

# **John 1:51 and the motif of “Jacob’s ladder” in Genesis 28:12**

**By**

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## SUMMARY

**Title: John 1:51 and the motif of “Jacob’s ladder” in Genesis 28:12**

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The motif of “Jacob’s vision” in John 1:51 is used to prove that Jesus was the apocalyptic Son of Man who fulfilled the promise that was given to Jacob through his dream in Genesis 28:12. This dream was different from Joseph’s (Gn 37:9) or Abimelech’s (Gn 20:8). From the gate of heaven that Jacob mentioned after the dream, it is possible to interpret the vision of Jacob eschatologically. In Ezekiel’s vision (Ezk 1:1) and Daniel’s vision (Dn 7:13), there are eschatological approaches about the open heaven and the one that comes from heaven. Therefore the vision of Jacob through the dream in Bethel was interpreted eschatologically by later traditions.

The interpretation of the Rabbinic tradition about Jacob’s dream has an eschatological perspective. For example: the author of *Jacob’s Ladder*, the first century CE Pseudepigraphon, interpreted it as an eschatological vision according to their interpretation of the archangel in Genesis 5-7. The Rabbi in Genesis Rabba also interpreted it as a celestial icon as it is perceived in mysticism. Jacob’s dream is mentioned in the *Testament of Levi*, and the dream of Levi is added to it. The dream of Levi is an extension of Jacob’s dream. Levi was invited to heaven by the angel to receive the priesthood. It is a celestial interpretation of Jacob’s vision. In the tradition of the intertestamental period, the Son of Man was understood as an eschatological figure.

The author of John's gospel also used this vision with the concept of the "Son of Man", which is considered as an apocalyptic term. Nathanael and all the people with him who heard Jesus' promise in Jn 1:51, understood it as an eschatological promise. It was not a personal promise to Nathanael alone, but a general promise to all who listened to it and all the readers of John's gospel. It is therefore possible to interpret this promise as an apocalyptic interpretation of Gn 28:12 similar to those of the Rabbis. There are three motifs in Jn 1:51: the open heaven (Ezk 1:1), the angels ascending and descending (Gn 28:12), and the Son of Man (Dn 7:13). These three motifs are eschatological concepts in the Old Testament tradition as well as in Judaism. It means that Jn 1:51 has to be understood with its eschatological promise.

In Revelation the concept of the open heaven is also used. The ascending and descending angels are described in more detail in Revelation. The open heaven is used in Rv 4:1, and 19:11, and the Son of Man appeared in Rv 1:13, 14:14. Although the direct phrase "the angels ascending and descending" is not used, the scenes of the angels are described as moving between heaven and earth to execute the judgement of God on the last day. From this conception, it can be concluded that the promise in Jn 1:51 has to be interpreted as a connecting point of the eschatological interpretation to Revelation.

## **Keywords**

**The ladder of Jacob**

**Pseudepigraphy**

**Apocryphon**

**The angels ascending and descending**

**The open heaven**

**The Son of Man**

**Revelation**

**Eschatology**

**Ascension**

**Parousia**

# ABBREVIATIONS

## A. Abbreviations of the Bible books

Old Testament		New Testament	
Gn	Genesis	Mt	Matthew
Ex	Exodus	Mk	Mark
Lv	Leviticus	Lk	Luke
Nm	Numbers	Jn	John
Dt	Deuteronomy	Ac	Acts
Jos	Joshua	Rm	Romans
Jdg	Judges	1 Cor	1 Corinthians
Ruth	Ruth	2 Cor	2 Corinthians
1 Sm	1 Samuel	Gl	Galatians
2 Sm	2 Samuel	Eph	Ephesians
1 Ki	1 Kings	Phlp	Philippians
2 Ki	2 Kings	Col	Colossians
1 Chr	1 Chronicles	1 Th	1 Thessalonians
2 Chr	2 chronicles	2 Th	2 Thessalonians
Ezr	Ezra	1 Tm	1 Timothy
Neh	Nehemiah	2 Tm	2 Timothy
Es	Esther	Tt	Titus
Job	Job	Phlm	Philemon
Ps	Psalms	Heb	Hebrews
Pr	Proverbs	Ja	James
Ec	Ecclesiastes	1 Pt	1 Peter
Can	Song of Songs	2 Pt	2 Peter
Is	Isaiah	1 Jn	1 John
Jr	Jeremiah	2 Jn	2 John
Lm	Lamentations	3 Jn	3 John
Ezk	Ezekiel	Jude	Jude
Dn	Daniel	Rv	Revelation
Hs	Hosea		
Jl	Joel		
Am	Amos		
Ob	Obadiah		
Jnh	Jonah		
Mi	Micah		
Nah	Nahum		
Hab	Habakkuk		

Zph	Zephaniah	
Hg	Haggai	
Zch	Zechariah	
Ml	Malach	

## B. General Abbreviations

A.D.	Anno Domini
B.C.	Before Christ
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
Cf.	Confer
CD	Cairo-Damascus Document
Ch(s)	Chapter(s)
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
ed(s)	Editor(s)
e.g.	For example
i.e.	That is
LXX	Septuagint
MS(S)	Manuscript(s)
MT	Massoretic Text
NAB	The New American Bible
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NA28	Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland 27h Edition.
NIV	New International Version
NKJ	New King James Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
Tg	Targum translation
tr	translation
Vol(s)	Volume(s)
Sum	Sumerian
Akk	Akkadian
Eg	Egyptian
Ug	Ugaritica
Eth	Ethiopic

## C. Abbreviations of Reference Works

<i>ABD</i>	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Ed. D. N. Freedman. Vols. 6. New York: Doubleday, 1992
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ANT	Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. [1987] 1996. <i>The antiquities of the Jews</i> , in <i>The works of Josephus : Complete and unabridged</i> . Includes index. Peabody: Hendrickson.
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts
BAGD	<i>Greek-English Lexicon of the NT</i> . Ed. W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, & F. W. Danker. Chicago:1979.
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BZNW	<i>Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
BYZ	<i>Byzantine Text Form</i> , 2005 Compiled and arranged by Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont.
Cyr	<i>Cyrillus Alexandrinus I-X (PG 68-77)</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
Clem.Recog.	<i>Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions</i>
DBI	<i>Dictionary of Biblical Imagery</i> . Ed., Ryken, L, Wilhoit, J C & Longman III, T. Illinois:InterVarsity Press. 1998.
DCG	<i>Dictionary of Christ and the gospel. V II</i> . Ed., J Hastings, J C Lamvert, J A Selbie. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
EDNT	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the NT</i> . Ed. H. Balz & G. Schneider. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1994
EmJ	<i>The Emmaus Journal</i>
HALOT	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the OT</i>
IDB	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Ed. G. A. Buttrick Vols. 4. New York: Abingdon Press. 1962
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JPS	<i>The Holy Scriptures (Old Testament)</i> , originally published by the Jewish Publication Society in 1917
LTJ	<i>Lutheran Theological Journal</i>
LNL	<i>Louw-Nida Greek Lexicon</i>
NA28	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland 28h Edition</i> . 2012 Deutsch Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart.
NAC	<i>The New American Commentary</i>
NBD	<i>The New Bible Dictionary</i> . Ed. J. D. Douglas. London: Inter-Varsity Press. (1962) 1974
NIDNTT	<i>New International Dictionary of NT Theology</i> . Ed. C. Brown. Vols. 4. Cumbria: Paternoster Press. 1986

NIDOTTE	<i>New International Dictionary of OT Theology &amp; Exegesis</i> . Ed. W. A. VanGemeren. Vols. 4. Cumbria: Paternoster Press. 1997
NovTSup	<i>Supplements to Novum Testamentum</i>
NTF	<i>Neutestamentliche Forschungen</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTSSA	<i>Journal of the NT Society of South Africa</i>
OKE	<i>Targum Onkelos on the Pentateuch (English) translation by J.W.Etheridge</i>
OTP	Charles, RH [1913]1964 (ed). <i>The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English: With Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books</i> . Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
OTPC1	Charlesworth, JH (ed). 1983 <i>The Old Testament pseudepigrapha</i> . V. 1. New York: Doubleday & company.
OTPC2	Charlesworth, JH (ed). 1985 <i>The Old Testament pseudepigrapha</i> . V. 2. New York: Doubleday & company.
OPE	<i>The Pseudepigrapha</i> (English), Translated by Craig E. Evans, assisted by Danny Zacharias, Matt Walsh, and Scott Kohler. Copyright © 2008 Craig A. Evans.
OPG	<i>The Greek Pseudepigrapha</i> . Electronic text prepared by Craig A. Evans. Morphologically tagged by Rex A. Koivisto. Copyright © 2008 Craig A. Evans. Copyright © OakTree Software, Inc.
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca-Latina (Migne)</i>
RSR	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
SB	H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck. <i>Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch</i> . München: D. H. Beck, 1926-61.
SBLSP	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the NT</i> . Ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Eng. Trans. G. W. Bromiley. Vols. 10. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids. 1964-1976.
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the OT</i> . Ed. G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren & Heinz-Josef. Fabry. Eng. Trans. E. G. David. Vols. 7. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids. 1995/1978/2001
ThE	<i>Theological Educator: A Journal of Theology and Ministry</i>
TLNT	<i>Theological Lexicon of the NT</i> . By Ceslas Spicq. Ed. & Trans. Ernest, J. D. Vols. 3. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.
TLOT	<i>Theological Lexicon of the OT</i>



<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TWOT</i>	<i>Theological Wordbook of the OT.</i> Ed. R. L. Harris. et al., Vols. 2. Chicago: Moody Press. 1980
<i>VKGNT</i>	<i>Vollständige Konkordanz zum Griechischen Neuen Testament.</i> Vols. 2. (Spezialübersichten). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. 1978
<i>VKGNT WAR</i>	<i>Vollständige Konkordanz zum Griechischen Neuen Testament.</i> Vols. 2. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. 1983.
	Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. [1987] 1996. <i>The wars of the Jews or the history of the destruction of Jerusalem, in</i> The works of Josephus: Complete and unabridged. Includes index. Peabody: Hendrickson.
<i>WBC</i>	<i>Word Biblical Commentary</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZPEB</i>	<i>The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible.</i> Ed. Tenney, M.C. Vols. 5. Michigan: Grand Rapids. 1975

## E. Abbreviations of Jewish Writings

<i>Apocryphal Books in More Detail</i>	
<i>1ES</i>	<i>1 Esdras in the LXX – a paraphrase of 2 Chr. 35-36; Ezra; Neh. 8; with an original story</i>
<i>ESG</i>	<i>Greek Esther (LXX additions to Est. 1:1; 3:13; 4:17; 5:1-2; 8:12; and 10:3)</i>
<i>JDT</i>	<i>Judith</i>
<i>TOB</i>	<i>Tobit</i>
<i>1MA</i>	<i>1 Maccabees</i>
<i>2MA</i>	<i>2 Maccabees</i>
<i>ODE</i>	<i>Odes – Biblical canticles most of which form part of the morning office in the Byzantine rite</i>
<i>WIS</i>	<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>
<i>SIP</i>	<i>Prologue to Sirach</i>
<i>SIR</i>	<i>Wisdom of Sirach (also known as Ecclesiasticus)</i>
<i>PSS</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon – 18 first century B.C. Greek psalms relating to capture of Jerusalem by Romans</i>
<i>BAR</i>	<i>Baruch</i>

<i>EPJ</i>	<i>Epistle of Jeremiah (= Chapter 6 of Baruch)</i>
<i>SUS</i>	<i>Susanna (an addition to the Book of Daniel) (= Daniel Greek chapter 13)</i>
<i>BEL</i>	<i>Bel and the Dragon (an addition to the Book of Daniel) (= Daniel Greek chapter 14)</i>
<i>PRA</i>	<i>Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews (an addition to the Book of Daniel) (included in Daniel Greek chapter 3)</i>
<i>PRM</i>	<i>Prayer of Manasseh – 2nd Century B.C. – 1st Century A.D. prayer attributed to Manasseh, son of righteous Hezekiah, but the wickedest king in Judah (2Kgs 21:1-8; 2Ch 33:1-20) (= Odes 12)</i>
<i>PSX</i>	<i>Psalm 151 – psalm originally in Hebrew, perhaps as early as 3rd Century B.C. (included in BibleWorks LXX as Psa 151)</i>
<i>4ES</i>	<i>4 Esdras – a Latin apocalyptic pseudepigraph</i>
<i>LAO</i>	<i>Epistle to the Laodiceans – Vulgate – of unknown date, purportedly written by Paul, but clearly a plagiarization of Philippians and other Pauline letters – contained only in the Latin Vulgate</i>
<i>JSA</i>	<i>Joshua (A)</i>
<i>JDA</i>	<i>Judges (A)</i>
<i>TBS</i>	<i>Tobit (S)</i>
<i>DNG</i>	<i>Daniel (Greek)</i>
<i>SUT</i>	<i>Susanna (TH)</i>
<i>DAT</i>	<i>Daniel (TH)</i>
<i>BET</i>	<i>Bel and the Dragon (TH)</i>

<i>OPE / OPG / OPM / OTP Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Abbreviations</i>	
<i>1EN</i>	<i>1 Enoch</i>
<i>2EN</i>	<i>2 Enoch</i>
<i>2BA</i>	<i>2 Baruch</i>
<i>3BA</i>	<i>3 Baruch</i>
<i>4BA</i>	<i>4 Baruch</i>
<i>4ES</i>	<i>4 Esdras</i>
<i>3MA</i>	<i>3 Maccabees</i>
<i>4MA</i>	<i>4 Maccabees</i>
<i>ADA</i>	<i>The Books of Adam and Eve</i>
<i>AH1</i>	<i>The Story of Ahikar (Arabic version)</i>
<i>AH2</i>	<i>The Story of Ahikar (Syriac A version)</i>
<i>AH3</i>	<i>The Story of Ahikar (Syriac B version)</i>
<i>AH4</i>	<i>The Story of Ahikar (Armenian version)</i>
<i>AEA</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Elijah A</i>

AEB	<i>Apocalypse of Elijah B</i>
AEJ	<i>Aristeas the Exegete</i>
APE	<i>Apocryphon of Ezekiel</i>
APF	<i>Apocalyptic Fragment</i>
APM	<i>Apocalypse of Moses (Life of Adam and Eve)</i>
APR	<i>Apocalypse of Ezra</i>
APS	<i>Apocalypse of Sedrach</i>
APZ	<i>Apocalypse of Zephaniah</i>
ARB	<i>Fragments of Aristobulus</i>
ARI	<i>The Letter of Aristeas</i>
ART	<i>Fragments of Artapanus</i>
ASM	<i>The Assumption of Moses</i>
CLE	<i>Cleodemus Malcus</i>
DMT	<i>Demetrius the Chronographer</i>
ELD	<i>Eldad and Modad</i>
ETR	<i>Ezekiel the Tragedian, Exagoge</i>
EUP	<i>Eupolemus Concerning Moses</i>
EX1	<i>Exorcism Fragment A</i>
EX2	<i>Exorcism Fragment B</i>
HEC	<i>Pseudo-Hecateus</i>
HIJ	<i>History of Joseph</i>
JA1	<i>Penitence of Jannes and Jambres A</i>
JA2	<i>Penitence of Jannes and Jambres B</i>
JAA	<i>Joseph and Aseneth</i>
JUB	<i>The Book of Jubilees</i>
LadJac	<i>The Ladder of Jacob</i>
LIV	<i>Lives of the Prophets</i>
MRI	<i>The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah A</i>
MRB	<i>The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah B</i>
ODS	<i>Odes of Solomon 11</i>
ORD	<i>Ordinances of Levi</i>
ORP	<i>Orphica</i>
PEU	<i>Pseudo-Eupolemus</i>
PHL	<i>Philo the Epic Poet</i>
PIR	<i>Pirke Aboth</i>
PHO	<i>Pseudo-Phocylides</i>
PJA	<i>Prayer of Jacob</i>
PJO	<i>Prayer of Joseph</i>
PLV	<i>Prayer of Levi</i>
PRM	<i>Prayer of Manasseh</i>

<i>PRP</i>	<i>Prophetic Fragment</i>
<i>PSS</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
<i>REC</i>	<i>History of the Rechabites</i>
<i>RIL</i>	<i>The Rich Man and the Precious Stone</i>
<i>SBP</i>	<i>The Sibylline Oracles Prologue</i>
<i>SIB</i>	<i>The Sibylline Oracles</i>
<i>ZAD</i>	<i>The Fragments of a Zadokite Work</i>
<i>T. Jac</i>	<i>The Testament of Jacob</i>
<i>T12</i>	<i>The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i>
<i>T. Reu</i>	<i>The Testament of Reuben</i>
<i>T. Sim</i>	<i>The Testament of Simeon</i>
<i>T. Lev</i>	<i>The Testament of Levi</i>
<i>T. Jud</i>	<i>The Testament of Judah</i>
<i>T. Iss</i>	<i>The Testament of Issachar</i>
<i>T. Zeb</i>	<i>The Testament of Zebulun</i>
<i>T. Dan</i>	<i>The Testament of Dan</i>
<i>T. Nap</i>	<i>The Testament of Naphtali</i>
<i>T. Gad</i>	<i>The Testament of Gad</i>
<i>T. Ash</i>	<i>The Testament of Asher</i>
<i>T. Jos</i>	<i>The Testament of Joseph</i>
<i>T. Ben</i>	<i>The Testament of Benjamin</i>
<i>TA1</i>	<i>The Testament of Abraham A</i>
<i>TA2</i>	<i>The Testament of Abraham B</i>
<i>TAd1</i>	<i>The Testament of Adam A</i>
<i>TAd2</i>	<i>The Testament of Adam B</i>
<i>THE</i>	<i>Theodotus</i>
<i>TJO</i>	<i>The Testament of Job</i>
<i>TMO</i>	<i>The Testament of Moses</i>
<i>TS1</i>	<i>The Testament of Solomon A</i>
<i>TS2</i>	<i>The Testament of Solomon B</i>
<i>TS3</i>	<i>The Testament of Solomon C</i>
<i>TS4</i>	<i>The Testament of Solomon D</i>
<i>ZEF</i>	<i>Zechariah Fragment</i>

## **D. Abbreviations of Dead Sea Scrolls**

<i>1QS</i>	<i>Manual of Discipline (Serek Hayyahad, Rule/Order of the Community)</i>
<i>1Q29</i>	<i>Liturgy of the Three Tongues of fire</i>
<i>4Q175</i>	<i>Testamonia</i>

4Q374	<i>Discourse on the Exodus/Conquest Tradition</i>
4Q375	<i>4QApocryphon of Moses a</i>
4Q376	<i>4QApocryphon of Moses b</i>
4Q377	<i>4QApocryphon Pentateuch B</i>
4Q521	<i>Messianic Apocalypse</i>
11QMel	<i>Melchizedek</i>

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Statement of the problem

*Jacob's vision in Genesis 28:12 is used in John 1:51 to reveal the apocalyptic role of the Son of Man. A similar picture about the concept of an opened heaven reappears in Revelation 4:1, 19:11.*

The vision of Jacob in Genesis 28 was used again by the author of John's gospel in Jn 1:51, while the phrase, the "Son of Man" occurs elsewhere in many places. For example, the "Son of Man" is used thirteen times in John's gospel<sup>1</sup>, fourteen in Mark<sup>2</sup>, twenty six times in Luke<sup>3</sup>, and nineteen in Matthew<sup>4</sup> (Green, McKnight & Marshall 1992:776-777). It is also used in Acts 7:56; Heb 14:14; Rev 1:13; 14:14 (Freedman, Myers & Beck 2000:1242). It became a central issue in modern scholarship because of the frequent use of the expression the "Son of Man". According to Burkett (1999:1), the vigorous study of this expression in the gospels is because it is the self-designation of Jesus, and many scholars considered it as a key to Jesus' self-consciousness. However, studies about the vision of Jacob seem to be limited to commentaries and ad hoc studies by a few scholars.

John 1:51 is Jesus' response to Nathanael's confession about Jesus. Nathanael confessed Jesus to be the Son of God and the king of Israel. But Jesus' response to his confession refers to the Son of Man and Jacob's dream. There is not enough information in the text to understand this conversation between Jesus

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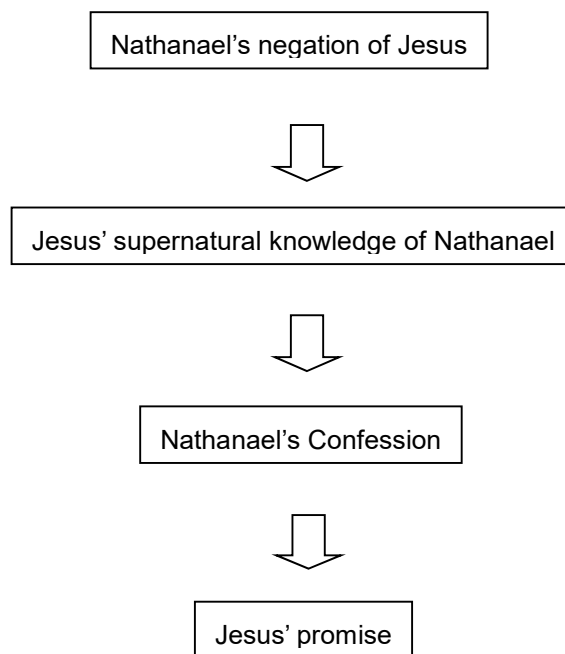
<sup>1</sup> Jn 1:51; 3:13, 14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:34a, b; 12:23; 13:31.

<sup>2</sup> Mk 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21a, b, 41, 62.

<sup>3</sup> Lk 5:24; 6:5, 22; 7:34; 9:22, 26, 44, 58; 11:30; 12:8, 10, 40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30; 18:8, 31, 32; 19:10; 21:27, 36; 22:22, 48, 69; 24:7).

<sup>4</sup> Mt 9:6; 12:8; 16:27; 17:9, 12, 22; 20:18, 28; 24:30b; 26:24a, b, 45, 64; Mt 16:13; 16:28; 24:30a; 26:2.

and Nathanael. There is no explanation why Nathanael accepts Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God. Jesus' knowledge that Nathaniel was under the tree is the only reason given in the text for Nathanael's acceptance of Jesus. However that is not reason enough for changing from negation to confession (Brown 1971:87). It is difficult to find the connection point between Nathanael's confession and Jesus' promise. Nathanael confessed Jesus to be the Son of God and the king of Israel in v. 49. The response of Jesus is about the greater things that Nathanael shall see. In v. 51 it is extended to the whole audience who were with Jesus and Nathanael. The progress of the meeting between Nathanael and Jesus is as follows,



The meeting between Jesus and Nathanael begins with Philip's introduction of Nathanael to Jesus. The plot of the story developed up to Nathanael's strong negation, which is a break in the flow of the story. Jesus' promise about the opened heaven adds an extra statement to the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael, which was in fact completed with Nathanael's confession. This

addition in v. 51 is no longer addressed to Nathanael only, but also to all the people present as the pronoun changed from singular 'σοι' in v. 50 to plural 'ὑμῖν' in v. 51. It means that this promise is not for one person, but to all. When Jesus used the saying of the Old Testament tradition about Jacob's vision, it meant that the promise of Jesus linked up with the expectation of the Old Testament or at least with the expectation of the people who understood Jacob's vision as an apocalyptic vision. The *Ladder of Jacob*, a pseudepigraphon, stands as an example that Jacob's vision was understood apocalyptically. The Ladder of Jacob, which is estimated to be written in the first century CE, has an apocalyptic interpretation of the vision as a comment on Gn 28:11-22 (Russell 1987:70). The apocalyptical concept of an opened heaven is found in Revelation 4:1, 19:11, as well as in 1 En 14:8-25, the *T. Lev* 5:13 and 3 Macc. 6:18. Cadman and Caird (1969:28) indicate that the Son of God and the king of Israel, which Nathanael used in his confession, was a well-known eschatological figure in that era.

This additional promise of Jesus is related to Nathanael's expectation as shared by the Jewish people of that time. It can also be related to what Nathanael did under the tree, because it probably implies more than the fact that Jesus only saw him under the tree. To interpret the relation between v. 48 and v. 51, there are some questions to be answered.

In this context, there are three questions:

1. Is it indeed the motif of Jacob's dream of Genesis 28 that is referred to in Jn 1:51?
2. Is there an apocalyptic tendency present in Jn 1:51 as is the case in the "*Ladder of Jacob*" pseudepigraphon?
3. Is it legitimate to connect Genesis 28 to the vision of the opened heaven in Revelation?

## 1.2. Research history

The allusion to Gn 28:12 in Jn 1:51 was dealt in the past by several scholars. St. Augustine already regarded v. 51 as an allusion to Genesis 28 (Bernard & McNeile 1928:70). Augustine regarded the ladder as a type of Jesus in *Faustum*, xii. 26. He writes:

Christ is the ladder reaching from earth to heaven or from the carnal to the spiritual: for by His assistance the carnal ascend to spirituality; and the spiritual may be said to descend to nourish the carnal with milk when they cannot speak to them as to spiritual, but as to carnal (Augustin 1997a:192).

He also regarded Jacob as a type of Christ in *De Civ. Dei* XVI. 39:

As I said a little while ago, Jacob was also called Israel, the name which was most prevalent among the people descended from him. Now this name was given him by the angel who wrestled with him on the way back from Mesopotamia, and who was most evidently a type of Christ (Augustin 1997b:333).

He also mentioned Jacob's vision, when he preached on Jn 1:48 in *Serm.* CXXII, 2:

Now then give ear, attend to this Nathanael, by the occasion of whom the Lord Jesus hath been pleased to explain to us Jacob's vision (Augustin 1997c:471).

Most modern scholars agree that Jn 1:51 alludes to Jacob's vision in Gn 28:12 (Bernard & McNeile 1928:67; Bruce 1983:62; Köstenberger 2004:85; Lincoln 2005:122; Schnackenburg 1980:320). However, Steyn (2015:3) regarded it as an explicit quotation. According to Steyn (2015:4-5), there are four major differences between LXX and John's quotation from Genesis 28: The first difference is ἀνεωγότα (Jn 1:51). There is no mention about the open heaven in Genesis 28.

The second is τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ in Jn 1:51. While it was used as nominative plural in Gn 28:12, John used it in the accusative plural. The third is difference between ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας (Jn 1:51) and ἀνέβαινον καὶ κατέβαινον (Gn 28:12). The last is “the Son of Man” was used in Jn 1:51 instead of ἐπ’ αὐτῆς (Gn 28:12).

Johnson (1992:1) approached it from three aspects: The Old Testament, the writings of early Judaism, and the New Testament. He focused on the use of Jacob’s narrative in Jn 1:43-51 and 4:1-42. The use of Jacob’s vision in Jn 1:51 is thus included in his study. This study wants to add a fourth aspect, namely that of the eschatological meaning of Jacob’s vision in Jn 1:51

#### 1) The interpretation of Jacob’s vision from the Old Testament

The story of Jacob’s vision was known to the people who lived in the Old Testamental period as well as the people who lived in the intertestamental period. The study about the understanding of the people who lived in the Old Testament and intertestamental periods is important to determine the intention of using Gn 28:12 in Jn 1:51. Modern Old Testament scholars focus particularly on the covenant between God and Jacob in their study of the text of Gn 28:12.. The vision of the angels ascending and descending and the ladder that reached to heaven is a symbol about the presence of God with Jacob and God’s protection through the angels, as becomes clear in the following:

Jacob was the first in Bible history to hear the assurance “I am with you,” a promise later repeated to many of the nation’s leaders, Moses (Exod 3:12), Joshua (Josh 1:5), and Gideon (Judg 6:16); indeed Emmanuel, “God with us,” (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23) speaks of God’s continuing presence with all his people, “for he has said ‘I will never



leave you or forsake you” (Heb 13:5). More than this, though, Jacob is assured of protection, “I will guard you wherever you go,” a sentiment reechoed in the priestly blessing, “The Lord bless you and keep (guard) you” (Num 6:24), and in the Psalms (e.g., 121, 23). It may well be that the angels in the dream are seen as Jacob’s invisible bodyguards (Wenham 2002:225).

Most of the scholars agree with his opinion. Thomas (1946:262-263) points out a fourfold assurance. The first is “the Divine Presence” and the second is “the Divine protection”. The third is “the Divine preservation” and the last is “the Divine promise”. The angels ascending and descending are to escort God. Mathews ([2005] 2007:449) considered the divine presence and mediation as the main topics of the vision story of Jacob. Freedman ([1992] 1996:602) also focused on God’s protection as the helper in Jacob’s vision story. Even though the angels of God and the heaven are eschatological factors, it is difficult to find the eschatology in the interpretation of Jacob’s vision.

There is the Old Testament study about Jacob’s vision that the focus is centred on the ladder, because the word *בֵּיטָא* occurs only in Gn 28:12 in the Old Testament. In LXX it was translated to *κλίμαξ*. Even though it was used twice more in Nehemiah (3:15; 12:37) as plural noun, many scholars connected this word to the path of the Mediterranean ziggurat, or temple tower, because the Hebrew word *מַעְלָה* was used in Neh 3:25 and 12:37. According to Brayford (2007:354), the ladder and ziggurat are the same in the point of connection between heaven and earth. Ziggurat is a symbol for the mediator between the place of the deity (*Hochtempel*) and the temple on the ground (*Tieftempel*). However it symbolises human efforts to reach out to heaven (Speiser 1983:220),

with its beauty as a place for the deity. The role of the messengers are to deliver gods' grace on earth through a stairway (Brodie 2001:312).

There were ladders of heavenly ascent described in Egyptian and Hittite sources. In Mesopotamia there was a ladder that was used by a messenger of the gods moving from one realm to another (Walton 2001:390). In this sense, the Son of Man can be identified with the mediator between God and humans as the ladder that connects the above and the earth. The concept of the ladder as a stairway that connected two different worlds gives a celestial meaning to the ladder of the angels in Jacob's dream. Hartley (2000:255) says that there were direct accesses to the heavenly realm for God's appearance, and the ladder was one of them. Its permanent religious significance is expressed with profound insight and truth in Jn 1:51 (Skinner [1910] 1930:376).

Hofman (2014:111-112) studied Jacob's vision in the perspective of a dream scene. He pointed out that Jacob's dream contains the divine promise. His dream has the structure of motivation and comfort. The motivation is his suffering from his brother. He was comforted in his suffering by the message of returning to his homeland. However, his comfort is not mentioned in the scene of the dream about the ladder and the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

## 2) The interpretation of Jacob's vision in Judaism.

An eschatological interpretation was pursued by the Rabbis in the intertestamental period. Jubilees and Genesis Rabba quoted and interpreted the whole Genesis text. In Jubilees the content of the vision of the ladder is not changed and it mentioned the giving of a tithe that Jacob vowed to give to God (Gn 28:22) that was not recorded in Genesis. Levi was ordained as priest and

Jacob gave a tithe to him after Levi dreamed (Jub 32:1-2). According to Schwartz (1985:71), Jacob received the hint of an “eternal sanctuary” in his vision of the ladder.

According to Russell (1987:70), the *Ladder of Jacob* is a commentary on Jacob’s dream in Gn 28:11-22. It is a haggadic exegetical expansion of Jacob’s vision. It has seven chapters. The first six are Jewish, and the last chapter is a later expansion by a Christian. It contains an apocalyptic vision of the future. Kugel (2006) regards the *Ladder of Jacob* as a Rabbi’s midrashic explanation of Jacob’s vision in Genesis 28. John’s use of Jacob’s vision and the occurrence of Jacob’s vision in the *Ladder of Jacob* cannot simply be compared uncritically with each other. The relation between Genesis 28, Jn 1:51, and the Pseudepigraphon, the *Ladder of Jacob*, have to be investigated each in its own right before a responsible comparison could be made.

Kim (1983:82) connects it to the *merkabah*-vision tradition that developed the figure of the Son of Man in Daniel 7, 1 Enoch 46, and 4 Ezra 13 on the “figure with the appearance of a man” from Ezk 1:26. He concludes that the evangelist used the Targumic tradition in Jn 1:51. This interpretation can connect the motif of Jacob’s dream with the concept of the Son of Man in Jn 1:51. According to Burney (1922:116), the heavenly icon of Israel in the Targumic tradition is the Son of Man, and John alludes to Gn 28:13 from the Hebrew text, “on Him”, that is the heavenly icon of Israel. Cadman and Caird (1969:28) regard Jesus as the ladder in the two promises, in Jacob’s vision and in Jesus’ saying to Nathanael. According to them, Jesus would be acting all the time in communion with God as his divine-human person. Jesus is the medium between the earth and the open heaven like the ladder.

### 3) The interpretation of Jacob's vision in the New Testament.

Schnackenburg (1980:320) points out that John's point is not Jacob's dream and his behaviour, but simply the image of the ladder with the ascending and descending angels. His emphasis is on comparing the ladder with the Son of Man. Daly Denton (2000:11) says that the evangelist intends his readers to see a connection between Jesus' promise and Jacob's dream. Moyise (2001:72) regards Jn 1:51 as an allusion to Gn 28:12. He calls Jn 1:51 an enigmatic promise to Nathanael. He sees that "a true Israelite" that Jesus called Nathanael (1:47) relates to Jacob, who was renamed Israel (Gn 32:28). Neyrey (2007:59) also compares Jn 1:51 with Genesis 28. There is, though, a difference between the two as compared by Moyise. The promise is not addressed to Nathanael only, as with Jacob. Jesus applies it to the disciples including Nathanael with two plurals "you". The point of John's allusion to Gn 28:12 is not the true Israelite Nathanael, but the angels ascending and descending. The Old Testament scholar, McKeown (2008:140) also mentioned that Jesus was probably alluding to Jacob's dream in Jn 1:51.

Smith (1999:78) says that the evangelist knows or presumes the Hebrew 'ladder' as masculine, and reads 'upon him', that is upon the Son of Man. However Jacob is not directly named in Gn 28:12, and the ladder was used by the angels to ascend and to descend, not the person Jacob. There are indications that John generally used the LXX, when John's quotations are compared to the Greek and Hebrew versions of the Old Testament (Daly Denton 2000:15). If it is assumed that the evangelist knew both the Hebrew text and the LXX, it can be concluded that he knew that v. 12 indicates the ladder. There is a possibility that the pronoun indicates Jacob only if the evangelist knew the Hebrew text. According to Carson

(1991:163), the ladder is also supported by some Rabbis in the late Jewish document like R. Hiyya the Elder and R. Jannai in Genesis Rabba 68:12,

They were ascending and descending the ladder; while the other said: they were ascending and descending on Jacob. The statement that they were ascending and descending the ladder presents no difficulty (Freedman & Simon 1939:625).

The reason is that a ladder is masculine in Hebrew. Jones (1990:66) makes another conclusion. He concluded Jesus was matched, not with the ladder or Jacob, but with the place Bethel, the house of God.

#### 4) The interpretation of Jacob's vision in eschatology.

Aune (2002c:1052) mentioned Jn 1:51 in his comment on Rv 19:11, because of the two similar phrases, 'to see', and 'open heaven';

ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγῶτα (Jn 1:51 NA28)  
ἰδοὺ θύρα ἠνεωγμένη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ (Rv 4:1 NA28)  
εἶδον τὸν οὐρανὸν ἠνεωγμένον (Rv19:11 NA28)

The vision of John in Rv 4:1 is to see the kingdom of heaven. Even though Jacob's vision in Genesis was dealt with in the Old and New Testaments by many scholars, the study of its relation with Revelation has been strangely neglected by critics. It is valuable to study the relation between Jn 1:51 and Revelation, because there are many common images like the open heaven, the angels of God, and the Son of Man.

However, there are many different opinions about the one like a Son of Man in Rv 19:11. Michaels (1997:136) and Morris ([1969] 1971:184) regarded it as an angel, because this celestial existence received the order from another angel.

According to Ford (1975:250) and Jones (1990:142), it can be regarded as Jesus, because the concepts of cloud and the golden crown in 19:11 are similar with the appearance of the Son of Man who will come again in Mk 13:27. Prigent (2004:250) and Stuckenbruck (1995:240-241) see it as the epiphany of Jesus. Even though it is not a descension of the Son of Man, the Son of Man appeared on earth according to Jn 1:51.

### **1.3. The focus of this study**

The correspondence between Jacob's vision and Jn 1:51 is the ascending and descending angels. The ladder from the earth to heaven in Genesis is changed in John's gospel to the open heaven with the ladder where angels are ascending and descending. However, it is certain that the concept of "ladder" is unique and can be representative of Jacob's vision, because of its role of the connection between heaven and earth. Therefore, the phrase "Jacob's Ladder" will refer to the dream of Jacob and all the elements of this motif. The expression about the ascending and descending angels and the open heaven has something in common with the apocalyptic figure of the Son of Man. It could mean that Jacob's vision of Genesis 28 was interpreted apocalyptically in John's gospel. Lincoln (2005:122) emphasized the realized eschatology of John's gospel in Jn 1:51. He adapted it to Jesus' earthly mission as the bridge. It can be possible that Jesus came to the world as the bridge between heaven – where God dwells – and the earth (Kim 1983:145). However, that does not prove that the concept of the ascending and descending angels is realized eschatology. Jesus used the future tense when addressing Nathanael and all the people. There is no event that matched this promise in Jesus' life. Therefore the concept of the ascending and

descending angels is the key to interpret it, whether as realized eschatology or the future eschatology of Revelation.

The concept of ascending and descending from heaven also appeared in Pr 30:4, and Dn 4:13. The one who is ascending and descending is God in Pr 30:4 (Murphy 2002:228). According to Toy (1899:521), the subject of Jn 1:51 cannot be “God”. The one who ascended and descended is the Son. The one who descended from heaven in Dn 4:13 is the Watcher that can be defined as the mediator. In Ps 121:3-4 God was described as the Watcher (Goldingay 2002:88). According to Montgomery ([1927] 1959:231), it can be identified as the angel. In the New Testament there are many usages of the concept of ascending and descending from heaven. It is applied to an angel (Mt 28:2; Lk 2:15; 22:43; Gl 1:8; Rv 10:1; 11:12; 14:17; 18:1; 20:1), the Son of Man (Jn 3:31), Jesus (Jn 6:38, 58; Ac 1:11), God (1 Th 4:16), Jesus with the angels (2 Th 1:7), and the Holy city (Rv 21:2, 10). Heaven was regarded as the place where God dwells. Descending from heaven means that they come from God to do something that should be accepted as from God. They, as the messengers, are to deliver God’s will to humans. Therefore the order of the path of the angels is described as first descending and then ascending. According to Charlesworth (1985:19-41) angels are described as descending and ascending in most of the Jewish pseudepigraphical works. Although the source of these works is Gn 28:12, the author of the Jewish pseudepigraphical works changed the order. According to Himmelfarb (1993:29), ascending to the heaven is regarded by early Judaism as ascending to the temple. The expression the opened heaven or the gate of heaven is also regarded as the opened gate of the temple. In Rv 21:22, there is no temple in the new Jerusalem, because God and the lamb of God are its temple.

However it can be explained with the comparison between the imagery of the temple in Ezekiel and the new Jerusalem in Revelation,

Yet the city is described in terms that allude to Ezekiel's description of the eschatological temple at the end of the Book of Ezekiel. Revelation's heaven is also described with elaborate temple imagery. The presence of the spiritual temple in heaven makes the physical temple on earth unnecessary (Himmelfarb 1993:34).

Therefore the opened heaven or the gate of heaven can be understood as the gate of the heavenly temple in Ezekiel and it can be regarded as the spiritual temple in Revelation.

#### **1.4. Methodology**

The use of Old Testament material in the New Testament can be examined with three kinds of methods: the linguistic, historical critical and hermeneutic methods (Steyn 1995:2). Following his methodology, this study about the use of Gn 28:12 in Jn 1:51 will approach our investigation with two ways. The one is a linguistic historical approach and the other is a hermeneutic approach. In the *linguistic historical approach* the usages of Gn 28:12 in other texts of the Old Testament and intertestamental literature will be traced, because it can assist us to know the pre-understanding of the people who were with Jesus and Nathanael in their conversation in Jn 1:46-51. In the *hermeneutic approach*, the analysis of Jn 1:51 and the interpretations about Gn 28:12 in the New Testament will be dealt to compare them.

John's use of Jacob's vision is complex, because John changed the ladder to the Son of Man. It is partially an explicit quotation, because John used the singular noun τὸν οὐρανόν to express heaven, while it is usually used in the plural. It



means he followed the expression in Gn 28:12 of LXX. In addition, Jesus followed the exact same order of the moving of the angels as ascending and descending like Gn 28:12. In this part, it is possible to find the *Textvorlage* of Jn 1:51. However Jesus used it with other concepts like the heaven opened and the Son of Man. Therefore hermeneutic methods are useful in this dissertation.

There are many interpretations of Jacob's vision among the Rabbi's, especially of the ascending and descending angels. Bar Kappara says, "No dream is without its interpretation". He regards the ascending and descending angels on the ladder as the high priests ascending and descending on the stairway beside the altar. Some rabbis related it to Sinai where Moses went up to God on Sinai and came down from the mountain. R. Hiyya the Elder and R. Jannai interpreted the angels ascending on high that Jacob saw as the high place of heaven whence they descended to see Jacob's face (Freedman & Simon 1939:626). They have used their own hermeneutic methods to interpret Jacob's vision. The author of the fourth gospel described it intentionally. It is not found in the other gospels. Comparison between various interpretations from a diachronic dimension will be used in this dissertation.

Therefore this dissertation will be divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with the images in John's gospel; "to see", "the heaven open", "the angels of God ascending and descending", and "the Son of Man". It is confirmed that the images of the angels of God ascending and descending come from Gn 28:12. "The heaven open" relates to Ez 1:1 directly, but it was implied in Jacob's dream in Gn 28:12. The Son of Man is added by John, following the concept of the Son of Man in Dn 7:13. Therefore the literal historical approach will be dealt with here. It means that the study of each image will be used and interpreted in

the history of the Old and the New Testament. In order to see the background of the text, the usage and interpretation of Judaism have to be considered also. Dentan (2011:4) points out that the Apocrypha can not fill the gap between the Old Testament and the New Testament, but it can narrow the gap. It means that the study about the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament will give a clearer understanding of the text in Jn 1:51.

Part two will deal with hermeneutical issues. When Jesus used Jacob's dream in Gn 28:12 with the concept, the Son of Man, it is related to his conversation with Nathanael. According to the analysis of the context of Jacob's dream, Jesus had the intention of the conversation. Therefore the understanding of the conversation between Nathanael and Jesus is the background of the quotation. The context about the vision of the angel ascending and descending is the whole New Testament.

It will deal with the role of Jacob's vision in the New Testament. Even though the partially direct quotation of Jacob's vision is found only in John's gospel, the concept of the descending angels appears in the New Testament. The main problem is whether the concept of descending angels is realized in the present or in the future. In Mt 28:2 the angel descends in order to take away the stone from Jesus' tomb. The angels who came to the shepherds to deliver the good news went away to heaven after they have finished their mission (Lk 2:15). In John's gospel, the one who descended to earth and who will ascend to heaven is the Son of Man, otherwise he would be the angel that was mentioned in Jn 1:51. Therefore a comparison will be made in this study between the concepts of ascending and descending in the New Testament in order to compare the various interpretations of Jacob's vision in the New Testament.

The relation between Jn 1:51 and Revelation has to be dealt with, because there are a lot of appearances of angels in Revelation. The open heaven and the Son of Man are also found in Revelation. These three Old Testament motifs are used in Jn 1:51. Therefore it is necessary to study the usage of these three motifs in Revelation as well. Revelation is regarded as the main apocalyptic book in the New Testament, and there are many similarities with later apocalyptic Judaism, like 1 Enoch and the *Testament of Levi*. Enoch and Levi ascended to heaven to receive a revelation. Apocalyptic imagery is also found in Ezekiel and Daniel, and there are many allusions to Ezekiel and Daniel in Revelation (Collins 2000). Ezekiel and Daniel are alluded to in Jn 1:51. As the result of this study, it can be said that Jn 1:51 has to be interpreted in an eschatological perspective, because of the similarities with the eschatological usages of Gn 28:12, Ezk 1:1 and Dn 7:13 in Revelation. The theological synthesis from these three motifs have to be dealt with in three areas: Christology, angelology, and eschatology, because of the three motifs in Jn 1:51: the Son of Man, the angels ascending and descending and the open heaven.

## **Part. I The motif of “Jacob’s ladder” in John 1:51**

Jacob’s dream is unique in the life of Jacob. The motifs in Jacob’s dream are also unique in the Old Testament. Even though it was an important event in his life, it was not mentioned again in Jacob’s story. Even though it was regarded as the shelter from the dangers of other tribes after his sons’ slaughter of the Shechemites, the dream about the angels ascending and descending was not mentioned there. Compared to Joseph’s dream which was accomplished when he became the governor in Egypt, Jacob’s dream was not cleared whether it was accomplished or not. However his dream was mentioned by Jesus in Jn 1:51. The mentioning by Jesus was not concerned with the accomplishment of Jacob’s dream, but it was still to be accomplished in future, because Jesus said “you will see greater things” (Jn 1:51).

The motifs in Jacob’s dream were used in Jn 1:51. Most scholars agree that Jn 1:51 is an allusion to Jacob’s dream in Gn 28:12. The reason is the order of the angels, ascending and descending, as a unique expression. Usually the order of the angels is first descending and then ascending, because angels dwell in heaven with God. The expression ascending first and then descending is not found in the Old Testament and Rabbinic traditions except as a direct quotation. However the problem is why Jesus used Jacob’s dream from Gn 28:12 and what kind of methods were used for it. These problems are related with the role of this allusion in John’s gospel or in John chapter 1, as the prologue to John’s gospel.

To solve this problem, the context of the allusion have to be studied. The context of v. 51 is the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael during the calling of the disciples by Jesus. The use of Jacob’s vision is related to the conversation

between Jesus and Nathanael. Different from the other disciples, the calling of Nathanael in John's gospel gives more detail. The conversation between Philip and Nathanael as well as between Jesus and Nathanael have more detail. There are unique things in the calling of Nathanael. Firstly, Nathanael rejected the possibility that Jesus could be the messiah, because of Jesus' hometown. Secondly, his ignorance was changed to his confession of Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Israel. Lastly, Jesus said of him to be a true Israelite with no guile. In this conversation, Jacob's story was implied by using Jacob's other name, Israel (Gn 35:10).

