

“A LADDER WAS SET UP ON THE EARTH”

INTRODUCTION

I. Twice in the Bible, reference is made to “angels ascending and descending.”

A. The 1st time is in the Old Testament record of Jacob’s dream, which reads, *“Then he dreamed, and behold a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.”* (Gen. 28:12).

1. This is Jacob’s vision at Bethel, as God renewed His promise made to Abraham about Israel’s inheritance.

a. Note that GOD is **“above”** the ladder. v. 13

b. Note also that the ladder was set up **“on the earth”** and it **“reached to heaven.”**

c. Note also that where angels “ascend and descend” **“there is a ladder.”**

2. We may not know the significance of angels “ascending” (going up) before they “descended” (unless it signifies the calling of angels **to God**, and then being sent down to serve.)

B. The 2nd time a ladder is mentioned is in the New Testament where reference is made to angels “ascending and descending” (into heaven). Read John 1:51

1. Jesus had just met Nathaniel, who had been brought to Him by Philip. John 1:44-46

a. Jesus first revealed His knowledge of Nathanael. v. 47

b. Then Jesus explained how He **knew** about him. v. 48

c. Nathaniel is now convinced that Jesus was “the Son of God.” v. 49

2. Next, Jesus states that Nathanael would see greater things than these (the things just transpired).

3. **Then**, Jesus said that Nathanael would see heaven open, and angels “ascending and descending” upon the Son of man.

a. No specific reference is made to a “ladder”, but such is implied or suggested, since the only other time angels so ascended and descended, there **was** a ladder involved.

b. Note that Jesus states that the angels were “ascending and descending” upon the Son of man, the order being just as it was in Jacob’s vision.

II. Now, let’s look at our lesson, “A Ladder Was Set Up On the Earth.”

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, we observe that the ladder was “SET UP ON THE EARTH.”

A. Jacob’s ladder was set up “on the earth”, and Jesus, **as** a “ladder” came to earth to begin His mission of salvation.

B. The kingdom of God was set up on the earth in the city of Jerusalem, and was to spread throughout all the earth, and did so by A. D. 65. Mark 16:15; Col. 1:23

1. The kingdom was not “of” the earth, and would be a heavenly kingdom. John 18:36

2. Its citizens are in the kingdom while on earth, and will be transported from the earth to heaven at the return of the Lord. 1 Cor. 15:23-24

II. 2nd, we observe that the ladder “REACHED TO HEAVEN.”

A. Jacob’s ladder went FROM “earth:” TO heaven, with God being **above** the ladder. Gen.28:12-13

B. Christ is the ladder that will take the saved from an earthly life, to heaven where God is above, if they use Him AS that ladder. John 14:6; 10:1-5

III. 3rd, we observe that LADDERS HAVE MANY RUNGS.

A. A rung is one of the many cross-bars OF a ladder, upon which one steps when climbing the ladder.

B. There are many rungs to any ladder, and one does not reach the top by stepping on only one rung.

1. The **ground floor**, the area from which we **begin** to climb. Is the **word of God**, which we “hear”, so as to know where to take each step.

a. Some do “hear”, but do not take the next step of “faith”, that the word produces in honest and good hearts. Matt. 7:26-27

b. Others “hear” and act upon that hearing. Matt. 7:24-25

2. There are **eight rungs** on the ladder that leads from earth to heaven where God is above the earth.

a. The 1st rung is **BELIEF**, which comes **from** the hearing of the word, but we must not stop with belief “only”. Cf Jas. 2:24

b. The 2nd rung on the ladder to heaven is **REPENTANCE** or changing the heart about sin. Acts 2:36-38; 3:19; 17:30

c. The 3rd rung on the ladder to heaven is a **CONFESSION** of faith in Jesus as God’s Son. Acts 8:35-37; Rom. 10:9-10

d. The 4th rung on the ladder to heaven is **BAPTISM** *for* salvation, or the remission of sins. Acts 2:38; 22:16

1) As important as **belief** is, it must be coupled with baptism to save. Mark 16:16

2) Baptism is that which honors God, and without it we condemn ourselves. Luke 7:29-30

e. The 5th rung on the ladder to heaven is **WORSHIP** to God. John 4:24; Acts 2:42, 47

f. The 6th rung on the ladder to heaven is **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, or living right before God and man. 1 Pet. 4:2-4; Tit. 2:11-12; 2 Cor. 7:1

g. The 7th rung on the ladder to heaven is **GOOD WORKS** for the Lord. Matt. 5:16; Tit. 3:1

h. The 8th and final rung on the ladder to heaven is **FAITHFULNESS** in all things till the end of life. 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10

CONCLUSION

I. Which **one** of the rungs SAVES?

A. Not just one rung is more important than another, for they ALL are essential, and we cannot get to the final rung without climbing on ALL the rungs—from the first to the last.

B. Remember, heaven is not gained by a single run, but we get to heaven rung by rung.

II. Where are YOU on this ladder to heaven?

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