

PANORAMA OF PROPHECY

A LIFE-CHANGING BIBLE STUDY!

WINDOWS IN HEAVEN

Genesis 27:1-28

THE STORY ...



Jacob had never felt so destitute and alone—and it was all because he had been devious and greedy. First Jacob had bribed Esau, his elder twin, into selling his birthright. Then, with his mother's help, he tricked his blind father, Isaac, into giving him the paternal blessing that rightfully belonged to Esau.

Now Jacob was fleeing from home, partly to escape the murderous threats of his offended brother. He bowed his head and cried when he thought of how all his grasping plans had backfired. Alone in the wilderness, with only a stone for a pillow and a stick for protection, Jacob tried to rest. He wondered if he would ever see his parents again—and if God would forgive him. Exhausted, Jacob drifted off to sleep. Soon he found himself bathed in the brilliant glow of a vivid dream. He saw a blazing light streaming from the open heavens, with a beautiful stairway spanning from the glory above to the earth below. There were countless shimmering angels traveling up and down this ladder.

Then Jacob heard the Lord speak from heaven and promise to bless him in his journey. The Lord also confirmed with Jacob the same covenant He had made with Abraham and Isaac. When he awoke, Jacob fell on his knees and made a vow to abandon his greedy ways. He promised, “Of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.” Genesis 28:22.

God accepted this vow and opened the windows of heaven so that when Jacob returned home 20 years later, he had become a very prosperous and generous man.



THE STUDY

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. Where did Jacob learn the concept of returning a tenth to God?

Genesis 14:18, 20 *Melchizedek ... was the priest of God Most High. ... And [Abraham] gave him a _____ of all.*

NOTE: Tithe is one-tenth of a person's income. In fact, the word "tithe" simply means "a tenth." Jacob's grandfather, Abraham, set an example many years earlier by giving a tithe to God's priest, Melchizedek.

2. What portion of our income belongs to God?

Leviticus 27:30 *All the _____ ... is the _____. It is holy to the LORD.*

NOTE: Technically, 100 percent of all we have belongs to God.

Psalms 24:1 *The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.*

But God asks us to acknowledge that we believe it all belongs to Him by returning a tithe, or 10 percent of our increase.

3. What does God do with our tithe?

Numbers 18:21, 24 *I have given the children of Levi all the _____ in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform. ... The _____ of the children of Israel ... I have given to the Levites as an inheritance.*

1 Corinthians 9:13, 14 *Do you not know that those who _____ the holy things _____ of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who _____ the gospel should live from the gospel.*

NOTE: In the Old Testament, God directed that the tithe be used to support the Levites, who were His ministers. In 1 Corinthians 9:13, God says that just as the priests of old were paid from the tithe of the temple, so gospel ministers today should be paid from tithe given through the church.

4. Is the tithing system part of Moses' old law, which ended at the cross?

Genesis 28:20, 22 *Then Jacob made a vow, saying, ... "Of all that You give me I will surely _____ a tenth to You."*

NOTE: No! Both Abraham and Jacob gave a tenth of their income to God long before Moses' law was given. Because it pre-dated Sinai, we know that it was not part of the ceremonial law that ended at the cross. The law of tithing is God's plan for support of the ministry, and it remains in effect today.

5. But didn't Jesus condemn the tithing plan?

Matthew 23:23 *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay _____ of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you _____ to have done, without leaving the others undone.*

NOTE: No. Jesus saw that the miserly Pharisees were counting out individual leaves and tiny seeds for tithe instead of taking it to the temple by the bushel. Therefore He rebuked them for being so exact in tithe while failing in judgment, mercy, and faith. He did not condemn them for tithing, but for ignoring the other great principles of Christianity. That is why Jesus said, "These you ought to have done [speaking of tithing], without leaving the others undone."

6. What amazing promise does God make about tithing?

Malachi 3:10 *"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,... and _____ Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not _____ for you the windows of _____ and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."*

NOTE: God is saying: "If you are doubtful, try tithing as an experiment. Test Me, and see if I won't return to you a blessing too vast for you to receive." Hundreds of thousands of tithepayers will tell you that it is true. You cannot outgive God!

7. God tells His people to bring all of the tithe into the storehouse. What does that mean?

Nehemiah 13:12 *Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the _____ .*

LESSON 15

NOTE: The storehouse is the treasury of God's church. (The Bible margin equates "treasuries" with "storehouses.") In Malachi 3:10, God refers to the storehouse as "mine house," which means His church, or temple. Other texts that refer to the storehouse as the temple, or temple treasury, are 1 Chronicles 9:26 (see margin); 2 Chronicles 31:11, 12 (see margin); and Nehemiah 10:37, 38. So it is obvious that the storehouse is God's church treasury.

8. When we tithe, who really receives our money?

Hebrews 7:8 *Here mortal men receive tithes, but there _____
[Jesus] receives them.*

Colossians 3:23 *And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the
_____ and not to men.*

NOTE: We need to always remember that we are not returning our tithe to people, but to God. It belongs to Him. We need not worry about how the tithe is used if we give it to God. He is big enough to take care of His own money and to properly handle anyone who may be irresponsible in managing His funds.