The second step to solve the problem is to analyse verse 51. John's method is to quote the Old Testament with no introductory formulae, but John edited the verses and inserted something or changed the words to apply it to Jesus. There are two Old Testament traditions in v. 51. The one is Jacob's dream in Gn 28:12 and the other is the Son of Man in Daniel 7. In addition, there is the expression the "heaven opened" that did not appear in the Genesis text. The main motifs that were used in v. 51 are the open heaven, the angels ascending and descending, and the Son of Man.

The last step is to find what the role of v. 51 is in John's gospel. The author mentioned the goal of John's gospel in order that the people may believe in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God to have life through His name (Jn 20:31). Snider (1994:17) regarded the concept of 'witness' as an important concept in John's gospel. John followed the legal standard of the Old Testament, that required two or three witnesses in order to prove that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God. Beasley-Murray (1999:28) indicates that the witness of John the Baptist toward his disciples is based on the sacrifice of Christ and it is related to the revelation

through the Son of Man. From Nathanael's confession, the author has another witness about the Son of God for whom the people of Israel were waiting.

## Chapter 2 “You will see” in Jn 1:51 and Jacob’s dream

Jesus said to the people, “You will see”. It is not only for Nathanael but also all the people around Jesus, because Jesus used the plural “You” in his last saying. The object of the conversation was changed to the people passing by from Jn 1:50 to Jn 1:51. In v. 50 Jesus talked with Nathanael and said to him that he will see greater things, but the object changed to the plural ‘You’ that will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. The concept of seeing is an important theme in John Chapter 1. The verb, “ἐθεασάμεθα” (Jn 1:14) which means “we saw” is used to reveal the glory of the incarnated Word of God. Even though there is no one who has ever seen God (v. 18), the incarnated Son can be seen. The acknowledgement about the messiahship of Jesus by John the Baptist is also from his seeing the Spirit descending, and remaining on Jesus (v. 33). Philip said to Nathanael “come and see” (Jn 1:46), and Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him (v. 47). The reason for Jesus’ acknowledgement of Nathanael as a true Israelite is due to seeing him under the fig tree (vv. 47-48). According to Lee (2010:119), it is the climax of the sight imagery in the conversation between Nathanael and Jesus, because the concept of seeing is the main theme in their conversation. The personal seeing is changed to the public seeing in v. 51. Therefore it is possible to regard it as the revelation of Jesus as seen by the people. From this point, Jacob’s ladder vision can also be regarded as a revelation shown by God to Jacob.

In the dream of Jacob, it is difficult to decide whether Jacob’s dream has to be regarded as a motivation story for the continuance of the patriarchal line, or has

to be regarded as a special revelation for the future like the dream of Joseph or Daniel. However there is no interpretation about the vision of the ladder, only the conversation between God and Jacob about the earthly land. His dream is complex, because of its many motifs, like the ladder, angels ascending and descending, and the gate of heaven. There are various interpretations among the Rabbi's in the Midrash because of its complex of motifs (Kugel 2006:13-14).

Jesus also used the theme from Jacob's dream to describe the greater things that Nathanael will see (Jn 1:51). To understand Jn 1:51 it is important to know the background of Jacob's dream in Gn 28:12. In Jn 1:51 Jesus uses the motifs of the open heaven, and angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man. The ladder, the gate of heaven and the house of God are not mentioned in Jn 1:51. However these motifs are related to each other to suggest heaven as the place where God dwells. It means that the motifs that are not mentioned by Jesus in Jn 1:51 are indirectly related to Jesus' promise to Nathanael. Therefore the background to the motifs in Gn 28:12, 13 will be studied to understand the reason behind its usage in Jn 1:51.

Therefore, Jacob's dream in Gn 28:12 and the dream as the revelation of God in Old Testament will be dealt with in this chapter to compare the sight imagery in Jn 1:51 and the vision as a revelation in the New Testament. The main theme is the possibility to connect the dream revelation in Gn 28:12 with the sight imagery in Jn 1:51. The first step is to explore the usage of a dream as the revelation of God in the Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern literature. The second step is to understand it within the broader framework of Judaism. The last is to take note of its role in John's gospel and the New Testament.

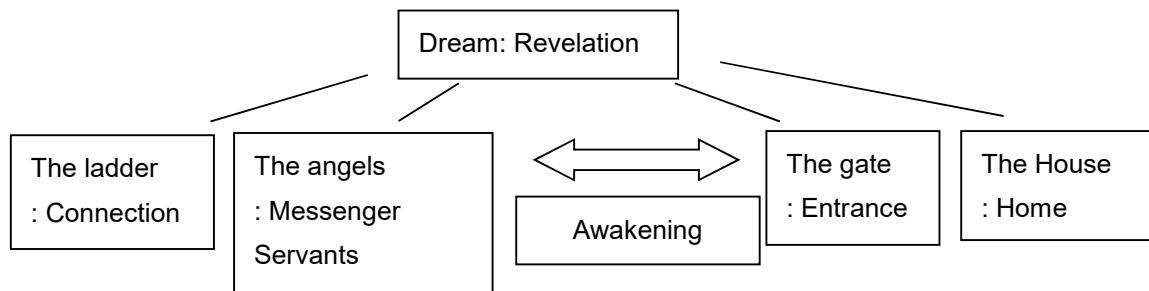


## 2.1 Jacob's dream in Genesis

Jacob's dream in Genesis forms part of the biological stories of the patriarchs. The role of Jacob is that of the father of twelve sons who were the ancestors of Israel's twelve tribes. Jacob's first encounter with God was in his dream at Bethel. Here he received the same promise from God as his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham. This dream was the first turning point in Jacob's life. According to Mathews ([2005] 2007:442), this story is an important link in the Jacob narrative, because it refers to both the past and the future: the past in the steps of his ancestor Abraham, and the future of his return after twenty years in self-imposed exile. Jacob is the link in the patriarchal line. However his dream differs from the encounters of God with his ancestors Abraham and Isaac. In God's promise to Jacob at Bethel, there were two kinds of mediums used (a dream and angels). While Abraham and Isaac received the promise directly from God, Jacob received the promise by God after he saw the vision about the ladder and the angels of God ascending and descending. The angels ascended and descended between the earth and heaven by using the ladder. It is a unique expression that the angels used the ladder to ascend and descend between earth and heaven. Freedman ([1992] 1996:602) sees the ladder as the symbol of the connection between the earth and heaven. The dream, the angels and the ladder are unique features that distinguish Jacob's encounter with God from the previous patriarchs' experience.

There are also two special images concerning Jacob's dream. After he awoke from his dream, Jacob named the place where he spent the night and said it is the gate of heaven and the house of God. These images are related to the vision

that he saw in his dream. The ladder and the angels in the dream are related with the revelation of God, and the gate of heaven and the house of God are related with the response of Jacob, as follows,



The match between the dream and the response points to the reason for the revelation of God. The House of God has a personal meaning for Jacob who is leaving his home where his father stays. According to Mathews ([2005] 2007:443), this dream has the important role to elevate the spiritual status of Jacob. The consistent view about this dream is that it suits the situation of Jacob as successor of the patriarchs' covenant. The concept of the ladder and the angels also suits his story, because his leaving from home can be compared with leaving from the heavenly home. The connection between heaven and earth can be implied by Jacob's returning to his heavenly home.

The role of the dream in Jacob's story is a revelation of God to him as the successor of the patriarchal covenant. A dream was regarded as a legitimate means to receive messages from God in the Old Testament (Guinan 1997:422). The dream was included with the Urim and the prophets that Saul tried as instruments to get a message from God (1 Sm 28:6). According to Eisenberg (2004:604), the first dream of revelation in the Old Testament is when God alerted Abimelech to prevent him from sinning with Abraham's wife (Gn 20:6). Even though there is a vision that was once seen by Abraham in Gn 15:1, it is not a

dream but a vision. The word that was used in Gn 15:1 is מַחְזֶה in MT and ὄραμα in LXX which means vision. The same word is used in Nm 24:4, 16, Ezk 13:7, and Dn 2:8. In Abimelech's dream, there was a conversation between Abimelech and God. It is therefore certain that the dream that is mentioned firstly in the Old Testament did not occur to one of the patriarchs. The first dream connected with a revelation to the patriarchs was Jacob's dream (Gn 28:12). These revelatory dreams were used as instruments to convey God's will to his people. The most developed revelatory dreams were Joseph's dreams and interpretations (Gn 37:9). Joseph's dreams were signs about the near future. Therefore it can be interpreted by others like his father Jacob. Jacob interpreted Joseph's second dream as that eleven brothers, the father and the mother will bow down to Joseph. Even though Jacob interpreted it wrongly, because Joseph's mother was already dead. In addition, even though eleven brothers bowed down to Joseph, Jacob did not bow down to Joseph (Pirson 2001:563). The dreams that were dreamed by the people like Pharaoh's two officials in Joseph's story were fulfilled in Joseph's life time. Joseph was a dreamer as well as an interpreter of dreams (Gn 41:16-36).

In another view, Houtman (1977:340) mentioned that this dream related with the world-wide religious concepts of communication between heaven and earth in the Ancient Near Eastern era. The ladder, the angels, the gate of heaven, and the house of God were also used in the literature of the Ancient Near East. There are many similar points between them. In the literature of the Ancient Near East dreams were used to reveal the will of gods to humans. The ladder was used as the connection between the underworld and heaven, and the messengers of the gods went down and up on it. But Jacob's dream did not really use these concepts

of the Ancient Near East, because there are a lot of differences between them. The biggest difference is the monotheism of Jacob's dream which is a fundamental difference. Even though these images were common in Ancient Near East thoughts, they were used in a different way, than for the message that they wanted to deliver to Jacob.

In the Ancient Near East, dreams were also seen as revelations of the gods. In the text of Ebla, the record about the five kings of Egypt, the two daughters of the king were interpreters of dreams:

The daughters of the king (DUMU-MÍ-EN) had important positions in the temple; two of them, Za. aše and Tarkabbu, daughters of Ibbi-Sipiš, held the office of ša.iltu, "dream interpreter" of the Sun-god. (Meyers [1984] 1997:1-4).

Meyers also refers to communication between persons and gods through dreams in the Mari texts. There are also strong parallels between the Mesopotamian and the biblical accounts of Joseph's dream interpretations. A dream-interpreter is mentioned in the Mesopotamian story of Etana:

Every day, Etana prayed repeatedly to Shamash, "O Shamash, you have enjoyed the best cuts of my sheep, Earth has drunk the blood of my lambs, I have honored the gods and respected the spirits of the dead. The dream-interpreters have made full use of my incense. The gods have made full use of my lambs at the slaughter (Dalley 1997a:455).

It is apparent that dreams were regarded as revelations of deities, and there were also special interpreters of dream revelations in the Ancient Near East.

Dream revelations can be classified with the time for them to be accomplished. Some had been accomplished in a near future like Joseph's dreams. The others

were accomplished far into the future and can not point exactly whether it is accomplished then or not. Joseph's dreams about his family were fulfilled in his life time. Pharaoh's dreams were already realizing at the time of his dreams. After the exodus dreams and visions increased as methods to transmit revelations to the prophets (Nm 12:6). From the warning about the wrong direction of a dream by the wrong prophet is given in Dt 13:3-4, it is confirmed that the dream was considered as the means of revelation of God to the people or person.

Jacob dreamed three times. The first when he fled from his brother (Gn 28:12). The second is when he guarded the sheep of his father in law, Laban (Gn 31:11-13). The last was in his old age when he doubted whether he should go to Egypt or not (Gn 46:2-4). Jacob's first and second dreams differ. The second dream was about Jacob's private purpose as a defence against his father in law. The third dream is presented as a vision, מְרֹאֵה (MT), ὄραμα (LXX) in Gn 46:2 a different word than Abraham's vision, מַחְזֶה, (MT) ὄραμα (LXX) in Gn 15:1. In LXX the same noun was used to translate different words, but the first expression adds the phrase "of the night" like "ἐν ὀράματι τῆς νυκτὸς" (Gn 46:2 LXX). Jacob's first dream in Gn 28:12 can be considered as an apocalyptic revelation, because there is no event in his life time that can be matched with this dream. The promise from God in his dream is concerned with blessing to his descendants and guidance to him. However it is difficult to find the relation between the promise to Jacob and what he saw in his dream about the ascending and descending angels. Therefore it gave the possibility to be interpreted as apocalyptic literature in Judaism.

## 2.2 The dream as a revelation of God in the Old Testament

The dream was regarded as a revelation in both the Old Testament and the Ancient Near Eastern cultures. According to Freedman ([1992] 1996:479), there is a warning about a young man of Terga that had a dream from Dagan not to rebuild a temple. The Pharaoh and the Assyrian monarchs also slept in temples seeking dream revelations. Dream revelations were regarded as a way to receive guidance from God. In the gospel of Matthew, dreams were used as revelations of God's will to man, predominant in Jesus' birth story. The dreamers are Joseph (Mt 1:20, 13, 19, 22), and the Magi (Mt 2:12). Pilate's wife also dreamed a dream of warning about Jesus' crucifixion (27:19). In Ac 2:17, there is a direct quotation of Jl 2:28. There is mention of the filthy dreams that defile the flesh in Jude 1:8. There is no mention about a dream in John's gospel and Revelation. The word, revelation (Ἀποκάλυψις), was used in Revelation, even though it was composed of visions that John saw on the island of Patmos. "You will see" as a natural view was mentioned in Jn 1:51, and the word vision (ὄρασις) was used with "I saw" in Rv 9:17. This chapter in this dissertation compares the usage of the words, "dream" and "vision" as revelations in the Old Testament.

The dream revelations in the Old Testament were to Abimelech, king of Gerar (Gn 20:3, 6), Jacob (28:12; 21:10-13), Laban (31:24), Joseph (Gn 37:6-9), the pharaoh's butler (Gn. 40:12-13) and baker (vv.18-19), Pharaoh (41:25-32), soldiers of the Midianites and the Amalekites (Jdg 7:13), Solomon (1 Ki 3:6), Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon (Dn 2:27-45; 4:19-27), and to Daniel (Dn 7:1). These dreams were regarded as revelations from God. Some dreams needed special interpreters like Joseph and Daniel. Some dreams were dreamed

by gentiles. Some dreams were about the immediate future, and others about a far off future. The law ordered the killing of false dreamers who tried to lead the people back to Egypt (Dt 13:1–5). The prophet Jeremiah warned against false dreamers (Jr 23:25–32) and dreams that predicted a shortening of the Exile (29:8–11). Zechariah also criticized those who gave false consolation with dreams (Zch 10:2). According to Ryken, Wilhoit and Longman III ([1998] 2000:218) the angels or God Himself appears or speaks in dream revelations. The expressions “God said in a dream’ (Gn 20:6) or “the Angel of God said” (Gn 31:11) in a dream were used in dream revelations. Special symbols or scenes also appeared in dream revelations, and then interpretation was required. The special wise man or an angel are interpreters of such dreams. The reference to a dreamer as a typical religious leader is evidence that the dream was a normal and legitimate means of receiving a prophetic revelation from God in ancient Israel (Christensen 2002:271). As a result, the dream was regarded as the way to receive a revelation from God, even though it was dangerous to be used by a false prophet to deceive the people when the dream did not realise.

A vision is clearer than a dream as a way for humans to receive the will of God. The word, ‘vision’ (ὄραμα) is translated from five Hebrew words in the Old Testament; מַרְאֵה (Gn 46:2; Nm 12:6; Ezk 1:27; Dn 8:27; 10:1, 7), מַחְזֶה (Gn 15:1; Nm 24:4, 16; Ezk 13:7), חֲזִיוֹן (2 Sm 7:17; Job 7:14) or חִזּוֹן (1 Chr 17:15; Is 21:2; Jr 23:16; Lm 2:9; Dn 1:17; 8:2, 13, 15, 17, 26; 9:24; Hab 2:2, 3) or חֲזוֹן (Dn 2:19; 7:1, 13, 15). The dream (חֲלוֹם) was translated as a vision (ὄραμα) in Dn 2:1, 7, 26, 36, and 45. The hebrew מַרְאֵה derives from רָאָה, which means ‘to see’ (Baker & Carpenter 2003:664). It was also used for visions in the night (Gn 46:2).

The masculine noun, מַרְאֵה is used for normal sight or appearance (Gn 2:9; Ex 3:3; Lv 13:3, 12; Nm 9:15; Can 2:14; 5:15). It is also used for a supernatural vision in Ezk 8:4; 11:24; Dn 8:16, 27; 10:6. מַחְזֵה is found only four times in the Old Testament, and there is a warning about a vain vision of the false prophets in Ezk 13:7. It derives from חָזָה which also means 'to see' like מַרְאֵה (Baker & Carpenter 2003:594). Like חֲזוֹן a vision, and an oracle, are masculine nouns, חֲזוֹן a dream, a vision, and a revelation, are also masculine nouns. It is also used for a night vision (Job 4:13) like a dream. While a dream appears while sleeping, a vision is seen by someone who is awake.

In the Old Testament a dream was regarded as a revelation, with a warning about false dreams that did not realise. Visions as revelations from God were more often received by prophets and reacted upon by them. Visions and dreams are revelations of the will of God and were often predictions about the future, with occurrences in the near and personal future, or in the eschatological future.

### 2.3 Interpretations of Jacob's vision in intertestamental literature.

Jacob's vision was used in Judaism. There are many interpretations of the vision in intertestamental literature. The aim of this chapter is to find the understanding of Jacob's vision in the intertestamental period. The tradition of the Old Testament was interpreted by the people who could read the Scriptures and study it. After the exile, the Tora was read and studied, and the education of it was done by



Rabbi's. Midrash is the method of exegesis of the Tora Rabbi's. When Jesus said the angels of God ascending and descending will be seen (Jn 1:51), the people who heard Jesus' words had a pre-understanding of Jacob's vision from their Rabbinic tradition. For this reason, the author of John's gospel did not add a note or any explanation for their understanding. It means the clue to the interpretation of Jesus' word in Jn 1:51 was understood by the readers. Therefore it is important to find the pre-understanding of the people who lived in that generation.

To understand it, their main idea about Jacob's vision in Gn 28:12 has to be understood. Even though it was not dealt with in a direct quotation, their concepts that were used in Jacob's vision must be understood, like the dream revelation, the angel, and heaven. The Son of Man concept that was mentioned by Jesus in Jn 1:51 was also an important concept in the intertestamental period, even though it was not used in Jacob's vision in Genesis 28 and did not relate to the text of Gn 28:12. Therefore this study will classify the motifs from Gn 28:12 and study their role in the intertestamental texts.

A dream as the revelation of God was recognized in the Old Testament tradition and the Ancient Near Eastern traditions. Rabbis continued to understand the dream with that conception in the intertestamental period and beyond. In many documents, the dream was considered to be a revelation of God. The angels appeared there, and some one ascended to heaven. Rabbi Bar Kappara in Genesis Rabba mentioned that a dream has to be interpreted as a revelation (Freedman & Simon 1939:625). In the New Testament, the dream was used as a method of revelation of God. When Joseph thought to hide Mary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream (Mt 1:20). When King Herod decided to kill all the male children in Bethlehem from two years old and under, the angel

warned Joseph in a dream and advised him to flee to Egypt (Mt 2:12-13). The dream in the *Testament of Levi* or the *Book of the Watcher* is also recognized as a revelation of God. It was shown by angels, and angels have the role as guides and interpreters. According to the references about the dream in the pseudepigrapha and apocrypha it can be classified into two main groups. The one is that it is a celestial vision with specific symbols, and the other is that it is a revelation about the future. However the celestial vision also points to the future with its eschatological function.

### **2.3.1 The revelation of the future**

In the Old Testament a dream was considered to be pointing to the future. For example, the dream of the Midian soldier was interpreted as the winning of Gideon (Jg 7:14), and Parah's dream about the famine in Egypt was also interpreted as a sign of the future by Joseph (Genesis 41). In Judaism it is also regarded to be a prophecy of the future. According to Subash (2009:124), Sirach warned against prophetic dreams, as follow:

The senseless have vain and false hopes, and dreams give wings to fools. As one who catches at a shadow and pursues the wind, so is anyone who believes in dreams. What is seen in dreams is but a reflection, the likeness of a face looking at itself. From an unclean thing what can be clean? And from something false what can be true? Divinations and omens and dreams are unreal, and like a woman in labor, the mind has fantasies. Unless they are sent by intervention from the Most High, pay no attention to them. For dreams have deceived many, and those who put their hope in them have perished (Sir 34:1-7 NRSV).

It is a rejection of the injudicious acceptance of a dream revelation. However, there are wide support for dreams as revelations of God. In SIB 3:293, it was mentioned

that the holy dream is given by God, therefore a dream was considered as a revelation of God. The authority of the dream comes from the dreamer's political, social, priestly and religious contexts (Flannery-Dailey 2000:324). For that reason, dream revelation was named for whom dreamed it. Enoch was well known as the one who ascended to heaven without dying (Gn 5:24). A dream as a prophecy about the future was used for special purposes. Mordecai reminded people about his dream which led to the redemption from the plan of Haman to kill all the people of Israel (LXX Esther 10:5). Mordecai's dream is used to explain that the redemption of the people of Israel from Haman's intrigue was the plan of God. About this, Subash (2009:126) expressed its "group-maintenance" function. It means that it can encourage a people to maintain their nationality from other people around them like Israel.

The dream as a the prophecy of the future is seen a conveying eschatological symbols, like in Daniel. In 4 Es 11:1-4, there is an eagle from the sea which had twelve feathered wings, and three heads. This eagle is interpreted to be the kingdom which was seen in the vision of Daniel (4 Es 12:11). According to Flannery-Dailey (2000:337), there was an understanding of an esoteric eschatological revelation about the dream in 2 Ba 4:4 and 85:3, as follows:

And after these things I showed it to My servant Abraham by night among the portions of the victims (2BA 4:4 *OTP*).

But now the righteous have been gathered and the prophets have fallen asleep, and we also have gone forth from the land, and Zion has been taken from us, and we have nothing now save the Mighty One and His law (2BA 85:3 *OTP*).

It is dealing with the dream of Abraham in Genesis 15, which was considered as pointing to the Jewish wars in the esoteric revelation tradition (Flannery-Dailey

2000:346). From these documents, it can be clear that a dream was considered by the people as the revelation of either the near future, or the far future. The eschatological dream revelation is also included in the category of the dream revelation about the distant future.

### 2.3.2 Celestial vision

Celestial visions appeared frequently in the intertestamental period. Waldman (2011:260) identified it in various versions of the Books of Enoch. It is related to the Merkaba mysticism. A celestial vision in dreams usually have angels, heavens, ascending persons, etc. These celestial conceptions will be dealt with in detail in the next section. Here attention will be paid to the content of these dreams.

A vision was seen in the Enochic literature at the same time as a dream. Even though there is no mention about the dream, it was seen at night. In 1 En 13:8, Enoch saw the visions of wrath, as follows:

While I slept, and look! A dream came to me and visions were falling upon me, and I saw visions of wrath, and a voice came, saying: "Speak to the sons of heaven, in order to convict them." and I awoke and came toward them, and all those gathered were sitting and mourning in Ebelsata, which is up in the middle of the Lebanon and Senisel, covering their face. In front of them, I also recounted to them all the visions that I saw while sleeping, and I began to speak the words of righteousness, convicting the Watchers of heaven (1 En 13:8-10 *OPE*).

It means that the dream revelation was regarded as a vision that the angels showed to this man. In 1 En 14:2, Enoch expressed that he saw his vision during his sleep. Flannery-Dailey (2000:293) points out that Enoch has the role of a

heavenly scribe, prophet, priest and angelic intercessor in his dream revelations. It is related to the celestial temple. Concerning the relation between the celestial temple vision and the apocalyptic tradition in the second temple period, Angel (2010:29) mentions that Enoch's vision is indebted to Ezekiel 40-44 and was influenced by later heavenly visions in apocalypses and hekhalot literature. It means that his dream can be regarded as an eschatological dream.

In the *Testament of Levi*, Levi dreamed that he ascended to heaven (T. Lev 2:5). His dream vision is a copy of the dream of Jacob. It has more detail explaining about the heavens. Levi ascended in heaven from the first heaven to the seventh heaven. He heard the interpretation of the seventh heaven from the angel interpreter. The gates of heaven also appeared in his dream (T. Lev 5:1). From these celestial concepts that were in Levi's dream, it is certain that the author of T. Lev tried to represent Jacob's dream to Levi as an eschatological dream, because in his later vision he mentioned that his former vision (8:1) has an eschatological conception. The conclusion of the T. Lev in chapters 17, 18 is eschatological. The seventy weeks that was mentioned in 17:1 means seven jubilees. The seventh week that was depicted in 17:11 has several images of the end and of its time:

In the seventh week there will come priests: idolators, adulterers, money lovers, arrogant, lawless, voluptuaries, pederasts, those who practice bestiality (T. Lev 17:11 *OTPC1*).

According to Jackson (2004:71-72), the eschatological priest is related to the eschatological expectations of the *Apocalypse of Weeks* (1 Enoch 91-93), Jubilees and the Qumran sectarian literature. Therefore it is possible to interpret his dream with eschatological concepts.

There is another document of a dream about a celestial existence namely the T. Abr. From the celestial existence, people received a personal revelation. In the case of the T. Abr, God sent Michael, the archangel of God, into Isaac's heart in a dream to notify Abraham of his death:

<sup>14</sup> Then the Lord said to Michael: "Arise and go to Abraham, and lodge with him, <sup>15</sup> "and whatever you see him eat, eat also, and wherever he will sleep, sleep there also. <sup>16</sup> "For I will cast the thought of the death of Abraham into the heart of Isaac his son in a dream. (TA2 4:14-16 *OPE*)

The dream of Isaac concerning Abraham's death appeared in TA2 7:1. Abraham's tour of heaven starts from TA2 8:1. According to Subash (2009:131), the opportunity to get a glimpse of heaven, Abraham is indebted to Isaac's dream, because his dream has the function of a revelation. The depiction of heaven to Abraham is that there are two gates (small and large) and a man upon a throne of great glory with many angels around him (TA2 8:4-5). Mazzaferri (1989:177-178) admits that there are eschatological factors in T. Abr, but he concludes with little doubt about Abraham's eschatological dream. The half of the content of T. Abr is about the effort of God towards Abraham in death. However it does not mean that there is no eschatological dream in T. Abr. His opinion rather supports that the dream of Isaac can be interpreted from its eschatological aspect. From the studies of the dream in the intertestamental literature, it can be concluded that the dream was regarded as a revelation of God for the near future or for the distant future. A dream with a celestial vision had an eschatological purpose. The literature which used dream revelations had the eschatological purpose of an apocalypse.

## 2.4 The verb ὄψεσθε that was used with a vision in the New Testament

The dream is also considered as a revelation of God in the New Testament. The dream ὄναρ was mentioned six times in Matthew's gospel (Mt 1:20, 2:12,13, 19, 22, 27:19). The first is Joseph's dream that the angel of the Lord appeared and informed that a baby has been conceived in his wife by the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:20). The second is the Magi's dream who came from the east (Mt 2:12). There is no mention about the angel, but they received a warning about King Herod's plot and in the next verse (v.13) Joseph also received a warning by an angel of the Lord to leave to Egypt in order to avoid the plot of King Herod. Considering a conjunction δέ and the adverbial phrase Ἀναχωρησάντων αὐτῶν, which means the progress of the time, it can be inferred that the one who warned the Magi was also the angel of the Lord. The fourth dream is also to Joseph, after the death of King Herod (Mt 2:19). The angel appeared in a dream to inform about the death of the King and to order Joseph to go back to Israel. The sixth dream indicated the district of Galilee to go to, because Joseph was afraid to go to Judea (Mt 2:22). The last is the dream of Pilate's wife (Mt 27:19). She begged Pilate to release Jesus, because of her dream.

While Jacob saw the ascending and descending angels in his dream, Jesus did not mention a dream in his conversation with Nathanael in Jn 1:51. What Jesus mentioned to Nathanael is that you will see "ὄψεσθε". It can be compared with Jacob's dream. The opening of heaven and the ascending and descending angels were used in Jn 1:51. Although the dream is not mentioned as a revelation of God in Jn 1:51, it is an allusion to Gn 28:12, because it is a simile about the

words and works of Jesus. Jesus' saying that you will see ὄψεσθε hints at a vision in the future, because it is Jesus' promise to see into the future. At least the promise Jesus gave to Nathanael can be expected to realize during the life of the people who were with Nathanael. Therefore a distinction between these three revelatory methods (dream, vision, and real sight) is necessary to define the relation between Jacob's dream and Jesus' promise.

The usages of ὄψεσθε has an important role in John's gospel, because the sight imagery is an effective method to reveal Jesus as messiah in the gospels, as follow,

It is not surprising, therefore, that the most significant Johannine image based on the senses is that of sight, mostly found in the verbal form "to see". While there is a more mundane meaning, there is also a metaphorical sense for this verb in the gospel- or, rather, cluster of verbs (Lee 2010:117).

The concept of sight is important in the gospels, because the message of the gospels is concentrated to announce Jesus as saviour. Hearing and seeing are important instruments among many experiences. John's gospel emphasizes it, because the aim stated in Jn 20:31 is to reveal Jesus as the Christ and Son of God. Jesus revealed God, because he is Son of God. The will of God is that the people who see the Son, will believe him to have everlasting life (Jn 6:40). Jesus said that the disciples will not see him, and again they will see him. In the majority texts, the reason for it is added, "because I go to the Father". It interprets Jesus' saying.

Μικρὸν καὶ οὐκέτι θεωρεῖτέ με, καὶ πάλιν μικρὸν καὶ ὄψεσθέ με (Jn 16:16 NA28)

Μικρὸν καὶ οὐ θεωρεῖτέ με, καὶ πάλιν μικρὸν καὶ ὄψεσθέ με, ὅτι ὑπάγω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα (Jn 16:16 BYZ).



That they will not see Jesus is a prediction about the future and that they will see him again is also a prediction about the future, because it cannot happen during the time that Jesus is with his disciples. From the future verb and the concept of sight, a revelation of it was expected by the disciples. Therefore this verb ὄψεσθε is used for the proclaiming of the future event that relates to the sight. From this verb, the hearers can imagine the scene that one speaks about. This expression was used in the four gospels, especially the prediction about the eschatology. In Mt 26:64 and Mk 14:62, Jesus says “you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven”. Stephen experienced it in Ac 7:55, and said the same to the people, even though there is a little difference between sitting and standing.

The dream that Jacob dreamt was not a normal dream. It was a special revelation of God. The dream that Joseph dreamt or the dream of the Pharaoh in Genesis were also special revelations from God. In the case of Abraham in Gn 15:1, the word “vision” was used to reveal the will of God to him. It is difficult to find the difference between these two methods of revelation. Numbers 12:6 mentions both the vision and the dream as methods of the revelation of God. In Dn 7:1, the dream and the vision both indicated one revelation of God at the same time (cf. Job 33:15-17). Myers (1987:293) regards a dream as a night vision that were recognized as an important means of divine communication. As there are special dreams to reveal God’s will, there are also special visions. While a vision is a supernatural visual manifestation, the real perception of it is that of a natural visual manifestation. A dream or a vision can be understood as a special revelation from God. Therefore there is a correlation between the dream, the vision, and the real perception of it as in a promise and its accomplishment. In the case of Jn 1:51, it was a promise about something to show to people. Jesus

spoke not only to Nathanael, but to all the people present. Therefore the promise of Jesus can be regarded as the promise that the vision or dream of Jacob will also be accomplished in the present or the future.

## Conclusion

The motifs from Jacob's vision were prevalent in intertestamental literature as well as in the Old Testament tradition, even though they were not referred to by a direct quotation or an indirect allusion. The motifs like dream, ladder, angel, heaven, and house of God were interpreted and applied according to their own understanding. In the case of the dream, they were warned about a wrong revelation by an individual character. At the same time it was regarded as a revelation of God. A dream that was a revelation was seen as a vision.

As Gast (1883:238) points out, God comes into history in revelation, a dream was also used as one kind of revelation in the biblical literature to show God's intervention in the world. However, a dream as revelation presents the vision that God wants to show. In that meaning, Jesus also wants to show the revelation of the open heaven and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. There are different forms of revelation employed in Gn 28:12 and Jn 1:51. The first used the dream and the second used vision.

## Chapter 3. An open heaven and the gate of heaven

### 3.1 The gate of heaven and the house of God in Genesis 28:12 and Ancient Near Eastern Texts

The gate of heaven and the house of God did not appear in Jacob's dream. When Jacob awoke from sleep, he confessed the place to be the gate of heaven and the house of God. These two interpretations of Jacob are both related to the open heaven and the presence of God. The gate of heaven refers to the conception of an open heaven. According to Mathews ([2005] 2007:452), it derives directly from the dream, because the angels ascended from the place where he spent the night, and directed his eyes upwards to the entryway to heaven. Between the dream and his response, many concepts can be connected and developed as follows,

opened => the gate	The heaven => the house of God
The opened heaven => the opened gate of the house of God	
The ladder and the angels =>	
The path to the opened heaven (the gate of the house of God)	
The ascender to the opened heaven (the gate of the house of God)	

However it is uncertain whether Jacob refers to the gate of heaven as the open heaven or to the place he spent the night as the gate of heaven. In the text, the word, המקום that Jacob used means "the place" where he spent the night. He also changed the name of the place to Bethel, which means the house of God in accordance with his confession. In Jacob's dream there is a conversation

between God and Jacob. This conversation took place after the appearance of the angels. Jacob could confirm that the angels are guardians from God. It led to his confession that this place is the house of God. It is clear that these two images are both connected to the confession of Jacob concerning his dream. Jacob indicated the place where he spent the night to be the gate of heaven and the house of God. Although it is clear that the concept of the gate of heaven and of the house of God derive from his dream of the opened heaven and of the angels' ascent and descent between the earth and heaven Jacob indicated the place where he spent the night.

The gate of heaven was a familiar idea in ancient thought, even though it occurs only here in the Old Testament (Wenham 2002:223). In the ancient Egyptian literature, it occurs as the stairway to heaven. Compare the following for instance:

O father of Pepi<sup>5</sup>, take Pepi with you  
Living, to you mother Nut<sup>6</sup>!  
Gates of sky, open for Pepi,  
Gates of heaven, open for Pepi,  
Pepi comes to you, make him live!  
Command that this Pepi sit beside you,  
Beside him who rises in lightland!  
O father of Pepi, command to the goddess beside you  
To make wide Pepi's seat at the stairway of heaven! (Lichtheim 1973-  
80:49)

This resembles Jacob's dream. Both the gates of heaven and the stairway of heaven appear in it. It can prove that the concept of the gate of heaven and the stairway of heaven was a common notion in Ancient Near Eastern societies. It also appears in the name Babylon. The name of "Babylon" means the gate of the

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<sup>5</sup> The king of Egypt.

<sup>6</sup> Sky Goddess, Mother of the Gods.

gods and indicates the entryway to the deity's presence (Freedman [1992] 1996:563). Babylon was a major city in central Mesopotamia and it played an important role in the Old Testament history. The Greek name, Babylon derived from the Akkadian word *Bab-Ilu*, which means "the gate of God". In the Egyptian literature it was not the angels, but the human king of Egypt that ascended to heaven by the stairway to heaven. In "The descent of Ishtar to the underworld" in the Akkadian stories, the one who appeared at the gate is the gatekeeper,

Ishtar<sup>7</sup>, when she arrived at the gate of Kurnugi<sup>8</sup>,  
Addressed her words to the keeper of the gate,  
"Here gatekeeper, open your gate for me,  
Open your gate for me to come in! (Dalley 1997c:381).

In this story, the gate is not of heaven, but of the underworld. The messenger of the gods descended by the stairway and arrived at the gate. The gate was locked and he called the gatekeeper to open it. In the text of "Nergal and Ereshkigal", there are seven gates of the Underworld for Ereshkigal to go through (Dalley 1997b:384). This concept of the gates has the role of a demarcation line between two other abodes and the connection point to the other abode.

The world view of the Ancient Near Eastern myths resembles Jacob's dream and his confession on many points. Three elements common in the motif, include the following: The Ladder, the Gate of heaven, and the Messengers. However there are crucial differences as well. The gates of the underworld in the view of Ancient Near Eastern myths are due to the polytheism of the Ancient Near Eastern myths. The gods in heaven, the goddesses in the underworld, and their messengers are gods in the myths. From their polytheism their worldview were three tiered:

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<sup>7</sup> Daughter of Sin, the Babylonian goddess of love.

<sup>8</sup> Land of no return, underworld.

heaven, the underworld, and the world. These three domains were connected with stairways. At the demarcation lines, there are gates. The gates to the underworld have a gatekeeper who locks and opens the gate for visitors. In Jacob's dream there are only two worlds: Earth and Heaven. He speaks of a gate to heaven. Jacob did not see the gate of heaven but saw heaven opened. The gate is only Jacob's expression. He did not see a gate in his dream. Jacob imposes the name of the gate of heaven to the place where he spent the night. The gate of heaven and the house of God were not concepts in his dream, but of the place where he spent the night. The place where he spent the night is a very important place to Jacob. He met God there, and he wanted to impose this meaning to the place so that he named it Bethel (Gn 28:19) which means the house of God. In many instances in Genesis names were given to places according to special events (Beersheba Gn 21:31, Jehovahjireh Gn 22:14, Mahanaim Gn 32:2, Peniel Gn 32:30, Succoth Gn 33:17, Abelmezraim Gn 50:11). The place was named according to the special event of the protagonist in the story. In the context of Jacob's dream story, the gate of heaven is not the entrance for the angels. It has the concept of the path to heaven, i.e. to the house of God where God dwells. He named the place where he met God as a place to come back to as his eternal home where God dwells.

## 3.2 The gate of heaven and the house of God in the Old Testament

### 3.2.1 The gate of heaven (Gn 28:17, Ezk 1:1)

In the Old Testament, there is but one direct reference to the gate of heaven (Ps 78:23). However, it is not similar to Gn 28:17 that indicated a spiritual heaven as the kingdom of God as in Jacob's dream. In Ps 78, it refers to the physical sky that opens to pour down rain. While the word שַׁעַר was used in Gn 28:17, the word דָּלַת was used in Ps 78:23. It is rather similar to the window (אַרְבֵּה) of heaven in Gn 7:11, 8:2. It is a metaphor for the flood. There is another expression like it in 2 Ki 7:2, 19. The word אַרְבֵּה is used for the window, but actually means door. It is not concerned with rain, but with food or wealth. All these expressions are various conceptions about heaven. According to Freedman ([1992] 1996:90-91), heaven was understood as a physical reality, as the dwelling place of God under God's control. Heaven as a physical reality was used in Gn 7:11, 8:2, as the storeroom of God. In 2 Ki 7:2, 19, the windows of heaven is about the sky as the storeroom of God.

The concept "to open" is also connected with the gate. Jesus does not mention the gate of heaven in Jn 1:51. Only the open heaven was mentioned in Jn 1:51. The open heaven is directly related to the gate of heaven, as open implies something to be opened. Actually Jacob did not see the gate of heaven. He only described the phenomenon he saw in his dream with the word. "Open the gate" is only a metaphor. The same motif is used in Ezk 1:1. Like Gn 28:12, Ezk 1:1

tells about the vision of the person. Both Jacob and Ezekiel refer to the vision from heaven. Jacob saw the angels ascending and descending between heaven and earth, and he called the place the gate of heaven. Ezekiel saw the heavens opened, and saw visions of God (Ezk 1:1). According to Greenberg (1983:41), it is an unique expression in the Old Testament. “Incline” or “rend” heaven was used to express descending and revealing (2 Sm 22:10; Is 63:19). Cooke (1985:5) indicates that the opening of heaven in the Old Testament is for destruction and judgement or for blessing (Gn 7:11; Is 24:18; MI 3:10). The open heaven in Ezekiel 1 gave Ezekiel a vision of heaven.

The vision that Ezekiel saw through the open heaven was the four living creatures with four faces and four wings (Ezk 1:5). The four faces are the face of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (Ezk 1:10). The one who leads them is the spirit (Ezk 1:12, 20, 21). There is the throne above the firmament that was above their heads, and the likeness of the appearance of a man sits upon the throne (Ezk 1:26). According to Allen (1990:35), there is a distinction between v. 5 and v. 26 in the expression about the heavenly figures. In v. 5, they are described as human likenesses, while in v. 26 they look like a human form. These two expressions explain them to be supernatural figures. Ezekiel saw the celestial place. In Jacob’s dream, there is no picture above the open heaven, but the angels ascending and descending between the heaven and the earth. It means that the open heaven is not an entrance for the angels’ ascent and descent, but as a screen for the vision of God. While Jacob called the place where he saw the open heaven to be the gate of heaven as the way to heaven, Ezekiel received a revelation about the future from the vision of the open heaven. Block (1988:428) points out that the gate of heaven and the heavenly throne room of God can be



assumed from the picture in Ezekiel's description. The vision of Ezekiel is related to the apocalyptic revelation about the future.

### 3.2.2 The house of God

In Gn 28:17, Jacob called the place where he dreamed and met God as the house of God, and the place name was changed from Luz to Bethel which means the house of God. It is difficult to define the meaning of Bethel without considering its relation to Jacob's dream. Jacob saw the ladder between heaven and earth, and the angels of God. He met God and received the promise. Therefore he confesses the place to be the house of God. However the one point to consider is where the house of God is. Especially what the people who lived in the intertestamental period thought where the house of God is. The main concept of the house of God in the literature was a temple. In the *Testament of Job* 17:4, the author used the words "temple of God" first and pointed to it again by using the words "the house of the great God",

... and destroyed the temple of God, annihilating the place of libation. I will therefore pay back to him just as he did against the house of the great God. Come together, then, gather spoils for yourselves, all his animals and what he has upon the earth. (TJO 17:4 OPE)

In the case of John's gospel, Jesus calls the temple "the house of My Father", when He expelled the merchants from the Jerusalem temple (Jn 2:16). It is certain that the temple was regarded as the house of God on earth. In the book of *Adam and Eve* 29:6-7, the meaning of the house of God is God's dwelling with men on earth. Even though it is not Bethel, the place where God dwells can be recognized as the house of God. In Judaism this concept of the house of God was fixed to the Jerusalem temple built by king Solomon, because it was so designed by king

David the king of Israel. It appeared in the literature of the intertestamental period *Eupolemus Concerning Moses* 2:22 says “When the temple was completed, and the city was walled in, he went to Shilo and brought a sacrifice of one thousand cattle as a whole burnt offering to God. Taking the tent, the altar, and the furnishings which Moses had made, he brought them to Jerusalem and placed them in the house [of God]”. The house of God in this document means the Jerusalem temple of king Solomon. In the *Testament of Moses* 1:5, Moses prophesized that David and Solomon will build the house of God.

The concept of the house of God is also applied to the second Jerusalem Temple. In 1 Es 5:57-58 the house of God indicated the rebuilt Jerusalem Temple. The phrase “the house of God” is used with “the temple of the Lord” in v. 58, as follows,

... and they appointed the Levites from twenty years old over the works of the Lord. Then stood up Jesus, and his sons and brethren, and Cadmiel his brother, and the sons of Madiabun, with the sons of Joda the son of Eliadun, with their sons and brethren, all Levites, with one accord set forward of the business, labouring to advance the works in the house of God. So the workmen built the temple of the Lord. (1Es 5:58 KJA)

However the dependence on the temple as the house of God was weaker than before the exile. Since the destruction of the Solomon temple the concept of the house of God as his dwelling place on earth became confused, because previously the people’s dependence on the Jerusalem temple had been absolute. In Jr 7:4, Jeremiah pointed out their wrong expectation about the temple. The absence of the temple during the 70 years in exile confused their faith about the temple. From this condition, the Rabbis used the *shekhinah*, which means the presence of God, or his dwelling (Ex 33:14, 22, 34:6). Brawer (2008:82) pointed out that there are two minds about the *shekhinah* among the Rabbis. The one is

that the shekhinah followed the people also in exile, and they continued to be people of God in exile. The other is that the spiritual shekhinah is with the people, even though the temple was destroyed physically. Thereby the people tried to be comforted in the other country. After the exile, they tried to rebuild the temple and had two minds about the temple. After the reconstruction of the second Jerusalem temple, the people expected again the visible temple as the house of God. Jerusalem was considered to be a holy place to Judaism. However there remained a question about the temple as the house of God on earth after the destruction of the temple. Nevertheless the concentration on worship at the temple was recovered through the prophets like Isaiah, and Haggai, and was revived in the second temple period.

To the ten tribes Bethel was the place of worship. Bethel is the place where Jacob saw the presence of God and confessed it to be the house of God. Why is the house of God not in Bethel, but in Jerusalem? King Jeroboam of North Israel placed an altar with a golden calf in the temple in Bethel (1 Ki 12:29). The altar at Bethel existed until king Josiah (2 Ki 23:15-20). Even though it is not sure that Jeroboam considered it to be the place of Jacob's dream, the altar in Bethel and in Dan already existed. Jeroboam used these two places as substitutions for the Jerusalem temple.

Jeroboam did see the necessity of sealing off the border—a political concern. But his concern was also religious, for he needed holy places that the people would accept as authentic Yahweh shrines. It was not enough that Dan (cf. Judg 18:27–31) and Bethel (cf. Gen 28:16–22, 35:1–4) had long been reconsecrated as Yahweh shrines. One or both (preferably both) needed a special sacred object similar to the ark to signify Yahweh's real presence. Jeroboam and his counselors decided to make a calf (or bull) for each shrine and install these in the most holy place, the innermost adytum. Much controversy has arisen

as to the function of these calves, but the present consensus is that they were not idols but ornaments or pedestals. (DeVries 2003:162)

The Bethel temple was regarded as the worship place till king Josiah destroyed the altar and the gilded calf. According to Flusser (2007:210), the first temple of God's promise is not the Jerusalem temple but Jacob's temple at Bethel in Jacob's vision from the midrashic interpretation. The formula of the understanding of the Midrash about the three patriarchs was reworked into "saw it built, saw it destroyed, and saw it rebuilt". The rebuilt temple that was mentioned is not the Jerusalem temple in the second temple period, but the eschatological temple of the future.

In the Samaritan tradition, there is another holy place to worship. It is known by the question of the Samaritan Woman to Jesus (Jn 4:20). The woman asked about the true worship place, because the Jews regarded it to be the Jerusalem temple while the Samaritans insisted that Mt. Gerizim is the house of God. House (1995:184) pointed to it,

The Jacob story (Gen 28:16-18) may have been read to support an alternate site to Jerusalem as the legitimate place of worship, and Jacob himself perhaps seen as a justification for Samaritan traditions regarding Mt. Gerizim.

