'akov that he has a connection with G!d and that G!d is about to talk to him. The angels show that G!d will help Ya'akov along his way.

**NOAH:** I think that the ladder in the dream connecting the land with the heavens is G!d's way of telling Ya'akov that this time now will be connected with the generations of the future.

**3) In Hebrew, the word for "angels" is related to the word for "messengers". How are angels and messengers similar or different from each other?**

**NOAH:** I believe in angels. In my dreams I was in the city and I saw an angel flying through the subway. I took its hand and flew around the city. I was in a dump truck on a rollercoaster and I was riding it with an angel and the car came off the tracks and then it started to fly. I feel like one important thing that angels do is protect people.