

## I. REVIEW/INTRO

A. The God who seems nowhere, is always here

**Psalm 46:1-3 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth gives way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, <sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

**Psalm 46:7 (NIV)** <sup>7</sup> The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

B. God still wanted to be called the God of Jacob

C. Jacob's encounter with God

- God was here and I didn't know it

**Genesis 28:16-17 (NIV)** <sup>16</sup> When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." <sup>17</sup> He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

- Bethel means the house of God. Not only was God here, this is where He lives.

## II. LET'S MAKE A DEAL

A. God's promise to Jacob in the dream

- I'm the God of Abraham & Isaac, and I'm going to be your God too

**Genesis 28:15 (NIV)** I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

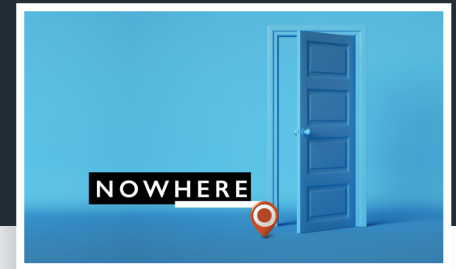
B. Jacob had a vision but now he makes a vow

**Genesis 28:20-22 (NIV)** <sup>20</sup> Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear <sup>21</sup> so that I return safely to my father's household, then the Lord will be my God <sup>22</sup> and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."

C. The return to Bethel

**Genesis 35:1 (NIV)** Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau."

**Genesis 35:3 (NIV)** <sup>3</sup> Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone."



- When Jacob met God the first time—Bethel was a place

D. Jacob realizes that Bethel is not just a place but a person

- There is a difference between God being everywhere and God being... HERE

### III. ALWAYS HERE

A. God changes nowhere to now here

B. Christmas story—Emmanuel, God with us

C. God is more near than we realize

**2 Kings 6:14-16 (NIV) <sup>14</sup> Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city. <sup>15</sup> When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. “Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?” the servant asked. <sup>16</sup> “Don’t be afraid,” the prophet answered. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”**

**2 Kings 6:17 (NIV) <sup>17</sup> And Elisha prayed, “Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see.” Then the Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.**

**Luke 5:17-20 (NKJV) <sup>17</sup> Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them. <sup>18</sup> Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. <sup>19</sup> And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with *his* bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus. <sup>20</sup> When He saw their faith, He said to him, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.”**

**Luke 5:21-25 (NKJV) <sup>21</sup> And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” <sup>22</sup> But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? <sup>23</sup> Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise up and walk’? <sup>24</sup> But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”**

**James 4:8a (NKJV) <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...**