To the Samaritan people Mt. Gerizim was regarded as the place of the blessings of God (Dt 27:12) instead of the Jerusalem temple that was destroyed and rebuilt, because it was difficult to the Samaritan people to go up to the Jerusalem temple for worship on account of their social position. According to Pummer (2009:38-39), the Samaritan temple stood on the northern peak of Mt. Gerizim where archaeological excavations started from 1982. It was built in the Persian period. But it was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in the second century BCE, according to

Josephus (*Ant.* 13:281). After the destruction of the temple, the Samaritans lived around Mt. Gerizim and they kept the place as their worship place. Therefore the meaning of Mt. Gerizim is attached to the temple as the place where the blessing was proclaimed in the time of Moses (Dt 27:12). The tension between the Samaritans and the Jews is not about the visible temple but the place to worship God at least for the Samaritans. In the conversation about the worship place between the Samaritan woman and Jesus, Jesus taught her that God is not concerned with the place, but time to worship. It means that the time has come to worship in the eschatological temple (Jn 4:23), because Jesus is himself the temple (Jn 2:21).

In conclusion, there are three concepts about the house of God as his dwelling place, and as a worship place. The one is the Jerusalem temple in the Jewish tradition, and the other is Mt. Gerizim in the Samaritan tradition. Another is the eschatological temple that God Himself will establish. However the motif from Jacob's vision is difficult to apply to the Jerusalem temple or to the Samaritan temple, because Jerusalem is not Bethel. A Samaritan temple was established with a political purpose. Nevertheless, the Rabbi's tried to apply the house of God to the temple of Jerusalem which was replaced by the body of the Christ in the New Testament.

### 3.3 The open heaven in Jn 1:51

The open heaven alludes to Ezk 1:1. From the opened heaven Ezekiel saw the vision of the chariot. According to (Allen 1990:22), the concept of the open heaven was used in apocalyptic texts;

The opening of the heavens is an expression that occurs here first and has influenced a number of later visionary and apocalyptic texts, in the sense of glimpsing of a heavenly scene or witnessing the descent of a heavenly being (e.g., 3 Macc 6:18; 2 BA 22:1; T. Lev. 5:1; Matt 3:16; Acts 7:56; Rev 19:11). It here refers to the preliminaries of a theophany.

In Gn 28:12, the concept of an open heaven comes from Jacob's proclamation that the place is the gate of heaven. The concept of a gate that is opened depicts the scene of an open heaven to the imagination of the reader, even though it is not referred to directly in 28:12. In the case of Ezk 1:11 and Gn 28:12, the open heaven is seen as an eschatological concept (see Ch. 2). The concept of an open heaven was regarded as an eschatological concept in intertestamental texts (see Ch. 3). The problem is whether it can be applied to v. 51 or not. Schnackenburg (1980:321) has another opinion about the allusion to Ezk 1:11,

The opening of the heavens is an eschatological motif in Is 63:19, and the baptism of Jesus it is seen by early Christian thought as a sign of the messiah (Mk 1:10 parr.).

Westcott (1908:28) also regarded it as a symbol of free intercourse between God and man by comparing it to Is 64:1 (*KJV*). However, Ezk 1:1 is more convincing than Is 63:19 (*LXX*), because the expression is more in detail. Nevertheless, it is clear that these two verses (Ezk 1:1 and Is 63:19) are regarded as eschatological revelations.

The expression about the open heaven is only in 1:51 of John's gospel. Mt 3:16 and Lk 3:21 are considered to be parallel with Jn 1:32-34. The expression that the heaven opened is mentioned when Jesus was baptized (Bernard & McNeile 1928:48). The event when Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist is described in more detail by Matthew and Luke, while John only recorded a

reminiscence of John the Baptist. In John's gospel, the event of the Holy Spirit that came down like a dove is the testimony of John the Baptist. However John the Baptist mentioned heaven whence the Holy Spirit came. According to Beasley-Murray (1999:25), the climax of the witness of John the Baptist is his confession, 'this man is the Son of God' (Jn 1:34). The reason for his confession is that the Holy Spirit came from heaven. This confession can be regarded as the same as Nathanael's confession, but there are several differences between them. The first is the basis of the confession. The one is the Holy Spirit and the other is the supernatural knowledge about the place under the fig tree. As mentioned above, the place under the fig tree was understood as a place of national political peace. It is related with the other confession of Nathanael about the King of Israel. However the Holy Spirit mentioned by John the Baptist does not have any political meaning. The other reason is the expression of John the Baptist, about the Lamb of God. The understanding about the Lamb of God does not correspond with any political revolution. It alludes to Is 53:7, the lamb that suffered which is different from a political messiah that was expected by the people. There were a lot of misunderstandings about the messiah among the people in John's gospel. Therefore the Son of God that was confessed by John the Baptist is not the same as Nathanael's confession, even though the words are the same. Even though the Son of God that was confessed by John the Baptist from his seeing the Holy Spirit coming from heaven can not point to a political messiah, it is not enough to indicate it as the event that was predicted by Jesus in Jn 1:51. In John's gospel, the expression, "the heaven opened" was not used.

There are various possibilities of meaning to the promise in v. 51. The one is at the baptism of Jesus. When Jesus received baptism by John the Baptist, the heaven opened (Mt 3:16, Lk 3:21). However it is difficult to match this event with

the promise of v. 51, because it is the antecedent to the promise. As mentioned above, John the Baptist reminisced about this event in 1:32, and then two of his disciples followed Jesus. The order of calling is Andrew that is the one among two disciples of John the Baptist, Peter, Phillip and Nathanael. So it is impossible that the promise of v. 51 refers to the baptism of Jesus. According to Beasley-Murray (1999:28), the reminiscences of the baptism of Jesus and the imagery of Jacob's dream are complex and consisted of the promise in v. 51. His opinion is based on the event when the heaven opened as the antecedent of the promise in v. 51 using the same phrases at the heaven's opening, so the later promise in v. 51 reminded them of the event at Jesus' baptism. However he missed the possibility that both of them are based on Jacob's or Ezekiel's vision. Jesus mentioned the future to the people including Nathanael, and the event of the heaven opening happened after Jesus promised it in v. 51.

The crucifixion of Jesus can be understood as the realization of this promise, because the cross can be seen as the ladder of Jacob's vision. The ladder was understood as the symbol of mediation between God and humanity. The signs, written in the Synoptics, like the opened tombs (Mt 27:52) or the torned veil in the temple (Mk 15:38; Lk 23:45) and the gathering of the crowds (Lk 23:48) can be seen to be the realization of the promise in v. 51. That is the future event of the promise with the cross effecting redemption. It can be matched to the Lamb of God that was proclaimed by John the Baptist. However, it is not stated in John's gospel. If it is the realization of the promise in v. 51, it would have to be written in John's gospel. Different from the other gospels, John's gospel keeps silent about the signs in the death story of Jesus.



Another interpretation is that the resurrection of Jesus is the accomplishment of the promise in v. 51. When Jesus was resurrected from the dead, there was a great earthquake, and the angel of God descended from heaven (Mt 28:2). The angel of God appeared and descended from heaven. It is near to the realization of the promise in v. 51. However it does not match Jacob's vision in Gn 28:12. The first reason is the order of the angel's move to ascend first.

The other possibility is the ascension of Jesus. The ascension to heaven and to sit on the right hand of God is recorded in Mk 16:19, and the more detailed record in Ac 1:9-11. Jesus ascended to heaven and the clouds hid him. While the disciples looked at the sky, the angels of God appeared to the disciples, and gave an advance notice about his "descension", his coming again, as they had seen him ascending. It is the nearest to the promise in v. 51. There are the ascending to heaven and the descending to earth again in future. Even though there is no expression about the open heaven, it is the same as in Jacob's vision. The problem is the one who ascends and descends is not Jesus, but the angels of God in v. 51. It refers to the angels of God who are ascending and descending upon the Son of Man on earth.

The most possible match with v. 51 is the parousia in Revelation. There are expressions that the heaven opened (4:1; 19:11), and the angels descended (10:1; 11:12; 14:17; 18:1; 20:1). The condition of the situation is the same as the ascension of Jesus, as mentioned by the angels in Ac 1:11. In relation with Ezk 1:1, the realization has to be matched with the parousia, because the vision of Ezekiel was also understood eschatologically. Even though it can be understood as a symbol for the connection between God and humans, it has an eschatological meaning in connection with the open heaven. Therefore it can be

possible that the open heaven does not only refer to the connection with the cross between God and the people, but the hope for the kingdom of God from the eschatological unity of heaven and earth.

### 3.4 The open heaven in John's gospel (Jn 1:32; 3:13; 3:27; 6:38; 12:28; 17:1)

The first motif in Jn 1:51 is that the heaven is opened. It indicates the connection between heaven and earth, that persons or things from heaven can come down and persons or things from earth can ascend to heaven. Jn 1:51 states that the path of the angels is first to ascend and then to descend between heaven and earth, but it is used as a metaphor, because angels have a spiritual existence that has no need of a physical opening of the sky. Therefore this open heaven is the starting point of the connection between heaven and earth. The open heaven is first mentioned in John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus' baptism in Jn 1:32. In Mt 3:16, Mk 1:10, and Lk 3:21 it was mentioned directly as the heaven opened. According to Bernard and McNeile (1928:49-50), the omissions in John of the heaven opened and the voice from heaven is to explain its meaning more primitively than in the Synoptic Gospels.

In John it is important that heaven is the starting point from where the Holy Spirit came. The dove is a metaphor of the Holy Spirit that came down from heaven on Jesus. The physical sky is not the same as the kingdom of heaven, but they are both from above the earth. The descent of the Holy Spirit from heaven also indicates the origin of Jesus. Schnackenburg (1980:305) expands on the testimony of John the Baptist to the pre-existent divine messiah from heaven.

John 3:13 confirms that the Son of Man is from heaven. The concepts of ascending and descending are used together without mention of the angels. The point why Jesus refers to heavenly beings is because he descended from heaven and that he will again. Beasley-Murray (1999:50) says “The descent is mentioned in v 13 as the presupposition of the ascent (via the cross) for the salvation of humankind”.

In the Old Testament tradition, there are persons who ascended to heaven like Moses or Elijah. They received heavenly knowledge from the ascending. However the Son of Man took the heavenly knowledge not from ascending to heaven, but inherently from the fulness of heavenly knowledge, because it is his home;

His elevation is yet more glorious than a mere ascent. He did not mount up to heaven, as if earth were His home, but came down thence **out of heaven**, as truly dwelling there; and therefore He has inherently the fulness of heavenly knowledge (Westcott 1908:53).

His lifting up in Jn 3:14 confirms that the Son of Man will ascend. The lifting up is not only his ascending to heaven, but refers to the redemption through his crucifixion as the bronze snake was lifted up for the healing of the people of Israel (Brown 1971:145). Brown continues his statement that the lifting up on the cross is the first step of his ascension. According to Carson (1991:200), this was from the perspective on the ascension as understood by the church at the end of the first century. This wider understanding of the crucifixion implies the ascension of Jesus, even though his ascension is not directly mentioned in Jn 3:13. Therefore this verse can also be understood eschatologically, according to Schnakenburg’s opinion, as follows:

The object of the eschatological revelation is not to give instruction on

the hidden things of heaven, but to mediate salvation, which consists in gaining access to the world of God, the heavenly kingdom of light and life (Schnackenburg 1980:392).

The heavenly origin is also emphasised by John the Baptist in Jn 3:27. Jesus comes from heaven and is above all (v. 31). John the Baptist contrasted himself and Jesus that he belongs to the earth and Jesus belongs to heaven. It does not mean that the baptism of John the Baptist is not from heaven, but it means that John the Baptist states what belongs to the earth. Jesus' origin is in heaven and refers to what belongs to heaven. It supports the heavenly origin of Jesus.

Heaven is also the origin of the Johannine "bread of life", like the manna that came from heaven in the desert (Jn 6:32-33). It comes from the tradition of the Old Testament in Exodus. It matches the dove from the sky in Jn 1:32. The physical sky points to the heaven as the dwelling place of God. It means that the Holy Spirit as well as the Son of Man come from heaven which is also a metaphor for the dwelling place of God. In Jn 6:38-39, Jesus defines his aim with his descent from heaven. It is to raise up on the last day the ones who was given to him by his Father. According to Borchert ([1996] 2001:266), the phrase "the last day" appeared here for the first time in John's gospel, and the word "here" is the eschatological expectation of eternal life.

The voice from heaven in Jn 12:28 supports the heavenly origin of Jesus. It is the main theme in John's gospel that Jesus is the Son of God. The Father sent his Son to the earth, and the Father speaks from heaven. Therefore the voice from heaven supports Jesus' sonship of God. John 17:1 mentioned that Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, when he prayed. According to Schnackenburg (1982:170), heaven has the meaning of the transcendent space of God, and it was the home

of Jesus. He connected this to Jn 1:51 and mentioned that Jesus is closely connected to heaven.

These texts that refer to heaven in John's gospel, confirm that heaven was regarded as the dwelling place of God whence Jesus was sent by the Father. John's gospel used it to prove that Jesus is the Son of God. The open heaven can be regarded as the beginning of the eschatological event. The opened heaven, the ascending and descending angels and Jesus' prediction about his ascension to heaven imply that Jesus is the Son of God from heaven. The opened heaven plays an important role as starting point of the eschatological event.

## Chapter 4. The angels ascending and descending

Another motif that surfaces in our investigation is that of the angel. The angel also appeared in visions in the documents. As in the dream of Jacob, the angels are working for God on earth as well as in heaven. In heaven, the angels glorify and praise God all the time. Sometimes they guide people to heaven, such as those who were called by God, like Enoch and Levi. Their earthly work is to deliver the will of God to the people sometimes through dreams, and sometimes by an angel in person. In Enoch, the angels taught a skill to the people, and they were punished therefore. Lastly, the angels execute the judgement of God on the people. However, it is not executed and noticed by the angels in visions or dreams. During the intertestamental period, this performance of the angels is related to the eschatological apocalypse.

This eschatological understanding of the angels is supported by the concept of the open heaven. This concept and the gate of the heaven appeared with the angels in the texts of the intertestamental period as the portal to the other world. The key of the gate belongs to the angels to open and close the gate of heaven. In the *Testament of Levi* there are seven heavens and there is a gate to each heaven with a gatekeeper angel. The gatekeeper angels open the gates for the man who was invited by God, and guides him to higher heavens.

## 4.1 The angels ascending and descending in Gn 28:12

In his dream Jacob saw the angels ascending and descending. Freedman ([1992] 1996:248) says that there are many names for angels in the Old Testament: “sons of God” (Gn 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7), “holy ones” (Ps 89:5, 7), “ministers” (Ps 103:21), “commander” (Jos 5:14), “hosts”, “army” (Ps 89:9), and “messengers” (Gn 28:12). The word, מַלְאָכִים, ἄγγελος (messenger), used in this text, is the most common name for them in the Old Testament to indicate their main function as messengers of God’s messages to humans. It is also used for human messengers in the Old Testament. The word, מַלְאָכִים, was used when Jacob sent messengers to his brother Esau (Gn 32:3, 6), and it was used when the elders of Jabesh sent messengers throughout Israel in a desperate attempt to locate someone who could rescue their town from the dreadful threat of the Ammonites (1 Sm 11:3, 4, 9). It means that this word was used for messengers of God and of humans. The main idea is that they deliver messages to others.

The concept of messengers of the gods appears also in another Ancient Near Eastern tradition. According to Meier (1999:46), it was used to identify both human messengers and supernatural messengers (Sumarian: *kin-gi-a*, *sukkal*; Akkadian: *mār šipri*; Egyptian: *wpwty*; Ugaritic: *ǧlm*, *ml.ak*; Ethiopic: *mal.ak*). The gods of the Ancient Near East communicated with one another over great distances by means of messengers. *Nuska* and *Kakka* appeared as messenger gods in the Mesopotamian sources. *Anu* addressed his words to *Kakka* to carry his message to *Ereshkigal*, because they cannot go down and come up to one another between heaven and the underworld in *Nergal and Ereshkigal* (Dalley 1997b:385). However there are obvious differences between the angels in

Jacob's dream and the messenger gods in the Mesopotamian sources. The first is that the angels in Jacob's dream are not gods. In Mesopotamian sources, the messengers are also gods. While they are low level gods, because of their polytheistic culture, the angels in Jacob's dream, on the other hand, are not gods. There is only one God in Jacob's dream. The second is that the angels in Jacob's vision did not say anything, although the word, מַלְאָכִים, which means messenger, was used. The angels of God in Genesis 28 were just ascending and descending between the heaven and the earth. Thirdly the one who speaks with Jacob is God Himself, as Mathews ([2005] 2007:450) pointed out that the angels did not speak, and Jacob's encounter is direct with God like in the case of Abraham and Isaac. In Mesopotamian sources, it is impossible for the gods of heaven to go down directly to the underworld, therefore they send messengers. But the role of the angels in Jacob's dream is not to deliver the message of God.

There are two possibilities to interpret it. The one is that the act of ascending and descending is a symbol of heaven's messages to the world, and the other is that it is itself a message to Jacob. Sarna (1989:198) regards it as symbols indicating Jacob's prayers for protection, which rise to heaven and receive a response from heaven. It is also the reason why the angels ascend from the earth firstly, and then descend from heaven. Waltke (2001:390) also support this opinion, as saying "the angels ascending are responsible for Jacob's homeland and the angels descending are responsible for the land Jacob is going to". The angels in Gn 28:12 is not descending and ascending but ascending and descending. The right order is that descending have to be first, because the angels are the messengers that God in heaven sends to Jacob on earth. However the order of Jacob's dream is right according to Waltke's interpretation. Janzen (1993:108)



supports Sarna's opinion and mentions that the communication between God and Jacob is going up from Jacob and is being answered from heaven. He points out the support of his idea from the stone that Jacob put under his head to sleep. He imposes the meaning on the stone as a way of seeking contact with God. However there is no connection between the stone and contact with God. It is also not referred to in any other text in the biblical literature that Jacob sought God before sleeping that night. According to his response to his dream, he was amazed, and unexpectant of his dream.

According to Wenham (2002:222), the OT angels are also to look after different nations and territories and to patrol the earth (Job 1:6; 2:1; Zch 1:8–17; cf. Dt 32:8). From his view, the act of the angels in Jacob's dream can be regarded as a symbol that the angels, who guided Jacob, turned back to heaven to report and went down again to Jacob with the presence with God. The Rabbinic interpretation is similar to this opinion. According to a Rabbinic interpretation, there were two distinct groups of angels. The one group, who is escorting Jacob on earth, is ascending and the other group, who is in heaven, is descending from heaven:

Those angels who escort a man in Eretz Israel do not escort him without the Land. Thus ascending refers to those who had escorted him in the Land, while descending refers to those who were to escort him without the Land - Gen. Rab. 88:12 (Mathews [2005] 2007:450).

The ascending and descending angels as symbols are related to the communication between God and Jacob. The promise of God to Jacob in his dream is concerned with God's blessing to the patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac (v. 14), that God will guard Jacob until God brings him back. Even though there is no message from the angels, the act of the angels can strengthen Jacob's

confidence about the protection of God during his travel. After the appearance of the angels, God Himself spoke to Jacob to give him the promise of protection and the blessing as in the case of his father and grandfather. However the interpretation of symbols of protection narrows the meaning of these angels. Because of the confession of Jacob about the gate of heaven and the house of God, it is possible to interpret the vision of ascending and descending angels also apocalyptically. It is related to heaven as the house of God and the angels as celestial beings. In the mention of Jacob about the gate of heaven, the concept of that heaven which was opened in Jacob's dream is implied.

## 4.2 Ascending and descending from heaven in the Old Testament (Pr 30:4; Dn 4:13, 23; 7:13; Zch 6:1-5)

In the Old Testament the scene of angels ascending and descending between heaven and the earth are only to be found in Gn 28:12. The concept of ascending and descending relates only to the heaven in the Old Testament. Heaven was regarded as the house of God or the kingdom of God in Old Testament tradition. Angels are servants in the house of God. As mentioned above, the act of ascending and descending from heaven in Gn 28:12 can be interpreted in several ways. Firstly, it is a symbol for God's protection of Jacob. That means the angels were sent to guard him and to report to God whilst ascending and descending between God and Jacob. The second is to show the role of the angels as mediators between God and humans to deliver a message from God to them. Lastly it is an apocalyptic vision to indicate the place to which Jacob will return. The return to the promised land motif is the main topic in Jacob's story. Jacob

described his life to Pharaoh as a pilgrimage. His life was a real pilgrimage from his flight to Haran to avoid his brother's fury to Egypt to flee famine. The dream he had at Bethel was the basis of his hope to return to the promised land. However the promised land can be the symbol of the eternal heavenly home that Jacob saw in his dream by means of the open heaven. It means that the vision of the ascending and descending angels has a role as the path to heaven as his eternal home where God is.

Those who ascend to heaven are not only angels, but also Old Testament persons. In person, ascending happened to Elijah (2 Ki 2:11). 2 Chronicles 30:27 mentions the prayer of the priests and Levites that will ascend to heaven. It is a metaphor. It means that the prayer was accepted by God. Isaiah warned the king of Babylon, who was proudly comparing himself with the morning star to raise himself above God (Is 14:13-14). In Judges 13:20 the angel of God ascended to heaven. It resembles Jacob's dream in Gn 28:12. The difference from the angels ascending and descending in Jacob's dream is that the angel who came to Manoah came in human form like the angels who visited Lot (Gn 19:11-13), who were only afterwards recognized to be angels (Jdg 13:21).

The other expressions about ascending and descending between heaven and earth are Dt 30:12, Pr 30:4, and Dn 4:13, 23, 7:13. There are four riddles in Pr 30:4. The question about the one who ascends to heaven and descends is in the first. In Dn 4:13, the one who descends from heaven is a watcher and a holy one. The name watchers is included among the many names for the angels (Freedman [1992] 1996:249). The one like a son of man descends with the clouds of heaven in Dn 7:13. The expression, the "son of man" also appears in Jn 1:51.

Therefore these three expressions about ascending and descending in the Old Testament are important and will now be discussed.

#### **4.2.1 Who ascended to heaven, or descended? (Pr 30:4, cf. Dt 30:12)**

The first question is about who ascended to heaven and descended. The one who ascended into heaven was referred to many times. Elijah was the prophet who ascended into heaven in a whirlwind (2 Ki 2:11). Even though there is no exact reference about the ascent of Enoch, the author of Hebrews indicates that Enoch was taken up to God without death like Elijah (Heb 11:5). The author of Psalm 139 used the expression about ascending and descending as poetic expressions for God's omnipresence (Ps 139:8). In Dt 30:12, the question of one who can ascend up to heaven and descend to bring the command of God, was stated as unnecessary. In these cases, the one who would ascend to heaven was a human. In the myth of Egypt, it was the king who ascended to heaven and descended (Lichtheim 1973-80:40). The futile boast of the gentile king to ascend to heaven was rejected as rebellion against God (Is 14:13-14). Enoch and Elijah's ascending to heaven at the end of their lives are special cases. Their ascending to heaven as humans depended on the special grace of God. In the other cases, it is a poetic expression. In Jdg 13:20, the angel of God ascended in the flame of the altar, after delivering God's order to Manoah and his wife. This text has a closer relationship to Jacob's dream, because the one who ascended to heaven was the angel of the Lord like in Jacob's dream. The angel came to execute the order of God. There is no mention about his descending. He appeared to Manoah's wife, and she called her husband. After the angel repeated the message of God, he ascended into heaven in the flame of the altar. The angels of God ascend and descend between heaven and earth on God's order.

The question who ascended and descended in Pr 30:4 is a special case. The expression in v. 4 is “who has ascended to heaven and descended?”. It means that it is a special one time ascending and descending of a human. However the one who would ascend and descend is related to the other three questions and the other three questions’ answer is simply God (Murphy 2002:228), because the one who controls the wind, waters, and the ends of the earth is only God, like the answer to the questions in Job 38. There are problems to describe God as ascending to heaven and descending from it. According to Toy (1899:521), the subject of the answer in Pr 30:4 cannot be God, because the starting point of the question was the earth. While the questions express divine acts, they are addressed to a human who has no power to control the universe. It is impossible to find someone among humans. To solve this problem, Perdue poses another solution to these questions:

These related questions in their present context suggest that human wisdom is incapable of discerning the good in human existence, since the sources of the comprehensive knowledge needed to determine the answer to the noble man’s question for the good, the gods are in heaven and beyond human reach (Perdue 1994:118-119).

The questions in Pr 30:4 are expected to find the same answer as suggested in Dt 30:12, of which they are regarded as its echo by Murphy (2002:228). The answer of Dt 30:12 is that no one need to ascend to heaven and bring the law to the earth. While the question of Dt 30:12 does not expect an answer, the questions of Pr 30:4 expect the answer ‘no one’. There is no human who can ascend to heaven and descend. It is the prerogative of the deity and those ordered by Him.

Skehan (1971:43) mentioned that the first question in Proverbs can be associated with Gn 28:12. It was also referred to by Murphy (2002:229). He continued his statement that Agur is representative of the people of Israel, and the people of Israel is called “the son of the Lord” (Ex 4:22). Agur is called the son of יְהוָה that means “He is the holy Lord” (abbreviation of יְהוָה קְדוֹשׁ הוּא). It is an antecedent to the well-known הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרַךְ הוּא of later times. He regarded these questions as a riddle. According to his interpretation, the answer to the fifth question can be Agur himself. However his interpretation is not supported by the text. It is difficult to match the name of Jakeh (Pr 30:1) to יְהוָה קְדוֹשׁ הוּא, because the main goal of the question is not to present Agur himself, but to present the ignorance of humans. Nevertheless it is possible to see a relationship between Gn 28:12 and Pr 30:4. The other expressions mentioned above have the ascending into heaven without a descending. Only these two verses have the expression of ascending and descending between heaven and earth, as follows;

Pr 30:4	<u>עֲלֵה-שָׁמַיִם וַיֵּרֵד</u>	<u>ἀνέβη</u> εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ <u>κατέβη</u>	aorist
Gn 28:12	<u>עֲלִים וַיֵּרְדוּ</u>	<u>ἀνέβαινον</u> καὶ <u>κατέβαινον</u>	imperfective

The differences are only the tense and the number of the versions. Proverbs 30:4 is singular and Gn 28:12 is plural. The first tense is aorist and the latter is an imperfective participle in the LXX, while the latter is a Qal, participle in the MT. While the two cases are the same in the MT. The difference is in the LXX. Both of them start with the earth. It is not descending and ascending, but ascending and descending even though the angels are heavenly beings. It means that this expression has a special pattern. From this pattern, Skehan (1971:43) regards

Pr 30:4 as an allusion to Gn 28:12. Deuteronomy 30:12, “Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us” is mentioned above by Murphy as echoed in Proverbs with a similar pattern. Even though there is no mention about descending, the sentence, “bring it unto us” can imply “having it and descending to us”. Murphy (2002:228) added that Bar 3:29 “Who has gone up to heaven and taken her” can be recognized as an echo of Pr 30:4. The three biblical passages have the same point. They started from the earth and come down again. The first step is just ascending and descending (Gn 28:12), the second step is ascending to bring something to the earth from heaven (Dt 30:12). The last step is reminding of the first and second steps (Pr 30:4). However Dt 30:12 and Pr 30:4 are posed in the question format that expected negative answers. The answer is that no human can ascend and descend like the angels and cannot bring wisdom from heaven. Although it is not sure whether these two passages alluded to Gn 28:12 or not, these two authors must have known it and kept it in mind.

#### **4.2.2 The watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven (Dn 4:13, 23)**

In king Nebuchadnezzar’s dream he saw a “watcher” (*Greek/Hebrew*) and “a holy one” (*Greek/Hebrew*) come down from heaven. There are discussions about what a watcher and a holy one is. Freedman ([1992] 1996:249) points out that ‘watchers’ is a term for angels in extra-biblical literature from the late second temple period. Lucas (2002:100) agrees with him and says that it comes from a Semitic root ‘*ur*’ which means ‘to be awake’. It designates an angel since the earliest literature, and is commonly used in this sense in the later Jewish literature. It is demonstrated by a comparison of the translations: The LXX text and the Theodotion text in Dn 4:13, 23, match Gn 28:12;

Dn 4:13(LXX) ἄγγελος ἀπεστάλη ἐν ἰσχύι ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ

Gn 28:12(LXX) οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνέβαινον καὶ κατέβαινον ἐπ’ αὐτῆς

Dn 4:13(TH) ἰρ καὶ ἅγιος ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ κατέβη

The LXX translated עִיר וְקָדְוֵיִשׁ with ἄγγελος that came from heaven. In Theodotion it was translated with “ἰρ καὶ ἅγιος” following the MT (Dn 4:10) directly. It means that the watcher was understood as an angel when the LXX was written. In the fragments of the version of Aquila and Symmachus, it was translated with ἐγρήγορος, which means the one who wakes up or watches (Ziegler, Munnich & Fraenkel 1999:292). It indicates that in later times it was understood as a watcher who had a special mission from God. The mission of the angels according to this interpretation is to keep the people of God from the enemy. The mission of the angels in Jacob’s dream was special, because they did not say anything and only their act of ascending and descending was seen. The angels that visited Lot in Sodom saved Lot and his two daughters (Genesis 19). They were revealed to be angels after their special mission and the special situation. In Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7 the title, “sons of God” was used for them against Satan the Accuser. Miller ([1994] 2001:133) mentioned that “son of God” is used for an angel in the Genesis Apocryphon from Qumran, but it is the messenger that was “the one who is awake” in the Biblical usage. The term “watcher” is one of the titles of the angels, that explains their function in a specific case. Goldingay (2002:88) saw them as other heavenly beings that were different from angels. He considers it to be a metaphor for heavenly kings governing God’s realm like earthly kings. He sees it as a description of God himself, as in Ps 121:3-4. It emphasizes the way God is governing the world. This opinion can be supported by Dn 4:17 (4:14 MT), where the watchers and the holy ones are mentioned, as there are many watchers who



receive orders from a king in his kingdom. The first watcher can represent all the watchers. According to Collins, Cross and Collins (1993:228), the plural “watchers” was a reflection on the concept of the heavenly council that was widespread in the Ancient Near East. Therefore it is confirmed that an angel came from heaven to inform king Nebuchadnezzar.

There are two different verbs used by the Old Greek Version LXX and Theodotion in Daniel 4. While κατέβη in Gn 28:12 was used in Daniel 4 by Theodotion, the Old Greek Version LXX used ἀπεστάλη, Aorist Passive 3<sup>rd</sup> person from ἀποστέλλω which means “to send”. The translation of the Old Greek Version LXX differs from the MT in both Gn 28:12 and Dn 4:10 (4:13), while the MT uses two different verbs,

מְלַאכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים Gn 28:12 (MT)

עִיר וְקִדְיֵשׁ מִן־שָׁמַיָא נָחַת Dn 4:10 (MT)

The two words, נָחַת and יֹרְדִים in Gn 28:12 have the same meaning, “to descend”. However the LXX translated נָחַת with ἀπεστάλη, that means “he was sent”. Theodotion, who tried to correct the LXX translation more literally changed Dt 4:23(20) as follows,

Dn 4:23 (LXX) καὶ ἡ ὄρασις ἦν εἶδες ὅτι ἄγγελος ἐν ἰσχύι ἀπεστάλη παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου

Dn 4:23 (TH) καὶ ὅτι εἶδεν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἰρ καὶ ἅγιον καταβαίνοντα ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ

Where the LXX has “from the lord”, TH reads “from heaven”. In 4:13(10) and 4:(20)23 the word, ἀπεστάλη was used; in 4:13(10) ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ and in 4:(20)23 παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου. Even though this difference is not a big problem

compared to the vast differences between LXX and TH in Daniel 4-6, it is clear that the meaning of descending from heaven was understood as the sending by God to earth. It also supports the fact that the one who comes down from heaven is an angel.

## **Conclusion**

The discussion above dealt with the concept of ascending and descending. This concept is related to the celestial world, because the ascending and descending was done between heaven and earth. It can be regarded as a visitation from one world to the other world. There is no direct quotation of Gn 28:12 in the Old Testament. The nearest phrases to it are Dt 30:12 and Pr 30:4. Both of these phrases are questions that expect a negative answer. The answer does not concern the celestial existence, but man's inability compared to God. The question in Dt 30:12 and Pr 30:4 indicates that no one can ascend to heaven and descend again to earth.

There are other expressions about ascending to heaven. Although there are the ascending of prayer (2 Chr 30:27), of the prophet (2 Ki 2:11), the angel of the Lord (Jdg 13:20), and the Morning Star (Is 14:13), it is difficult to find their connection with the angels ascending and descending in Jacob's dream because there is no mention about a descending but only of one ascent. The angels in Jacob's dream are ascending and descending, moving up and down. The other expressions are metaphors. The ascending of the prayer in 2 Chr 30:27 indicates the acceptance of the prayer of the priests and the Levites. The prophet and the angel of God in 2 Ki 2:11 and Jdg 13:20 are called to heaven by God as they completed their work given by God. The Morning Star (Is 14:13) is a poetic

expression about the arrogance of the King of Babylon, to become the same as God.

Daniel's vision in Dn 4:13, 23, 7:13 (LXX) is similar to Jacob's dream. It is an apocalyptic revelation like Jacob's dream. Although it is difficult to define who is the one who descended from heaven, it is clear that he was sent by God to deliver a revelation. However, it is difficult to find a direct relation between him and the angels ascending and descending in Jacob's dream. The one like a Son of Man who descended with a cloud has a possible connection with Jacob's dream apocalyptically interpreted like the dream of Jacob.

### 4.3 The ascending and descending angels in intertestamental literature

There are many references in Judaism about an angel as the messenger of God. In the New Testament, an angel is also several times mentioned. In the birth narrative of Jesus, the angel appeared to announce the birth of the saviour and to warn about king Herod's wicked design (Lk 1:11, 30; 2:10; Mt 2:13). An angel actually opened the iron gate of the city for Peter, and led him out to the street. When Peter arrived at the house where people prayed for him, they were confused and thought it was his angel (Ac 12:1-16). From their response, it is clear that the angels of God are seen as personally guarding the people on earth. Both the Old Testament tradition and the intertestamental tradition have the same concept that the angels of God dwell in heaven to serve God, and descend to work for God's kingship. There are many interpretations about the order of the angels of God in Jacob's dream. In the Midrash, many Rabbi's interpreted it as

symbols of other Old Testament verses. In the Targum an interpretation was inserted in the text, like guarding angels who were ascending to see the face of Jacob that was inscribed in the throne of glory, and the heavenly angels were also descending to see the face of Jacob who was sleeping on earth (Gn 28:12 PJE). This section will look how the motif of ascending or descending angels was used in the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha.

Firstly it will ask which concept of the angels was prevalent in the Intertestamental period. The role of the angels of God in the intertestamental period literature can be classified in two groups. One group regards them as agents to assist God's work both in heaven and on earth, and the other regards them as teachers or interpreters of God's will to the people (Freedman [1992] 1996:252). In the first case, the angels of God work mainly as protectors of the people on earth. According to Evans and Porter (2000), there is an individual angel for each person. Jubilees 35:17 implied an individual guarding angel was stationed not only with Jacob but also with Esau. Secondly, the angels of God represented God on earth. It also appeared in Hosea 12:3-4:

<sup>3</sup>He took his brother by the heel in the womb, And in his strength he struggled with God. <sup>4</sup>Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; He wept, and sought favor from Him. He found Him in Bethel, And there He spoke to us (Hos 12:3-4 NKJ)

In v. 3 the one who Jacob had struggled with is God, while he had struggled with the angel in Gn 32:24. It means that the angel represented God, as the agent of God toward the people. When Abraham greeted the angels, there were three angels at the terebinth trees of Mamre. However the one angel remained with Abraham and two angels of God left for Sodom. The one who had a talk with

Abraham is called “God” (Gn 18:16). The other work of the angels as agents of God is doing the punishment according to God’s will (1 En 56:1-2 *OPE*).

The angels of God interpret the vision or dreams to man. These visions or dreams have a special meaning about the future, as the *Testament of Reuben* states:

Also, concerning them, the angel of the Lord told me, and taught me, that women are overcome by the spirit of fornication more than men, and they plot against men in their heart; and by means of their dress they first deceive their minds first, and by the glance of the eye they instill poison, and then through the accomplished act they take them captive (T. Reu 5:3 *OPE*).

In the dreams of Levi and Enoch, the angels of God were interpreters. Especially, Sariel was ordered by God to interpret the dream of Jacob, and Sariel was the one who is in charge of dreams. In 1 En 20:6, Sariel is one of the seven Archangels. According to Webster (2009:174), one of Sariel’s roles is to teach the people who want to learn. However in the case of 4 Ezra, the interpreting angel was Uriel (4 Ezra 3:1-4:21). Uriel had been sent to Ezra in order to explain the vision. It means that the role of interpretation about the will of God or of a vision belong to the work of the angels of God.

These two roles of the angels of God relate to Jacob’s angels ascending and descending. The roles of the angels are to mediate between God and the people. God dwells in heaven and the people dwell on earth. Therefore their ascending and descending is necessary. It is not clear that the angels that ascended and descended in Jacob’s dream are mediating between God and Jacob. However the ascending and the descending of an individual angel is for communication between God and the people in Judaism.

In 1 En 6:6, there are two hundred angels descending from the summit of Mount Hermon in order to take wives from the daughters of man. They taught their skill to the humans, so that this culture arose among men. The author of 1 Enoch saw this descending as corruption, so these angels could not ascend into heaven for all ages (1EN 14:5 OPE). In the same sense, the Sibylline Oracle used “fallen” instead of “descend”,

You have fallen from the stars: you will not ascend to heaven  
(SIB 5:72 OPE)

Because of this conception of the angels who descended on earth, the order of ascending and descending of the angels in Jacob’s dream was explained. In Genesis Rabah, R. Levi mentioned the banished angels. They were banished from heaven during 138 years (Freedman & Simon 1939:627). It means that there are two kinds of the angels on earth. The one group is protecting angels and the other fallen angels. In the case of the protecting angels, their ascending means they returned after completing their work on God’s order. The fallen angels’ ascension means recovery through the forgiveness of God. However 1 Enoch mentioned the impossibility of the second case in 14:5 OPE, “in order that no longer into heaven you should ascend for all ages. And in the bonds of the earth it was spoken to bind you for all the generations of the age”.

In conclusion, it is difficult to find the exact expression “ascending and descending” in Judaism except in this direct quotation, like the *Ladder of Jacob*. It means that the expression of “ascending and descending” was not used in other idioms. Ascending means going up to heaven and descending means coming down directly to earth. The general order of angels in Judaism is descending and ascending. When these two directions were covered at the same instance it was

to bring a person to heaven. Levi was also taken up by the angel from heaven, as well as Enoch. A case of eschatological descending occurred in 1 En 100:4 OPE,

... and angels will come down, descending into the secret places on that day; [and] all who helped unrighteousness will be gathered together into one place and the Most High will rise on the day of judgment to make a great judgment of all.

The angels will gather the unrighteousness in one place for God to judge them on the day of Judgment.

The concept of “an open heaven” does not appear in Gn 28:12, but can be referred from Jacob’s confession after he met with God, when he mentioned the gate of heaven, and the house of God. The concept of “an open heaven” appears in Jesus’ saying in Jn 1:51. From the concept of the gate, the opening of heaven can be deducted. In the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha there are many expressions about the opening of heaven. However it has to be considered that these two concepts are related to each other only on the way to the other world. The concept also has a literal meaning. In the Old Testament tradition it was used for the rain and the blessing from the heaven. This remained the same in Judaism. In Enoch 33:2, it is stars that come through the portal of the open heaven. In 34:2, 36:1, it is the winds, hail, frost, snow, dew and rain. In the vision, it can mean that there is a real portal like a hole or a gate in heaven open, and it means that the heaven was described as a literal place. According to Engberg-Pedersen (2001:177), the phenomenon that Enoch sees is transcendent and is a concealed order and rules of astronomical phenomena. Its interpretation comes from the interpreting angel, Metatron. After ascending to heaven, Enoch transformed the angel, Metatron (3 EN 15:1-2 *OTPC1*). From this instance, he concluded that

these phenomena and the transfiguration are mythological aspects. In his view, there is this mythological factor in the literature of the intertestamental period. These factors have affected the common sense of the people who were standing beside Jesus in Jn 1:51 and the readers of John's gospel.

The concept of the gate of heaven or the open heaven is related to the several floors in heaven. In 2 Enoch 20, and T. Lev 3, there are seven levels in heaven. Enoch and Levi were led by the angels to each level of heaven. In Jub 5:24, there are seven gates of heaven for the flood in Noah's times,

<sup>24</sup> And the Lord opened seven flood-gates of heaven, And the mouths of the fountains of the great deep, seven mouths in number. <sup>25</sup> And the flood-gates began to pour down water from the heaven forty days and forty nights, and the fountains of the deep also sent up waters, until the whole world was full of water. (JUB 5:24-25 OTP)

According to Demy and Ice (2011:83), the Jewish teaching of seven heavens is treated in detail in the Talmud. The names for the seven heavens in the Talmud are: The first floor heaven is Vilon which means curtain. It is situated near to the physical sky, because it is the way for the sun. The second floor is Ragi'a. Its concept is the universe, because the sun, moon, and stars are fixed there. The third is Shehaqim, the place of the millstones for manna. The fourth is Zebul, where Michael offers the sacrifice. The fifth is Ma'on with the praising angels that sing to God. The sixth is Makon, where the snow, hail, dew, rain and the mist are prepared. The last is `Arabot for righteousness, justice, and blessing with the throne of glory, and where the great king is enthroned.

There is a more detailed record about the seven heavens in 3 En 17:1-3. From 3 Enoch 16, R. Ishmael received guidance from the angel Metatron who was transformed from Enoch. The angel Metatron guided him from the first heaven to



the seventh heaven. In each heaven there is one prince. The heavens' name is the same as in the Talmud. In Vilon, there is Sidri`el, in Raqia Baraqi`el, in Shehaqim Baradi`el, in Zebul Sahaqi`el, in Ma'on Satqi`el, in Makon Gabriel, and in `Arabot Michael. The synopsis of these two documents is as follows,

Name of Heaven	The angel	Explanation of the place
Vilon	Sidri`el	Curtain, the way of the sun
Ragi`a	Baraqi`el	The place for the sun, moon, an stars
Shehaqim	Baradi`el	Millstones for manna
Zebul	Sahaqi`el	Sacrifices offered
Ma`on	Satqi`el	Praise God
Makon	Gabriel	Snow, hail, dew, rain, mist
`Arabot	Michael	The throne of Glory

Michael is in charge of the seventh heaven; in 3 BA 11:1-2, there is a gate to the fifth heaven, and the key of the gate belongs to Michael,

And the angel took me and led me thence to a fifth heaven. And the gate was closed. And I said, Lord, is not this gate-way open that we may enter? And the angel said to me, we cannot enter until Michael comes, who holds the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; but wait and thou shalt see the glory of God. (3BA 11:1 OTP)

The "keys of heaven" appears in Mt 16:19. It implied plural "heavens", because the word form κλειῶδες is the plural of keys. It can be interpreted like one kingdom of heaven with many keys of stores in it. However it is not applied to v. 19ff, "whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven)". These keys can be interpreted as symbols, "Keys are above all a symbol of authority and, hence, a symbol of power over something" (Hagner 1995:472). However it is not a problem to see the gates of heaven as symbols or as real gates or portals to the heaven, because they come from a

vision or from dreams. In the vision of Baruch it is apparently a physical gate. The voice came from the open gate of heaven in 3 Baruch. Here Michael was depicted as the commander and interpreter of the revelations. God ordered Michael to escort the righteous to the heavenly God. It can be implied that it is the last judgement. There are other versions of the voice from the gates of heaven in 1 En 9:2. It is concerned with the judgment to the Most High. It is more directly related to the eschatological judgement than in 3 Baruch. The archangels, Michael, Uriel, and Raphael received God's order to judge the corrupted angels.

The gate of heaven is also the gate of the store of heaven. In 1 En 11:1, there is a door to the inner room of blessing in heaven. This chapter in Enoch is followed by the corrupted angel's punishment, and the cleaning of the earth. It can be interpreted as a symbol which means that God's blessing comes from heaven. The concept of a treasure house in heaven is also found in the New Testament (cf. Mt 6:20; 19:21; Lk 18:22). From the promise of God's blessing to Jacob in the vision of Jacob can be interpreted as God's blessing from the treasure house in heaven. The treasure house in heaven is explained in 2 En 6:1, while Enoch was in the first heaven, many angels were guarding the treasure houses. It is the treasure house of the dew. This expression can be interpreted as a symbol of the wealth of the people that comes from the dew and rain, and can bring an abundant harvest.

In Judaism, the concept of an open heaven and the gate of heaven are symbols that imply a portal between heaven and earth. Heaven was regarded as the dwelling place of God. The expression about the seven heavens and the seven guarding angels is similar to a castle for the construction of the kingdom of heaven and the roles of the angels. It shows that there is a demarcation between

heaven and earth. The opening of the gate of heaven implies a connection between the two different worlds. In the mythological perception, snow, rain, dew, and mist belong to heaven. However there is also a distinction between heaven as a dwelling place and the heaven of snow, rain, dew, and mist. Therefore the souls of these who have died appeal at the gates of heaven, because it is the border of heaven.

#### 4.4 The angels ascending and descending in Jn 1:51

There are two problems with the angels of God that are ascending and descending. The one is the unique expression about the order of ascending first and then descending. The angels are celestial existences that is expected to start by descending. However John's gospel followed the order of Gn 28:12. It is a question whether it just followed the order of Gn 28:12, or whether there is another intention. Another problem is the understanding of the angels that are usually celestial messengers of God or guardian angels as in Ac 12:15. The people who prayed for Peter in prison heard the girl's report about Peter who was released when he knocked at the door and they thought it is Peter's angel. It means that the belief in guardian angels existed among them. In addition, Jesus also mentioned guardian angels indirectly in Mt 18:10. There are the angels who were possessed by the little ones in heaven. From these two kinds of examples about guardian angels, it is certain that there was the faith about the angels who stay in heaven and descend to assist the people on earth, when the people faced suffering like Peter.