9. In addition to my tithe, which belongs to God, what else does He ask of His people?

Psalms 96:8 *Bring an _____, and come into His courts.*

Malachi 3:8 *Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, "In what way have we robbed You?" In tithes and _____.*

NOTE: The Lord asks us to give freewill offerings as an expression of our love for Him and our thanksgiving for His blessings.

10. How much should we give as offerings?

2 Corinthians 9:7 *So let each one give as he purposes in his _____,
not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

NOTE: The Bible does not set a specific amount. Each person decides how much to give for freewill offerings, as God impresses.

11. What test did Adam and Eve fail that we must pass if we expect to inherit God's kingdom?

Genesis 3:3 *But of the fruit of the _____ which is in the midst of
the garden, God has said, "You shall _____ eat it, nor shall you
_____ it, lest you die."*

NOTE: God told Adam and Eve they could eat the fruit of all the trees of the garden except one—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not to eat of that tree or even touch it, else they would die. God did not put an electric fence around the tree. Rather, He kept it where they could reach out and take the fruit. And they did, because they did not trust God. Today, God gives us all the same test. He says, “You can keep all the money that comes to you, except one tenth. That money is Mine. Don’t take it.” However, He leaves it where we can reach out and take it, if we so desire. But when we do, we repeat the sin of Adam and Eve. God did not need the fruit of the special tree. It was a test of their loyalty. Neither does He need our tithe. He owns everything! It is a test of our love, loyalty, and trust.

12. What commandment are we breaking when we refuse to return tithes and offerings to God?

Malachi 3:8 *Will a man _____ God? Yet you have _____ Me! But you say, “In what way have we robbed You?” In tithes and offerings.*

Exodus 20:15 *You shall not _____ .*

NOTE: God says those who are knowingly unfaithful in tithes and offerings are robbers. It is bad enough when men steal from one another, but it is a terrifying thought that people would dare to steal from God! It is also hard to believe that people would stoop so low as to steal money that God has designated for spreading the gospel to the lost.

13. What does God say will happen to those who knowingly rob Him of tithes and offerings?

Malachi 3:9 *You are cursed with a _____ , for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation.*

1 Corinthians 6:10 *Nor _____ , nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*

NOTE: Those who are not faithful in tithes and offerings are cursed, and unless they change, they will be shut out of God’s kingdom as thieves.

14. Why is covetousness so dangerous?

Luke 12:34 *For where your _____ is, there your heart will be also.*

LESSON 15

NOTE: Covetousness is lethal because our hearts follow our investments. If my focus is on accumulating more and more money, my heart becomes covetous, grasping, and proud. But if my focus is on advancing God's work, my heart becomes caring, loving, liberal, and humble. Our hearts inevitably follow our treasure. We must never forget that it was Judas' greed and love for money that led him to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-16).

15. How do you suppose Jesus feels when we rob Him of tithes and offerings?

Hebrews 3:10 *Therefore I was _____ with that generation, and said, "They always go astray in their heart."*

NOTE: Jesus probably feels much as a parent would whose child steals money from his wallet. Losing the money is not the big thing. Rather, it is the child's lack of integrity, love, and trust that is deeply disappointing. Surely none of us wants to grieve the heart of our Saviour.

16. What other Bible principles does God share in regard to giving?

A. 2 Corinthians 8:5 *They first gave _____ to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.*

B. Proverbs 3:9 *Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the _____ of all your increase.*

C. Proverbs 11:24, 25 *There is one who scatters, yet _____ more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The _____ soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.*

D. Acts 20:35 *It is more _____ to _____ than to receive.*

E. Luke 12:21 *He who lays up treasure for _____ ... is not _____ toward God.*

F. Luke 6:38 *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and _____ will be put into your bosom.*

G. 1 Corinthians 16:2 *Let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may _____ .*

H. Deuteronomy 16:17 *Every man shall give as he is able,*
_____ to the _____ of the LORD your God which He
has given you.

NOTE: Nine-tenths of my income with God's blessing will go much further than ten-tenths without it. Incidentally, when God opens the windows of heaven, His blessings are not always financial. They may include such things as good health, peace of mind, answered prayers, protection, a close-knit and loving family, physical strength, ability to make wise decisions, a closer walk with Jesus, success in soul-winning, an old car kept running, etc. If we truly love Jesus, giving sacrificially for His work will never be a burden. Rather, it is a blessing—a glorious privilege that we will perform with great joy and satisfaction.

17. What did the ladder that Jacob saw in his dream represent?

John 1:51 *Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the _____ of _____ .*

NOTE: Jacob saw a ladder that bridged heaven with earth, which symbolized the Son of Man. In Malachi 3:10, God says that if we bring all the tithes into the storehouse, He will open for us the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing we can barely receive! Jesus is that blessing.

18. What is the greatest gift we can give to Jesus?

Proverbs 23:26 *My son, give me _____ ,
and let your eyes observe my ways.*

Mark 7:6 *This people honors Me with their lips, but their _____
is far from Me.*

NOTE: When Jesus has our hearts, He has everything else too.

LESSON 15

YOUR RESPONSE

When we are faithful in tithes and offerings, Jesus becomes our partner in everything we attempt in life. Are you willing to invite Him to be your partner by returning tithes and giving offerings?

ANSWER: _____