The word, “angel(s)” was used four times in John’s gospel (1:51; 5:4; 12:29; 20:12), 20 times in Matthew, Mark six times, and Luke 26 times. In the case of John’s gospel, only in 1:51 as the angel(s) “of God”, and in the other texts, “angel(s)” without “of God”. The angel(s) of God are used three times in Lk 12:8, 9, and 15:10. In Mt 22:30, the “of God” is only in the Byzantine texts. According to Stewart ([1962] 1996:36) there are distinctions in usages between the angel(s) and the angel(s) of God (the Lord). Angels are spiritual and celestial existences and obey the orders of God. Especially the angel(s) of God or the angel(s) of the Lord used of the heavenly existences sent by God to deal with men as God’s agents or messengers (Taylor [1962] 1996:38). In Matthew, “the angel(s) of the Lord” are used many times. The question is about the intention of the usage of the angels of God in Jn 1:51. Basically, it is due to the partially direct quotation from Gn 28:12. The phrase “the angels of God ascending and descending” is unique, as mentioned above. From its uniqueness, it is certain that v. 51 is a quotation to Gn 28:12. However there remains the question about the intention of the quotation. V. 51 is a complex quotation joining the concept of an open heaven and the Son of Man with the other sources. Jesus transformed the texts on purpose in verse 51. Even though the phrase, “the angels of God” has the possibility of transformation, Jesus used it directly. The concept “the angels of God” matched the usage of that phrase in Gn 28:12. Therefore, it is certain that the angels mentioned in Genesis and John’s gospel had a special order from God. The order from God can be protection in the Genesis text, and the possibility of the match in John’s gospel is to deliver the will of God. However which revelation the angels received from God is not clear, because there is no mention of it. There is another possibility about the mission from God. If this promise of v. 51 is

connected to the parousia, it can be applied to the angels in Revelation, who received the mission from God to bring disasters on earth.

The order of ascending and descending proves that Jn 1:51 is based on Gn 28:12. Schnackenburg (1980:321) interprets it that the angels of God ascend to bring up to God the desires and prayers of Jesus and descend to serve him. It is included in the meaning that the angels are sent to the earth to serve Jesus from his birth, and assisted his work between the earth and heaven. In his opinion, heaven opened from the starting point of Jesus' public ministry. It can be concluded that Jesus tried to show Nathanael and the others that his public ministry will be in communication with God. This conclusion is matched with another theme in John's gospel. In many places, Jesus says that he was sent by the Father, and he is doing just what God wants. In his diagram of the relationship between the Son and the Father and the communication between them, his opinion is matched with John's gospel. However, there is no need of angels between the Son and the Father in John's gospel. In many places, the unity of the Father and the Son is emphasized. The will of the Father is at the same time the will of the Son, because the Son and the Father is one. There is no place for angels between them in John's gospel.

The other opinion about the ascending and descending is the realization of the angels' function as divine messengers who already came to the earth to carry the prayers to God and bring the answer of God to the people (Westcott 1908:28). It is similar to Schnackenburg's opinion, but the role of angels is different. While the angels work between God and the Son of Man in the case of Schnackenburg's opinion, it is between God and the people through the Son of Man. McGee ([1975] 1991:38) and Boice (1975:770) also regarded the ladder as the symbol of Christ,

because Christ has the role of a bridge connecting God in heaven and humans on earth. Even though there is no direct mention about the ladder, the Son of Man is substituted for the ladder. From their opinion, the role of the Son of Man and the angels can be distinguished. However the role of the angels is not clear yet, because there are not two mediators between God and the people. According to their opinion the Son of Man is only a symbolical instrument for the angels to do the works of God between God and the people. A more exact meaning of the angels is assistance to the Son of Man who is the only mediator like a ladder to connect between heaven and earth.

There is another possibility to interpret it. The angels ascending and descending can be eschatologically interpreted as apocalyptic. According to Revelation, the angels descend to bring the wrath of God to the world in which they take turns. This opinion is based on the other concepts in v. 51, like the open heaven and the Son of Man. The concept of the open heaven can be understood as an eschatological concept. However, it is complex to find the relation between this text and the eschatological vision in Revelation. It will be dealt with in the next chapter.

In conclusion, the concept of the ascending and descending angels affirms that v. 51 is an allusion to Gn 28:12, because of the unique order of the angels' movement. From this concept, it is sure that the promise of Jesus in v. 51 relates to the vision Jacob received from God. It has also to be considered whether the Rabbis' understanding of Jacob's vision is reflected in v. 51, because the people who were with Nathanael and the readers of John's gospel were involved in this promise. There is no description of the promise and no response of the people in

the text. It means that this promise is not limited to John's gospel and expands to eschatology.

## 4.5 The angels ascending and descending in John's gospel (Jn 5:4; 12:29; 20:12)

There are three verses in John's gospel that mention the angels' descent (Jn 5:4 [BYZ], 12:29, 20:12). An angel descended and stirred up the water in Jn 5:4 (BYZ). The people believed that the water had the effect of healing diseases, when the angel stirred it up, as mentioned by Bernard & McNeile;

The healing virtues of the intermittent spring were explained by the Jewish doctrine of the ministry of angels, and the explanation first found a place in the margin and, later, in the text. Cf. Rev. 16:5 for "the angel of the waters," *i.e.* the angel who was believed to preside over the mysterious powers of water (Bernard & McNeile 1928:229).

The man who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years was healed by Jesus, even though he did not enter the pool. It means that the work of the Son of God is greater than the angels. From this scene the commonsense of the people can be known about the angel who is descending with some purpose.

In Jn 12:29, while Jesus talked with his disciples, some Greeks who came up to worship at the feast, wished to speak to him, and the voice from heaven said, "I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again" (Jn 12:28 NKJ). The crowd thought it to be thunder or the voice of an angel. In the minds of the people there was an understanding about the voice from heaven by an angel, as Borchert ([1996] 2002:57) says;

But natural phenomena in that day were often linked to nonhuman powers and forces beyond the rational. The other group apparently recognized the event as strange/mysterious and sought another explanation. In the intertestamental period, God was regarded as remote and the word of the Lord was viewed as rare. At that time the people of Israel developed all sorts of theories concerning angels as intermediary beings, both good and bad. Moreover, they developed hierarchies of angels, and their archangels often resembled some of the gods of the Greek pantheon. They were not always sure how they would act, but they often were thought to act on behalf of God.

In Jn 1:51, the Son of Man is already on earth and the angels who assist the Son of Man is ascending and descending on him. From this hypothesis, the moving angels are to be understood, because the angels who descended on the Son of Man and assisted him on earth will first ascend to heaven and descend again to assist the Son of Man. It is the interpretation of the Rabbi's about Gn 28:12.

In Jn 20:12 the angels guarded the empty tomb of Jesus to proclaim his resurrection. The two angels in white were waiting for the disciples. According to Beasley-Murray (1999:374), the angels' role here is to present the powers of heaven as witnesses. Draper (2002:75) regards the two angels' appearance in the empty tomb. He suggested that the narrative about the angelophany in Jn 20:12 refers to the "targumic potential" of Isaiah 6 on account of eight comparisons:

- 1) John's interpretation of Isaiah "In the year the king died, God empowered him, and I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up".
- 2) John's reading שוליו compared to Jesus' winding cloths.
- 3) The seraphim literally seated on the throne or above the throne and the angels lay on or on top of the body.
- 4) Six wings and John's ἐν λευκοῖς (Jn 20:12)
- 5) One angel stationed at each end used all six wings to cover.



- 6) “Foundation of the threshold shook” (Is 6:4) vs. a maiden at the entrance shaking with fear
- 7) The angel touched the mouth of Isaiah vs. the forbidding to touch of Jesus to Mary since the enthronement is not complete.
- 8) The theological understanding of John about the ‘holy seed’ which fall from the tree and dies as a reference to Jesus’ death and resurrection. (Draper 2002:73-74)

The theological issue of the death and resurrection of Jesus in John can be regarded as the fulfillment of the prophecy to Nathanael that the heavens will open and angels will ascend and descend on the Son of Man. However the prophecy of Jesus in Jn 1:51 is a more public event than the angels in the empty tomb, because the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael extended to the people as seen in the verb, ὄψεσθε (Jn 1:51).

Besides Jn 1:51, there is no record about the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man in John’s gospel. It refers to the ascending and descending of the Son of Man. In Jn 3:13 the descending and ascending of the Son of Man is mentioned. Jesus, who was resurrected, mentioned that he has not yet ascended to the Father and gave notice about the ascension in future (Jn 20:17). The descending and ascending of the Son of Man presented his incarnation and resurrection and ascension in John’s gospel. In addition, the heaven, as the dwelling place of God, was used with ascending and descending, because of the vertical concept of heaven above the earth.

## Conclusion

From this world view, the house of God also appeared with other concepts. However the house of God was interpreted in its relation to the temple. It is related

to the dwelling place or the presence of God because Jacob called the place where he dreamed “the house of God”. In Bethel, there was a temple after 586 BCE and destroyed in the second century BCE. according to Eshel (2004:22). From the destruction of these two temples, the expectation about the eschatological heavenly temple arose. The text where Jesus regarded his body as the temple shows the tension between the visible temple on earth and the heavenly temple.

As the result of the study of the motifs of Jacob’s vision in the intertestamental period, these motifs were considered to be eschatological concepts. It means that Jacob’s vision was not considered to be the hope for the earth, but as the eschatological hope for life in heaven. The angel, and the travel to heaven appeared frequently. Even though the word “ladder” does not appear, except in direct quotation, similar concepts as the mediate way or method between heaven and earth were found like “the paths” or “the chariot of fire”. In the case of the chariot of fire, it was a main title in Merkabah mysticism. However the chariot of glory in the vision of Ezekiel and the chariot as the instrument of the angels have to be distinguished. The Merkabah is to be understood as the presence of God rather than the instrument to descend or to bring humans to heaven with the ladder in Jacob’s vision.

## Chapter 5. The relation between the Son of Man and the Ladder

### 5.1 The ladder in Gn 28:12 and Ancient Near Eastern Texts

There are three motifs (ladder, the angels ascending and descending, and the gate of heaven) in Jacob's dream. Dreams were used as revelations from God in both the Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern tradition. In Jacob's dream there is no interpretation of the dream and it is difficult to find the relation between the dream and the conversation with God. The ladder in Jacob's dream stood on the earth between heaven and earth with the angels ascending and descending. There were many appearances of the angels in the shape of human beings in Genesis. The people who went to Sodom in Gn 18:22 were angels. The people in Sodom could not realize that they were angels. In another expression, an angel's voice was heard in Gn 21:17. The voice came from heaven, but it was realized to be the angel of the Lord by Hagar. Therefore Scullion (1992:210) regarded the angel of the Lord not as the messenger of God, but as the sons of God in Ps 29:1, Job 1:6, and 2:1, because the divine beings did not deliver messages but they were doing their works without any relationship with Jacob. He regarded it as the sign of God's power. Even though there are different appearances, the use of the ladder is unique in the Old Testament, because there was no mention about the instrument for descending of the angels. It means that the ladder was a symbol mediating communication between heaven and earth. It serves as a prototype of Christ in John's gospel. Mathews ([2005] 2007:449) mentioned that it signifies the divine presence and mediation. It is a symbol of

God's help and presence. Mathews' opinion is based on the role of this dream in Jacob's life. Jacob is fleeing from his brother without a helper, as he left his mother, who was his helper. This dream brought comfort to him on his way. With the ladder in mind he can be sure of his connection with heaven as his home in the alien land of his pilgrimage. Freedman ([1992] 1996:602) adds that it is a symbol of a helper that comes down to save people who needs help. It is like the present day fireman's pole.

However, it is difficult to prove a ladder to be a symbol which means the pathway along which to give help to Jacob, because it is unique in the Old Testament tradition. The word 'לִמְסָלָה' occurs only here in the Old Testament. There is also no concept of a ladder as the pathway to give help to man in the Old Testament. In the Ancient Near Eastern tradition, there are many usages of this word. This word also can be translated as the stairway that was used in the Mediterranean, namely the ziggurat, or temple towers in Egyptian and Hittite sources (Brayford 2007:354). These towers were constructed in both Babylonia and Assyria from the end of 3000 BCE. It was known as ziggurats which was an essential feature of the Mesopotamian temple (Freedman [1992] 1996:375). It was made for the priests to climb to the gods for worship service. The stairway ramp on the ziggurat linked each stage of the tower with the next until its top reached the heavens (Waltke 2001:390). However it cannot be seen as parallels of the ladder of Jacob's dream, because the ladder was not for humans to ascend, but by angels to ascend and descend. The angels are the messengers of God delivering his messages and to make known God's will to humans. In Genesis 28 the ladder was not used for priests to ascend to God for worship, but for angels.

The ladder was also used as a connection of the infinite to the finite ones in the Egyptian text:

O you eight Infinite Ones, who are at the parts of the sky, whom Shu<sup>9</sup> made from the efflux<sup>10</sup> of his limbs, who tie together the ladder for Atum!<sup>11</sup> Come to meet your father in me! Give me your arms, tie together a ladder for me (Allen 1997:10).

It shows the function of the ladder as the connection in the gap between the parts of the sky. In the pyramid text, the function of the ladder was to tie the eight Infinite Ones together. However, it is different from Genesis 28, because the ladder of Gn 28:12 is not permanently connecting heaven and earth, but a temporary stair for angels to ascend and descend.

According to Walton (2001:570), the stairway was also used by “Namtar”, a messenger of the “Ereshkigal”, who is the queen of the Underworld, moving from one realm of existence to another spiritual world in the Akkadian story:

[I shall give something to him to present to you]. [Kakka<sup>12</sup> went down the long stairway of heaven]. [When he reached the gate of Ereshkigal (he said)], [“Gatekeeper, open] the gate to me!” (Dalley 1997b:384). Ereshkigal made her voice heard and spoke, she addressed her words to her vizier Namtar, “O Namtar my vizier, I shall send you to the heaven of our father Anu. Namtar, go up the long stairway of heaven. Take from the table and accept a present (for me). Whatever Anu gives to you, you must present to me.” (Dalley 1997b:385)

In the Akkadian story, these two worlds are divided, and it is impossible to go from the one to the other world. So Anu sent his messenger, Kakka, to his

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<sup>9</sup> The first element of the world in Egypt myth.

<sup>10</sup> A linking material between two things.

<sup>11</sup> Sun god and eldest of the Ennead of Heliopolis, occurs in the Bible in the place-name Pithom (Ex 1:11).

<sup>12</sup> A messenger of *Anu* who is the father of Ereshkigal.

daughter, Ereshkigal. Kakka used the long stairway of heaven to visit the underworld. Ereshkigal also sent her messenger, Namtar, to her father through the long stairway of heaven. It means the stairway is the pathway between two worlds. It resembles the ladder in Gn 28:12. However the ladder in Gn 28:12 was not the pathway between two spiritual worlds, but a symbol of the contact between heaven and earth, and did not extend to underworld (Zakovitch 2012:48)

The ladder in Jacob's dream is a unique concept, although it resembles the usages of this image in Ancient Near Eastern literature. All the usages of this word in the Ancient Near Eastern literature indicate the connections or paths between two abodes. However the ladder in the Ancient Near Eastern literature is not a temporary construction, but is seen as the permanent bridge between two abodes. The base of the ladder in Gn 28:12 is not heaven, but the earth. It stands on the earth and its top reaches to heaven. It means that it is not a symbol to show that the help and comfort of God is coming through angels, but a symbol to show the heaven's vision.

Therefore from the unique usage of the word מַלְאָכִים as *hapax legomenon* in the Old Testament (Brown 2012:15, Pak 2012:289), it is necessary to compare it with Ancient Near Eastern texts. The similar thing is the angels ascending and descending that are associated with the messenger gods between the two abodes of the gods to deliver messages in the Ancient Near Eastern texts. The gate of heaven in Jacob's interpretation about the place where he met with God in his dream is also a concept in Ancient Near Eastern texts. However there are decisive distinctions between the motifs in Jacob's dream and the Ancient Near Eastern texts. The first difference is between their polytheism and Jacob's monotheism. The angels of Jacob's dream do not have the same existence as

God, while the agents of the Ancient Near Eastern god's and gatekeepers are also gods. The second is that the content of Jacob's dream is composed with apocalyptic topics, following Collins' definition about an Apocalypse,

'Apocalypse' is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an other-worldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world (Collins 1979:9)

From these apocalyptic elements, Jacob's dream can be interpreted apocalyptically in apocalyptic literature in Judaism.

## 5.2 The conception of a ladder and the Son of Man in Judaism

### 5.2.1 The conception of a ladder as an instrument or a path to heaven

In Ancient Near Eastern culture, the ladder or stairway was used as the path between two or three worlds, like heaven, earth, and the underworld. It is not used in the New Testament. The gospel of John did not mention the ladder. However there is a conception about a path between heaven and earth or of heaven and another heaven in the intertestamental period literature. Enoch mentioned the paths as a similar concept of the ladder in Jacob's dream:

<sup>3</sup>And I saw how the winds ride the heights of heaven and stand between heaven and earth: These are the very pillars of heaven. <sup>4</sup>I saw the winds which turn the heaven and cause the star to set - the sun as well as all the stars. <sup>5</sup>I saw the souls carried by the clouds. I saw the paths of the angels in the ultimate end of the earth, and the

firmament of the heaven above (1En 18:3-5 *OTPC*).

According to Charles ([1913]1964:200), ‘the paths’ that Enoch saw between the limit of the earth and the firmament of heaven is omitted in G<sup>g</sup> or G<sup>s</sup>. It is found in the Ethiopic version. Charlesworth (1985:23) translates the one quotation above, but Charles translates it as two sentences, like “I saw the paths of the angels. I saw at the end of the earth the firmament of the heaven above”, to join the second sentence to v. 6. It concerns Enoch’s first journey from the Earth to Sheol in ch. 17-19. Enoch saw something between heaven and earth. It can be regarded as the heaven as the firmament or a road in the firmament. However, it is important that the boundary between heaven and earth is clear and something can be regarded as the portal from heaven to earth like the ladder from this text. It is difficult to find another text which has the same concept of the path of the angels.

The chariot of fire was another instrument which was considered as the means for the angels to come down to earth or to take a person to heaven. It appeared in 2 Ki 2:11. Actually, it is not the chariot that took Elijah ascending to heaven. Elijah went up into heaven in a whirlwind. It was accepted by the Jews that Elijah rode the chariot of fire into heaven,

<sup>5</sup> And then the blessed Ezra began to say: "O eternal God, the Maker of the whole creation, who have measured the heaven with a span, and who hold the earth as a handful, <sup>6</sup> who drives the cherubim, who took the prophet Elijah to the heavens in a chariot of fire", (APR 7:5-6 *OPE*)

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G<sup>g</sup> The large fragment of the Greek Version discovered at Akhmim, and deposited in the Gizeh Museum, Cairo.

G<sup>s</sup> Fragments of the Greek version preserved in Syncellus.



In the other text, God commanded Michael to take Abraham into heaven with the chariot of the cherubim (TA1 9:8). The chariot of the cherubim was used as the vehicle for the angels of God in this text. The chief angel, Michael, took the chariot first and went down to take the righteous Abraham. After taking Abraham in the chariot, Michael did not ascend to the heaven directly. They ascended upon the chariot over all the earth and stopped and turned away to see all the earth by the voice from heaven (TA1 10:12). After they saw all the earth, they arrived at the first gate of heaven (TA1 11:1). At last, Michael turned the chariot to Abraham's house in order to bring him back (TA1 15:2).

In *Joseph and Aseneth*, there is mention of the chariot of fire as the instrument or vehicle of the angels of God and of a human,

And the man said to Aseneth: "Take this table away." And Aseneth turned to move the table, and the man departed from her eyes. And Aseneth saw (what looked) like a chariot of fire being taken up into heaven towards the east. (JAA 17:6 OPE)

From these texts, it is certain that the concept of a chariot was used as the instrument to descend and ascend between the heaven and the earth like the ladder in Jacob's vision.

There is also a throne-chariot, i.e. the Merkabah in Ezekiel's vision. It is the base of the Merkabah mysticism in the second temple period including 2 Enoch. This chariot differs from the chariots of the angels that was mentioned above. This chariot is accompanied by the throne in Ezekiel, indicating the presence of God. This vision is related to the celestial dream, but is not an aspect of the ladder, but the one above has a relationship with Merkabah and is always an eschatological image.

### 5.2.2 The Son of Man

Even though there is no direct mention of the Son of Man in Gn 28:12, the concept of the Son of Man in the intertestamental texts will be dealt with, because it is an important concept in Jn 1:51. The context of the Son of Man in the texts is developed with the theophany-vision tradition. In the Old Testament, it appeared in Ezk 1:26 and Dn 7:13. The appearance of the Son of Man as the divine who has the same authority with God brought confusion in the monotheism of Judaism. In Chagigah Ch. 15a, of the Babylon Talmud, Akibah and Elieza ben Abuyah says that there are two principles in heaven:

Acher cut the plants. It is of him that the Scripture says, “Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin”. What was the matter referred to? He saw the Metatron, to whom is given the permission to sit to record the merits of Israel. He said, we are taught that in heaven there is no sitting down nor anger nor back nor weariness. Are there – God forbid! – two First Principles? They brought out the Metatron and gave him sixty strokes with a lash of fire. They said to him, what is the reason that, when thou sawest him, thou didst not rise up before him? He was given permission to strike out the merits of Acher (Streane 1981:85).

Even though they were excommunicated from the Jews, because of their heretic theory opposing monotheism, it is sure that there was a trial about binitarianism among the Jews.

In 3 Enoch, Metatron, was called “little Jehova”. Metatron means “the one who sits after the throne”. He works for God as the agent of God. It is proof of a development from the theophany vision tradition to binitarianism in Judaism. In the interpretation of the angels in Dn 7:18, the vision is that the people of the Most High will in the end receive the kingdom of God forever, and it comes from the Ancient of Days, and the one like the Son of Man. It means that the Son of Man

has an eschatological function. In 1<sup>st</sup> Enoch 46:2-4 the angel explains about the Son of Man that has righteousness and will raise above the kings to rule over them. In 62:5, 69:26, the people saw the Son of Man who sits on the throne of glory:

<sup>3</sup> And he answered and said unto me: This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, and whose lot hath the preeminence before the Lord of Spirits in uprightness for ever. (1EN 46:3 *OTP*)

<sup>5</sup> And one portion of them shall look on the other, And they shall be terrified, and they shall be downcast of countenance, And pain shall seize them, When they see that Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory. (1EN 62:5 *OTP*)

The tradition of the Son of Man was accepted as the presence of God on earth and it developed to the eschatological apocalypse, because the presence of God on earth means the unity between heaven and earth. It is similar to the concept of the ladder and the open heaven, as the connection between heaven and earth.

### 5.3 The one like a Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven (Dn 7:13)

The one who came down from heaven with the clouds is like a “Son of Man” in Daniel’s night vision (Dn 7:13). This verse plays an important role in this study, because John made use of this motif of ascending and descending angels. While the angels ascended and descended on a ladder, Jn 1:51 uses the saying of Dn 7:13 in Jacob’s dream that the angels ascended and descended, but says that they will descend on the Son of Man. Among New Testament scholars the Son

of Man is considered to be one of the important Christological titles, because it is used many times by Jesus for Himself. It can be considered as the key to Jesus' own self-consciousness (Burkett 1999:1). The difference between Daniel's night vision and Jacob's dream is that the one who came down from heaven in Daniel is not an angel but one like a Son of Man, and there is no mention about his ascending in Dn 7:13. The one like the son of Man came down with the clouds of heaven, not on a ladder. However, Kim (2013:131) considered it as the same metaphor, because the ladder in Jacob's dream has the meaning or pattern of the up-and-down movement like the tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream vision (Dn 4:10-11). Linguistically the rendering of the two dreams are not similar. Daniel 7:13 uses the verb מָטָא, ἔρχομαι which means "to come", while Gn 28:12 writes יָרַד, καταβαίνω which means "to come down". Even though different verbs are used in these two passages, the situation of both is similar. "With the clouds in heaven" implies that the one like a Son of Man is a heavenly being and he is descending from heaven. Therefore it is important to define who the one like a Son of Man is.

Among Old Testament scholars there are many differences of opinion who the one like a Son of Man in Dn 7:13 is. Collins (1998:102-103) suggests that the one like a Son of Man in Dn 7:13 represents the triumph of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes. Michael can also be regarded as the one like a Son of Man, because Michael was referred to as the chief prince among the celestial leaders (Dn 10:13, 21), and stood watch over the people of Israel (Dn 12:1). Nebe (1997:112) points out that there is agreement between the conceptions of angels like Michael or Gabriel to the one like a Son of Man in the legendary religious traditions. If the one like a Son of Man can be seen to be the angel Michael, there could be a

relation between Jacob's dream and Daniel's vision. The other angel that could be the one like a Son of Man is Gabriel who is mentioned to be "like the appearance of a man" (Dn 8:15; 10:18), and "like the resemblance of sons of man" (Dn 10:16). Another candidate with an image of one like a Son of Man is the "messiah", the anointed one. In the Rabbinic tradition, the one like a Son of Man is regarded as the messiah or the anointed one in the Davidic line. The name 'messiah' is referred to in Dn 9:26. From these various interpretations, it is necessary to define who the one like a Son of Man in Dn 7:13 is and then to investigate its relation to the descend to the earth in view of Gn 28:12.

- Israel/Jews

Collins (1998:101) referred to an analogical interpretation of Daniel's vision by using the Canaanite myths about Baal and Yam. There is a depiction of the clouds in the theophany of Baal who triumph against Yam, the sea-monster. In Daniel's vision, there are two contrasting parts: the four beasts from the sea and the one like a Son of Man coming with the clouds from heaven. Collins sees Daniel 7 to be describing the situation of the Jews under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes by using this myth. In his opinion there are two kinds of possibilities to guess who the one like a Son of Man is. The one is the collective interpretation. In it, the one like a Son of Man is regarded as the people of Israel under Epiphanes. The other is the messianic interpretation. It means that the one like a Son of Man is the anointed one, who can save the people from the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. According to this interpretation, Judas Maccabees was regarded as the one like a Son of Man, because his rule followed that of Antiochus as the actual leader of Israel (Goldingay 2002:169). However, this view presupposes that Daniel was written after the temple restoration. As

Goldingay pointed out, there is no specific pointer to Judas in the text and the figure portrayed in Daniel 7 is not of the violent resistance of the Maccabees.

- The angels: Michael or Gabriel

Angels appeared in human figures in the Old Testament. When Abraham met the angels, he saw human figures (Gn 18:2). When Lot invited two angels and protected them in his house from the people, the angels were human figures (Genesis 19). The angel who appeared to Manoah's wife was called "Man of God", and she described him as having the appearance of an angel (Jdg 13:6). There are three verses (Dn 8:15; 10:16, 18) that described the angels (Michael and Gabriel) as having the appearance of a man and the resemblance of a Son of Man. Collins, Cross and Collins (1993:307) said that the one like a Son of Man was understood as a realistic symbol that represented an angel or a divine being, because the heavenly counterpart of Israel in the book of Daniel was the archangel Michael (Dn 12:1).

Although Michael appears three times in the book of Daniel (10:13, 21; 12:1), Michael himself does not really appear. He is only mentioned by someone. In 10:13, a man dressed in linen mentioned Michael, one of the chief princes, as his helper. The one who was mentioned in 10:21 was the one who looked like a man. He also indicated Michael as the helper. His prediction continues up to 12:4. In Dn 12:1 Michael is also mentioned as the one who looked like a man. In the context of 7:13, the role of the one like a Son of Man is not a helper, but the leader. Except for 12:1, Michael's role is to help the one who is dressed in linen and looked like a man. But the one like a Son of Man in 7:13 received the authority, glory and sovereign power from the Ancient of Days. Zevit (1968:394-396)

supports the view that the angel Gabriel is to be the one like a Son of Man on account of Dn 9:21. He states that “Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision” would refer back to the one like a Son of Man (Collins, Cross & Collins 1993:310). However Gabriel already appeared in Dn 8:16 before Dn 9:21, as the interpreter of the vision. Even though the earlier vision refers to the vision in Daniel 7, the role of Gabriel is more like an interpreter among the attendants in Daniel 7, as in Dn 8:16 and 9:21.

- Messiah

The interpretation of the majority follows the Jewish literature that the one like a Son of Man refers to the messiah. According to Collins, Cross and Collins (1993:306), this was the earliest interpretation. According to 1 En 46:1-2, the one who had a head of days had the appearance of a man,

<sup>1</sup> And there I saw One who had a head of days, And His head was white like wool, and with Him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man, and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels.<sup>2</sup> and I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of Man, who he was, and whence he was, and why he went with the Head of Days? (Charles 2004:204).

This Son of Man has the authority to rise up or to loosen the reigns of the kings (1 En 46:4-5). It is similar to Dn 7:14. According to Boccaccini (2007:159), the book of the *Parables of Enoch* is a reproduction of Daniel’s iconographic repertoire. He continues his statement that it cited Daniel almost word for word. However, Collins, Cross and Collins (1993:309) maintained that the book of Daniel differs from Enoch as it is difficult to call one like a Son of Man to be the messiah, because, unlike Enoch, there is no trace of the restoration of the Davidic

line, nor any mentioning of a messiah in Daniel 7. The messiah of an anointed one who has no sins who is mentioned in Dn 9:24 is also the most Holy and as the one who will build the holy city, and bring everlasting righteousness. He will fulfill the vision and the prophecy. It can be connected to Dn 7:14, with the role of the one like a Son of Man to rule as king in the kingdom. From the Ancient of Days he received authority, glory and sovereign power to rule over an everlasting domain. It is related to the role of the king. The anointed one of 9:25 is also named נָגִיד leader. It raised the Jewish hope of a future king of Israel whose domain will be the whole world. It supports the Jewish tradition to interpret the one like a Son of Man as the messiah.

- The preposition כִּי

There are many celestial figures in Daniel’s vision in Ch. 10. There is a man clothed in linen (v. 5), the one like a human’s hand that touched Daniel (v. 10), the one like the similitude of the sons of man (v. 16), and the one with an appearance of a man (v. 18). It is not sure how many celestial figures there are. Whether one celestial figure talks to Daniel or different celestial figures in turn. “The one like the form of the sons of man” (v. 16) and “the one like the appearance of a man” (v. 18) looks like “the one like a Son of Man” (7:13).

(Dn 7:13 LXX) ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου	כִּי בֶר אֱנוֹשׁ (Dn 7:13 MT)
(Dn 8:15 LXX) ὡς ὄρασις ἀνθρώπου	כִּי מַרְאֵה גִבֹּר (Dn 8:15 MT)
(Dn 8:15 TH) ὡς ὄρασις ἀνδρός	
(Dn 10:18 LXX) ὡς ὄρασις ἀνθρώπου	כִּי מַרְאֵה אָדָם (Dn 10:18 MT)
(Dn 10:16 LXX) ὡς ὁμοίωσις χειρὸς ἀνθρώπου	כִּי דְמוּת בְּנֵי אָדָם (Dn 10:16 MT)
(Dn 10:16 TH) ὡς ὁμοίωσις υἱοῦ ἀνθρώπου	



In 10:18, ὄρασις was used, and υἱός was omitted, the son replaced by the appearance. In 10:16, Theodotion changed χειρὸς with which his lips were touched in the LXX, to υἱοῦ to match יָדָי of the MT both of them used ὡς ὄρασις to render תְּמוּנָתוֹ which means “like the shape of” a man. The suggestion obscures the exact identity or expresses something more about him. The common figure, ἀνθρώπου “of man” with the accompanying suggestion points to the celestial existence of this man from above.

Scholars agree that it is difficult to define who these celestial beings are. Goldingay (2002:291) says, “It is not clear how many supernatural beings are involved in the scene”. It is clear that the one who has the hand (v. 10) and the one who looked like a man (v. 18) are not Michael, because they mentioned Michael as their assistant, when they fought with Persia. These two texts can be regarded as referring to one and the same being. Miller ([1994] 2001:287) regards this being to be Gabriel, who appeared as the speaker in Ch. 9, and is described as the one who looked like a man in 8:15. It can be regarded as the same being as the one who looked like a man (v. 18), because of ‘καί’. The context of Ch. 10 is continuing with one celestial being. It means that by the expression אָ he indicates an angel. Therefore these expressions can be regarded as one and the same celestial being, although there are linguistic differences.

The one like a Son of Man in 7:13 differs from the other expressions. The context differs from the others. The glory, a kingdom, all people, nations, and languages were given to him. The role of the angel does not fit his dominion. Secondly, his suffering and defeat in 7:21, 25 cannot be attributed to an angel (Miller [1994] 2001:208). Thirdly, the one like Son of Man is not an interpreter, but he is the content of the vision. The interpreter of Ch. 7 is not the one like a Son of Man,

but is one of these that “stood by” (Dn 7:16). Interpreting is attributed to the angels. In conclusion, the one like a Son of Man who is descending with the cloud has to be interpreted as the messianic king.

## 5.4 The Son of Man in Jn 1:51

In the analysis of v. 51, the Son of Man is the third concept in this verse that was studied by many scholars, because it is Jesus’ self designation. The Son of Man in Ezk 1:26 is seen on the throne that appeared on the burning chariot. The appearance of one like the Son of Man in Dn 7:13 was with Ancient of the age. The Son of Man is distinguished from the Ancient one. In the literature of the intertestamental period, the divinity of the Son of Man appeared in Hagigah, 1 and 3 Enoch with an eschatological character.

Jn 1:51 is the conclusion of the calling narrative. The use of the concept of the Son of Man in v. 51 reflects the main issues that the Son of Man presents. There are three indications of the Son of Man in the New Testament. The first is the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun, ‘I’ with the same meaning, as the Son of Man in the sentence, as follows,

Ἐλθὼν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὰ μέρη Καισαρείας τῆς Φιλίππου ἠρώτα τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ λέγων· τίνα λέγουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; (Mt 16:13 *BGT*)

In King James version it was translated as "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" (Mt 16:13 *NKJ*). In Mk 8:27 and Lk 9:18, its parallel verses, the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun is used instead of the Son of Man (τίνα με λέγουσιν οἱ ὄχλοι εἶναι; *BGT*). In the second case, the Son of Man can be indicated with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person

pronoun, or “the man”. The man and the Son of Man are used parallel in Psalm 8:5,

τί ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος ὃτι μιμήσκη αὐτοῦ ἢ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ὃτι ἐπισκέπη αὐτόν (Psa 8:5 LXX)

Myers (1987:962) added Nm 23:10 and Ezk 2:1 to it and explained “it is a Semitic idiom for an individual human being or for mankind in general particularly as distinguished from God”. The third case is its christological usage. The title, the Son of Man was used by Jesus himself in the four gospels. His humanity is represented by this title. However this title can also represent an eschatological christology, because the eschatological apocalypsis used this title from the Old Testament traditions and intertestamental traditions. Therefore, it is in the presentation about the eschatological promise that the concept of the Son of Man is used instead of the ladder in Jn 1:51.

However it has to be considered whether the Son of Man can be matched to the ladder in Jacob’s vision. The ladder was used as an instrument for the ascending and descending angels in Jacob’s vision. The Son of Man is mediator between heaven and earth, but not for the angels. In John’s gospel, the angels are ascending and descending between heaven and the Son of Man, as follows,

τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (Joh 1:51 NA28)

In the text of John’s gospel, the author followed the order of Gn 28:12 of the Septuagint,

οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνέβαινον καὶ κατέβαινον ἐπ’ αὐτῆς (Gn 28:12 LXX)

The same preposition ἐπί is used here. But it is different in the Hebrew text, as follows,

*וַיִּרְדּוּ אֱלֹהִים מֵאֶלְיָשׁ (Gn 28:12 MT)*

The ladder, κλίμαξ is a female noun in Greek, but מַלְאָךְ is a male noun in Hebrew. In LXX αὐτῆς is female pronoun and it is clear that it indicates the ladder. However the preposition with the pronoun ἐπὶ can indicate both Jacob and the ladder. Therefore another interpretation can be that the ladder reached to heaven and the angels of God are ascending and descending between Jacob and heaven on the ladder. Draper (2002:65) suggested this opinion;

Speculation on this text focuses on the ambiguity of מַלְאָךְ in the Hebrew text. This could be understood as meaning either that the angels ascend and descend on the ladder or that they ascend and descend on Jacob himself (as in Gen. Rab. 68:18; cf. Odeberg ([1929] 1968), 35-42). Clearly John's understanding presupposes the latter possibility, which cannot be inferred from the Greek text of the LXX. John then replaces Jacob with Jesus as the "Son of Man".

In Targum interpretation, Jacob was indicated;

Then the rest of the angels of the holy Lord descended to look upon him. (Gn 28:12ff *JTE*)

The angels ascending and descending between heaven and Jacob through the ladder compare Jacob's face with the icon that is engraved on the throne of glory in heaven (Neeb 1991:163-164). According to the Targum interpretation, the Son of Man cannot be matched to the ladder, but matched to Jacob. According to the LXX interpretation, the Son of Man has to be matched to the ladder, because ἐπὶ αὐτῆς in LXX indicates the ladder only. These two interpretations of the quotation of Gn 28:12 in Jn 1:51 can be compared as follows:

Jn 1:51	LXX	Targum
Heaven open	Heaven	The ladder that reached heaven
The angels	The angels	The angels
On the Son of Man	On the ladder	On Jacob
Ascending and descending	Ascending and descending	Ascending and descending

Neyrey (2007:59) matched the ladder with the Son of Man and Jacob with Nathanael by comparing Jn 1:51 with Gn 28:12 as follows,

Jn 1:51	Gn 28:12
1. You will see	1. Jacob saw
2. Heaven open	2. Ladder from earth to heaven
3. Angels up/down	3. Angels up/down
4. upon the Son of Man	4. on the Ladder

He sees the function of the ladder as the bridge between heaven and earth. Smith (1999:78) says that the evangelist knows or presumes the Hebrew “ladder” is masculine, and reads “upon him”, that is upon the Son of Man. There are indications that John generally used the LXX, when John’s quotations are compared to the Greek and Hebrew versions of the Old Testament (Daly Denton 2000:15). If it is assumed that the evangelist knew both the Hebrew text and the LXX, it can be concluded that he knew that v. 12 indicates the ladder. There is a possibility that the pronoun indicates Jacob only if the evangelist knew the Hebrew text only. According to Carson (1991:163), the ladder is also supported by the late Jewish document, because in Hebrew a ladder is masculine.

Another thing to be considered is the genitive pronoun was used after ἐπί in Gn 28:12, while an accusative noun was used in Jn 1:51. O'Neill (2003:375) points out:

If the transcriber or translator of John 1:51 into Greek had wanted to suggest that the Son of Man was now the ladder, he would have naturally used a genitive. Instead, we have an accusative. The verb καταβαίνω with ἐπί and the accusative can mean “unto” (John 6:16)

He refused the theory that Jacob is a symbol of the Son of Man in Jn 1:51, and he matched Jacob to the people who around Jesus, or to Nathanael, who was talking with Jesus. The reason is that the role of Jacob is not the place of the angels ascending and descending, but the converser with God. He concludes that the Son of Man in John can be matched to Jacob or to the stone that was used by Jacob as a pillow and used to build the altar after awakening from his dream (O'Neill 2003:376).

Even though most scholars regarded the Son of Man in the ladder's role in John's allusion to Gn 28:12, there are several problems.

1. While the ladder is an instrument for the angels of God to ascend and descend, the Son of Man is not there for the angels of God, but they are there for Him.
2. The ladder is the connection between heaven and earth in Gn 28:12, but the Son of Man is on earth and the angels of God are ascending and descending through the air without a ladder.

From these reasons, to understand as a symbol is more reasonable.

1. The meaning of the ladder as the mediator between God and humans matches with the Son of Man.
2. The grammatical similarity between the LXX text of Gn 28:12 and Jn 1:51 has the same position in the text and uses the same preposition.
3. Jacob as a prototype of Nathanael in his conversation with Jesus, matches Nathanael's role as seer like Jacob who saw God.

This problem can be solved, however, from the consideration of John's method of allusion to Gn 28:12 in Jn 1:51. The Jesus' promise in Jn 1:51 is composed with three Old Testament texts. Even though there was no direct mention about the open heaven in Gn 28:12, it was borrowed from Ezk 1:1. The concept of the Son of Man is from Dan 7:13. From his method of allusion the ladder is no more the instrument for the angels in Jn 1:51. However the meaning of the connection between heaven and earth, and the order of the structure of the sentence from Gn 28:12, were used in Jn 1:51. From this hypothesis it is not important to John whether the pronoun with the preposition indicates the ladder or Jacob. In conclusion, Jn 1:51 used the texts of the Old Testament freely, mixed it together and reminded his readers of the vision of Jacob in Bethel to present the scene to show the future to the people.

## 5.5 The Son of Man (Jn 3:13, 14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 12:23, 34; 13:31)

The Son of Man is mentioned 81 times in the four gospels: 30 in Matthew, 13 in Mark, 26 in Luke, and 12 in John (Kelber 1997:14). The smallest usage of the Son of Man is in John's gospel. Besides Jn 1:51, the usage of the Son of Man in

John's gospel can be classified in five groups. The first group is that he will ascend, as the Son of Man came from heaven in Jn 3:13, 6:62. The second is to present the glory of the Son of Man (Jn 12:23, 13:31). The third is that the authority of the Son of Man to judge is reported in Jn 5:27, and fourthly the lifting up of the Son of Man, which refers to his crucifixion, is mentioned in Jn 3:14, 6:53, 8:28, and 12:34. The last is that God the Father has set his seal on the Son of Man in 6:27. However, it can be grouped into three groups. The first is that the Son of Man was with God. The Son of God from heaven means that the origin of the Son of Man is not on earth but in heaven, the dwelling place of God. The expression of God as the Father has set his seal on the Son of Man means also that the Son of Man belongs to God the Father, as Borchert points out:

The question in this section is thus focused on the recognition of the authentic sign—Jesus, the Son of Man, the one who had been marked/sealed/certified (*sphragizein*) as genuine by the Father (Borchert [1996] 2001:262).

This concept is emphasized from the first chapter of John's gospel. In the beginning, the Logos was, and he was with God and was God. The descension of the Logos is presented as incarnation in 1:14 and implied many times in John's gospel from the usage of the word, καταβαίνω. According to Holleman (1990:20), the word, καταβαίνω was applied to the descension of the Son of Man in different ways:

Eleven of the nineteen occurrences of καταβαίνω in the Fourth Gospel have to do with the latter form of descent: two involve the reported descent of the Spirit before the commencement of his public ministry (1:32, 33), one is employed in Jesus' allusion to Jacob's dream at Bethel where the angels are said to ascend and descend upon the Son of Man (1:51), and all the rest speak of Jesus' journey from heaven to the earth.



The heavenly origin of the Son of Man presupposed his return to heaven (Schnackenburg 1995:261).

The second group is about his crucifixion and resurrection (3:14; 6:53; 8:28; 12:34). John 3:14 mentions the lifting up of the Son of Man like the snake in the desert. It means that the Son of Man has to be crucified on the cross, that heralds his ascending to heaven through the resurrection (Lindars 1983:146). There is a more detailed presentation of it in Jn 8:28. Jesus said that he will go somewhere that the Jews could not find and follow him. The Jews guessed that Jesus will try to commit suicide (Jn 8:22), because Jesus said that he will go to another world. However, Jesus continued that he is from above and belongs to the above. Jesus mentioned that they will know after they have lifted up the Son of Man, referring to his crucifixion. An expression of certainty is in Jn 6:53. To have eternal life, they have to eat the flesh of the Son of Man and to drink his blood. His blood is not related to the Manna, but it refers to and implies his death on the cross. It is explained by Nicholson (1983:75) that, with the theory of “Descent-ascent schma”, the suffering and crucifixion can be considered as the instrument to receive the glory. .

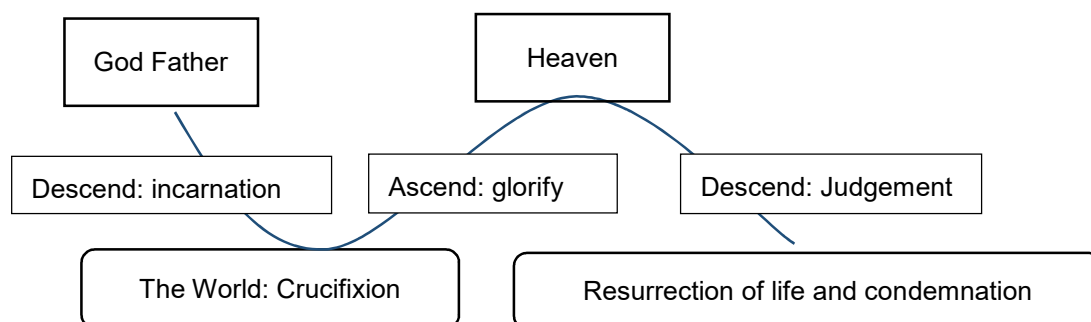
The last group is about the glorification and judgement authority of the Son of Man. It means that the Son of Man will go back to heaven through his death on the cross and resurrection to be glorified (Jn 12:23; 13:31) and will return for judgement (Jn 5:27). In Jn 12:23, the time to be glorified of the Son of Man means his death on the cross, but it can also be assumed of his return to heaven through his death and resurrection as Beasley-Murray (1999:211) interprets it:

The connection between v 23 and vv 27–28, to say nothing of the intervening vv 24–26, shows that the hour of the “glorifying” of Jesus

relates to his death; yet 13:31–32 and 17:1, 5 as clearly indicate that the glorifying includes his exaltation and return to the Father. The same idea applies to 12:31–32, except that the more specific term ὑψωθῆναι (“be lifted up”) is used instead of δοξασθῆναι (“be glorified”); here the death-resurrection-exaltation of Jesus is concentrated into a single term, indicating the unity of the redemptive action of God in Christ as the means whereby the saving sovereignty of God comes for the world.

John 13:31 can be regarded to mean the same as Jn 12:23. Beasley-Murray (1999:246) mentioned that the “now” in Jn 13:31 is explicitly the same as “the hour” in Jn 12:23. It is not just suffering, but includes exaltation. Jesus prepared for his death on the cross, and said that the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. Jn 5:27 shows that the Son of Man has the authority to execute judgement. The resurrection to life and the resurrection to condemnation in Jn 5:29 confirm that the judgement refers to the eschatological judgement when the Son of Man will come again to the world at the last days.

Therefore the usage of the Son of Man in John’s gospel is shown to be related to his descending and ascending. Firstly the Son of Man was in heaven with God, and descended to earth through his incarnation. Secondly the Son of Man was glorified by his death on the cross. Through his resurrection, the Son of Man again ascended to heaven. Thirdly the Son of Man will descend again to execute judgement. It can be presented in this diagram;



According to this diagram, the one who did ascend and descend is not the angels but the Son of Man. From this, there are two possibilities to interpret the position of the Son of Man in 1:51. The one is after the first descension by incarnation, and the other is after his second descension for judgement. The ascending and descending of the angels can be interpreted as assistance to the incarnated Son of Man or to the second coming Son of Man. In the first case, the work of the angels was to announce his birth, the opening of the tomb, and to inform about his resurrection in John's gospel. In the second case, they would be regarded as the angels who will bring the condemnation in Revelation. However, Jesus' works are more emphasized in John's gospel than the angels'. It means that the second case is a better explanation.

## **Part. II Hermeneutics of John about Jacob's ladder**

According to Jn 20:31, the main titles of Jesus in John's gospel is the Christ and the Son of God. It means that the origin of Jesus is not the earth but heaven. It can be a reason why there is no genealogy of Jesus and no infancy narrative in John's gospel. John's gospel begins with Jesus' preexistence as the Logos in the prologue (Culpepper 2011:111). Heaven as the original place of Jesus with God as his father are explained by Jesus himself, but the people could not understand it. Therefore there are many comparisons between heaven and earth in John's gospel.

The bread from heaven (Jn 6:35, 48), and the light (Jn 8:12; 9:5) indicate heaven as the origin of Jesus and that Jesus was sent from heaven. In the case of the light, the origin of the light was considered to be the sun in heaven. The door of the sheep (Jn 10:7, 9), the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6) represent him as the bridge or path between heaven and earth. In this context, Jn 1:51 indicates heaven as the origin of Jesus coming from the open heaven, and his mediator's role with the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

Jn 1:51 can be regarded as an eschatological promise, because the Son of Man, the angels ascending and descending, and the open heaven are eschatological themes. John 1:51 is composed with three allusions; The open heaven, the angels ascending and descending, and the Son of Man. This section will indicate how these three concepts are used in the whole of John's gospel, and what the relation is between the Son of God and the Christ that is presented in Jn 20:31.

It is not difficult to connect the Son of God to the open heaven, because heaven was considered as the place where God dwells. Therefore the Son of God is from heaven, because the Son comes from God the Father. The concept “opening” has a special meaning to indicate the connection between heaven as the dwelling place of God and the earth where the Son was sent to.

The ascending and descending angels also relates to the Son of God and the Christ, because the angels are assistants of Jesus on earth. In Jacob’s story, the angels were guardians on earth to guard over Jacob to return to his hometown. Jacob was sent by his father Isaac to Haran to get his wife and it was a refuge from his brother. The Son of God was also sent by his Father, but here the angels are not his guardians, but the assistants. The Son of Man, that Jesus used for himself in John’s gospel is not a pronoun or an indication of the humanity of Jesus, but of the eschatological messiah, the Son of Man of Dn 7:13. The application of these concepts in John’s gospel will be analysed.

The three images in Jn 1:51 plays an important role in John’s gospel. Compared to the aim of John’s gospel that was presented in Jn 20:31, these images are also related to his Christology, even though the things that will be revealed is the angels of God ascending and descending. The reason is that the focus of this vision is not on the angels but on their act of ascending and descending. The place where the angels ascend to and descend from is between heaven as his/their dwelling place and the earth the Son of Man is standing upon. The centre of this vision is the Son of Man because it was presupposed that the Son of Man who has a heavenly existence has already descended to the earth. It can be inferred that the Son of Man will return to heaven, whence he came. In John’s gospel the concept of ascending and descending is more concentrated on the

Son of Man than on the angels of God. Therefore these three images in Jn 1:51 are related to the Christology in John's gospel.

The ascending and descending of the Son of Man is a main theme in John's gospel. There are many references about the sending of the Son from God in John's gospel (eg. Jn 5:37, 17:18). Jesus is the Son of Man who descended from heaven and the one who will ascend to heaven (Jn 3:13). The Son's descend was described as his incarnation and his ascension was announced in Jn 6:62, 14:2, 16:5, 28, and 17:11. The angels of God that are ascending and descending is a supplementary event to the Son of Man's ascending and descending, because the role of the angels in John's gospel is to support the Son of Man.

From the structure of the Son of Man's ascending and descending, an eschatological application can be possible in Jn 1:51. There is no direct announcement about the descension of the Son of Man at the last day, except for the mention about the last day in Jn 6:54. In Jn 6:54 there is no direct mention about the descension of the Son of Man as his parousia. The other gospels mention the descension of the Son of Man (Mt 24:30; 26:64; Mk 14:62). However it is expressed with other methods in the other gospels, while the ascending and descending is a main concept in John's gospel. Even though it is not a direct expression about the parousia in his farewell narrative (John 14-17). Jesus promised to come back to the disciples, and mentioned that the world will see him again in Jn 14:18. These verses can be referring to the resurrection because of the phrase ἔτι μικρόν (Jn 14:19 BGT). In Jn 14:28 Jesus mentioned that he is going to his Father. The resurrected Jesus said to Mary "I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God'" (Jn 20:17 NKJ), the coming back

in v. 18 refers to the parousia. John 14:2 says that Jesus will go back to his Father's house to prepare a place for the disciples. Jesus promised to send another Helper, ἄλλον παράκλητον in Jn 14:16 that was fulfilled after his ascension in Ac 2:4. John 21:22f says "If I will that he remain till I come" (NKJ) referring to his parousia. Therefore the concept of the parousia is in John's gospel, even though it is not directly mentioned as in the other gospels. This character of John's gospel about the parousia can make it possible to interpret Jn 1:51 as a the phenomenon of the parousia.

## Chapter 6 The background of Jesus' saying in Jn 1:51

### 6.1 The conversation between Jesus and Nathanael

Verse 51 is an addition to the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael. Before analyzing v. 51, it is necessary to analyse the construction of the conversation composition. In the progress of the story, the first step is the calling of Nathanael. Actually, Jesus did not call Nathanael. Compared with the other gospels, in the calling of the disciples Jesus is passive in John's gospel. In the other three gospels, Jesus saw someone and called him as disciple. In the case of Peter and Andrew, Jesus got into the boats, performed the miracle of the multitude of fish. In John's gospel, the two disciples of John the Baptist followed Jesus, and Jesus permitted them to become disciples. One of them brought Simon to Jesus. After Philip met Jesus, he became a disciple. Philip brought Nathanael. While Jesus called disciples in the other three gospels, the disciples came themselves to Jesus in John's gospel. The difference in the way of calling disciples between John's gospel and the other gospels' standard harmonization is that Jesus first meet with disciples, then they go back to their hometowns, and they confirmed their following of Jesus in a second meeting with Jesus (Brown 1971:77). Especially the reason that the author chose in the first calling of a disciple in the beginning of the gospel, have to be considered in order to come to a conclusion about the use Jacob's dream in Jn 1:51.



Firstly it is better to check the steps of calling and the conversation with Nathanael.

The steps to Nathanael are the following,

- 1st step** John's two disciples follow Jesus
- 2nd step** Andrew brings Simon, his brother
- 3rd step** Jesus meets Philip
- 4th step** Philip says to Nathanael
- 5th step** Nathanael ignores Jesus, because of Nazareth
- 6th step** Jesus calls Nathanael a true Israelite with no guile
- 7th step** Nathanael's question "how do you know me?"
- 8th step** Jesus says about seeing him under the fig tree
- 9th step** Nathanael's confession, "you are the Son of God, the king of Israel.

After these steps, Jesus promised the people, including Nathanael, using the words about the angels in the vision of Jacob that will be seen by all the people with the Son of Man. Therefore some of these motifs will be studied.

### 6.1.1 Calling to be a disciple.

In John's gospel there is a difference in the calling of Nathanael and the other disciples. Firstly, his name is omitted in the list of 12 disciples in Mt 10: 2-4; Mk 3:16-19 and Lk 6:14-16. The comparison of the list of 12 disciples in the Synoptic gospels is as follows,

Mt 10: 2-4	Mk 3:16-19	Lk 6:14-16
1 Simon Peter	1 Simon Peter	1 Simon Peter
2 Andrew	3 James the <i>son</i> of Zebedee	2 Andrew
3 James the <i>son</i> of Zebedee	4 John	3 James
4 John	2 Andrew	4 John
5 Philip	5 Philip	5 Philip
6 Bartholomew	6 Bartholomew	6 Bartholomew
7 Thomas	8 Matthew	8 Matthew

8 Matthew the tax collector	7 Thomas	7 Thomas
9 James the <i>son</i> of Alphaeus	9 James the <i>son</i> of Alphaeus	9 James the <i>son</i> of Alphaeus
10 Lebbaeus Thaddaeus	10 Thaddaeus	10 Simon called the Zealot
11 Simon the Canaanite	11 Simon the Cananite	11 Judas <i>the son</i> of James
12 Judas Iscariot	12 Judas Iscariot	12 Judas Iscariot

Besides the order of the list, these three gospels agree on the names of the disciples. Only Luke leaves out Judas the son of James, and writes Thaddaeus. However Nathanael is not named in the list of 12 disciples. Barclay (1956:95) points to several reasons why Nathanael is the same person as Bartholomew the 6<sup>th</sup> disciple in the list of the disciples. The first is that Bartholomew and Philip is put together in the order of the disciples' list in the Synoptic Gospels. The second is that Bartholomew is a second name. Bar Tholomew, that is, the son of Tholmai. Therefore the full name can be Nathanael bar Tholomew.

Bernard and McNeile (1928:61-62) also tried to solve it like Barclay. He added the meaning of Nathanael's Hebrew name. It means "God has given" and the Greek word is Theodore. Beasley-Murray (1999:27) suggests critically that Nathnael cannot be identified with Bartholomew, because it is not necessary that all the early followers have to be apostles. However, it is difficult to deny that Nathanael is included with the 12 disciples, because there is no list of 12 disciples in chapter 1 of John's gospel. Jesus gathered his disciples as his witnesses. It means that Nathanael is the same person as Bartholomew or that he has the same authority as the 12 disciples. Therefore whether Nathanael is identified with Bartholomew as one of the 12 disciples, or as an early follower of Jesus, the appearance of Nathanael in the last part of Jesus' calling of his disciples is important because his earlier confession about the Son of God is echoed at the end in 20:31. The theory that he is the same person as Bartholomew better explains this important response as coming from another disciple. Nathanael

appears again in Jn 21:2. He is with six other disciples like Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. It was the meeting with Jesus after his resurrection. Therefore It is certain that Nathanael was one of 12 disciples or a valuable disciple similar to the other 12 disciples. It means that the meaning of the name, Nathanael can be related to the story of the calling of the disciples, because of Jesus' choice of Nathanael. In the story of the calling of Nathanael, the meaning of his name is important, like Israel, the new name for Jacob, which means "the one who sees God". The phrase "there is no guile" is related to the meaning of the name, Jacob. It will be dealt with in more detail in the next section. From the method that was used in the story of the calling of Nathanael, it can be possible to relate the meaning of the name Nathanael with Jesus' choice as the one to whom the greater vision is revealed.

According to Köstenberger (2004:18), there are three reasons for Nathanael's skepticism about Jesus' home town Nazareth. The first is that Nazareth was a small town. There were less than two thousand people, too small to expect the messiah from it. The second is that people did not expect it from Nazareth, but from Bethlehem as the place where the messiah will come from (Jn 7:42). The people expected Bethlehem to be the home town of the messiah according to Micah 5:2 (Mt 2:6). Bethlehem was the home town of king David. They expected the king of Israel as the descendent of king David to be their saviour from Roman domination. There is also no mention of Nazareth as the home town of the messiah in the Old Testament (Bernard & McNeile 1928:62-63). John's gospel did not mention Jesus' birth story, with which two other gospels dealt with (Mt 1:18-25, and Lk 2:1-7). It is the same with the Jewish Talmud and Midrash, and there is no mention about Nazareth as a Messianic place in any extant pagan writing (Bryant & Krause 1998:46). However there was a misunderstanding

among the people and with Nathanael, because Jesus' birth place was Bethlehem. It means that the author intended to hide Jesus' original birth place so that this question about Nazareth is possible. The last is the relationship between Nazareth and Cana. Nazareth was a rival town to Cana where Nathanael lived (Borchert [1996] 2001:147; Burge 2000:77; Carson 1991:160; Morris 1971:145). Their inference is from Nathanael's scathing question. Nathanael's place is Cana located nearby Nazareth. If the messiah comes from Galilee, it has not to be Nazareth but Cana in Nathanael's mind. However it does not mean that Nathanael expected the messiah to come from his home town, Cana. The skepticism about Nazareth is not only from Nathanael, but also with other people in 7:41. Their skepticism about Nazareth is not reasonable. Philip introduced Jesus as the one about whom Moses wrote in the law, and the prophets also, and Nathanael denied it, because his home town is Nazareth. The Christ was denied by the people in 7:41, 52, because his home town is thought to be in Galilee. However, Judas of Galilee revolted against Rome at the time of the census (Ac 5:37). He was regarded as the saviour and many people followed him. It means that Galilee as the home province cannot be the reason of skepticism about Galilee.

Therefore, there is no reason why the messiah cannot come from Nazareth. Otherwise, Nathanael's doubt about a man from Nazareth, compared to his home place indicates Nathanael's intention to examine whether Jesus is the true messiah. Galilee was the Northern province far from the centre, Jerusalem. It is better to start a revolt from outside the centre. In the case of the Maccabean revolution, it started from the small town, Modin, not from Jerusalem. It is not sound reasoning that Nathanael expected a saviour like the Maccabean to come from his home town. According to Witherington (1995:36), the relationship of

individuals to society was considered important to define his identity in Jesus' world, and the question of Nathanael was asked into such a setting.

The context of the calling of Nathanael leads to v. 51. The appearance of Nathanael is special, because his name is not on the list of the 12 disciples, whether he is one of the disciples or not. The ignorance of Nathanael is also irrational, because there is no reason to ignore his province. These things show that he is related to the expectation of the messiah to save his people with force and politically. From this beginning, Jesus begins to adjust Nathanael's and his people's expectation to the greater vision in v. 51.

### 6.1.2 Israel and Jacob

Jesus said to Nathanael that he is a true Israelite and there is no guile in him. There was no previous conversation between Jesus and Nathanael. Most scholars regarded it as an allusion to Jacob and Israel as his new name which he received from God (Borchert [1996] 2001:147; MacArthur 2006:72; Newman & Nida [1980] 1993:49; Schnackenburg 1980:316). Jacob's name changed to Israel after he wrestled with God. According to Gn 27:35, Isaac mentioned the word, "guile" to Jacob who cheated and took the blessing from his brother. Esau agreed with his father's opinion and said that the meaning of Jacob was "guile" (Lockwood 1991:26). Jesus used these two texts and synthesized it, as follows,

τὸ ὄνομά σου Ιακωβ ἀλλὰ Ἰσραηλ ἔσται τὸ ὄνομά σου (Gn 32:29)

Ἴδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης, ἐν ᾧ δόλος οὐκ ἔστιν. (Jn 1:47)

σου μετὰ δόλου ἔλαβεν τὴν εὐλογίαν σου (Gn 27:35)

Jesus called Nathanael a “true Israelite in whom there is no guile”. It seems that “true Israelite” and “no guile” receive double emphasis. From this sentence, Jesus seems to praise Nathanael’s authentic character by comparing two words “true” and “guile”. However, Jacob’s story is used as a metaphor. It is not sure whether Nathanael caught this meaning or not, because the questions and answers between Jesus and Nathanael do not follow each other. “No guile” in 1:47 is possibly an allusion to Ps 32:2 “Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity” (Carson 1991:161). From this allusion, the authenticity of Nathanael can be emphasized. The focus is concentrated on true, ἀληθῶς. If the intention of Jesus is focused on this word, the emphasis have to change as follows,

”Ἴδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης, ἐν ᾧ δόλος οὐκ ἔστιν. (Jn 1:47)



The reason is that these two concepts is opposed to each other. Some scholars take both of them (Bernard & McNeile 1928:63; Bryant & Krause 1998:46). They mentioned the guile is from Ps 32:2 and they mentioned the name Jacob’s meaning also. However Schnackenburg denies these scholars’ opinion, as follows,

Many commentators have seen here an allusion to Jacob, the patriarch Israel. But this is improbable. Nathanael is not called "a man with nothing false in him" in contrast to Jacob, the deceiver, but because he is a genuine Israelite, that is a worthy representative of the people of God (Schnackenburg 1980:316).

There are too many facts to explain the relation between Jacob and Nathanael to accept Schnackenburg’s opinion. The first is that v. 51 is an allusion to Jacob’s vision as many commentators indicate. Even Schnackenburg also admitted it. According to Moloney ([1978] 2007:36), v. 51 is the climax of the calling of

disciples in John, so the verb was changed from singular to plural in v. 51. From the personal conversation, the stream of the conversation moved to the public. The allusion to Gn 28:12 is not a direct quotation but is indirect. This method of allusion also mixed Jacob's vision with the Son of Man concept. This method of allusion is similar to v. 47. There is the possibility that the author used Jacob's image in the whole conversation between Jesus and Nathanael.

The second is that Jesus used the word, "Israelite". The normal word that indicated the people of Israel is Jews, as Morris mentioned,

Jesus salutes Nathanael as a straightforward person. "Israelite: is used here only in this Gospel, though "Jew" (especially in the plural) is common as we have noted (Morris 1971:166).

This word, ὁ Ἰσραηλίτης was used only here in John's gospel, and it is not used in the other gospels. It was used five times in Acts (2:22; 3:13; 5:35; 13:16, and 21:28). In Romans, it was used two times (9:4; 11:1), and it was used in 2 Co 11:22. The word, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is used five times in Matthew (2:2; 27:11, 29, 37; 28:15), seven times in Mark (1:5; 7:3; 15:2, 9, 18, 26), and five times in Luke (7:3; 23:3, 37, 38, 51). Even in John, it is used 72 times. However Jesus called Nathanael a true Israelite instead of a Jew, and Nathanael confessed Jesus as the king of Israel. When Jesus was crucified on the cross, Pilate wrote "the king of Jews" on the cross (Jn 19:21). When Jesus met the Samaritan woman, the topic of their conversation is firstly about Jacob's well. It means Jacob's story plays an important role in the first part of John's gospel.

In conclusion, it is certain that Jesus used Jacob's story in Genesis in Nathanael's calling at the beginning of John's gospel. Following the reference of Carson (1991:161) who points out the method of Jesus that used popular etymology, it

can be concluded that a complex structure was used in the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael. Jesus called Nathanael an Israelite. Israelite means the people of Israel, and Israel means “the one who sees God”, אִישׁ רֹאֵה אֵל (Bernard & McNeile 1928:65; Carson 1991:161; Johnson 1992:137; Barker 1992:73). After Jacob met the angel of God and wrestled with the angel, God gave this name to Jacob. In the context of the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael, Nathanael was called a true Israelite, when he met with Jesus. The conversation between Jesus and Nathanael recalls Jacob’s wrestling with God, because of the tension between his ignorance and admiration. The confession of Nathanael is that Jesus is the Son of God. It means that Nathanael sees God according to Israel’s etymology. A person’s name has meaning to the Jews, like the name “Cephas” that Jesus gave to Simon, which means “a rock”. Likewise the name Israel is related to the vision, and Jesus’ promise is related to Nathanael through Jacob’s vision.

### **6.1.3 Under the tree**

The story of the calling of Nathanael changed from his first negative response to a positive response. The pivot point of Nathanael’s change in attitude toward Jesus is Jesus’ saying about seeing him under the fig tree. The place where Nathanael sat is not enough to change his attitude. Carson (1991:161) indicates that the chief point of Nathanael’s attitude is due to Jesus’ supernatural knowledge, like in the case of the Samaritan woman. Her attitude to Jesus also changed because of Jesus’ supernatural knowledge about her husbands. However the change of attitude towards Jesus in the case of the Samaritan woman is from a Jew to a prophet. The real change to the Christ in her attitude is from her hearing about true worship. A prophet that was mentioned by the



woman is not an eschatological prophet as the messiah, it is just a normal prophet (Jn 4:19). There is development of recognition of the identity of Jesus in conversation between Jesus and the one who met Jesus in John's gospel. It can be applied to Nathanael also. Even though the Son of God and the King of Israel that was confessed by Nathanael have a messianic character, it is different titles from what Jesus wanted to show about himself. There were also a lot of prophets from the Old Testament tradition who have had supernatural knowledge to know who someone was before meeting him (Barnett 2010:4567).

Nathanael's response with the Son of God and the King of Israel can be the clue about his change towards Jesus. Clarke ([1994] 1998:25) referred to a prayer for the salvation of Israel that Nathanael prayed under the fig tree of the king of Israel. It is difficult to prove his reference, because there is not enough proof for any reference about his opinion. However the King of Israel appeared again in Jn 12:13, when Jesus entered Jerusalem. The people shouted "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!" (Jn 12:13 NKJ). It refers to Israel's expectation of the salvation of its people. In Jn 6:15, the people tried to make Jesus King with force, so that Jesus withdrew to the mountain alone by Himself. This is enough evidence about the longing for salvation by the people, including Nathanael. According to Borchert ([1996] 2001:148), the place under the fig tree was used as the place of studying the law by the rabbis according to the Jewish custom. The first expression about Nathanael, true Israelite, also opens the way to interpret Nathanael as a patriot for his own country, Israel. He did not call Jesus the King of the Jews, because he lived in the region of Northern Israel.

There are a lot of hints about the meaning of “under the fig tree” in the Old Testament, cf.

1Ki 4:25 (KJV) - And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

Mi 4:4 (KJV) - But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make *them* afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken *it*.

Zch 3:10 (KJV) - In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.

These verses about “under the fig tree” can point to the recovery of Israel’s national life. In 1 Ki 4:25, “under the vine and fig tree” to every man means rest in the peace in the country through king Solomon’s rule. According to DeVries (2003:73), every man under his vine and fig tree means that they are satisfied with a small possession. However it does not correspond with the conditions in the kingdom of Solomon. In the time of king Solomon, the kingdom of Israel was wealthy and powerful. From the prosperity of the kingdom, the people could be safe under their vine tree and fig tree. Therefore it is not the self-sufficiency of the people, but the prosperity of the kingdom. Smith (2002:37) interprets Mi 4:4 as the depiction of a universal kingdom to come with peace to all peoples of the world who will worship Yahweh only. Barker ([1999] 2001:86) defined “the vine tree and fig tree” as symbols of security, prosperity, and contentment in God’s peaceable kingdom, because of the ruling of God. The consent of these two scholars is that it means a condition of peace in the kingdom through the special salvation of God. In the case of Zch 3:10, Smith and Beyer (1912:159) point out that inviting to sit under the vine and fig tree is connected to the description of the

condition in Zechariah 8 with the recovery of Zion through the return by God's ruling. The people of God will dwell in Jerusalem again (8:8) and ten men from every nation will try to become companions of Israel (8:23). It means that the nation of Israel will recover to be as in the time of the King Solomon. At that time many people visited Israel, like the queen of Sheba to see the prosperity of Israel (1 Ki 4:34; 10:1). From the texts of the Old Testament the meaning of "under the fig tree" indicates the peace of the nation from the force of other countries by the hands of God. It refers to the prosperity of the kingdom of Israel.

It is also mentioned in 1 Maccabees, as follows,

1Ma 14:12 (KJA) - For every man sat under his vine and his fig tree, and there was none to fray them.

1 Maccabees 13 is about Israel being independent from Syria. The brother of Juda, Simon Maccabee, accomplished the independence of Israel in 170 BCE that is the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Simon (1 Ma 13:41, 42). From the effort of Simon, the people could spend their days in peace (14:11). The expression "under the vine tree and the fig tree" was used to show how the people will enjoy their peace (14:12). Even though this expression is only used once in the New Testament, it can prove that this expression was accepted as the peace from other forces through the redemption by God through a hero or a king.

The saying of Jesus about Nathanael who was under the fig tree has a special meaning as seen by Jesus through his supernatural knowledge which is a sign of a prophet. It is certain that there were Messianic movements that raised as a political complication (Schnackenburg 1980:288). It is due to their hope for salvation from Rome. Since the exile, the people of Israel waited for a king to save their people from other countries like king David. Even though king David

was the king of the Jews, he was the ideal type they waited for as their messiah King of a united country including Israel. From his word about seeing under the fig tree, Nathanael knew that Jesus was the messiah who they were waiting for a long time to save their nation politically from other forces. It corresponds to the confession of Nathanael. He called Jesus the King of Israel who can save Israel's kingdom from Rome. Morris (1971:83) considered another reference that connected the saying of Jesus about "under the fig tree" and the stories of Jacob from Genesis. He referred to Jesus' call to Nathanael as a true Israelite, and to Nathanael's answer that Jesus is the King of Israel. The saying about the fig tree by Jesus made Nathanael to see an immediate recovery of Israel that he meditated on under the fig tree. The other possible interpretation is that Jesus did not see Nathanael sitting under the fig tree or even that Nathanael did not sit under a fig tree, but that Jesus saw the mind of Nathanael waiting for the one who can recover the nation of Israel to sit under their fig tree, which means the peace of Israel.

#### **6.1.4 Son of God, King of Israel**

The titles of Jesus, where mentioned by Nathanael, are the "Son of God" and the "King of Israel". These titles are related to the hope for a messiah to recover the nation of Israel, because of the expression, "under the fig tree". In the case of the Son of God, Jesus was interpreted by Nathanael as a divine character, because of his divine knowledge. Bernard and McNeile (1928:65) mentioned that these titles are rooted in Psalm 2. The king is established upon Zion by God in Ps 2:6 and this king was called the son of God begotten by God in v. 7. In addition, he was called God's anointed one, the messiah. Therefore, Jn 1:49 alluded to Psalm

2. The expression, “the only begotten Son” in Jn 1:18 also shows the relationship between this context and Psalm 2.

This title appeared as the only Son of God in Jn 3:16, 18. The relationship between God and the Son is an important theme in John’s gospel. God gave his only begotten Son to the world and the Son had the role to deliver the world from sin (cf. Jn 3:35, 36, 5:19, 20-23). From the intention of the author in the prologue, it is connected to the beginning of the gospel, because the title, the “Son of God” already appeared in Jn 1:34 by John the Baptist. He testified that the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus and that He is the Son of God. The title, the “Son of God” appeared also in 20:31 where the author mentioned his aim with this gospel. It means that the title, the “Son of God” plays an important role in John’s gospel.

According to MacArthur (2006:73), this title, the “Son of God”, shows that Jesus shares the same nature as God. It can be right in one sense and would be wrong in other sense. There is a difference between Nathanael’s confession and other usages of this title, because the confession of Nathanael about the Son of God does not mean the same nature as God. The Son of God was used to express the closeness to God (Schnackenburg 1980:318). It is also discovered in the difference between *BYZ* and *NA28* on 6:69,

*NA28* **Jn 6:69** καὶ ἡμεῖς πεπιστεύκαμεν καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ.  
*BYZ* **Jn 6:69** Καὶ ἡμεῖς πεπιστεύκαμεν καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος.

In the Majority Text, the holy one of God is changed to the Christ, the Son of the living God. It means that the Son of God was treated as of the same nature as God to be the messiah who can save the people from other nations’ forces. In

the first one the author's aim is that the readers should believe and the second is the understanding of the people who had the expectation about the messiah. The disciples could also not realize the true meaning of the Son of God to be of the same nature as God before Jesus' resurrection.

The title "Son of God" was used by the ancients for the priest, or for the king. Freedman ([1992] 1996:128) classified the title, "the Son of God" in several traditions. In the Old Testament tradition, the title "Son of God" was used for the king, the people of God, and for the heavenly hosts. The "messiah", the anointed, was used for the righteous among the people, charismatic individuals, and for an exalted angel in non-christian Jewish literature. In the Greco-Roman World the hero, the divine man, and the ruler was called the "Son of God". It means that the Son of God that was called by Nathanael can be regarded as a human messiah or king, not of the divine existence who has an equal nature with God. According to (Brown 1971:88), the understanding about Jesus is not complete, so Jesus have to manifest his glory more and more. Nathanael's confession about Jesus is not complete, so Jesus wants to show greater things to Nathanael and the other disciples with Jn 1:51. The Son of God that was confessed by Nathanael is not of the same nature with God, but he was the political messiah that the people were waiting for.

That Nathanael confessed Jesus to be the king of Israel and the Son of God means than he saw Him to be a political messiah to save his people from other forces. Carson (1991:162) mentioned that the title, "the king of Israel" indicates the messiah to the Jews. Jesus was also hailed as the king of Israel by the people, when he entered Jerusalem (Jn 12:13). It was used in the same sense as the king of the Jews. The title, "the king of Israel" was used twice in John's gospel,

and “the king of the Jews” five times (18:33, 39; 19:3, 19, 21). The “king of Israel” was used in the Galilee province, because Galilee belonged to North Israel in the past. The king of the Jews is used in the latter half of John’s gospel, because the scene of the latter half of the gospel is in Jerusalem that belonged to South Judah. However the “king of Israel” in Jn 12:13 was used by the people in Jerusalem. Therefore, the difference between the “king of Israel” and the “king of Jews” should not be pushed too far. The important thing is that this concept has the meaning of the political messiah of Israel. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the people called Jesus the king of Israel because of their hope for political independence from Rome. Due to the disappointment about this hope, the people changed their attitude toward Jesus. When Pilate tried to write the title, the “king of Jews”, on the cross, the people did not accept Jesus as their king, so they asked to Pilate to write “he said I am the king of the Jews” (Jn 19:21). The confession of Nathanael is certainly that the king of Israel means a political messiah, even though he became a disciple. Bernard and McNeile (1928:68) support this opinion, saying:

Nathanael is represented as acknowledging that Jesus is “the Son of God, the King of Israel” (v. 49), *i.e.* that He is the messiah as looked for under the aspect of King, the “political” messiah of Israel’s hope.

They continue their statement that the higher concept than “the Son of God” and “the king of Israel” that was presented by Nathanael, is the Son of Man that was suggested by the words of Dan 7:13. It is a greater thing to show to Nathanael and the people around in v. 51. It means that the knowledge about Jesus would be developed according to Jesus’ intention, because Jesus induced Nathanael to confess Him as the king of Israel because Jesus called Nathanael “a true Israelite”.

There is another problem about “the king of Israel” that is related to Jacob’s new name, Israel. Borchert ([1996] 2001:148) is the only scholar who mentioned the king as the descendant of the reborn Jacob. If the connection between Jesus’ calling Nathanael a true Israelite and the confession of Nathanael as the king of Israel is presupposed, it is certain that the king of Israel implied that he is the descendent of the reborn Jacob. The hope of the king of Israel or the king of the Jews was on the son of David. In Mt 21:9, the people shouted “the Son of David” instead of “the king of Israel” in Jn 12:13. In John’s gospel, there is only one verse that mentioned the Christ as the seed of David (7:42). It is the question of the people that doubted whether Jesus is the Christ. There is no genealogy that can prove that Jesus is the seed of David in John’s gospel. Therefore it can be concluded that the intention behind the calling of Nathanael is concentrated on Jacob’s story in Genesis, and the conclusion of this narrative is Jacob’s vision in Jn 1:51.

There is another problem in Nathanael’s calling. There are two doubts and two confessions from two disciples in John’s gospel. The one is Nathanael, and the other is Thomas. Nathanael confessed Jesus to be the *Son of God* and *King of Israel*, after he met Jesus, and Thomas confessed Jesus as his *Lord* and his *God*, after he met the resurrected Jesus (McGee [1975] 1991:37). From these two doubts and confessions, it can be known that the confessions of Nathanael is incomplete and the confession of Thomas completes it. Thomas confessed Jesus as his Lord and God. The title, “Lord” is also used for an earthly king of the nation. However this title accompanied with “God” ensured the divine nature of Jesus as of the same nature with God. These two doubts and two confessions are unique in John’s gospel. The other gospels do not mention them.



## Conclusion

From the analysis of the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael, it is certain that v. 51 is not an addition to the story of the calling of the disciples, but the conclusion of this conversation. Brown (1971:88) says of the title of v. 51 “a detached saying about the Son of Man”, because Jesus said to the people “He then added” at the beginning of v. 51, and the object was changed from Nathanael to the people around them. He regarded the Cana miracle, the first sign in 2:1-11 as the greater thing as that is mentioned in v. 50. In the case of the confession of Nathanael, he also assumed that the Son of God and the king of Israel is incomplete. His confession is completed by Thomas. Therefore the greater thing that they will see is not v. 51, but the signs in John’s gospel to manifest Jesus’ glory to him. However the connection between the true Israelite and the king of Israel makes it possible for the interpretation of v. 51 to be the conclusion of the disciple calling narrative, because v. 51 is an allusion to Gn 28:12 in this chapter.

The narrative about the calling of Nathanael concentrated on Jacob to lead to the greater vision in v. 51. From it, there are many traces to use Jacob’s story in the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael. It is certain that Jesus used the name of Jacob by applying his new name Israel to Nathanael. It was the popular etymology in that era. By changing of the name from Jacob to Israel, Nathanael’s response toward Jesus is changed from doubt to interest about Jesus. The crucial reason for the change in Nathanael’s response is the phrase, “under the tree”. It has the special meaning of a political revolution. In the Old Testament tradition, it refers to the peace from the salvation from another country. It is not important whether Nathanael was under the fig tree and Jesus saw it. Rather it is more

possible to say that Jesus did not see Nathanael sitting under the fig tree with his eyes. If Jesus saw it and Nathanael realized it, it is not a matter to be amazed of. Even though Jesus did not see it, he knew Nathanael's mind for Israel and pointed it out as "under the fig tree". The result of this indication changed Nathanael's mind. He admitted Jesus to be the messiah of his country. So he confessed Jesus as the Son of God and the king of Israel. However, his confession about Jesus is incomplete, because his confession just remains limited to a national saviour from other forces like the other people's hope. Therefore Jesus wants to show him the greater vision about Jacob's vision, by the application of the Son of Man. Therefore the change in Nathanael is as follows,

"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"  
(Joh 1:46 NKJ) - Ignorance about Jesus



"Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"  
(Joh 1:49 NKJ) – from the Jesus saying about "under the fig tree"



You shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man (Joh 1:51 NIV) – the greater thing to see

From this development of the theory, it is certain that the main theme is in v. 51 and it needs an analysis of v. 51 in this context.

## 6.2 The analysis of Jn 1:51

### 6.2.1 John's method of quotation

Verse 51 is not a detached saying in the calling narrative, but the conclusion of the narrative of the calling of Nathanael. The plural “you” (ὁμῖν) and plural verb “will see” (ὄψεσθε), is taken by Brown (1971:88) as the proof to conclude that v. 51 is the conclusion of the calling narrative. In the conversation with the Samaritan woman, Jesus' conversation with her broadened at the end to include the Samaritan people in the village. In the conversation with the blind man in Ch. 9, Jesus talked with him directly, but referred to “those who do not see” in v. 39 on which the Pharisees who were with them, reacted. Many people were following Jesus after John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus to be the messiah. There were many people with Nathanael when Jesus talked with Nathanael about Jacob's vision. The conversation led to the people that were inferred by the plural “you” (ὁμῖν) in v. 51 at the climax of the conversation (Rodriguez 2008:200, Van der Merwe 1995:142). The structure of the conversation developed from a true Israelite with no guile in the calling of Nathanael, to Jacob's vision as the hope of the kingdom of God. The confession of Nathanael, “you are the King of Israel” is also related to Jacob's vision. Nathanael mentioned an earthly kingdom of Israel, Jesus denied this hope and presented the heavenly kingdom above the Ladder in Jacob's vision. John's method of allusion to Gn 28:12 in v. 51 will be dealt with according to this presupposition.

In order to check the method of allusion in John's gospel, it is necessary to consider the whole structure of Ch. 1. The author of John's gospel started with the Logos who was with God in the beginning. This is an allusion to Gn 1:1.

However it is not applied directly, and brought a similarity with Genesis. According to Moyise (2001:71), the relationship between Genesis and John's gospel is not a coincidence, not only because of the phrase "in the beginning" but also because of the next concept of light and darkness. He insisted that John also used wisdom motifs from Proverbs 8 to explain that the Word accompanied God at creation. The quotations and allusions in John's gospel differ with the other three gospels. Lieu (2000:145) expressed this difference with the complexity of John's gospel. He mentioned that John's gospel is like a "seamless robe", and at the same time it is like a discordant patchwork of sources and redaction. These two sides can also be applied to v. 51.

Jr Manning (2004:201) analyzes v. 51 with two references, Ezk 1:1 and Gn 28:12. He divided it in two parts; the one is "You will see heaven open", and the other is "the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man". The first part is regarded as an allusion to Ezk 1:1 "the heavens were opened". The second part is Jacob's vision in Gn 28:12. Even though the allusion to Ezekiel is short, it was used to introduce the revelation of God to Ezekiel. It is just three words, ὁράω, οὐρανός, ἀνοίγω. As pointed out in chapter 1 of this dissertation, the concept of an open heaven to introduce a revelation of God is used in the Old Testament only in Ezk 1:1. The other expressions about an open heaven refer to the path of the rain, the blessing of God or the wrath of God in the Old Testament. The expression, "the angels ascending and descending on" is unique, therefore it is clear that Jn 1:51 comes from Gn 28:12. The Son of Man is inserted instead of the pronoun "it" (αὐτῆς). The concept, "the Son of Man" is found in Ezekiel (Ezk 2:1, 3), which does not refer to a spiritual existence, but indicating Ezekiel. The closer concept to Jn 1:51 is the one like a Son of Man in Dn 7:13.

Therefore the analysis of the use of Old Testament motifs or allusions in v. 51 has to be as follows,

John 1:51	Old Testament
ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγῶτα καὶ	<b>Ezekiel 1:1</b> καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ τριακοστῷ ἔτει ἐν τῷ τετάρτῳ μηνὶ πέμπτῃ τοῦ μηνὸς καὶ ἐγὼ ἦμην ἐν μέσῳ τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας ἐπὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ τοῦ Χοβαρ καὶ <u>ἠνοίχθησαν οἱ οὐρανοί</u> καὶ εἶδον ὁράσεις θεοῦ
τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας	<b>Genesis 28:12</b> καὶ ἐνυπνιάσθη καὶ ἰδοὺ κλίμαξ ἐστηριγμένη ἐν τῇ γῆ ἧς ἡ κεφαλὴ ἀφικνεῖτο εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ <u>οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνέβαινον καὶ κατέβαινον</u> ἐπ’ αὐτῆς
ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.	<b>Daniel 7:13</b> ἐθεώρουν ἐν ὁράματι τῆς νυκτὸς καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς <u>υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου</u> ἦρχετο καὶ ὡς παλαιὸς ἡμερῶν παρῆν καὶ οἱ παρεστηκότες παρῆσαν αὐτῷ

As shown above, the use of the Old Testament here is not by direct quotation of the text, but a compilation of texts alluded to. In addition, the texts that John alluded to in v. 51 were used in the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha of the Old

Testament. Ezekiel's vision can be the basis of the the Merkabah mysticism. The Son of Man is also used in the other three gospels. It is clear that the Son of Man has a special meaning in relation to the messiah, even though it was used with the pronoun that indicates a 3<sup>rd</sup> person.

The methods of allusion to the Old Testament in v. 51 is that the complex of sources were taken from various books and they were put together with a theological intention. In v. 51, the three texts (Ezekiel, Daniel, Genesis) were taken up and synthesized. The important thing is the theological intention in the proces of synthesizing. On this ambiguous synthesis, there are various interpretations about the promise of Jesus.

The method of allusion is similar to the Midrash. According to Meeks (1972:51), the allusion to the Midrash in Gn 28:12 in v. 51 is to correct the traditional prophecy of the Parousia that was depicted in the Synoptics as realized eschatology. However it is not certain that John used the Midrash instead of the Old Testament, because the Midrash interpretations also used the Genesis text. In Midrash, Rabbi's interpreted Gn 28:12, but there is not a complex of different verses, like the combination with Ezekiel and Daniel. There is no concept of the Son of Man in the Midrash interpretations. They used the Targum tradition to depict the celestial world by including the throne of glory. John only used the methods of interpretation of the Old Testament from the Midrash. John used the Old Testament freely. He mixed three texts from the Old Testament. In addition, he hides other texts from Genesis in the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael. His purpose by using the method of the Midrash was to correct the traditional concept of the parousia. Brown (1971:89), in agreement with Meeks, suggests that the original meaning of v. 51 can be applied to the resurrection of

Jesus or to the parousia with the appearance of the angels. He added the resurrection of Jesus, because, Jesus arose and ascended to heaven with the promise of descending again at the parousia. In this case, the ascending and descending is not referring to the angels, but to Jesus. According to Carson (1991:163), v. 51 refers to the event of the crucifixion of Jesus. The ladder symbolises the cross and the crucifixion to the path between heaven and earth. The angels are symbols referring to the messengers that deliver God's will on earth about the crucifixion of Jesus. The reason for the use of these three sources about an open heaven, Jacob's vision, and the Son of Man at the conclusion of Nathanael's calling will be dealt with next.

### **6.2.2 Judaism's application of quotation of Gn 28:12**

It is difficult to find a trace of Jacob's vision in the Old Testament. There is no direct quotation of Gn 28:12 in the Old Testament. However there are many eschatological concepts in Jacob's vision that is found in the Old Testament tradition, like an open heaven, descending angels, and the connection between heaven and earth, as dealt with in the previous chapter. The next usage of Jacob's vision is seen in Judaism, especially after the exile. There are two dimensions about Jacob's vision; the Genesis dimension and that of John's gospel. There is a chronological gap between them. When Jesus spoke with Nathaneal and the audience who were with Nathaneal, one motif from Jacob's vision was used. At that time, the audience had a pre-understanding about Jacob's vision. It cannot be ignored in the interpretation of Jn 1:51. It is important to compare the interpretation of Genesis 28 with intertestamental documents and with John's gospel.

In the Jewish tradition the motif of Jacob's vision was understood through various methods. The study of early Judaism's understanding of the vision of Jacob was dealt with in Johnson (1992:1). He also dealt with the usage of Gn 28:12 in John's gospel. He saw the two pericopae in Jn 1:43-51 and 4:1-42 as an allusion to Jacob's stories. The first pericope is concerned with Gn 28:12, and the second pericope is concerned with Jacob's well. He regarded these two pericopae to be related to each other. He started by studying the Old Testament passage. However his study differed from this dissertation, because of the different focus points. While his study focused on the theophany of Jacob's vision, this dissertation focused on the vision of the ascending and descending angels. His second step was a study of the writings of early Judaism about the vision of Jacob with a similar approach as this thesis. Johnson (1992:185) regarded the understanding of Jacob's vision in early Judaism as an eschatological interpretation.

Johnson (1992:1) introduced the usages of Jacob's narrative in early Judaism from the apocrypha (Wisdom 10, Sirah 44), Philo of Alexandria, Josephus, Pseudepigrapha (first Enoch, 4 Ezra, second Baruch, Testament of Levi, Testament of Isaac, Testament of Jacob, Jubilees, Joseph and Aseneth, Biblical Antiquities, Ladder of Jacob, Fourth Maccabees, Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers, Prayer of Joseph, Theodotus, and Demetrius the Chronographer), the Dead Sea scrolls, the Septuagint, and the Targumim. His study is broad and it is not focused to Jacob's vision, but focused on the Jacob narratives. For this reason, the woman at the well (Jn 4:1-42) is also regarded as an allusion to Gn 28:10-22. This dissertation concentrates on the vision of Jacob about the angels ascending and descending on the ladder.



There are various uses and interpretations of Jacob's vision in the Jewish tradition. This study will be limited to well known literature in the Jewish tradition like the Old Testament pseudepigraphies and apocrypha. Even though it does not represent the whole of the Jewish tradition about Jacob's vision, it shows the kind of interpretations or uses of Jacob's vision in the intertestamental period. In the intertestamental period and in the New Testamental period they were recognized as of a lower or with a similar authority as the Old Testament. First to be studied is the direct quotation of Gn 28:18 in the apocrypha and pseudepigraphies. Jubilees rewrites Genesis and Exodus. Jacob's vision is mentioned directly with a bit of transformation. Genesis Raba is a Midrash, an exegesis of the Old Testament. The *Ladder of Jacob* reconstructs Jacob's vision of Gn 28:18, and mentions Jacob's vision in Ch 1, while the other chapters are interpretations of his dream. The vision is expanded with more detail than in Genesis 28. All three books have direct quotations or direct uses of Jacob's vision in Genesis 28. The texts these authors used are also important. The first step of this study is to compare them. Between these texts and the text of Genesis which was quoted, there are little differences, according to the different texts they used and their intentions. The second step is to sketch the background of the authors of the texts. Besides the historical background of the authors, it can also be detected in their texts, from their methods of changes and from traces of what the authors implied in their texts.

Secondly the allusion to Gn 28:12 in the apocrypha and pseudepigraphies will be examined. In the *Testimony of Levi*, the situation is similar to Jacob's vision. Jacob's vision was used to prove the legitimacy of the Levitical priesthood, that is their hemeutical presupposition. The Wisdom of Solomon mentioned Jacob's vision indirectly. In the *Testament of Levi*, the one who saw the open heaven is

changed to Levi. The Wisdom of Solomon refers to Jacob's flight from his brother, Esau. In the Testament of Jacob, the event of Jacob's vision was reflected to explain that Jacob saw God face to face. These are the references to Jacob's vision in Genesis 28.

The third step is to determine how the authors used the motifs from Jacob's vision, but there is only a similarity between them and no relation between them. It shows that motifs used in the documents prevailed in that era. The concept, the Son of Man, was not used in Jacob's vision in the intertestamental documents. Jesus combined two other sources. They have to be looked into separately to find the connection.

The purpose of this section is to examine the understanding of the vision of the angels ascending and descending on the ladder in Judaism around the New Testament era in order to compare the understanding between the New Testament and Judaism. The use of Jacob's vision about the angels ascending and descending in early Judaism can be narrowed down to Jubilees, *The Testament of Levi*, *Wisdom 10*, *The Ladder of Jacob*, *Testament of Jacob*, *Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers*, *Genesis Rabba*, the *Book of the Watcher*, and Philo's *On dreams*. Philo interpreted Jacob's ladder as symbolic for air in Jacob's dream, because the air is like the home of a human's soul (Reddoch 2010:203). There are other references that used the motifs in Jacob's vision indirectly, like the open heaven, the angels ascending and descending, the ladder as the connection between earth and heaven, and the theophany. Especially the Son of Man can be connected to these motifs in the references. Like in the Old Testament tradition, the open heaven has the meaning of a special revelation that came down from heaven. In the case of the angels ascending and

descending, the order of the angels move was dealt with in the Midrash. The men who ascends to the heaven are Enoch, and Levi. The ladder as the connection between heaven and earth is difficult to find in the Judaic documents. In the case of *Jubilees*, *Testament of Jacob*, and *The Ladder of Jacob*, the ladder was mentioned in the exegesis of Gn 28:12. The aim of this section is to establish whether these motifs can be representations of the apocalyptic themes of the intertestamental period. It means that Jacob's vision in Gn 28:12 was understood as an apocalyptic revelation to Jacob, and as an escatological interpretation.

#### 6.2.2.1 Jubilees

Jubilees is known as a rewriting of Genesis 1 to Exodus 19 around 150 BCE (VanderKam 2000). The methods of rewriting are copying with additions, omissions, and changes of some words or sentences with alternative ones (Segal 2007:1). The stories in Jubilees are following the biblical order, but sometimes the order was changed. For example Joseph was sold by his brothers before Isaac's death in Jubilees 34 (cf. Gn 35:29). The title, the Book of Jubilees, is derived from its divisions of their jubilees according to the times and events during the years and weeks. A Jubilee is found in Leviticus 25. There is a year of rest for every Israelite after six years since their entry into the Promised Land (vv. 2-5). Jubilee is the year after seven rest years, i.e. every 50<sup>th</sup> year since their entry in the Promised Land. The book of Jubilees divides the history from creation to their entry into the Promised Land with 50 times of Jubilees, so that the sum of years are 2450 years. It is a heptadic chronological system. According to Segal (2007:7), the terminology of "jubilees" and "weeks" was also used in the second Temple period (cf. 1 En 93:91, *Testament of Levi* 17, *Assumption of Moses*, *Apocryphon of Joshua*, *Apocryphon of Jeremiah*, etc.). About the date of writing,

VanderKam (2001:17) says it is difficult to define the exact date of Jubilees, because the book does not have any explicit mentioning of its date. It is the same with the author. However, he assumes that the date of Jubilees is between 164 and 100 BCE. The language of the original Jubilees is Hebrew with a translation in Greek. The book of Jubilees is well constructed. It has an introduction and a conclusion. Between them, the Bible stories are arranged from creation to the entry in the Promised Land. The contents of the Book is follows:

1. Introduction (Ch. 1)
2. Adam to Noah (Ch. 2-10)
3. Abraham (Ch. 11-22)
4. Issac (Ch. 23)
5. Jacob and his sons (Ch. 24-45)
6. Slavery in Egypt and the Exodus (Ch. 46-49)
7. Conclusion (Ch. 50)

Especially Jacob's dream in Gn 28:10-22 was dealt with in Jub 27:19-27 (Charlesworth 1985:108-109). These two texts only differ slightly. The writing about the vision of Jacob, God's blessing of Jacob, and the promise to Jacob after the vision are nearly the same. The differences in the first part of this narrative are, as follows:

Jubilees 27:	Genesis 28:
<sup>19</sup> And Jacob went from <u>the Well of the Oath</u> to go to Haran <u>on the first year of the second week in the forty-fourth jubilee,</u>  and he came to <u>Luz on the mountains, that is, Bethel, on the new moon of the first month of</u>	<sup>10</sup> Now Jacob went out from <u>Beersheba</u> and went toward Haran. (Gn 28:10 <i>NKJ</i> ) <sup>10</sup> And Jacob went forth from <u>the well of the oath</u> , and departed into Charrhan. (Gn 28:10 <i>LXE</i> ) <sup>11</sup> So he came to <u>a certain place</u> and stayed there all night,

<p><u>this week, and he came to the place at even and turned from the way to the west of the road that night:</u> and he slept there; for the sun had set.</p> <p><sup>20</sup> And he took one of the stones of that place and laid it at his head <u>under the tree, and he was journeying alone,</u> and he slept.</p> <p><sup>21</sup> And he dreamt that night, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold, the angels of the Lord ascended and descended on it: and behold, the Lord stood upon it. <sup>22</sup> And he spake to Jacob and said: 'I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou art sleeping, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee.</p>	<p>because the sun had set.</p> <p>And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. (Gn 28:11 NKJ)</p> <p>12 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.</p> <p>13 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. (Gn 28:12-13 NKJ)</p>
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Jub 27:10 indicates the name, Beersheba, as “the Well of the Oath” as the meaning of the name. It can also be found in the LXX. It is from Jos 15:28 that the Greek name is Beersheba, Βηρσαβεε. It was translated as τὸ φρέαρ τοῦ ὄρκου in Genesis. Beersheba first appeared in Gn 21:14, and in Gn 21:31 when Hagar and her son, Ishmael, departed from Abraham and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. The name, Beersheba was mentioned at the sealing of the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech (Gn 21:22-34). According to Gn

21:31, they called the place, Beersheba, because their covenant was made at the well. The name, Beersheba, which means “the well of the oath” is related to their covenant. In Gn 26:33 it is related to the covenant between Isaac and Abimelech. According to Sarna (1989:389), the phrase “from Dan to Beersheba” was used frequently in the Old Testament (2 Sm 3:10; 17:11; 24:2, 15; 1 Ki 4:25; 1 Ch 21:2; 2 Ch 30:5). It shows that these cities were famous for practical purposes in this era. The author of Jubilees would know the history of the name. However he did not use Βηρσαβεε, but τὸ φρέαρ τοῦ ὄρκου, following the LXX. In the case of the LXX, it was more natural to use τὸ φρέαρ τοῦ ὄρκου than Βηρσαβεε in Genesis as τὸ φρέαρ τοῦ ὄρκου explains the origin of the name.

Another difference is the addition of the time to leave “on the first year, the second week in the forty-fourth Jubilee”, and the time to arrive as, “on the new moon of the first month of this week”. The same expression shows that the indication of the time is used frequently in the book of Jubilees (ex. Jub 3:15; 4:2, 10, 16, etc). The author used the Jubilee calendar, therefore this document was called “the book of Jubilees”. While he reconstruct the bible story, he added the Jubilee calendar on purpose. About the Jubilee calendar, Segal (2007:8-9) compared it with the solar calendar. The solar calendar is similar to the Jubilees calendar. According to Jub 6:32, one year is composed of 364 days. It can be divided per Sabbath to be 52 weeks. The divisions of this calendar are months, Sabbaths, feasts and jubilees.

Thirdly, the place where Jacob arrived is named in detail as “Luz on the mountains, that is, Bethel”. Jubilees added more detail to the title and description of Jacob’s moves, like, ‘on the new moon of the first month of this week, and he came to the place at evening and turned from the way to the west of the road that

night'. The author of the book of Jubilees adds the details to biblical events like the exact time and the place where events happened. In Jubilees, the new moon frequently appeared to indicate when an event happened. The author points out the time of biblical events at new moon in a month (Jub 1:14; 3:32; 5:22; 6:1; 7:2; 12:16; 13:8; 14:1; 16:1; 24:22; 27:19; 28:14; 31:1; 33:1; 44:1; 45:1). Adam and his wife went forth from the Garden of Eden on the new moon in the fourth month (Jub 3:32), and Noah and his family entered into the ark on the new moon of the second month. Abraham received the revelation about the Promised Land on the new moon of the seventh month (12:15). It is also on the new moon that Israel went to Egypt (45:1). According to the Jubilees calendar, the chief Jewish feasts and new moons were celebrated according to the following table (Hilgert 1963:47).

New moon, 1st month	Wed	New moon, 7th month	Wed
Passover (15/1)	Wed	Day of Atonement (10/7)	Fri
Wave-Sheaf (26/1)	Sun	Feast of Tabernacles (15/7)	Wed.
New moon, 2nd month	Fri	New moon, 8th month	Fri
New moon, 3rd month	Sun	New moon, 9th month	Sun
Pentecost (15/3)	Sun	New moon, 10th month	Wed
New moon, 4th month	Wed	New moon, 11th month	Fri
New moon, 5th month	Fri	New moon, 12th month	Sun
New moon, 6th month	Sun		

According to this table, Jacob arrived at Luz on a Wednesday. New moon has the meaning of the first of the month, and the starting of events. To Jacob, the flight from his brother is the starting point to obtain the promise of God as his ancestor. From this context, the author interpreted it as the new moon of the month.

Fourthly, there is no detailed description of his route in Genesis. In the book of Jubilees Jacob came to the mountain at Luz at eventide but he turned his way to

the west of the road. This addition about the route of Jacob shows that Jacob intended to go to Bethel on purpose. It seems that Bethel had a special meaning during the second temple period, because Levi's dream in Bethel is added in Jub 32:1. Even though there is no mention that Jacob gave a tithe to his son Levi according to his promise in Genesis at Bethel, it appeared in the *Testament of Levi*. In the case of the *Testament of Levi*, Levi saw the vision of heaven in Avel-Maul (T. Lev 2:7-10). The vision giving the reason why Jacob gave a tithe to Levi is from Jacob's other dream at Bethel according to T. Lev 9:3, as follows:

The book of Jubilees 32:1-2	The Testament of Levi 9:3-5
<p>And he abode that night at Bethel, and <u>Levi dreamed</u> that they had ordained and made him the priest of the Most High God, him and his sons for ever; and he awoke from his sleep and blessed the Lord.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> <u>And Jacob rose early in the morning</u>, on the fourteenth of this month, and <u>he gave a tithe of all that came with him</u>, both of men and cattle, both of gold and every vessel and garment, yea, he gave tithes of all.</p>	<p><sup>3</sup> And when we came to Bethel, <u>my father saw a vision</u> concerning me, that I should be their priest unto God.</p> <p><sup>4</sup> <u>And he rose up early in the morning</u>, and <u>paid tithes of all to the Lord through me</u>.</p>

Although there are different things about the tithe that Jacob gave to Levi between the *Book of Jubilees* and the *Testament of Levi*, it has the same focus on the place where the cultic event about the tithe was given namely at Bethel as Jacob promised it at Bethel. The priesthood of Levi was conferred on them during the Exodus according to the Old Testament (Num 18:1-32).

Schwartz (1985:63) comments that the author of the book of Jubilees edited the Bible freely with his own particular interests. He assumed that Bethel was regarded as a special sanctuary during the Second Temple period, so that Jacob



receives the hint of an “eternal sanctuary” at Bethel according to Jubilees (Schwartz 1985:71). He assumed that the date of Jubilees is in the time of the Second Temple. However the importance of Bethel as the temple of God instead of Jerusalem is questionable, because the Jerusalem temple was considered a sanctuary of God since King David. Nevertheless, it is certain that Bethel was the place of a sanctuary in both Jubilees and Genesis. However there is no mention in Genesis that Jacob gave tithes according to this promise at Bethel. Jubilees 32:2 says that Jacob gave tithes to his son Levi who was chosen to be the high priest. It is due to his different point of view. In the case of Genesis, the first mention about tithes is when Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, king of Salem (Gn 14:20). The tithes in the promise of Jacob in Bethel is the second. The fixed ordinance about tithes appeared after the Exodus in Lev 29:40. The reason why Jacob did not keep his promise about tithes in Genesis can be assumed from the opinion that the temple Jacob saw in Bethel was not an earthly, but a heavenly temple. It could be the reason why Jacob did not give tithes. The author of Jubilees tried to solve this problem without this understanding. He wrote that Jacob appointed Levi as high priest to live on the giving of tithes. In Genesis, the first one who received tithes was Melchizedek. He was considered to be the king of Jerusalem and also the priest whose priesthood was fulfilled by Jesus in the New Testament. From this concept, Abraham’s tithes is not to the earth, but to heaven. Jacob’s promise was made in view of the vision Jacob saw in Genesis 28 of the sanctuary of heaven at Bethel. This concept also appeared in Jubilees, as follows:

<sup>22</sup> And he showed him all that was written on the tablets, and said unto him: 'Do not build this place, and do not make it an eternal sanctuary, and do not dwell here; for this is not the place. Go to the house of Abraham thy father and dwell with Isaac thy father until the day of the

death of thy father. (JUB 32:22)

The author of Jubilees also admitted that the things that Jacob saw and hoped for at Bethel are not an earthly temple but a heavenly sanctuary. The concept of Bethel as the sanctuary of heaven appeared in both Genesis and Jubilees. The sanctuary of God is not earthly but heavenly in the interpretation of the author of Jubilees. Even though he interpreted the beginning of Levi as a cultic priest that should receive tithes from Jacob, Bethel's role as an earthly temple instead of Jerusalem was not emphasized. The confession of Jacob that Bethel is the house of God and the gate of heaven is also understood as a heavenly sanctuary, and can be understood as an eschatological interpretation.

#### 6.2.2.2 Genesis Rabba

This Midrash is a source of the understanding of Jacob's dream in Judaism, because it is the exegesis of the Old Testament by Rabbi's. According to Freedman ([1992] 1996:1818) the Midrash starts with a fixed canonical text. From the canonical text, it uses the original verse explicitly or alludes to it. It cites single words and phrases and interprets it directly. The Midrash is in the form of a conversation between scholars. The Midrash shows the knowledge of the Torah of the ancient Jewish community and of the Rabbi's. About Jacob's vision in Gn 28:12 there are various interpretations by several Rabbi's. Generally the Rabbi's interpret the vision of the angels ascending and descending in Gn 28:12 as a symbol. They matched the details in Jacob's dream to many other symbols in the rest of the Old Testament.

According to Rabbi Bar Kappara, the ladder in Jacob's dream can be understood symbolically as the stairway to the altar, and the angel as the High priest from

Ex 20:21 (*OKE*), Ex 20:24 in *MT* (Freedman & Simon 1939:625). The ladder set up to heaven was compared to the odour ascending from the altar. The ascending and descending of the angels was understood as the High priest's ascending and descending of the stairway. However there is no explanation of what the stairway means. There is no Old Testament reference in his interpretation because in the Old Testament there is no stairway that goes up to the altar, nor to the ark nor to the temple. There is mention about a stairway to the altar that was prohibited for the priests (Ex 20:26). This verse does not appear in the Targum Onkelos that was used by Rabbi Bar Kappara. It is clear that he used the Targum Onkelos, for the verses that he quoted do not appear in the MT Ex 20:21. Even though Rabbi Bar Kappara followed Targum Onkelos, Ex 20:26 proves that a priest in the Jerusalem temple did not use a stairway to ascend to the altar. In Ancient Eastern culture a ladder was used as a stairway in their temples. Therefore his interpretation surely comes from concepts mixed with other ancient cultures.

In the Midrash Rabba the Rabbis compared Jacob's vision to Sinai in Ex 19:17. He interpreted the ladder that reached to heaven as the fire that burned in the midst of heaven according to Dt 4:11. The angels of God refer to Moses that went up to God and down from mount Sinai in Ex 14:3, 14, and God was coming down upon Mt. Sinai and the Lord stood upon it in Gn 28:13 (Freedman & Simon 1939:625). It is also considered as a symbol of the angel that is ascending and descending on the ladder. Rabbis tried to solve the problem of the order of the angel's movement with the ascending first and the descending second, while the angel of God is an heavenly existence, and the starting point is not from the heaven but from the earth.

Shalmoni with the name of Resh Lakish, and Rabbi Joshua of Siknin, with Rabbi Levi's name, mentioned that Jacob saw a throne with three legs that God showed to Jacob. According to his interpretation, there are two angels ascending and two angels descending (Freedman & Simon 1939:625-626). He continues his interpretation that God said to Jacob, "you are the third". From this, these three legs means Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob is the third patriarch (Schwartz 2004:366). The patriarchs are the basis of God's throne or merkabah, or man's soul is the throne of glory (Goodenough & Neusner 2014:99).

R. Hiyya the Elder and R. Jannai's opinion is that the angels were ascending and descending not on the ladder, but on Jacob. They considered ascending on Jacob as exalting and leaping on him and descending on Jacob as degrading and maligning him. The angel is considered to be an existence who has feelings like preference and envy. Their opinion is related to the conception of an engraved feature of Jacob on high. Freedman noted about it as "This apparently refers to the angels who exalted him, though a different explanation is perhaps possible" (Freedman & Simon 1939:626). They continued their statements about the angel that ascends to see Jacob's features that was engraved on high and they descend below to compare it with the sleeping Jacob's face. On high Israel is exalted as a favour, but on earth it was debased in his disfavour. This is related to the explanation of the Jerusalem Targum. In the Jerusalem Targum 28:12 there is a detailed explaining about the angels ascending and descending:

And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder was fixed in the earth, and the summit of it reached to the height of heaven. And, behold, the angels who had accompanied him from the house of his father, ascended to make known to the angels on high, saying, Come, see Jakob the pious, whose likeness is in the throne of glory, and whom you have been desirous to see! And, behold, the holy angels from before the

Lord ascended and descended, and looked upon him. (Gn 28:12 *JTE*).

The angels accompanied Jacob from the house of Isaac and ascended to show Jacob's image which can be regarded as the face of Jacob. According to Schwartz (2004:366), most texts regard it as the face on the throne on high. Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezer said "This is a face like the face of the holy beast on the Throne of Glory". From this theory, the angels who escort Jacob from the house of his father ascended to heaven on the ladder to report to the other angels about Jacob, and the other angels who stayed in heaven descended to compare the face of Jacob with the face that was engraved on the throne of glory on high. R. Hiyya and R. Jannai quoted Isa 49:3, "You *are* My servant, O Israel, In whom I will be glorified". Therefore other angels descended to see Jacob and ascended taking turns. Concerning the angels on earth and the angels in heaven, they mention two kinds of angels: the angels who escort man with land, and the angels who escort man without land. The ascending angels are first and the descending angels are later. R. Levi with the name of R. Samuel b. Nahman shows an example with angels banished from their precincts. R. Tanhuma called it *Kelah*. According to R. Hama b. Hanina, they were banished because they boasted (Freedman & Simon 1939:627).

R. Johua b. Levi interpreted it with the Exile. He matched Jacob's story in Genesis 28 with Jeremiah and Lamentations as follows (Freedman & Simon 1939:627-628):

Jacob's fugitive journey	Exile
Jacob went out	Cast them out of My sight, and them go forth (Jr. 15:1)
And went toward Haran	Wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His

	Fierce (haron) in Lm 1:12
And he took of the stones of the place	The hallowed stones are poured out at the head of every street (Lm 4:1)
Jacob's dream	Nebuchadnezzar's dream
Ladder (sulam)	Nebuchadnezzar's image (semel)
Set up on the earth	He set it up in the plain of Dura (Dn 3:1)
And the top of it reached to heaven	Whose height was threescore cubits (Dn 3:1)
The angels of God	Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah
	Daniel
Ascending and descending on it	Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods (Dn 3:8)
	He went up and brought forth what it had swallowed from its mouth
And, behold, the Lord stood beside him	Ye servants of God Most high, come forth, and come hither (Dn 3:26)
	O Daniel, servant of the living God (Dn 6:21)

Another interpretation was comparing it with Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The Ladder is interpreted as an image with the same consonants (SLL) in Dn 2:31. The angels of God ascending and descending are the princes of the four empires that ascended in power and lost it in Dn 2:32-44. It was compared with Dn 2:44 "and in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which

shall never be destroyed” with that the Lord stood beside Him in Gn 28:13 (Freedman & Simon 1939:628-629).

In the Midrash there is a detailed description that was not mentioned in Genesis 28. For example, R. Judah mentioned twelve stones that Jacob took as his pillow, but R. Nehemiah pointed to three stones only. As Rabbis pointed out rightly, these interpretations are from the plural noun, stones, in Genesis 28:11 (Neusner 1985:112). Their interpretation was based on other verses of the Old Testament, and applied allegorically to the text. In the Rabbis’ interpretations there are many metaphors, like the altar, MT Sinai, or Exile that they matched with the vision of Jacob and the other metaphors, except R. Hiyya the Elder and R. Jannai’s interpretations. Their interpretation is similar to the Jerusalem Targum translation that they used as the main text. There are detail mystic narratives about Jacob’s image on high. It implies that there was an apocalyptic interpretation of Jacob’s vision.

#### 6.2.2.3 The Testament of Levi

The intention of Levi’s dream is to defend the vengeance on Hamor for his treatment of their sister Dinah and to insist on the judgement of his high priestly position. From its content, the date of the *Testament of Levi* is regarding to be between 109 and 107 BCE, because it can be applied to all the Maccabean priest-kings. The vengeance for Dinah can be regarded as their leadership to protect the purity of the Jews. At the same time, Levi was the ancestor of the priests (Charles 2004:289-290). Even though it has no direct quotation of Jacob’s vision of the open heaven, it seems that the author of the *Testament of Levi* kept the vision of Jacob in his mind, because of the similar structures between the

*Testament of Levi* and the vision of Jacob. The first similarity is the heavens that were opened and the angel of God that appeared to Levi and brought him to heaven in T. Lev 2:6. Levi saw the gate of heaven and the holy temple in 5:1. The second is that Levi went to his grandfather with his father and received Isaac's blessing (9:2), his father Jacob saw a vision about Levi's priesthood in Bethel (9:3), and Jacob paid tithes to God through Levi (9:4):

And after two days I and Judah went up with our father Jacob to Isaac our father's father. And my father's father blessed me according to all the words of the visions which I had seen. And he would not come with us to Bethel. And when we came to Bethel, my father saw a vision concerning me that I should be their priest unto God. And he rose up early in the morning, and paid tithes of all to the Lord through me (Charles 2004:309)

According to 9:2-3, Levi seems to follow his father's way on purpose to reproduce his father's work he received by the order of Genesis 28.

## **The Vision of Levi and the Vision of Jacob**

The vision of Levi is similar to Jacob's vision, but has more detail and a transformation. Even though Jacob only saw the angels ascending and descending between heaven and earth, Levi entered into the open heavens and heard a message from the angel of God. Levi entered from the first heaven to the third heaven, and heard about the seven heavens (T. Lev 2:7-10). In the *Testament of Levi*, there are detailed descriptions of the heavens. 3 Enoch also mentioned the seven heavens. Rabbi Ishmael entered the seventh palace. It is related to Merkaba mysticism. The vision of the chariot and the door of the seventh palace appeared in 3 Enoch (Charlesworth 1983:255). About the vision



of heaven, the detailed concept of heaven was developed in the intertestamental period.

There are the same similarities between Jacob's vision and Levi's vision, like heaven, angels, the gate of the heaven, and the house of God, and the same structure between them. It can be compared as follows:

Jacob's vision	Levi's vision
The ladder reached to the heaven (Gn 28:12)	The heaven opened (T. Lev 2:6)
Jacob saw the angels ascending and descending (Gn 28:12)	Levi entered heaven and heard the voice of the angel (T. Lev 2:6-10)
Jacob said this is the gate of heaven (Gn 28:17)	Levi saw the gate of heaven (T. Lev 5:1)
Jacob said this is the house of God (Gn 28:17)	Levi saw the holy temple, the throne of glory (T. Lev 5:1)

There is no mention of open heavens in Gn 28:12, but open heavens are implied by the ladder that reached to the heaven. In T. Lev, there is no conception about the angels ascending and descending. The angel of God just called Levi to the open heavens, and Levi entered from the first heaven into the second (T. Lev 2:7). The gate of heaven and the house of God is mentioned by Jacob's word after he awoke from the dream (Gn 28:17), and the gate of heaven and the holy temple was seen by Levi (T. Lev 5:1). However the structure of the vision and the order of the progress of the dream story is almost the same. The order of the progress of the dream is: asleep, appearance of the angels, the gate of heaven, and the presence of God (the house of God or the temple of God).

A dream was considered to be a revelation of God in the Old Testament tradition as can be seen in T. Lev. There is a spirit of understanding of the Lord in T. Lev 2:3. It is separated from the angel, because the angel appeared in v. 6 after the heavens were opened. It is difficult to define the spirit of understanding of the Lord whether it means a real spiritual existence or a literal expression about the thinking of the human, Levi. The first is related to other mystic literature, like 3 Enoch or the *Ladder of Jacob*. In 3 En 1:5, Metatron appeared to explain the revelation. Sariel was the interpreter of dreams on God's order in Ladjac 3:2. However there are some differences between them. The spirit of understanding of the Lord in T. Lev 2:3 is distinguished from the angel of God in T. Lev 2:6. It means that Levi fell asleep and dreamed after thinking about the corrupting of the race of the sons of men. Levi met the angel after his sleep and his dream. It can be considered to be a meditation on the future.

The role of the angel in these two visions differ from each other. While the angels showed in a performance to Jacob, the angel called Levi (2:6), showed him the heavens, and explained about the seven heavens. The angel's role in the T. Lev includes his work to open the gate of heaven (5:1). There is also the conception of ascension, but it is not of the angel, but of Levi. Its verbs differ not ascend (ἀνέβαινον), but enter (εἴσελθε).

The gate of heaven is not mentioned in Jacob's dream. The gate of the heaven is the response of Jacob after he saw the vision (Gn 28:17). However Levi saw the gate of heaven directly (T. Lev 5:1). The angel opened the gate of heaven to Levi. The expression about "the opened gate of heaven" is similar to "the heaven is open" in Jn 1:51. In T. Lev 18:6, the expression "the temple of glory" was used after the expression of "the heavens shall be opened". There is another dissimilar

expression, “he shall open the gates of paradise”. It means that the conception of the dwelling place of God was called heaven, the holy temple of heaven, and paradise. The gate has the conception of an entrance to enter through. Another conception is the demarcation of the two different places heaven and earth or the lower heaven and the higher heaven.

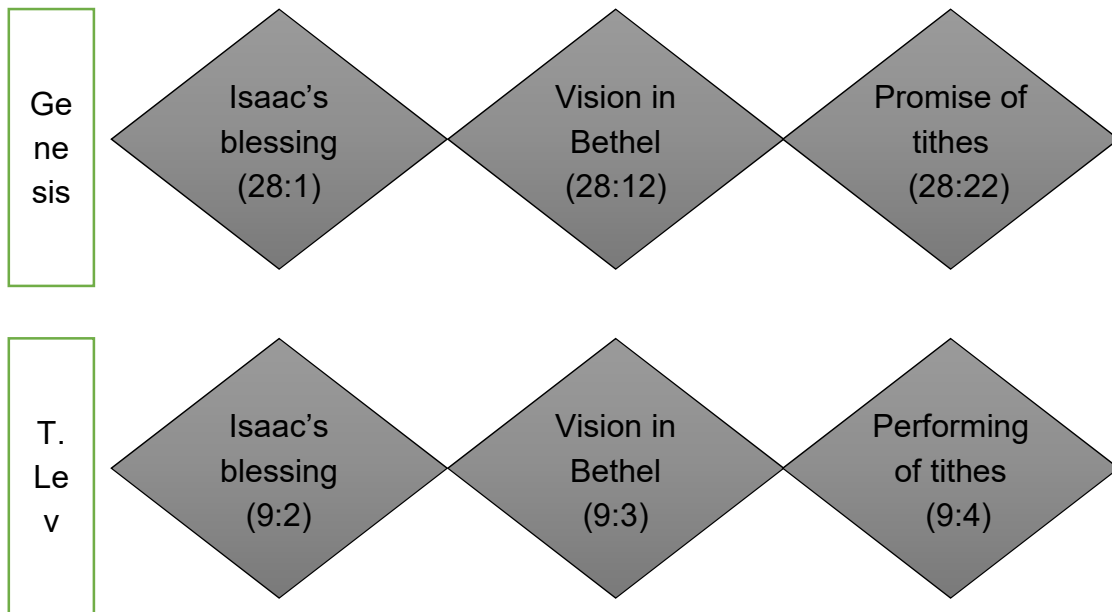
In the vision of Levi there are the holy temple and a throne of glory of the Most High, while the house of God is the response of Jacob in the Old Testament. The holy temple and a throne of glory of the Most High means the dwelling of God. The house of God has the same meaning as the dwelling of God. These are similar conceptions to express God’s presence. However the expression of T. Lev is more concrete than the confession of Jacob. As a result, it is certain that T. Lev refers to the vision of Jacob in Bethel, even though there are many differences to defend the priesthood of Levi. Especially the relationship of father and son between Jacob and Levi supports this conclusion. As the son of Jacob, Levi saw the same vision as his father Jacob to succeed Jacob as priest. Therefore the author of T. Lev reconstructs the vision of Jacob with his son, Levi.

### **Connection between Levi and Jacob’s visions**

There is another trace to prove the relationship between Jacob’s vision and Levi’s vision. According to Johnson (1992:108), Jacob’s vision mentioned in T. Lev 9:3 relates to the vision of Gn 28:12 or Genesis 35. From the context, it is not the exact vision of Gn 28:12, because the vision of T. Lev 9:1-6 was given to Jacob when he was with his third son. Levi met his grandfather Isaac, with his father, and received his grandfather’s blessing. Therefore the vision that Jacob saw in

Levi 9:3 happened when Jacob went to Hebron and stayed with Isaac in Gn 35:27.

However there is a similar structure between these two vision stories, as follows:



The travel of Jacob with Levi to Bethel in 9:3 is considered as the recurrence of the vision of Jacob in Gn 28:12. The blessing that Jacob received from his father in Gn 28:1-4, is concerned with a multitude of sons and the sojournings. In the case of the *Testament of Levi*, Isaac blessed Levi according to his visions about the seven heavens. The one who received blessing from Isaac in Genesis 28 was changed from Jacob to Levi. The role of Levi is the substitution of Jacob as the patriarch and priest. It is according to the principle that Jacob became the patriarch of Israel even though he was not the first born. The second reason of Levi's patriarchship is the fact that Isaac blessed Levi instead of Jacob. In the case of the vision at Bethel, the one who received the vision in Bethel is not Levi but Jacob. Jacob saw the vision concerning Levi's priesthood. Lastly, while the tithes were promised by Jacob in Gn 28:22, T. Lev 9:4 tells about the performance of the promise by Jacob to God. The performing of tithes in 9:4 is connoted with

the vision of Jacob in Gn 28:12 and is related to the priestly office. The giving of tithes is not directly mentioned in the *Testament of Levi*, but it is contained in the structure. From the performing of tithes by Jacob, the giving of tithes by all Israelites is emphasised, because he was representative of all Israel. As the result, the *Testament of Levi* makes it clear that the Jews of the intertestamental period understood Jacob's vision as composed from the vision of Jacob in Gn 28:12. In the view of the Jews Jacob saw the kingdom of God above the ladder with the concept of the temple of heaven, and the throne of heaven. These concepts are representatives of the celestial things.

#### 6.2.2.4 The Testament of Jacob

The *Testament of Jacob* was probably written by a Christian author, because the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit were mentioned in 1:1. It means that this document can indicate the understanding of Jacob's vision in early Christian thought. The form of this document is with a narrator who explains the story before Jacob's death. According to his narration, God sent the archangel Michael to Jacob at his imminent demise. In the narration of the angel, an angel who guarded him through his life was mentioned in T. Jac 2:5. The reference to the ladder of Jacob is mentioned in the *Testament of Jacob* in vv. 15-17, as follows:

You saw the angel of God - may he be exalted! - and you saw the ladder standing firm on the ground with its top in the heavens. Then you beheld the Lord sitting at its top with a power which no one could describe. You spoke out and said, 'This is the house of God and this is the gate of heaven (Charlesworth 1985:915).

There is no mention about the ascending and descending angels. The focus is on God who is sitting at the top of the ladder. The author's intention is not to focus

on the vision but on the fact that Jacob saw God face to face. The content of the Testament of Jacob is composed with reminiscences of Jacob's life.

#### 6.2.2.5 The Ladder of Jacob

The pseudepigraphon, the *Ladder of Jacob*, is directly related to Jacob's vision in Gn 28:12. It was based on the bible story and reconstructed with the author's own interpretation. However, there is no extant original text. According to Charlesworth (1985:401), it was edited by the Slavic editors with many changes in the Old Testament texts that was used in the text. There are two kinds of versions of the *Ladder of the Palaia* text. It is important that both versions used the Septuagint version of Gn 28:13. Greek was regarded to be the original language of the *Ladder of Jacob* (Charlesworth 1985:403; Kugel 1995:209). According to Kugel (1995:210), the various rabbinic texts and basic understanding of Jacob's dream were mixed. From his opinion, the effect of the Judaic eschatological background of "the Ladder of Jacob" will be examined. This study used the English text of "the Ladder of Jacob" in Charlesworth's "The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha" (1985) to compare it with Genesis 28. It is composed of seven chapters:

1<sup>st</sup> Chapter – Jacob's dream and conversation with God about the blessing

2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter – Jacob's prayer to God and asking to understand the dream

3<sup>rd</sup> Chapter – God sends the archangel Sariel to explain the vision

4<sup>th</sup> Chapter – Sariel changed Jacob's name to Israel

5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> Chapter – Sariel's eschatological interpretations

The vision of Jacob was retold in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter and it was interpreted by the archangel, Sariel, according to God's order in Chapters 5-7.

In LadJac 1:1, the Jacob story about the vision in Bethel started with “then”:

Jacob then went to Laban his uncle. He found a place and, laying his head on a stone, he slept there, for the sun had gone down, He had a dream (Charlesworth 1985:407).

There are two possibilities. The first is that this text is a part of another text. The previous text would be Jacob’s cheating of Esau. Another possibility is that the author intended this text to be considered to be a continuation of Jacob’s story. “Then” connected it with the Genesis story (Gn 28:10). The detail of names like Beersheba, and Haran was omitted.

The vision that Jacob saw in the dream is almost the same. However, the detailed explanation of the ladder was written between the placing of the ladder from earth to heaven in LadJac 1:3 and the fact that the angels are ascending and descending in v. 7:

4 And the top of the ladder was the face as of a man, carved out of fire. 5 There were twelve steps leading to the top of the ladder, and on each step to the top there were two human faces, on the right and on the left, twenty-four faces including their chest. 6 And the face in the middle was higher than all that I saw, the one of fire, including the shoulders and arms, exceedingly terrifying, more than those twenty-four faces (Charlesworth 1985:407).

There is also the interpretation of the author about the place where God stands. While the place of God is ambiguous in Gn 28:13, it is above the highest face in LadJac 1:8. In the case of Gn 28:13, the word עָלָיו can be translated to “above it” and “besides him”. It can be possible that God stands with Jacob, and the angels of God are ascending and descending on the ladder. In LadJac it is clear where God stands.

Another difference is God's introduction by himself. In Genesis 28, God said, "I am the Lord", and said a blessing on Jacob. However "I am the Lord" comes after He has called Jacob's name twice. While God blesses Jacob with land and descendants in LadJac 1:14, the phrase, "in the last times the years of completion shall be blessed" was added in LadJac 1:11. In addition, the phrase, "My blessing with which I have blessed you shall flow from you unto the last generation" is also added. These two phrases can be interpreted as the emphasis on the perseverance of God's blessing until the end. However it can also be seen as an eschatological expression, because the interpretation of the dream by the archangel, Sariel, is also eschatological. Johnson (1992:134) pointed out that these verses have an eschatological focus. It means that the author interpreted Genesis 28 with an eschatological focus.

The response of Jacob in Genesis 28 has a short record, however the song of Jacob after the confession about the house of God and the gate of heaven appeared in the *Ladder of Jacob 2* with a detailed description of heaven above the Ladder. LadJac 2:15 used Isa 6:2 to explain the seraphim:

Before the face of your glory the six-winged seraphim are afraid, and they cover their feet and faces with their wings while flying with their other (wings), and they sing unceasingly a hymn (Charlesworth 1985:408)

From the song in LadJac 2:7 the scene of heaven above the ladder is that there are many angels around God who sit on fiery thrones of glory. It is similar to R. Hiyya the Elder and R. Jannai's opinion in Genesis Rabba. The concept of a throne of glory is regarded to be the basic celestial concept in the intertestamental period. It appeared in Merkaba mysticism. It is based on Ezk 1:26. There is the likeness of a man on a throne.



The interpretation about Jacob's dream was presented by the archangel. It also uses the order of God in Chapter 3. It seems to give confidence to the reader about the author's interpretation. The author tried to follow the order of Genesis by writing about the name change of Jacob. It matches Genesis as Jacob received the interpretation by the angel, when he met the angel at the Jabbok (cf. Gn 32:22).

The interpretation of the dream is about the number symbolism of the ladder. According to the *Ladder of Jacob*, the ladder has 12 steps. There are two human faces on each step. The interpretation of the angel imposed meaning to each step and face. The 12 steps mean 12 age periods, and the 24 faces are the kings of the nations. Endo (2002:143) regarded the ladder as this age, and the twelve steps as the periods of the age, and the twenty four faces as the kings of the godless nations. Otherwise, there are four ascents of this age that will destroy the descendants of Jacob. It is similar to the four kings in Daniel 7. According to Kugel (1995:215), the theme is similar to the four empires that were widespread in the late Second Temple period. He interprets the four ascents as the four angels ascending and descending. He considered it to be a symbol where the ascend is positive and the descend negative. However it is difficult to see the four ascents as the four angels, because there is no mention about the 4 angels in the *Ladder of Jacob*. It is better to interpret it as the times of moving up.

The order of the angels' motion is changed as "descending and ascending" in LadJac 7:1-2. It means that the author changed the order on purpose. Charlesworth (1985:404) regarded Chapter 7 of LadJac as an addition by a later Christian author. Its record is regarded to be eschatological:

And as for the angels you saw descending and ascending the ladder,

in the last years there will be a man from the Most High, and he will desire to join the upper (things) with the lower (LadJac 7:1-2)

A man from the Most high indicates the Christ here. From the phrase “in the last years” the eschatological interpretation of Jacob’s ladder is expressed as the union of heaven and earth. The earth is glorified from its receiving heavenly glory (LadJac 7:10).

### Conclusion

From the three texts above about the vision of Jacob, it can be concluded that the interpretations of Gn 28:12 by the Rabbis in the intertestamental period have the following characters. Firstly it is allegorical interpretation. Secondly it is adopted to other biblical backgrounds. And lastly it had a celestial picture of the vision of Jacob. In the case of the first and second, it is close to the Rabbinical interpretation method of the Old Testament. *Jubilees* and *Genesis Rabba* have different interpretations of Jacob’s vision. The *Testment of Jacob* and the *Ladder of Jacob* show the intention of the authors. They interpreted Jacob’s vision of the celestial kingdom through the ladder in his dream. The important matter is not the covenant between God and Jacob after his vision of the ladder, but the kingdom of God that Jacob saw above the ladder. The kingdom of God above the ladder is where the angels are working for God, and the house of God where God is dwelling. The author used these concepts and applied it to his context.

## 6.2.3 The allusions to Gn 28:12 in Judaism

### 6.2.3.1 Wisdom of Solomon

Wisdom of Solomon is an apocryphon. According to Wis 1:6, Wisdom was seen as a spirit that loves humans (φιλόανθρωπον πνεῦμα σοφία). It implies that Wisdom is a divine personality. In 10:1-2, Wisdom received power to rule over all God's creatures. Wisdom indicates a divine existence that works for God on earth as his agent. Wisdom 10 is consistent with the Genesis stories. The creation of the earth was mentioned in verses 1-2. Adam was depicted as the first formed man and father of the world, and the one who gave him the Wisdom to rule over all creatures is Wisdom. Verse 3 referred to the first murderer, Cain, as an unrighteous man. The Genesis story continued to the great flood in Noah's time (v. 4), to Abraham's son in v. 5, and to Lot in vv. 6-7. Wisdom has an important role in every Genesis story. In 10:10-12 Jacob's story is mentioned. Jacob and Esau is mentioned in v. 10. It was also Wisdom who assisted Jacob to flee from his brother's anger, and showed him the kingdom of God:

αὕτη φυγάδα ὀργῆς ἀδελφοῦ δίκαιον ὠδήγησεν ἐν τρίβοις εὐθείαις  
ἔδειξεν αὐτῷ βασιλείαν θεοῦ καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ γνῶσιν ἁγίων  
εὐπόρησεν αὐτὸν ἐν μόχθοις καὶ ἐπλήθυνεν τοὺς πόνους αὐτοῦ  
(Wis 10:10 LXX)

In the text, there is no mention of angels. The one who shows the kingdom of God to Jacob is also Wisdom. While Jacob saw angels ascending and descending between earth and heaven in Genesis, in his vision Wisdom showed the kingdom of God to Jacob. From this comparison, it is clear that the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* interpreted what Jacob saw above the open heaven to be the kingdom of heaven. Johnson (1992:79) mentioned that the author

interpreted what Jacob saw in Gn 28:12 as the kingdom of God. He adds the interpretation about the knowledge of holy things (Wis 10:10) to the promises of God to Jacob (Gn 28:13-15). The result of the comparison between Wis 10:10 and Gn 28:12 is that the structure of the vision is the same:

	The one who show the vision	The thing that was shown	The message that was given to Jacob
Gn 28:12	God	The ladder, and the angels ascending and descending	the promises to Jacob
Wis 10:10	Wisdom	The kingdom of God	Knowledge of holy things

The structure contains the subject of showing, the object of showing, and the personal conversation between them. From the change from God to Wisdom as the subject of the showing in Wis 10:10, it can be inferred that the author of Wisdom changed it intentionally in order to highlight Wisdom as the subject of all things including creation as the agent of God or on equal footing with God. However, it is difficult to consider Wisdom as on equal footing with God, because of the monotheism of Jewish theology, even though the expression about Wisdom stands in the position of God or on an equal position according to Wisdom. From this comparison, two other motifs can also be considered to be the same or on an equal position. Namely the ladder in Gn and the kingdom of God in Wisdom. From this comparison, it is certain that Gn 28:12 is referred to in Wisdom. The first question from this allusion is which method the author of Wisdom used? It is not a direct quotation. The author changed the text in order to reconstruct Genesis by changing the subject from God to Wisdom. It means that the author took the idea and the story from the Genesis texts, adopted it to the Wisdom story, and reconstructed it. The second question is why the author

emphasized the kingdom of God instead of the angels ascending and descending. The reason is that in Wisdom the author is mentioned as a celestial being.

#### 6.2.3.2 Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers

According to Johnson (1992:136), the Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers can be considered to be earlier Jewish interpretations of the Jacob narrative, even though it is in the Apostolic Constitutions.

The reference about Jacob's dream appeared in He1Synpra 2:19-20, as follows,

19. And having placed our father Jacob in Mesopotamia, having shown (him) the Christ, through him you spoke, saying, 20 Look! I am with you and I will increase you and multiply you exceedingly. (Charlesworth 1985:678)

The Christian author changed the vision of the ladder and the angels ascending and descending in Jacob's dream in Genesis to the Christ, like in Jn 1:51. However it is not clear whether the author mentioned Christ instead of the ladder or instead of God who promised his blessing to Jacob, because the statement about the vision is too short. It is difficult to see whether the author kept his mind on the ladder in Genesis 28 as the symbol of Christ, like in Jn 1:51. Firstly because the author did not mention the ladder, even though it is an important symbol. The second reason is that the author neither mentioned the angels. The focus of the author was not on the vision, but on the promise of God. Considered with v. 19ff, "through him you spoke", it is more appropriate that the Christ is not meant in the vision, but God who talked to Jacob. From the trinitarian view, the theophany in the Old Testament can be understood as from the Son. According to Goodenough ([1935] 1969:317-318), Christians changed "the Lord" in Genesis 28 to "the Christ". However his opinion has the problem with "through him you

spoke” HelSynpra 2:19ff, because it means that the Christ has the role of the spokesperson of God’s message. In the trinitarian view, the position of God was explained sufficiently. In Gn 28:13, God was standing on the top of the ladder and nearby Jacob at the same time. In the Trinitarian view, God stood at the top of the ladder and received the report from the angels ascending and descending and the Christ was nearby Jacob to deliver the message of God. In this view, the role of Christ in Jacob’s vision is that the ladder is the connection between heaven and earth, and the role of the angels in Jacob’s vision is interpreted as assistants to the delivery of the Word of God through Christ.

The blessing to Jacob in HelSynpra 2:19 combines Gn 28:15 and Gn 48:4. The first phrase, “Look! I am with you” is from Gn 28:15, and “ I will increase you and multiply you exceedingly” is from Gn 48:4. However v. 19ff is found in Gn 28:3 also. It means that the author used the Old Testament tradition freely with his trinitarian view. This allusion shows the christian understanding about Jacob’s vision. From the combination of Gn 28:15, Gn 48:4, and Gn 28:12, they presented the promise towards the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However the presense of the Christ gave the eschatological hope, because the Christ was the eschatological hope that will come again at the end of the world.

In the intertestamental period there were many documents from Rabbi’s that were not included in the Old Testament Canon. It is not a concern of this dissertation whether these documents could be the bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament. It concentrated on the idea about Jacob’s vision in Gn 28:12 among the people who lived in that period. Their ideas can differ from the idea of the New Testament or not. However it is clear that the idea of the people and the priests in the New Testament time was different from the idea of Jesus. They had

their own tradition and their method of interpretation of the Old Testament. The ladder of Jacob in Genesis was an interesting subject to them and they used these motifs freely.

In the case of the *Testament of Levi*, the author copied Jacob's story and his dream and applied it to Levi, the son of Jacob. The dream of Levi is different from Jacob's dream but has the same authority as Jacob's dream in order to support the priesthood to Levi. An eschatological apocalypse was implied that reflected the thought of the intertestamental period. In the *Wisdom of Solomon*, Genesis was reconstructed by the view of the author of the *Wisdom*. The subject in their view of history is Wisdom. The dream was shown by Wisdom who is a celestial existence. It is the kingdom of heaven that Jacob saw through the open heaven. Even though there is no ladder and angels ascending and descending in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, it is certain that the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* interpreted them as the kingdom of God. It means that the ladder and the angels are instruments of the vision of the kingdom of God in the message to man on earth. The text of the *Hellenistic Synagogal Prayer* shows the understanding of the early christians about Jacob's vision. It was used in the christian liturgy that followed the liturgy of the synagogue (Oesterley 1925:127). However christians interpreted Jacob's dream christologically. From the three allusions to Gn 28:12 in the texts around the New Testament period, it is certain that the people had an understanding of Jacob's vision as an apocalypse from heaven.

## **Conclusion**

From the analysis of v. 51, it can be concluded that Jesus used three concepts, the open heaven, the angels of God ascending and descending, and the Son of Man from Ezk 1:1, Gn 28:12, and Dn 7:13. There is another hint for the analysis

of this text in the verb, ὄψεσθε. From the future tense of this verb, it is established that the vision that they will see from Jesus' promise is an event in the future. However the problem is what the future will be. It can indicate the incarnation of Jesus together with the crucifixion and his resurrection as the fullness of that promise. From the verb, ὄψεσθε, it is reasonable, because the people around Jesus and Nathanael had to be alive to see the fulfillment of the promise. However the promise of the future in v. 51 can be extended from the hypothesis that the 2nd person plural, "you" in this verb can be interpreted as unspecified persons. Therefore it can be extended to the readers of John's gospel.

It is certain that the three concepts that were used in v. 51 were regarded as eschatological images from the Old Testament tradition. In apocalyptic literature it was considered as eschatological images. The open heaven in Ezk 1:1 is the starting point of the vision of Ezekiel. The image of an open heaven demonstrates the character of the vision of Ezekiel as a celestial vision. The appearance of the angels of God ascending and descending as celestial beings accords with the concept of the open heaven. Firstly the special order as ascending and descending of the angels confirmed that it is an allusion to Gn 28:12. Secondly it implies that it is a special eschatological promise that was carried by the Old Testament and the apocalyptic thought in the minds of the people. The eschatological character of this promise is confirmed by the addition of the Son of Man that was a concept of an eschatological image.



## Chapter 7 The eschatological interpretation of Jn 1:51 in the New Testament

There is no direct quotation of Gn 28:13 of Jacob's vision in the New Testament. However the motifs in Jacob's vision and other motifs in Jn 1:51 like the open heaven, the angel(s) descending or ascending, and the Son of Man, appear many times in the New Testament. It is not certain that these motifs come from Gn 28:12 or not, because these three themes are used many times in the literature of the intertestamental period, and even in the Old Testament. It is apparent that these three motifs are also used eschatologically in the New Testament, not only in John's gospel, because of their eschatological character and eschatological usage by the Jews. They were also recognized as eschatological images in Old Testament traditions. There are many traces that other authors of the New Testament used them eschatologically.

In this chapter, firstly the motif of the open heaven will be dealt with. The exact expression, the "heaven opened" was used at Jesus' baptism, at Stephen's vision, and at Peter's vision. The first is used before the promise of Jesus in Jn 1:51, and the others are in Acts 7:56, and 10:11 after Jesus' ascension. John also shortened it and it is not exactly the "heaven opened", Mark and Luke record it in detail, and add the voice from heaven after baptism (Mk 3:16; Lk 3:21). In Stephen's vision, he saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (Ac 7:56). Heaven opened and Stephen saw God's dwelling place through the door of heaven. Compared with these two, Peter's vision is not concerned with this theme. However Peter saw an open heaven and something came down from there (Ac 10:11). It can support that the door of heaven was understood as the

portal by the people in the rest of the New Testament also. The usage of the motif of the open heaven in the rest of the New Testament confirms that John's gospel is having the same background of an open heaven.

Secondly the motif of the angels ascending and descending will be dealt with together with the Son of Man, because the Son of Man is a broad theme in New Testament christology. Therefore the ascension and descension of the Son of Man will be focused on together with the angels. The descension of the Son of Man mentioned in the New Testament refers to his second coming at the end of the days. In the New Testament the ascending and descending angels are concerned with the witness to the Son of Man.

Lastly the adoption of Jn 1:51 in Revelation will be dealt with. If Jn 1:51 is interpreted as an eschatological promise for the future, the mention about the angels, who will descend and ascend to execute the judgement of the Son of Man on the world, is close to the promise in Jn 1:51. Heaven opens twice in Rv 4:1, and 19:11. There is mention of a door of heaven in 4:1, as Jacob said of Bethel. The descending of the angels of God appeared four times in Revelation (10:1; 14:17; 18:1; 20:1), but there are many actions by angels on God's order in Revelation. The other ascension and descension in Revelation refers to people that will ascend when they heard a loud voice from heaven (11:12), and the descending of the holy city, the New Jerusalem (21:2, 10).

## 7.1 Opening Heaven in the New Testament (Mt 3:16; Lk 3:21; Ac 7:56; 10:11)

Besides John's gospel and Revelation, the open heaven or the gate of heaven was used four times in the New Testament (Mt 3:16; Lk 3:21; Ac 7:56; 10:11). Matthew 3:16 and Lk 3:21 are parallel with Jn 1:32. The first is when Jesus was baptised, and the second at the martyrdom of Stephen. The last is the vision of Peter in Acts. Before Stephen died by the stoning of the people, he saw heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. In his vision, the concept of heaven is close to heaven in Jn 1:51 and Gn 28:12. It is important for the understanding of heaven in the early church.

### 7.1.1 When Jesus was baptized (Mt 3:16; Lk 3:21)

While John reminisced in Jn 1:31 about the baptism of Jesus, Matthew and Luke recorded the event in detail. In Mt 3:16 heaven opened when Jesus had been baptized, and came up from the water. In Lk 3:21, it was while Jesus prayed after his baptism. Heaven opened to prove that the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes from heaven, the dwelling place of God. Chouinard (1997:74) mentioned that the open heaven was commonly used as the sign of a divine revelation to the people. He regarded the open heaven in Mt 3:16 as a revelation to prove Jesus' sonship of God in view of his messianic ministry. The voice from heaven about the beloved Son of God confirms that Jesus is not from the earth but from heaven. The voice from heaven was received as a revelation of God. The people of the intertestamental period regarded it as a divine communication for the recovery of Israel, as Blomberg pointed out:

The heavenly voice is often linked with the Hebrew idea of the *bath qol* (“daughter of the voice”), the way in which Jews in intertestamental times believed God spoke with them after the cessation of prophecy. More likely the voice is a sign that divine communication with Israel is resuming (Blomberg 1992:82).

When the people of Israel were at mount Sinai, God communicated with Moses with a voice (Ex 19:19), and Moses pointed out to the people of Israel that they heard the voice of God from heaven to discipline them (Dt 4:36). To king Nebuchadnezzar, the voice from heaven came to announce his punishment (Dn 4:31). In Matthew the voice from the cloud was heard by Peter, James, and John at Jesus’ transfiguration (Mt 17:5). Keener (1999:132) pointed out that the open heaven was applied in the Old Testament to the future deliverance in Is 64:1 and Ezk 1:1. It means that the voice from heaven and an open heaven can be regarded as eschatological motifs.

Bovon and Koester (2002:128) expanded the baptism of Jesus to the Pentecost account in Ac 2:17 with eschatological significance. In Acts 2:2 there is the sound from heaven like the wind to announce that the Holy Spirit is coming down. It can be compared with the Holy Spirit coming down on Jesus like a dove in Lk 3:21. After Peter received the Holy Spirit, he explained the account that happened to them with the quotation from the prophet Joel in Acts 2:17. Even though there is no phrase “at the last day” in Jl 2:28, Peter inserts it to his preaching in Ac 2:17. Steyn (1995:69) indicated that it is “the eschatological (re-)interpretation of the quotation from Jl 2:28-32”. He mentioned three possibilities to interpret this insert, the one is that Luke tried to show an eschatological expectation, another possibility is that Luke used an “eschatological introduction”, and the last is that μετὰ ταῦτα in Jl 2:28 is a synonym of ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις in Ac 2:17 itself (Steyn 1995:87-88). It is difficult to ignore the eschatological expectation in this

insertion by Luke. In Ac 2:3, the Holy Spirit comes down on the disciples, while the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus in Lk 3:22. These two descensions relate to each other as an eschatological event, both with the expression about the open heaven.

### 7.1.2 Stephen's vision (Ac 7:56)

In Ac 7:56 Stephen saw the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God, before he died as a martyr. It can be interpreted as an eschatological vision to Stephen, because he saw this vision about his personal eschatology. Firstly, the base of this vision is the ascension of the Son of Man. After the Son of Man ascended to heaven, he sits at the right hand of God (Lk 22:69). Talbert (2003:106) regards Stephen's martyrdom as the "evangelistic result" of Lk 21:12-19, in the line of Luke-Acts. The comparison between Stephen and Jesus was done by Franzmann (2009:369), as follows;

Jesus	Stephen
In the power of the Spirit to Galilee (Lk 4:14)	A man full of faith and the Holy Spirit (Ac 6:5)
Blasphemy and false witnesses (Lk 22:66-68)	Blasphemy and false witnesses (Ac 6:11)
Into the high priest's house. (Lk 22:54)	To the council (Ac 6:12)
The Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God (Lk 22:69)	He sees the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (Ac 7:55, 56)

Blasphemy as the charge against Jesus is not mentioned exactly in Lk 22:66-68, while Mt 26:65 and Mk 14:64 mentioned it explicitly. It confirms that the charge of the accusation of Jesus is blasphemy. From this similarity with the accusation against Stephen in Ac 6:11, it can be regarded as that Acts is the extension of Luke's gospel.

The two expressions about the Son of Man in heaven differ from each other. In Luke's text the Son of Man sits at the right hand of God, while the Son of Man is standing on the right hand of God in Acts. About this difference between sitting and standing, Polhill (1992:207) suggests two possibilities from two scholars; The one is that this difference is only a variation of expression (Sabbe 1979). The other is that Jesus stands to welcome the martyr Stephen (Haenchen 1971). However he suggests that Ac 7:56 is a quotation from Dn 7:13-14, where the Son of Man stands before the Ancient of Days (Polhill 1992:208). He continued his statement that Luke depicted the Son of Man as the eschatological Judge of Dn 7:13-14. To support this opinion, there is another expression that is not present in Jesus' word in Lk 22:69. That is the expression, "the heavens opened" in Ac 7:56. The Son of Man is twice mentioned in 7:55 and 7:56. The vision is seen by Stephen only and then related by Stephen. It means that the vision was proclaimed by Stephen to the people. In this context, the description about the open heaven is and eschatological proclamation.

### **7.1.3 The vision of Peter (Ac 10:11)**

The open heaven is mentioned in Ac 10:11. In a dream Peter saw a great sheet from heaven. This is the instruction that was given to Peter about the gospel to the gentiles. Jews despised the gentiles, but God gives the gospel to all nations. Therefore the vision is a metaphor about the gentile, Cornelius. Barrett (2004:506)

sees it as eschatological, because the opened heaven is “a standard feature of apocalyptic and other visions”. However the open heaven has other functions besides its eschatological meaning. It is the portal or entrance to heaven or to come down from heaven. In the case of entrance, ascension is applied, because heaven is in the above, and the exit is descending from it. In the case of Peter’s vision the open heaven was used by God as the portal to move something from heaven to earth to give guidance to Peter.

#### **7.1.4 Conclusion**

The fact that heaven opened was regarded as an apocalyptic expression and an eschatological event in both the Old Testament and intertestamental literature. It continued in the New Testament tradition. The other gospels have the same expression as Jn 1:51 to present the revelation of God and an eschatological event. In Mt 3:16 and Lk 3:21 the baptism of Jesus has a realized eschatological meaning, because eschatology started at the Son of Man’s first coming. Stephen saw the vision of an open heaven where the Son of Man is standing at the right hand of God in Ac 7:55 as Jesus mentioned to the Jews in Lk 22:69. This vision is individual, because it was only seen by Stephen. The eschatological motifs like the open heaven was uttered by his mouth. In the third reference to the open heaven Peter saw the vision of unpure objects coming from the open heaven. These three usages of the open heaven in the New Testament indicate that the eschatology starts with an open heaven and leads to an open heaven.

## 7.2 The angel(s) ascending to heaven or descending from heaven (Mt 28:2; Lk 2:15; 22:43; 2 Cor 12:2; Gl 1:8)

The ascending angels appear in Lk 2:15 and descending angel(s) is mentioned in Mt 28:2, Lk 22:43 and Gl 1:8. The concept of ascending and descending is related to the open heaven, because the open heaven is used as a window to see heaven as the dwelling place of God and the Son of Man, as well as the portal of entrance to heaven and exit to earth. The second role of the open heaven was used for the angel(s) ascending and descending on the Son of Man in Jn 1:51, even though there is no direct mention of the open heaven that was used by the angels. The role of the angel(s) of God who descend from heaven, mentioned in the New Testament is to witness to and strengthen the Son of Man and they disappear from sight after their commission (Mt 28:2; Lk 22:43). The angels in Lk 2:15 ascended to heaven, after they completed their work, and the angel in Mt 28:2 and Lk 22:43 descended from heaven to execute the order of God. The circle of the angels' way is similar to the description of the angels' moving in Jn 1:51.

In Gl 1:8, Paul used a rhetorical question, "even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (*NKJ*). It does not mean that the angel(s) will come down from heaven to teach the gospel to the people. The main point is that the one who preached another gospel will be accursed. However it has the possibility that an angel can preach the gospel. For example, the angels who appeared to the shepherds with the message about the birth of Jesus (Lk 2:8) did tell the good news. Paul



emphasized that the gospel that he preached to the people is the absolute truth. However it will not be dealt with in this section.

Even though it is not the angel, but a person that ascended to heaven in 2 Cor 12:2, it shows the possibility of the ascension of a person in the New Testament. In the Old Testament tradition, there are two persons (Enoch and Elijah) who ascended into heaven without seeing death (Hb 11:5). However the ascension of Enoch and Elijah in the Old Testament tradition is different from the person who ascended to the third heaven, because Enoch and Elijah did not return to the earth, while the one who ascended into heaven in 2 Cor 12:2 did have the experience of being temporally caught up to paradise.

### **7.2.1 The ascending of the angel(s) of God (Lk 2:15)**

What is to happen to the people is informed by the angels in the birth narrative of Luke's gospel. The angels informed the shepherds of the birth of Jesus. After they delivered the good news about the birth of the Christ, they returned to heaven. According to Nolland (2002:109), there are other expressions of the ascension of the angels:

The departure of an angelic figure is mentioned also at Lk 1:38 in similar language. The messenger and the chorus together are the ἄγγελοι, "angels." The heavenly destination corresponds to the heavenly origin specified in v 13.

Even though there are many references about the appearances and departures of the angel(s) in the New Testament, the direct mention about their departure is only in Lk 1:38, Lk 2:15, Ac 10:7 and 12:10. The verbs that were used are ἀπῆλθον (Lk 2:15), ἀπῆλθεν (Lk 1:38; Ac 10:7) that comes from ἀπέρχομαι, and ἀπέστη (Ac 12:10) that comes from ἀφίστημι. In Lk 1:38 the angel comes to Mary

to deliver the message about Jesus' birth by her. After the response of Mary, the angel departed from her. While Peter saw the vision in his dream, Cornelius met with the angel directly. The angel spoke to him about the visit of Peter and departed from him in Ac 10:7. The angel completes the prison break for Peter, led him to the street, and departed from him. These words are not the same as ascending. However it is sure that the exact mention to heaven is only in Lk 2:15. Even though different expressions were used, the angel's heavenly origin indicates that the angels returned to heaven after they completed their mission.

### **7.2.2 The descending of the angel(s) of God (Mt 28:2; Lk 22:43; Gl 1:8)**

Verses about the descension of the angel of God without mentioning of the Son of Man are Mt 28:2, Lk 22:43 and Gl 1:8. After Jesus' resurrection the angel of God descended from heaven and opened the tomb in Mt 28:2. Even though there is no mention about the open heaven, it can be regarded to have happened. The aim of the angel's descension from heaven is to open the gate of the tomb for the Son of Man and to glorify him as the resurrected Christ.

An angel came from heaven to strengthen Jesus who was praying at the Mount of Olives in Lk 22:43. The role of the angel is to assist the Son of Man to strengthen his prayer. The angels' role to assist him can be seen as the ascending and descending on the Son of Man during his life of Jn 1:51. In Mk 1:13 and its parallel, Mt 4:11, there are the angels who served Jesus after the temptations of the devil. The word that was used in these two kinds of assistences are *διηκόνουν* (Mk 1:13, Mt 4:11), *ἐνισχύων* (Lk 22:43). Guelich (2002:39) mentioned Elijah's story as a similar reference with the serving by the angels to Jesus. Elijah was strengthened by the food and drink from the angel and walked

40 days and 40 nights. The word ἰσχύς that was used for strength in 1 Ki 19:8 has the same root as ἐνισχύω in Lk 22:43. From these references, the role of the angels on earth is to serve and strengthen the Son of Man as well as persons who were chosen by God (Steyn 2003:1117).

In Gl 1:8, the angel was used as a dialectical example to emphasize the other wrong gospel that Paul did not give. It does not mean that the angel gives the gospel to the people. Although it is stated as a possibility that an angel deliver the gospel to the people. For example, the angel that appeared to the shepherds in Lk 2:9 gave good news about the birth of the saviour. There are other references about the role of the angel to give the law to the people in Ac 7:53 and Gl 3:19. According to Burton (1920:189), the angel as the law giver was mentioned in Dt 33:2 LXX, *ANT.* 15:136, *T. Dan.* 6:6-10, *Jub.* 1:29. It means that the concept of the angel as a law giver already existed in the minds of the readers of Galatians.

There is another expression of “the Son of Man that will send the angels of God” in Mt 13:41, even though it is not the same expression as the descension. It is important to define the place of the Son of Man in Mt 13:41, whether the Son of Man will send the angels of God from heaven before his descension or after his descension. The aim of the sending is to gather the people who do lawlessness for judgement. In Mt 24:31 and Mk 13:27 the Son of Man sends the angels to gather the chosen people for salvation at the eschatological judgement. According to Hagner (2002:393), the angels that gather the wicked for judgment in Mt 13:41 also have a connection with the eschatological gathering of the chosen in 16:27. Jesus delayed the judgment, because it is not yet time for judgment in Mt 26:53, when one of Jesus’ companions reached for his sword to

one among a large crowd armed men who come to arrest Jesus. It indicates that the gathering by the angels for judgment by the Son of Man is not in the time of Jesus but an eschatological event at the end of the days. The subject of judgment and salvation is the Son of Man, but the role of the angels are executors of the order of the Son of Man.

The eschatological judgment is more certain in Mt 16:27, Mk 8:38, Lk 9:26 and 2 Th 1:7. These angels will descend on earth with the Son of Man. It is apparent that the Son of Man is coming with the angels of God for judgement at the end of days. Hagner (2002:484) pointed out the ethical intention of the eschatological usage of the coming of the Son of Man, stating:

Matthew has placed special emphasis on the reality of the coming of the Son of Man and human accountability at that time. This emphasis is fully in keeping with the common use of eschatology in the NT as a motivation for ethics.

In his opinion, it is apparent that there is this warning of judgment about the second coming of Jesus with the angels at the end of the days, even though the reason for the use of these eschatological motifs is an ethical warning.

The descending of the angels points to the appearance of angels in the New Testament, because of the presupposition of that the point of departure of the angels is heaven. Even though there is no mention about heaven in the text, the sudden appearance of the angels implies their descension from heaven. In Mt 28:2, Lk 22:43 and Gl 1:8 the phrase ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ is added to show the place of departure of the angels. Marshall (1978:832) regarded it as unusual phrases, because there are many appearances of angels without the mention of heaven except Mt 28:2 and Gl 1:8 that have the phrase ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. Even though there

is no mention about the opened heaven in the other appearances of the angels, the heavenly place of departure of the angels cannot be denied.

The aim of the descending of the angel(s) of God in the New Testament is to assist the Son of Man and to proclaim the identity of the Son of Man (Mt 28:2; Lk 22:43; Gl 1:8). The descension of the angels of God to roll away the rock from the tomb or to help the praying Son of Man is not different from other descensions of the angels of God who assisted Peter when he was in prison (Ac 12:6-10). It is difficult to regard the special condition in Jn 1:51, because Jesus said to people that they will see the angels ascending and descending. The problem is that there is no witness about the descension of the angels, even that Jesus said to the people “you will see” in Jn 1:51. There are other kinds of descensions of the angel (Mt 13:41; Mt 24:31; Mk 13:27; Mt 16:27; Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26; 2 Th 1:7). The angels will accompany the Son of Man when he will descend at the end of the days for judgment. The Son of Man will send them to gather the wicked people and the chosen people of the world for judgment. It is closer to the promise of Jn 1:51, because it will happen in front of the people’s eyes. In Mt 24:30 the verb ὄψονται which means “they will see” was used, and ἰδῶσιν which means “to see” was used in Mt 16:28 and Lk 9:27. The appearance of the angels in Mt 28:2, Lk 22:43, and Gl 1:8 was hidden to the people and was seen by one person or a small group. The appearance in Mt 13:41, Mt 24:31, Mk 13:27, Mt 16:27, Mk 8:38, Lk 9:26 and 2 Th 1:7 is public before all the people, like in Jn 1:51.

### **7.2.3 Conclusion**

The motif of the ascension and descension is mostly applied to the angels of God. In the New Testament the aim of the ascension and descension of the angels of God is to perform the commands of God on earth. After they performed, they

returned to heaven. Proclaiming the birth of Jesus, and opening the tomb of Jesus, and helping to strengthen the praying of Jesus are their tasks on earth. After performing their tasks, they ascended to heaven. In the case of the angels, they descended and ascended several times. It means that the angels appeared suddenly and disappeared. The order of the expression of ascending and descending in Jn 1:51 is not important here, because it can refer to a patrol of the angels. From this presupposition, it can be concluded that the ascending and descending of the angels of God can be applied to the eschatological works of the angels at the second descension of the Son of Man at end of the world.

From the other expressions, like Mt 13:41, Mt 24:31, Mk 13:27, Mt 16:27, Mk 8:38, Lk 9:26 and 2 Th 1:7, it can be certain that the public descension of the angels of God will be at the end of days with the Son of Man who is coming for judgment. The angels will descend with the Son of Man and they will be sent to gather the wicked and the chosen for the Son of Man's judgment. While the angels accompany the Son of Man mentioned in his descension, there is no mention about the angels' accompanying in the ascension of the Son of Man. In Ac 1:11, when Jesus ascends to heaven, the angels were with the disciples to announce the parousia of the Son of Man in the same way they have seen him go.

In conclusion, there are two kinds of ascension and descension of the angels of God in the New Testament. The one is to individuals and hidden to the people. It was shown to a specific person or a group. Even though there is no exact mention about ascending and descending between heaven and earth, it is certain that it was presupposed in the mind of the readers from their belief in the heavenly abode of the angels of God. The public descending of the angels of God is prophesied as a futuristic expression. The angels of God who will descend with

the Son of Man at the end of the days will be sent into the world by the Son of Man to gather the people. In Mk 13:27 the angels will be sent by the Son of Man from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens. That scene described by Jesus is the closest to his promise in Jn 1:51. The first reason is that heaven will be opened like in Jn 1:51. The second is that the scene of their going around from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens will be seen by the people. The scene that was described in the New Testament about the angels ascending and descending, can possibly refer to the return of Jesus.

### 7.3 The Son of Man ascending and descending

The words, “ascending” or “descending” is used for the Son of Man and for the angels. The Son of Man’s descending and ascending is a common theme in the New Testament. The title “Son of Man” was used in four gospels. This title never occurs in the Pauline letters. The Son of Man came to the world at his incarnation and went back to heaven. The aim of his coming is to seek and to save what was lost (Lk 19:10), as a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Lk 7:34). The way to save what was lost is to serve and to give his life as a ransom for them (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45). At his ascension it is mentioned that “the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God” (Lk 22:69). Even though there is no reference to him as the Son of Man in Mk 16:19, Lk 24:51, Ac 1:11 and Eph 4:10, they speak about his ascension.

The descending of the Son of Man also refers to his parousia at the last day. The Son of Man was described as the one who will come again for judgement (Mt 16:27, 19:28). The people will be judged according to their acts, when he comes

(Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26; 18:8). The Son of Man will come in his glory with all his angels (Mt 16:27; 25:31), and send the angels to gather the chosen people and those who practice lawlessness (Mt 13:41; 24:31). The day of the Son of Man or the time of the Son of Man will not be known like in the days of Noah (Mt 24:37, 39, 44; 25:13; Lk 12:40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30). However all the people will see the coming of the Son of Man (Mt 24:30; 26:64; Mk 13:26; 14:62; Lk 21:27). Even though there is no direct mention about the Son of Man, 1 Th 4:16 and 2 Th 1:7 are related to the descending of the Son of Man. The descending of the Son of Man in the New Testament is related to his coming. It presents the final eschatological event with the accompanied signs like the clouds and the angel(s). The ascending of the Son of Man is described as his return home. It happened before witnesses after his resurrection and meetings with his disciples during 40 days. Paul reminded about it: "He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens" (Eph 4:10 NKJ).

### **7.3.1 The ascending of the Son of Man (Mk 16:19; Lk 22:69; 24:51; Ac 1:11; Eph 4:8-10)**

The Ascension of the Son of Man is recorded in detail in Mk 16:19 and there is a short description in Lk 24:51. The expressions about the ascension of Jesus used various words;

ἀνελήμφθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν (Mk 16:19 NA28)

ἀνεφέρετο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν (Lk 24:51 NA28)

οὗτος ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἀναλημφθεὶς ἀφ' ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν (Ac 1:11 NA28)

ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν (Eph 4:10 NA28)

ἀνελήμφθη ἐν δόξῃ. (1Ti 3:16 NA28)



These words, ἀναλαμβάνω, ἀναφέρω, and ἀναβαίνω, are used to describe the ascension of Jesus. Besides Ephesians the other words are passive to indicate that Jesus was raised by the Father. The aorist passive verb ἀνελήμφθη was used for Elijah in 2 Ki 2:11 and for Enoch in Sir 49:14, “But upon the earth was no man created like Enoch; for he was taken from the earth” (Sir 49:14 *KJA*). O’Toole (2004:33) regarded it as parallels between Elija and Jesus. He devised “the double role of Elijah” in Luke. Even though he admitted that Jesus did not accept to be the one like Elijah, when he heard the answer about his identification by the people in Lk 9:18-21, and matched John the Baptist to Elijah as the one who will turn the children of Israel in Lk 1:16-17, he suggested another aspect about the similarity between Elijah and Jesus;

Elijah’s raising of the widow’s son is reflected in Jesus’ raising of the son of the widow of Nain (Lk 4:25-26; 7:11-17; cf. 7:22; 1 Ki 17:1-18:1). Motifs from 1 Ki 17:8-24 are probable in Lk 8:42, 55, 9:38, 42, and more definitely between 1 Ki 19:19-21 and Lk 9:61-62. Ahab’s charge that Elijah was subverting Israel employs the same verb as that in the Sanhedrin’s accusation against Jesus (Lk 23:2). (O’Toole 2004:33-34)

Even though the similarity between Jesus and Elijah include the word ἀνελήμφθη, it is difficult to match Elijah’s ascension to that of Jesus. Elijah’s ascension can be matched to the ascension of the people in 1 Th 4:17, because Elijah was taken by God’s force from the earth to heaven, while Jesus returned to his heavenly place. Elijah’s works can be symbols pointing to Jesus, but that there is certainly a difference in ascension between them. In Jesus’ ascension, the word ἀναβάς with its active meaning appears in Eph 4:10, and it is the same word as that of Jn 1:51.

In Mk 16:19 there is a description of his place after his ascension as the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God, while the Son of Man is standing at the right hand of God in the vision of Stephen (Ac 7:55).

Mk 16:19 (NA28)	Ac 7:55 (NA28)
ἀνελήμφθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν	ἀτενίσας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν
καὶ	εἶδεν δόξαν θεοῦ καὶ Ἰησοῦν
ἐκάθισεν ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ.	ἐστῶτα ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ

The common phrases are εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν and ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ. In Mk 16:19 it describes the action of ascending and the condition after ascending. There are many verses that mention “at the right hand”.

The expression of the Son of Man at the right hand of God was used in four kinds of conditions: the condition of the ascension of the Son of Man (Lk 22:69; Eph 1:20; Heb 1:3; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pt 3:22), the condition in heaven (Heb 8:1; Col 3:1), and the condition with the descension of the Son of Man (Mt 26:64; Mk 14:62). The other is to prove the sonship of Jesus with a direct quotation from Ps 109(110):1f, κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου (LXX). This concept was used for the protection of David’s divine counterpart in the context of the Psalm (Allen 2002:115). Psalm 109(110):1 is four times quoted directly in the New Testament (Mt 22:44; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:42-43; Ac 2:34-35; Heb 1:13). The context of the three gospels is not concerned with the ascension of the Son of Man, but with his origin as the son of David. The main point is that king David called Christ as Lord, because the Son of Man is of higher dignity as king David. Steyn (1995:119) mentioned that it is certain that Luke

quoted it directly from the LXX, because the Greek words matched the LXX directly. However the usage of the direct quotation differs from each other. In the context of Lk 20:41-44, it is the same as in the other gospels, but in Peter's speech it indicates the condition of the ascension of the Son of Man (Ac 2:33-35). In Heb 1:13 the purpose of the direct quotation of Ps 109:1 is to indicate the position of the Son of Man in heaven. The reason of the different usages of the same quotation from Ps 109(110):1 is the different points of the focus. The four gospels focused on the Lord that king David called, while Acts and Hebrews are intent on the position of the Son of Man in heaven.

In Lk 22:69, Rm 8:34, Eph 1:20, Heb 1:3, 10:12, 12:2, and 1 Pt 3:22, the focus is on the condition of the ascension as the completion of Jesus' mission on earth. In 1 Pt 3:22, there is a direct reference to of the ascension of the Son of Man. Psalm 109:1 (LXX) was alluded to but Peter changed the plural ἐκ δεξιῶν to singular ἐν δεξιᾷ as in the Hebrew text and omitted the verb κάθου as Romans and Hebrews did. It is not from the Psalm text itself but from the common sense about the condition of the kingdom of heaven, as Michaels (2002:218) pointed out;

He is neither quoting nor alluding to the well-known Psalm, but simply adopting a phrase that had already become common among Christians to describe Christ's position of royal dignity and authority alongside God the Father, as a result of his resurrection

It is certain that the belief about the Son of Man who had ascended after his resurrection and was dwelling at the right hand of God was in the mind of the community of Peter as well as of the other communities.

The Father raised the Son of Man and seated him at God's right hand in heaven according to Eph 1:17. This text also used the singular ἐν δεξιᾷ instead of the plural ἐκ δεξιῶν of Ps 109:1 (LXX). Lincoln (2002:61) pointed out that the language of Ps 109:1 is a formula of the exaltation of "the general early christian tradition of Christ's session at the right hand of God". This formula has the following steps; The first is the sacrifice on the cross and the resurrection and the second is the ascension, and lastly to sit at the right hand of God. In the tradition of the gospels, there are the 40 days that Jesus remained with his disciples, but it is omitted in this formula of confession. The sacrifice is mentioned in Rom 8:34, Heb 1:3, 10:12, and 12:2. The resurrection is mentioned in Rom 8:34, and Eph 1:20. The ascension is mentioned directly in 1 Pet 3:22, but indirectly the ascension is implied in the phrase "at the right hand of God", because it has the meaning of the dwelling place of God in heaven, as Best (1998:171) pointed out;

The ascension (and/or the heavenly session) is sometimes simply stated as a fact; sometimes, as here, attention is drawn to the activity of the Exalted One as ruling (cf 1 Pet 3:22) or interceding (Rom 8:34); it is only in Acts 1:9–11 that the ascension is described physically.

In the Hebrew context the heavenly condition of the Son of Man was emphasized. The author of Hebrews used different expressions about his sitting in heaven. It was expressed with ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς in Heb 1:3, ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ in 10:12, and ἐν δεξιᾷ τε τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ in 12:2 and lastly it was synthesized in Heb 8:1 where it was mentioned that Jesus sat at "the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (NA28). The concept of the right hand of God existed and the other expression is a rhetorical flourish. The author of Hebrews

has the intention to declare Jesus' relationship to God in heaven, as Steyn (2011:123) pointed out;

The two elements contained in the Scriptural tradition, namely the sitting at the right hand and the subjection of the enemies, supplement those elements that surfaced from the other quotations in the catena in order to describe the royal position of the son. Christ's position at the right hand of God's throne- ordered by God himself- presents a conceptual image of Christ's royal role as Ruler.

The royal position of the Son was completed by his ascension, because the sitting at the right hand is after the completion of his mission of the purification of sins (Heb 1:3) and his everlasting sacrifice for sins (Heb 10:12). Even though there is no mention about the ascension of Jesus, it is presupposed in the phrase "at the right hand of God". Colossians 3:1 indicates the saints as being raised with Christ, and seated at the right hand of God. This resurrection is the counterpart of Col 2:20, "since you died with Christ". Bruce (1957:258) quoted by O'Brien (2002:159), regarded the resurrection with Christ as follows;

Again it is noted that the Colossians' resurrection with Christ is described as a past act if their death with him severed the links that bound them to the old order, then their resurrection with him established links with a new and heavenly order.

He regards the resurrection with Christ to seek those things which are above namely that the glory with Christ in future, for they have died and their life is hidden with Christ (v. 3). The concept τὰ ἄνω in v. 1 is connected to ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος, and opposite to τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς in v. 2 that is connected with v. 5. They have already died with Christ and is raised with Christ, so that the life of the Christian is already a new life. Here the glory above has a present meaning rather than a future meaning, and the resurrection with Christ also has a present

meaning. Therefore it means that the Christ seated at the right hand of God after his ascension is sitting there right now. From this verse, the concept of the right hand of God indicates the ruling position of Christ over heaven and earth.

Another kind of expression of “at the right hand of God” is used together with the descending of the Son of Man in Mt 26:64 and Mk 14:62. It refers to the descending of the Son of Man from his position in heavenly session without discarding his position like in his incarnation. It will be dealt with in the next section. Without mentioning the right hand of God, there are other verses in Luke about the ascension of Jesus. The reason why Luke mentioned the ascension of the Son of Man briefly, is that he planned to begin Acts with the ascension of Jesus, according to Plummer (1896:565): Luke “purposely reserves the narrative of the Ascension for the Acts” According to the record of Acts, Jesus appeared to the disciples during 40 days, gave them the great commission (Ac 1:3, 8) and ascended to heaven (v. 9). Two men in white apparel appeared and mentioned that Jesus will come again as they saw him leave (vv. 10, 11). It means that what was seen was an ascension up in the sky behind a cloud, and the descension will be seen physically in the sky and clouds. There is the problem of who the two men were with the white apparel. According to Barrett (2004:83), these two men in white apparel are angels, because the angels were described as men in many passages in the apocalyptic literature. The angels came to announce what will happen in future.

References in Acts connect Jesus’ ascension with his future return (1:11, 3:20-21), these two events marking the period of proclamation as itself an eschatological time (Hurtado 2005:346).

The exact expression about descending and ascending appeared in Eph 4:8-10. It mentioned the descending to indicate the first descension of Christ and his

ascent far above all the heavens. The aim to mention the ascension of Christ is that he might fill all things with gifts (Eph 4:10). Ephesians 4:8 quoted Ps 68:18, but with a difference,

You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even *from* the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell *there* (Psa 68:18 NKJ)

Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." (Eph 4:8 NKJ)

The text from Psalms means that the conqueror received tributary from the vanquished people, and Paul changed it as the gifts to his own people by the king who overcame the enemies as his prize, because Jesus does not need to receive any gift from people (Abbott 1909:111). With that meaning, the text regards the ascension of the Son of Man as the victory over Satan.

The word, ἀνελήφθη also indicates the result of the earthly works of the Son of Man in 1Ti 3:16. The authors summarises the earthly works of the Son of Man; "God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world" (1Ti 3:16 NKJ). Lea and Griffin ([1992] 2001:127) regarded this "hymn as an example of the mystery of godliness the church proclaimed". Therefore it includes the resurrection and ascension among the earthly works of the Christ.

The resurrection and ascension of Christ were testified by his disciples in the Synoptic gospels and Acts (Mk 16:19; Lk 22:69; 24:51; Ac 1:11) and in the letters of the apostles (Eph 4:10; 1 Th 3:16). The concept of the ascension of the Christ has an important role in the whole New Testament, because the physical absence of the Christ after his death had to be explained to the people. The last day they expected is not yet come. After the resurrection of the Son of Man, the redemption

they expected is not fully come yet. Jesus ascended to heaven, and the people have to wait for his return in glory. Therefore the eschatology is not fully accomplished.

### **7.3.2 The descending of the Son of Man (Mt 24:30; 26:64; Mk 14:62; 1 Th 4:16; 2 Th 1:7)**

The second coming of the Son of Man was predicted by Jesus in the gospels in more detail in the other three gospels than in John's gospel. The picture that was described by Jesus about the second coming have several characters. Firstly the second coming of the Son of Man is for judgement. When the Son of Man will come again the world will become renewed, the twelve tribes of Israel will be judged by the believers (Mt 19:28), and he will reward each person according to his works (Mt 16:27). The saying about some who are standing here will not die until the Son of Man's coming again (Mt 16:28) matched Jn 1:51, if Jn 1:51 is regarded as an event of the parousia, because Jesus said to the people, "you will see". The judgement by the Son of Man is implied in Mk 8:38, Lk 9:26, and 18:8.

The day when the Son of Man will come is secret. Nobody knows the exact time a day (Mt 25:13). The days of the Son of Man are compared to the days of Noah, because people will not know until the day comes (Mt 24:37, 39, 44; Lk 17:26). It is also compared to lightning, because it will be seen by every person. However some will see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom (Mt 16:28), Jesus said to the disciples "the days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see *it*" (Lk 17:22 *NKJ*).

There is a sign of the Son of Man from heaven in Mt 24:30. It is the answer to the question in 24:3 about the sign of the end of the age. The descending of the Son



of Man will be seen by the people and the Son of Man will come down on the clouds (Mt 26:64; Mk 13:26; 14:62; Lk 21:27). This descending is accompanied by angels with a sound of a trumpet. The angels receive the order of the Son of Man to gather the select people (Mt 13:41; 16:27; 24:31; 25:31). This verse shows a dynamic descension of the Son of Man. The clouds that will accompany the Son of Man appears in Mt 26:64 and Mk 14:62. It is a prophecy about the parousia like Mt 24:30. The appearance of the clouds supports the idea that the Son of Man comes down from a physical sky, even though the starting point is heaven where he dwells with God. It is reflected in Dn 7:13 and 4 Ezra 13:3.

And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days (Dn 7:13 NKJ)  
And behold, that man flew with the clouds of heaven; and whenever he turned his face to look, everything under his gaze trembled (4 Ezra 13:3 OTPC1)

These references in the gospel reflect the eschatological thoughts of 4 Ezra that comes from the Old Testament tradition reflected in Daniel.

Matthew 24:30 is Jesus' answer to the question of the high priest about his identity, whether he is the Son of God, the Christ or not. Jesus answered that the Son of Man will sit at the right hand of God and will come on the clouds of heaven. This conversation confirms that they had a pre-understanding about the descending with clouds. According to Hagner (1995:714), Mt 24:30 also used Zech 12:10-14 and combined it with Dn 7:13;

Following the second τότε, "then," is the reference to the coming of the Son of Man, but this is preceded, probably for emphasis, by the reference to the mourning of "all the tribes of the earth" (πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς), unique to Matthew. This language is virtually the same as that of Zech 12:10–14.

He continued his statement that it also appeared in Rv 1:7 and these two sources were combined from the early christian tradition. It means that there is a christian tradition about the formula of the parousia, and Matthew and John followed that formula to explain the second coming of the Christ.

There is the appearance of the angels of God with the Son of Man in Mt 16:17, 25:31. The descending of the Son of Man is accompanied by the angels, and the Son of Man will sit on the throne of glory. It has Daniel's vision as background and apocalyptic literature's background like 1 Enoch, as Hagner (1995:742) pointed out;

The background to this reference to the coming of the Son of Man is, as in the other references, primarily Dan 7:13–14. The language of this verse is also close to the following passages in *1 Enoch*: “the Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory” (62:5; cf. 62:2–3); “he placed the Elect One on the throne of glory” (61:8). In both of these passages, the Son of Man brings about apocalyptic blessing for the righteous and judgment of the wicked (cf. 69:27–29; 1:9).

These angels were sent by the Son of Man to gather his elect (Mt 24:31) and remove from his kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness (Mt 13:41), as dealt with in the previous section (see Ch. 7. 2. 2). The role of the angels is more emphasized in the Pauline letters. In 1 Th 4:16, the voice of an archangel and the trumpet of God accompanied the Lord who will descend with a loud command. When Jesus will descend from heaven, the resurrected people and the people who are alive will be snatched up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Th 4:17). About the dead in Christ, there is a similar expression in 1 Cor 15:18 “those who have fallen asleep in Christ”, and Rv 14:13 “the dead who die in the Lord”. According to Bruce (2002:101), it can be matched to the first resurrection in Rv 20:4-5, like the dead man in Christ it can be matched

to “the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands” (Rv 20:4 NKJ).

The public “being caught up” is mentioned in 1 Th 4:17. After resurrection the people will be taken to air with those alive to meet the Lord who is descending. There are two people who were caught up to heaven in the Old Testament, in the intertestamental literature and in the New Testament. Paul indicates in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago” was caught up to the third heaven (2 Co 12:2 NKJ). According to Thrall (2004:778), it was generally accepted that the one who Paul mentioned here is Paul himself. The word used in this verse, ἀρπαγέντα means “to be seized”, which shows that this man was seized by another existence. The one who brought the person to heaven is the angel of God as in 2 En 21:5 and T. Lev 2:6. In the Old Testament, there is Elijah who was caught up to heaven in front of his disciple, Elisha (2 Ki 2:1). However the snatching up that is related to the descension of the Son of Man is only in 1 Th 4:17.

There is another expression about the descending of the Son of Man in 2 Th 1:7, “and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels”. The aim of this descending is for judgment of those who do not obey the gospel of the Lord. It refers to the parousia at the end of the days. The punishment will be given to the people who do not know God, and do not obey the gospel of Christ (v. 8) and Christ comes to be glorified in his holy people (v. 10). The descending was described with ὅταν ἔλθῃ (sub aorist act 3<sup>rd</sup> p sg of ἔρχομαι) which means “when he comes”. The other expression was revelation;

The Parousia of Christ is called his ἀποκάλυψις in 1 Cor 1:7 (also in 1 Pet 1:7, 13; 4:13, “the revelation of his glory”); cf. ἐπιφάνεια in 2:8 below. It is the occasion when “the glory is to be revealed” (ἀποκαλυφθῆναι) to those who suffer with Christ at present (Rom 8:18); it is accordingly called the “revealing (ἀποκάλυψις) of the sons of God”—i.e. their being revealed as the sons of God, invested with his glory (Rom 8:19). The OT promise that “the glory of the LORD shall be revealed” (Isa 40:5) takes on fuller significance in the light of the work of Christ (Bruce 2002:150).

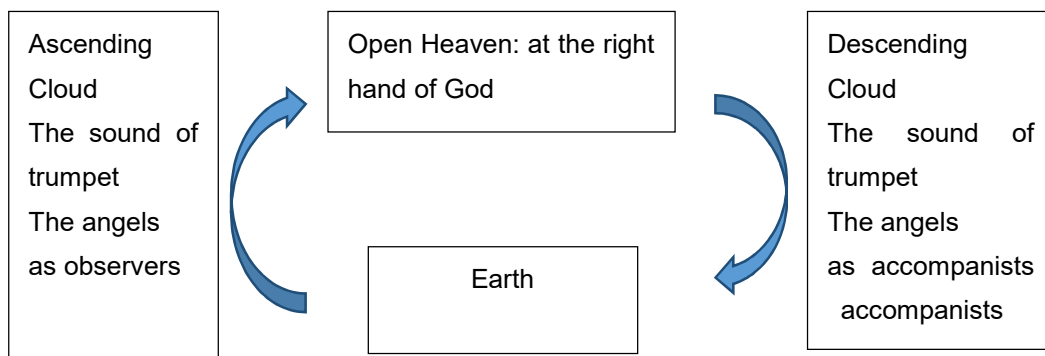
It can also be regarded as the same meaning as the descension of the Son of Man.

Three expressions in the gospels (Mt 24:30; 26:64; Mk 14:62) describe the descending of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven. The other two in the Pauline letters (1 Th 4:16; 2 Th 1:7) describe the descension of the Son of Man with the angels. Both represent the parousia in the end of the days. The descending of the Son of Man at the end of the days is to save his people and to judge the people who did not follow him.

## **Conclusion**

In the New Testament the ascending of the Son of Man is applied to his ascension after his resurrection from the dead. After his ascension to heaven, he sits or stands at the right hand of the throne or of God. The descending of the Son of Man refers to his parousia. It was predicted by Jesus in the gospels and mentioned in the Pauline letters. The Son of Man’s descending will be accompanied by the angels and the cloud. The role of the angels is to proclaim his descension. There is no detailed description of the first descending of the Son of Man in John’s gospel. About his incarnation, however, Jn 1:14 implies his first descension. While the other gospels contain detailed birth narratives (Mt 1:18-25;

Lk 2:1-7), there is no direct mention of the decension of Jesus at his birth in John's gospel, but Jesus mentioned his ascension (Jn 20:17), and his second descension (Jn 21:22). The relation between the ascension of the Son of Man and the descension of the Son of Man is as follows:



The ascending and descending of the Son of Man is with the angels and with the people as observers. However the role of the angels is different. In his ascension, the angels were with the people and looked and explained the ascension to the people, but the Son of Man will descend with the angels at the sound of trumpets. The angels will accompany him and assist him.

## 7.4 Revelation (Rv 4:1; 11:12; 21:2, 10)

The second coming of the Son of Man with the angels of God can be regarded to be the closest to the expression in Jn 1:51, where Jesus said to Nathanael and the people that they will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. However there is one problem. Even though Jesus said to the people that they will see it, almost all of them already died without seeing it. There is a key to solve it. The promise about the second coming in the gospel was given to the people and they thought that they will see it in their

life time. It means that there was an expectation of an urgent eschatology among the people in the New Testament period. John 1:51 can also be interpreted in the same way as an urgent eschatological expression, like in Mt 26:64, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Mt 26:64 *NKJ*). In Mt 24:30-34, Jesus mentioned the eschatological event, and said “Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place” (*NKJ*). The coming of the Son of Man with the angels was also mentioned in Mt 16:27 and Jesus said “There are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (Mt 16:28 *NKJ*). Therefore “you will see” in Jn 1:51 can also be seen in the same light. It means that the application of the eschatological promises in Revelation will also be fulfilled at his second coming.

John’s gospel and Revelation both used Old Testament sources and Apocalyptic Jewish sources. There is a general eschatological aspect in the whole of the New Testament, because there were common ideas about the eschatology among the people living at Jesus’ time and among the writers of the New Testament. From this presupposition, the verses concerned with the open heaven, the angels ascending and descending and the Son of Man in Jn 1:51 will be researched here. The main point is the purpose of these motifs, and what the relations are with the motifs in Jn 1:51.

#### **7.4.1 The open heaven in Revelation (Rv 4:1; 19:11)**

The expression about the open heaven was used twice in Rv 4:1 and 19:11. There is a throne in heaven, and God sits on the throne. 24 thrones are nearby the throne with 24 elders seated on it. They had white robes and golden crowns

(v. 4). There is “a sea of glass, like crystal” and there are “four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back” (v. 6). This vision is connected to the open heaven in 19:11. There are also 24 elders and 4 living creatures (19:4), the open heaven revealed the one who rode on a white horse (v. 11). The armies of heaven follow him to fight with the beast and the armies of the kings of the earth. Concerning with the one who ride a white hores, Aune (2002c:1052) indicates that it is a dramatic expression of the parousia of Jesus, because he is accompanied by an angelic cavalry. He also mentioned Jn 1:51 as the early christianity’s example of the same expression of a ‘heaven open’.

Both Rv 4:1 and Rv 19:11 start with ‘εἶδον’, and heaven opened;

Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ θύρα ἠνεωγμένη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, (4:1 NA28)	Καὶ εἶδον τὸν οὐρανὸν ἠνεωγμένον (19:11 NA28)
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It is similar to the Old Testament vision story of Daniel 7:6a, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐθεώρουν (Dn 7:6 BGT). When the new vision starts, this phrase was also used in the beginning. Beale (1999:316) indicated it to be ‘the introductory vision phraseology’ that notifies the starting point of the new vision. Revelation 4:11 is the starting point of John’s second vision and 19:11 is the beginning of the vision. It is certain that the rider on the white horse is the Son of Man, because he is named the Word (ὁ λόγος) of God (v. 13), and will rule with a rod of iron as in Ps 2:9. In the vision of Rv 19:11, the rider on the white horse is called faithful and true. Aune (2002c:1052) also regarded him as the Son of Man;

The appearance of the rider on the white horse accompanied by an angelic cavalry is generally, and probably correctly, understood as a dramatization of the Parousia of Jesus.

Aune (2002a:280) emphasized that the verb ἠνεωγμένη is a passive perfect to disclose divine activity. God opened the door to John to show him the kingdom of heaven. Revelation 4:1 mentions the open door of heaven like Gn 28:17 where Jacob explained what he saw. The door of heaven is related to the gate of heaven in Jacob's confession about the place where he saw the vision of the ladder. The words that they used to indicate the open heaven are different. Even though the door θύρα was used in Rv 4:1 and the gate πύλη was used in Gn 28:17 LXX, these two words have the common meaning as an entrance;

The idea of a solid firmament carries with it the thought of a door or doors into heaven. Though there are only two references in the OT (Gen. 28:17; Ps. 78:23), the notion is common in classical writings, mysticism, Gnosticism, and later Judaism. The only express reference in the NT is in Rev. 4:1, but the same figure lies behind the verses that speak about the shutting of heaven (Lk. 4:25) or its opening either (1) in God's self-revelation (Mk. 1:10; Jn. 1:51; Acts 10:11; Rev. 19:11) or (2) in disclosure to the saints of the mysteries of the coming aeon as they have access by vision (Acts 7:55ff.) or in the Spirit (Rev. 4:1ff.) to God's heavenly palace (Jeremias [1985] 1995:173).

The vision is regarded to be an epiphanic revelation, because of the motif of the open heaven. According to his opinion, the vision Jacob saw at Bethel have to be regarded as an epiphanic vision, as the vision of John in Rv 4:1 and the promise of Jesus in Jn 1:51. In the comment of Rv 19:11, Aune (2002c:1052) linked it to Jn 1:51 as the one among early christianity (Mk 1:10; Ac 7:56; 10:11), because of the phrase, "heaven open".

Whether they are symbols or historical facts to come in future, it is certain that the open heaven is an eschatological phenomenon that reveals the authority of the kingdom of heaven in this world. Therefore the promise of Jesus in Jn 1:51



can be interpreted to be an eschatological promise as in Revelation, because the expression “open heaven” is itself an eschatological expression. From this presupposition it can be possible to see that the promise in John’s gospel as fulfilled in Revelation’s visions.

#### **7.4.2 The descending of the angel(s) of God (Rv 10:1; 14:17; 18:1; 20:1)**

The angels play an important role in Revelation, because the content of the revelation to John was given by angels. Buchanan wrote in this regard:

The benediction that followed was for those who heard and the one who reads the words of the prophecy (1:3). This means, at least, that the message was communicated from John to the next recipients by means of writing. It also makes good sense to understand the enclosed prophetic message (4:1-22:5) as the revelation which John received and the ἄγγελος as a human being who brought John a scroll which John saw with his physical eyes and read it just as others have done ever since (Buchanan 1973:36)

Even though there is not an exact expression of descending, the angels appear often in Revelation, because of the different roles of the angels in Revelation besides revelation and interpretation. One proclaimed the judgement that was proclaimed from heaven and executed it on commission of God. It indicates that the judgement comes from heaven. In 10:1 an angel clothed with a cloud descends from heaven. That angel has a voice like thunder. This angel is described as “another” and “mighty”. It can be considered to be an expression of the Son of Man, because of these qualifiers, together with the following description of a figure with “a rainbow on his head and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire” (Rv 10:1 NKJ). The descending in a cloud also identifies him to be Jesus (MacArthur 1999:278). However there are more reasons to prove it cannot be identified with Jesus. There is another mighty angel

in Ch. 5, that is the closest to the angel in Ch. 10, to whom a book sealed with seven seals is handed by the one who sat on the throne. This book is also mentioned in 10:4, 9. Aune (2002b:557) regards this angel as the revelatory angel of Rv 1:1, quoting Bauckham (1998:254-255)'s opinion,

- (1) God gave the revelation to Jesus Christ (Rv 1:1)  
= the Lamb received the scroll from the hand of the one seated on the throne (Rv 5:7).
- (2) The revelation of Jesus Christ (1:1)  
= the Lamb opened the scroll and revealed its contents (Rv 6:1–8:1).
- (3) He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John (1:1)  
= the angel brings the opened scroll from heaven and gives it to John (10:2, 8).

In Rv 14:17-18, there is an angel with a sharp sickle who comes from the temple in heaven, and another angel called from the altar to the angel with the sharp sickle to gather the clusters of vine from the earth's vine. These are symbols of the judgement of God. The subject of the judgement is the Son of Man, and the executer is the angel. The expression ἄλλος ἄγγελος appears 5 times in Ch. 14 (vv. 6, 8, 15, 17, 18). Aune (2002b:823) regards it as a "stylistic device", because there is no previous angel in v. 6. The angel that was mentioned before v. 6 is the seventh angel who sounded a trumpet in 11:15. The angels receive their own work from God and perform it in turn. In 18:1, the angel with great power warns about the fall of Babylon.

The angel who has the key of the bottomless pit descends with a big chain, and binds the Devil, Satan, for a thousand years (20:1). The role of the descending angels in Revelation is to proclaim and execute the judgement of God. Every angel has his own role. It means that even though there is no direct mention about an ascension, it implies their ascension after their completed missions. These

frequent expressions about the angels of God in Revelation are expressions that define the ascending and descending angels in Jn 1:51.

### **7.4.3 The ascending of humans (Rv 4:1; 11:12)**

There is another kind of ascending in Rv 4:1, 11:12. After the 6th angel sounded the trumpet and before the 7th angel sounded his trumpet, the two witnesses ascended to heaven being summoned by the voice from heaven (11:12). John also heard the voice from heaven to come up and see the vision of the throne of heaven (4:1). Even though there is no direct mention about the ascension of John, it has the same structure as the ascension of the two witnesses in 11:12. The reason of the call of John to heaven is to show him the workings from heaven on the earth.

It is an unique instance that John ascended to heaven in the spirit (4:2). It is already mentioned in 1:10, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet” (NKJ). Charles (1920:110) mentioned that the condition of John was “a state of spiritual trance” and “an ecstatic state”. It is difficult to find a relation between the ascending in 1 Th 4:17, and Rv 4:1, because John is not in a bodily state, but in a spiritual ecstatic state to receive the revelation. There are no multiple eyes in Rv 4:1 as mentioned in 1 Th 4:17 (Ben Witherington III 2003:116).

The ascension with the clouds by the two witnesses after they were resurrected was seen by their enemies in Rv 11:12, and the phrase, ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ was also used in the ascension and descension of Jesus Christ (Ac 1:9; Mt 24:30; 26:64). Aune (2002b:625) classified the use of the clouds in the Israelite and early Jewish tradition, as follows;

- (1) as a means of transport for Yahweh
- (2) as a means of transport from earth to heaven
- (3) as a means of transport from one area of heaven to another
- (4) as a means of transport from heaven to earth, often associated in early Christian sources with the coming of the Son of man
- (5) as a mode of enthronement
- (6) as a symbol associated with theophanies or angelophanies

The clouds in the ascension of the people (1 Th 4:17) is used as a means of transport from earth to heaven. It differs from the stories of Levi who traveled spiritually to heaven in the *Testament of Levi* 2:6. The people in these stories were resurrected and ascended bodily.

#### **7.4.4 The descending of the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:2, 10)**

In John's vision, the new heaven and new earth were created when the previous heaven, earth and sea passed away. The city, the New Jerusalem, descended from heaven. It is an allusion to Is 48:2. According to Aune (2002c:1121), the name "New Jerusalem" is only found in the *Testament of Dan* 5:12, "and the saints shall rest in Eden, and in the New Jerusalem shall the righteous rejoice, and it shall be unto the glory of God for ever" (*OTP*). The expression, "the eschatological city Jerusalem" or the "heavenly Jerusalem" were used more often. Even though there is no direct mention about a "New Jerusalem", Decock (1999:381-386) suggests that the concept "New Jerusalem" comes from the vision in Ezk 40-48. He made the following list that was based on Fekkes (1994:241-247) and Vanhoye (1962:476);

- Rv 21:10: Holy City shown on a mountain: Ezk 40:2 (40:4, 43:5)
- Rv 21:11a: presence of God's glory: Ezk 43:2-5
- Rv 21:12a: wall of the city: Ezk 40:5
- Rv 21:12b: twelve gates for twelve tribes: Ezk 48:30-35
- Rv 21:13: compass points of the gates: Ezk 42:15-20; 48:30-34

Rv 21:15: measuring the city wall and gates: Ezk 40:3-16  
Rv 21:16: the city foursquare: Ezk 31:4; 45:2; 48:16, 20  
Rv 21:17: measuring the city wall: Ezk 41:5; 40:5  
Rv 21:18, 19a: wall, foundations and gates: (Ezk 28:13) Is 54:11-12  
Rv 21:21a: the twelve gates are twelve pearls: Is 54:12b  
Rv 21:21b: streets of precious jewels, pearls, and gold: Tob 13:16-18a  
(inspired by Is 54:11b) (Decock 1999:381-382)

From the comparison between Ezekiel and Revelation about the “New Jerusalem”, it is ascertained that Revelation reflected the vision of Ezekiel to describe paradise. According to Decock (1999:382-383), the relation between Revelation 20-21 with Isaiah is also considered as follows;

Rv 21:23: the city needs no sun or moon, glory of God: Ezk 43:2; Is 60:1-2, 19  
Rv 21:24a: nations walk by its light: Is 60:3a  
Rv 21:24b: kings bring their glory into it: Is 60:3b; 5b-9, 11-13, 16  
Rv 21:25a: gates will never be shut: Is 60:11a  
Rv 21:25b: shall be no night there: Zch 14:11 (?)  
Rv 21:26: glory of nations brought into it: Is 60:11b cf 60:5  
Rv 21:27: the unclean will not enter it: Is 52:1c  
Rv 22:1-2: river of life and tree of life: Ezk 47:1-12  
Rv 22:3a: no more curse: Zch 14:11  
Rv 22:5a: shall no more be night: Zch 14:11  
Rv 22:5b: Lord God will shine upon them: Is 60:1-2, 19 (Nm 6:25)

John got the eschatological concept from Ezekiel and Isaiah and the vision is from the open heaven (cf. Rv 4:1; Ezk 1:1). However it is unique in that the “New Jerusalem” descends from heaven. The first mentioned heaven does not mean the dwelling place of God, but the physical sky, and the last mentioned heaven refers to the dwelling place of God. The physical sky and heaven are related, because the concept of descending means coming down from above.

A difference between Ezekiel and Revelation is that there is no temple in the New Jerusalem, because the Lord and the Lamb are its temple (Rv 21:22). Decock (1999:386) mentions;

Although John is largely guided by Ezekiel 40-48 in his vision of the New Jerusalem, his view about the newness is more radical than that of Ezekiel; while Ezekiel sees God coming to dwell in the new temple (43:1-5), John sees the whole of the New Jerusalem descending from heaven, from God, having the glory of God (21:2, 10-11).

There is no need of a temple in the “New Jerusalem”, because the temple is the symbol of God’s dwelling on earth.

According to Du Rand (1988:69), John used the Jerusalem image in the limitation of that people’s understanding. The people can understand the “New Jerusalem” and expect it, because the city of Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 CE. The concept of the “New Jerusalem” can bring a great motivation to Jewish Christians. Jerusalem had an important meaning to gentile Christians, because the gospel started there, and the council of churches was held there (Ac 15:1-30, Gl 2:1-10). Paul received collections from other churches to help the Jerusalem church (1 Col 16:1-3). Paul emphasized that the Jerusalem above is the mother (Gl 4:26). The author of Hebrews also mentioned the heavenly Jerusalem as the city of the living God (Heb 12:22). From the tradition of the New Testament, it is certain that the image of the heavenly Jerusalem was in the minds of the people. Freedman ([1992] 1996:765) mentioned the difference between the eschatological expectation of Judaism and the Christian expectation about the heavenly Jerusalem:

Some Jewish writers envisioned a new, restored, earthly Jerusalem in the end times (Tob 13:9–18; 2 Bar. 32:2–4; Test. Dan. 5:12). Some Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts looked forward to a new,

perfect Jerusalem that would descend from heaven to earth (4 Ezra 7:26; 10:25–54; 13:36; Rev 3:12, 21:2–22:5). ... Other Jewish and Christian literature utilize apocalyptic imagery to describe a perfect Jerusalem in heaven to which the just ascend (2 Bar. 4:1–7; 4 Ezra 8:52; 4 Bar. 5:35; Heb 12:22). In Heb 12:22–24 “the heavenly Jerusalem” is the place of the new covenant sealed through the blood of Jesus.

It is certain that both the Christian image and Jewish image of the New Jerusalem are eschatological.

#### **7.4.5 The Son of Man in Rv 1:13; 14:14**

The Son of Man is mentioned directly in Rv 1:13 and 14:14. The Son of Man described in Rv 1:13 is among the seven lampstands, clothed with a garment, girded about the chest with a golden band, with a white head and hair. A sharp two-edged sword comes from his mouth. In Rv 14:14 the Son of Man has “on his head a golden crown and in his hand a sharp sickle” (NKJ). Both verses used the name of the one like a Son of Man from Dn 7:13. This expression about the one like a Son of Man appeared only here in the New Testament. The one like a Son of Man appeared with the clouds of heaven in Dn 7:13. The cloud also appeared in Rv 14:14. It means that Revelation followed Daniel, directly quoting about the Son of Man. While John’s gospel used the Son of Man as the self designation by Jesus, the one like the Son of Man was seen by John in a vision like Daniel. From this difference, it was possible to use the literal expression.

Another problem was brought up by Michaels (1997:136):

An angel seated on a cloud holds a sickle, and then another angel comes and commands the first angel to reap a harvest. This happens twice, so that the harvest takes place in two stages. The first of the four is not called “another angel” (as in vv. 6, 8 and 9) but *one like a*

*son of man*. In contrast to the angel with the “eternal gospel” (v. 7), who looked like an eagle or a vulture, this figure looks human.

The first reason why he insists that the one like the Son of Man is not Jesus but the angel who has a human image, is because he considered the descension of the Son of Man in Rv 19:11. Prigent (2004:449-450) also raises a question here:

We must therefore determine first of all whether or not he is the messiah, presented with reference to Dan 7:13. Next, we shall examine the surprising role played by this Son of Man whose prerogatives do not seem to be very different than those of an angel: he acts on the orders of an angel, and to his activity as a harvester of grain corresponds the intervention of a harvesting angel in the vineyard! This fact raises a real difficulty, and yet we should not have too rapid a recourse to drastic solutions.

However he admits the one like a Son of Man in Rv 14:14 comes from Dn 7:13 in the sense of that it is not with the same undertones of the Messianic title “Son of Man” in the Synoptic Gospels (Prigent 2004:250). He distinguishes between the usage of Dn 7:13 as a Messianic title and the usage of the humanic shape of the angel. However his opinion can not solve the problem, because the one like a Son of Man in Rv 1:3 also can be regarded as one of the angels according to his opinion. In addition, there is another reason to regard the one like the Son of Man as an angel, because the one like the Son of Man received orders from the other angel in v. 15 (Morris [1969] 1971:184). Concerning the problem of identity of the one like a Son of Man, Stuckenbruck (1995:240-241) makes two assumptions. The one is that the humanlike figure is simply an angelic being, and the other is that the readers, already familiar with the epiphany of the world in Ch. 1, undoubtedly have thought of Christ. To satisfy these two assumptions, he mentioned the developing angelomorphic Christologies which arose in the second century CE. (Stuckenbruck 1995:244).



The reasonable solution of this problem is to allow the appearance of the Son of Man before his public descension. Even though the public descension of the Son of Man is the one seated on a white cloud (19:11), it is certain that the one like the Son of Man is Jesus, because Jesus already showed himself to John in 1:13. The one like the Son of Man in 14:14 did not descend to earth. He stayed on the cloud and executed judgement from there. It indicates that the Son of Man did the judgement himself. Ford (1975:250) compares Rv 14:14 with Mk 13:26-27 to explain that the one like a Son of Man in Rv 14:14 is Jesus.

Revelation 14:14	Mark 13:26-27
<sup>14</sup> Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἶδου νεφέλη λευκή, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν νεφέλην καθήμενον ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ στέφανον χρυσοῦν καὶ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ δρέπανον ὄξύ (Rv 14:14 NA28)	<sup>26</sup> καὶ τότε ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλαις μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης. <sup>27</sup> καὶ τότε ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους καὶ ἐπισυνάξει τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς [αὐτοῦ] ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων ἀπ’ ἄκρου γῆς ἕως ἄκρου οὐρανοῦ. (Mk 13:26-27 NA28)

There are three similarities between them; the cloud, the Son of Man, and authority. The cloud was considered as the accompany thing with the descension of the Son of Man in Mt 26:64, Mk 14:62 and Rv 1:7. The “golden crown” is the distinction between the other angels and the Son of Man. It can be symbols of power and glory of Mk 13:27, and it was regarded as a symbol for a king (Jones 1990:142). The expression about another angel that ordered the one like the Son of Man can be explained as that the angel gives the time signal for the Son of Man to gather in the harvest (Ford 1975:250).

## Conclusion

Revelation has many references about the angels and heaven, because of its eschatological character. Even though it is difficult to find a direct connection between Jn 1:51 and Revelation, it is certain that they used the same eschatological motifs. Jn 1:51 can be seen as fulfilled in Revelation, because of the content of 1:51, while an open heaven, ascending and descending angels, and the Son of Man are main motifs of Revelation. The contents of Revelation is summarised as:

- John met with the Son of Man in a vision (ch. 1).
- The messages toward the 7 churches (ch. 2, 3)
- John ascended to the open heaven and saw the kingdom of heaven (ch. 4-5).
- The descending and ascending angels brought 7 seals, trumpets, plagues (ch. 6-18)
- First resurrection and the descension of the Son of Man (ch. 19)
- The Millennium (ch. 20)
- The second resurrection and the last Judgement and The new heaven and the new earth (ch. 21-22)

According to this structure of Revelation, the main motifs are an open heaven, and ascending and descending. Even though the Son of Man appeared only twice in Rv 1:13 and 14:14, it is certain that the Son of Man is the subject of the things done by the angels. The open heaven in Revelation means the connection between heaven and earth, because of its perfect tense, ἀνεωγμένη. Even though the opened gate in heaven was not used by the angels, but used for calling John, and the two witnesses to heaven (Rv 4:1; 19:11), it can be representative of the direct portal between heaven and earth for humans and angels. In John's vision the roles of the angels are to show, interpret, execute judgement ordered by the Son of Man as his assistants.

It is certain that these three motifs in John's gospel and Revelation were used with the same eschatological background and for the same purpose. From this conclusion, Jn 1:51 has to be understood as an eschatological promise.

## Chapter 8. Conclusion

Genesis has an important role in John's gospel to testify to Jesus' heavenly origin. John 1:1 followed Genesis 1:1 on purpose, because John alludes to it in the first phrase of his gospel.

Genesis 1:1 ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν (LXX)  
John 1:1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν (NA28)

God created the world by his word in Gn 1:3. He just said "let there be light". MacLeod (2003:53) points out that Jn 1:1, "In the beginning" (ἐν ἀρχῇ) is an allusion to Gn 1:1 (Hebrew בְּרֵאשִׁית, Greek LXX ἐν ἀρχῇ). Du Rand (2005:24-25) considers Logos as an agent of the new creation. Psalm 33:9, ("By the word of the LORD the heavens were made") testifies to the existence of the concept of creation by the word of God. It was through the word of God that the world was created according to Gn 1:3. God said, "let there be light"; and there was light. According to Genesis the way in which God creates is by his word. The word of God is not the same as human words, it is creatively powerful. While human words can be futile, God's word is existence itself according to Genesis. John 1:3a ("all things were made through Him" [Logos]) can be matched with creation as described in Genesis. Bauckham says "the impression of the retelling of Genesis would be furthered by the repetition of these words in v. 2, the reference to the creation of all things by the Word in v. 3, and the key words light (φῶς) and darkness (σκοτία) in vv. 4-5 (cf. Gn 1:3-5)". The Jewish tradition regards God's Word as his instrument or agent in creation. He says that "in the prologue the evangelist uses the Word to identify the pre-existent Christ within the Genesis

creation narrative, and so within the unique identity of God as already understood by Jewish monotheism” (Bauckham 2005:151).

Gundry (2002:6) tried to make a literal connection between the Logos in the Prologue and with “word” in the rest of the gospel. He analyzed the usages of the “word” in the rest of the gospel. He included ῥήματα, “words,” in his analysis of λόγος. The plural, ῥήματα is used nine times for Jesus’ words (Jn 5:47; 6:63, 68; 8:20; 10:21; 12:47, 48; 14:10; 15:7), and three times for the words of God, spoken by Jesus (Jn 3:34; 8:47; 17:8), which implies that references to Jesus’ ῥήματα were regarded as ῥήματα of God. Besides the occurrence of λόγος in the Prologue, the plural λόγοι is used three times for Jesus’ words (Jn 7:40; 10:19; 14:24), and eighteen times in the singular for Jesus’ word (Jn 2:22; 4:41, 50; 5:24; 6:60; 7:36; 8:31, 37, 43, 51, 52; 12:48; 14:23; 15:3, 20 bis; 18:9, 32). The singular is used six times for God’s word (Jn 5:38; 8:55; 10:35; 17:6, 14, 17), and twice for the word of God that Jesus speaks (Jn 14:24; 17:14). Therefore, the λόγος and λόγοι of Jesus are also regarded as of God. In this case, ῥήμα and λόγος are not distinguished in John’s gospel (Van der Watt 2000:225).

It is the presupposition of John’s gospel that the Logos was God’s agent from the beginning to reveal God. Therefore John alluded to Genesis in the narrative of the calling of his disciples at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. The construction of chapter 1 of John’s gospel is (1) The explaining about the Logos, (2) Incarnation, (3) the testimony of John the Baptist, (4) calling the disciples. After the promise in Jn 1:51, the narrative of the wedding in Cana is presented in Ch. 2. It begins with a new story, so that the verse 1:51 can be seen as the conclusion of Chapter 1. Therefore, v. 51 has the role of the conclusion of the

introduction to John's gospel and it plays an important role in the whole of John's gospel.

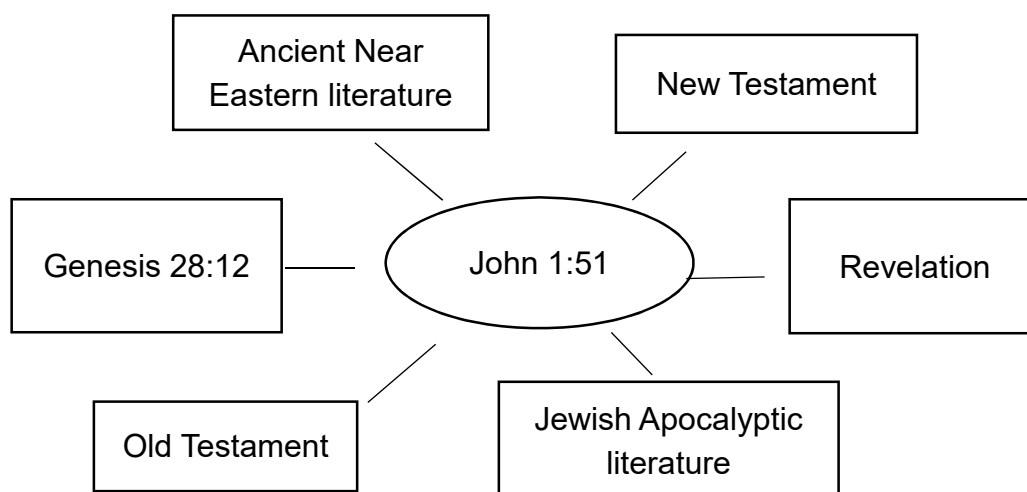
In this context, the study of the allusion about Jacob's vision in Jn 1:51 was preceded by Gn 28:12 in the Old Testament as the background to Jn 1:51 in the New Testament. *From the background of the text, it is possible to disclose the minds of the audiences of Jesus' word to Nathanael and to the readers of John's gospel.* That is the main point of this dissertation. The reason for this study is the many presuppositions of the audiences in the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael. They and the Jews had the background of the Old Testament.

The second conclusion in this dissertation from the study of Jn 1:51 is its theological aspect. *Jn 1:51 reflects the christology of John's gospel, because of the phrase "the Son of Man".* The Son of Man is an important title of Jesus in the christology of John's gospel as well as of other gospels, because it is the self designation of Jesus. The relation between the Son of Man and the Son of God in John's gospel was studied, because the aim of John's gospel was declared to convince the readers that Jesus is the Son of God (Jn 20:31). *A second theological subject from Jn 1:51 is its angelology, because the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man is an allusion to Gn 28:12.* There were many kinds of angelophanies in the Old Testament and in the tradition of Judaism. Therefore the study of the angels was necessary in this dissertation. *The last theological subject is eschatology. It is the most important part of this dissertation, because the three motifs that were used in Jn 1:51 have eschatological values.* The concept of an open heaven related to the coming of the heavenly kingdom of God to earth. Its theological meaning is that the open heaven was proclaimed at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, and contained the tension between

already and not yet in the controversy about the eschatology of John between realized eschatology and consistent eschatology. The conclusion of this dissertation is that the key to this tension between the already and the not yet in the eschatology of John's gospel is present in Jn 1:51.

## 8.1 The main point of this dissertation

In conclusion, the interpretation of Jn 1:51 as an eschatological allusion to Gn 28:12 is seen from the eschatological images that were used in Jn 1:51. First a comparison was made between the images in Jacob's vision and the Ancient Near Eastern literature, because the word, *בְּרָא* is used only once in the Old Testament. However there are many spectrums of the text in history, because the text is the production of history. The text of Jn 1:51 is surrounded by many cultures and texts as can be seen from the background in this diagram:



Therefore this dissertation begins from the following presupposition in the analysis of Jn 1:51.

1. The literature from the Ancient Near Eastern literature
2. The allusion to Gn 28:12 in intertestamental literature
3. The use of Gn 28:12 in John's gospel and the eschatological interpretation
4. The usages of the eschatological images of Jn 1:51 in the New Testament
5. The usages of the eschatological images of Jn 1:51 in Revelation

The eschatological interpretation about Jacob's vision existed in the tradition of the Old Testament as well as intertestamental literature. The New Testament has the background of the tradition of the Old Testament as well as the tradition of the intertestamental background. In the structure of the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael, there are symbols that imply a historical background. For example, Jesus called Nathanael a true Israelite with no guile, which implies the name change of Jacob which means guile to Israel. The climax of this conversation is the promise to show the people in Jn 1:51 a compilation from Ezekiel's open heaven vision, Jacob's angelophany vision and Daniel's the Son of Man vision. The Son of Man and open heaven were inserted to Jacob's vision in Jn 1:51, because of the usage of the name change as metaphor in the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael. In addition, the concept of an open heaven is included in Jacob's vision that can be presented in the response of Jacob of the gate of heaven. Therefore it is expedient to study the background of the motifs in Jacob's vision in each tradition.

### **8.1.1 Jacob's vision in the Old Testament**

The Old Testament scholars focused more on the promise about the protection and the earthly land when Jacob will come back from his refuge in Haran than on the vision of Jacob itself. From their focus, they saw the angels ascending and descending only as a symbolic vision to present God's protection through the



angels who will protect Jacob throughout. They concentrate on God's presence with Jacob like with his father, Isaac (Gn 26:2) and his grandfather, Abraham (Gn 15:1). There is no discussion about the angels of God or an open heaven. The word, מַלְאָכַי is unique in the Old Testament tradition. This word is used for the "stairway" that was used in the temple by the priest to ascend the Mediterranean ziggurat or for the connection between the infinite world and the finite world in the Egyptian texts. In the Akkadian story it was used as the way from the earth to heaven or from heaven to the underworld. The common thing in each tradition around Israel is this background to the word, מַלְאָכַי with its role as the connection between the other worlds and the path to go to the other worlds. From this concept of the ladder, or stairway it can be seen as a metaphor in Genesis 28.

The response of Jacob that this place is like the house of God and the gate of heaven makes it clear that to Jacob this vision means the hope for a place in heaven rather than an earthly land. The gate of heaven was used for rain in Ps 78:23. This concept is similar to the window of heaven in Gn 7:11, 8:2. The same concept of the gate of heaven in Gn 28:17 is the open heaven in Ezk 1:1. The vision Ezekiel saw through the open heaven is an eschatological vision. The figures described in Ezk 1:5, 26 were heavenly figures (Allen 1990:35). Ezekiel saw the celestial existence through the open heaven. Jacob did not describe the things that he saw above the ladder, only the angels ascending and descending. Ezekiel described the things above the open heaven. Compared with the eschatological vision of Ezekiel, the vision of Jacob can be regarded as an eschatological vision.

The conversation between God and Jacob in Gn 28:12-15 is concerned with the promise about the land that God will give to Jacob, the blessing of his offsprings and God's protection of him. However the concept of the eschatological vision about heaven is more emphasised by John and by the Rabbi's, because they interpreted it eschatologically. The story of the pilgrimage of Jacob and his vision of heaven can be matched to the Son of Man that came from heaven to the earth;

Genesis	John's gospel
Canaan as the home of the Father, Jacob	Heaven as the dwelling place of God, Father
Jacob	The Son of Man
Haran (the protection of the angels)	Earth (the assistance of the angels)
Canaan as hometown to come back to	Heaven as hometown to come back to

In this match, Jn 1:51 applies the vision at Bethel to the Son of Man on earth. The word in Jn 1:51 is composed as a promise about future things. From this presupposition, it is certain that the interpretation of Gn 28:12 by the Rabbi's and John is eschatological. Jacob described his life to the Pharaoh as a short pilgrimage of 130 years and his life ended in Egypt not in Canaan. It indicates that the promise of the vision at Bethel is the hope of a heavenly home for Jacob. The tension between the promise of God about the land and the surrender of it by the people of Israel brought the expectation of a coming kingdom of God in the Jewish apocalyptic literature, and in the eschatological interpretation about Jacob's vision in the Rabbinic literature.

### 8.1.2 Jacob's vision in the Intertestamental texts

The traditions of the intertestamental period about Jacob's vision can be divided into three kinds; the one is a direct quotation of the text and interpretation of Genesis, and the other is an allusion to Jacob's vision and an insert in the original text, and another is the use of similar motifs like the open heaven or the angels ascending or descending, and the ladder. Jubilees and Genesis Rabba have an exegesis of Genesis and the data for the Rabbi's understanding of Jacob's vision by the in the intertestamental period. There are various interpretations about Gn 28:12. In the Targum it was interpreted as the angels' envy to see Jacob's face on the heavenly throne. To compare the face on the throne with the earthly Jacob, the angels of God ascended and descended. In Jubilees there is the thought that the place Bethel was regarded as the heavenly temple. From that thought came the eschatological understanding of Jacob's vision among the Rabbi's (Jub 32:22). The ladder of Jacob was described eschatologically in the literature of Jacob's vision. The archangel interpreted the vision to Jacob (Chapter 3). The 12 steps in the ladder means 12 age periods and the 24 faces on the steps represent the kings of the nations. It is similar to the four empires of the late second temple period. It presents the eschatological understanding of Gn 28:12.

In Judaism the allusion to Gn 28:12 represented the dream of Levi in the *Testament of Levi* about the celestial world. Levi's vision is similar to Jacob's and in more detail. Levi entered into the first heaven and the third heaven. In the vision of Levi there are seven heavens. There is sufficient evidence that the author of the *Testament of Levi* used Jacob's vision. Jacob's vision is also mentioned there. The vision of Levi is used as God's revelation about the admission of Levi to the priesthood. Similar things between Jacob's vision and Levi's vision are heaven,

angels, the gate of heaven and the house of God. The *Wisdom of Solomon* interpreted Jacob's vision as the kingdom of God (Wis 10:10). The one who showed the vision was not God but Wisdom. The promise of the land and protection of God to Jacob is changed to the knowledge of holy things. From these changes the understanding of Jacob's vision in the *Wisdom of Solomon* is also eschatological.

Besides of allusion and direct quotation to interpret Jacob's vision, there are in Judaism many usages of the motifs of the open heaven, and concepts similar to the ladder as a path to heaven. In 1 En 18:3-5, there are "the paths of the angels". It is like the firmament of heaven that connects heaven and earth for the angels. There is a chariot as the instrument for transport between heaven and earth like the ladder for the angels in the *Testament of Abraham A* 9:8. The eschatological interpretation about Jacob's vision related to the celestial vision and celestial existences in the intertestamental period.

### **8.1.3 Jacob's vision in John's gospel.**

The direct use of Jacob's vision in Jn 1:51 is Jesus' prophetic promise to the people who surround Jesus and Nathanael about the future. The conversation between Jesus and Nathanael is the conclusion of the narrative of the calling of the disciples. John's use of Jacob's vision is not a direct quotation of Gn 28:12, but he used the symbol of "the angels ascending and descending". That the "heaven opened" and "the Son of Man", is not from Jacob's vision. The phrase "heaven opened" possibly comes from Jacob's interpretation, namely that it is like the gate of heaven. But it is better to find the concept the "heaven opened" from Ezk 1:1, like the other concept, the Son of Man from Dn 7:13 used in Jn 1:51. Therefore it is certain that the promise of Jesus to the people that they will see a

vision composed of three eschatological concepts; heaven opened (Ezk 1:1), the angels ascending and descending (Gn 28:12) and the Son of Man (Dn 7:13).

It is certain that these three concepts were regarded as eschatological concepts in the apocalyptic literature. The adoption of these eschatological concepts in the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael is to reveal himself as the eschatological messiah. From Nathanael's confession that Jesus is "the Son of God and the King of Israel", Nathanael expected the redemption of Israel from Jesus. Jesus' intention to show the greater things to Nathanael and the people who were with them is to realize the universal redemption through the opened heaven. In the conversations in John's gospel, the general theme is Jesus' intention to change the people's wrong view. For example, Jesus changed the Samaritan woman's concept of worship. She focused on the place of worship as her ancestors did, but Jesus' teaching is not about the place but about the true worship in truth and spirit. As in the conversation with Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-21) He changed their thoughts, of the people who saw the miracles of the feeding of the multitude with two fishes and five loaves (Jn 6:25-66), the healing of the blind man (9:1-11), Martha on resurrection (11:20-45), and some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast about his kingship (Jn 12:20-50). Therefore the main subject of the promise in Jn 1:51 is to adjust the traditional expectation of the people who surround Jesus and Nathanael. The first greater thing shown to Nathanael is Jesus' saying about "under the tree". The expression, "under the tree" is also an eschatological concept about the peace of Israel. The background of the conversation is Israel's subjection under the rule of Rome. Through the apocalyptic literature, the last day is understood by the people as the judgement of gentiles and the recovery of Israel as a nation. It is certain that the followers of Jesus also understood him as a national redeemer. There are many traces of the

changes of the wrong expectation of the Jews by Jesus in John's gospel. For example, to the people who look for real bread, Jesus indicates himself as the living bread from heaven with the metaphor of the Manna (John 6). The conversation between Jesus and Nathanael also has to be interpreted with this presupposition about his wrong view about Jesus.

The motifs that were used in Jn 1:51 to explain the greater thing than to see him "under the tree" is also found in John's gospel. Even though the phrase "heaven opened" is found only in Jn 1:51, heaven indicates the dwelling place of God and the original home of Jesus to go back to. The Holy Spirit comes down from heaven and remains on Jesus (Jn 1:32), the voice from heaven testifies the glory of the Son (Jn 12:28). Jesus demonstrated himself as the one who descended from heaven (Jn 3:13, 6:38) and when Jesus calls God, "Father". He lifts up his eyes to heaven (Jn 17:1). It is certain that heaven in John's gospel describes the Father's home where Jesus will return to.

There is no mention about the angels of God ascending and descending in John's gospel besides Jn 1:51. Only three (two) times the angel(s) appear in John's gospel (5:4 [BYZ], 12:29, 20:12). The first and second mentioned angel is not a real appearance, because it comes from the people's thoughts. The people did not see the angel who stirred up the water with their eyes (Jn 5:4) and they just guess the voice from heaven to be the voice of an angel (Jn 12:29). However it confirms that in the people's mind there are angels at work on earth. Draper (2002:75) regards the empty tomb and the appearance of two angels in Jn 20:12 as the fulfillment of the greater thing to see in Jn 1:51. The angelophany in 20:12 is the only narrative that can be matched with the angels of God ascending and descending, because of its similarity with Jn 1:51 in the usage of apocalyptic

literature, and the event of the resurrection of Jesus is also regarded as an eschatological event. However more important is the verb, ὄψεσθε (Jn 1:51) that describes a more public event like the parousia.

The Son of Man in John's gospel is related to the concept of ascending and descending. That the Son of Man came from heaven and will return to heaven is in Jn 3:13, 6:62, and the Father set his seal on the Son of Man in 6:27. Jesus predicted that the Son of Man who descended to the earth has to be lifted up on the cross to give his life for the people (Jn 3:14; 6:53; 8:28; 12:34). Lastly the crucifixion is the glory of the love of the Son of Man (Jn 12:23) and the glory of the love of the Father (Jn 13:31), and the Son of Man has the authority of judgement (Jn 5:27). However it is difficult to match his ministry to the Son of Man who saw the angels ascending and descending between heaven and him. As the result of this study, the fulfillment of the scene in Jn 1:51 is not exactly found in John's gospel. However it is confirmed that the three motifs in Jn 1:51 are used in John's gospel.

#### **8.1.4 Jacob's vision in the New Testament**

There is no direct quotation of Gn 28:12 in the New Testament besides Jn 1:51. Aune (2002a:280) regarded Rv 4:1 as an allusion to Gn 28:17, emphasizing the verb ἠνεώγησεν as a divine activity, because God opened the door to John to show him the kingdom of God. However the phrase "the heaven opened" is found in Mt 3:16, Lk 3:21, Ac 7:56, and Ac 10:11. In Mt 3:16, and Lk 3:21, the heaven opened not for the descending Son of Man or the angels of God but for the Holy Spirit's descending on Jesus, at Jesus' baptism. It presents the Holy Spirit's origin in heaven, the dwelling place of God, and Jesus was proved to be the messiah, the anointed by the Holy Spirit. The vision of opening of the heaven to Peter in

Ac 10:11 is a metaphor about the universal redemption of the gospel to the family of Cornelius.

Similar to the concept of the open heaven in Jn 1:51 is the vision of Stephen in Ac 7:56. The Son of Man and the open heaven among the three motifs in Jn 1:51, are found in Ac 7:56. The difference is that there are no angels of God and the Son of Man is not on earth but at the right hand of God in heaven, not sitting but standing at the right hand of God.

There is no direct expression of angels ascending and descending in the New Testament besides Jn 1:51. However, the appearance of an angel or disappearance of the angel can be regarded as his ascending and descending. The expression of the angel's "ascending" without "descending" is in Lk 2:15 in Jesus' birth narrative to deliver the good news. After they announced it with praise to God, they left and returned to heaven. The expression of the angel's "descending" without "ascending" is in Mt 28:2 and Lk 22:43 after Jesus' resurrection. The angel of God descended from heaven and opened the tomb in Mt 28:2. An angel came from heaven to strengthen Jesus who was praying at the Mount of Olives in Lk 22:43. The ascending and descending of the angels of God in the gospels are intermittent, while the promise in Jn 1:51 is of a continuous "ascending and descending" on the Son of Man. In the Targum the comparing of the face of Jacob and the icon on the throne in heaven was considered to happen many times. Four times moving up and down on the ladder was mentioned in the *Ladder of Jacob*. There are not exact examples of the acts of the angels described in Jn 1:51. It is certain that the aim of the angels' ascending or descending in the New Testament is to assist the Son of Man.

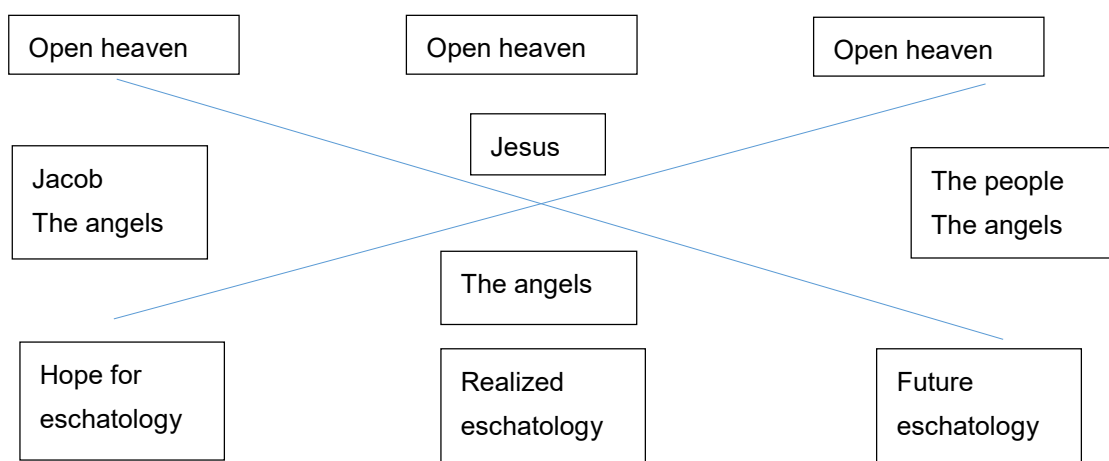


The title of the Son of Man with the concept of ascending and descending is used many times in the Synoptic Gospels. Different from John's gospel, there are many mentions in the other gospels about the Son of Man who came to the earth and ascends to heaven and will come again with the clouds in glory. About the first descending, Jesus indicated that the aim of his coming is to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mk 10:45). After the ascension of the Son of Man, he is seated at the right hand of the mighty God (Lk 22:69). The place at the right hand of God was recognized as the place of honour and co-regency of the Son of Man in heaven. It can be expressed by a throne. The throne is indicated as heaven itself (Mt 5:34; Ac 7:49). In the throne vision of Is 6:1 the throne is distinguished from heaven, and it indicates that the throne is in heaven. The second descending of the Son of Man was mentioned many times in the Synoptic Gospels. It expressed the return of the king who will come to judge the world (Mt 16:27; 19:28). It will come unexpectedly like the flood in the days of Noah (Mt 24:37, 39, 44; 25:13; Lk 12:40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30). The second descent of the Son of Man is a public event like the promise in Jn 1:51. The Son of Man will descend in the view of all people. Secondly, the Son of Man will come on the clouds of the heaven (Mt 24:30; 26:63; Mk 13:26; 14:62; Lk 21:27). Lastly, the angels of God will accompany the descending Son of Man and he will send them to gather the select and to sift out the lawless (Mt 13:41; 16:27; 24:31; 25:31). The accompanying by the angels of God matches Jn 1:51.

While the description about the descending of the Son of Man in Revelation is a prediction by Jesus, it is through the vision that John received. The concept of the open heaven occurs twice in Revelation (Rv 4:1; 19:11). The first opened heaven is for John to see the celestial vision, and the second opened heaven is for the parousia of the Son of Man. The angels described in Revelation are

excutors of the judgement on the order of the Son of Man. There are four angels at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds (Rv 7:1). When the Son of Man opens the seventh seal, there are seven angels with seven trumpets (Rv 8:2-11:15) An angel has a sharp sickle to gather the clusters of vine as symbols of the judgement by the Son of Man (Rv 14:17-18). The other angel has the key of the bottomless pit and a big chain to bind the Devil and Satan (Rv 20:1). The role of the angels are emphasized in Revelation, more than in the rest of the New Testament. Even though there are only two direct references to the Son of Man, it is certain that the descension of the Son of Man is the main theme of Revelation.

In conclusion, the three motifs in Jn 1:51 plays an important role in the whole New Testament, because they are symbols of the Son of Man who ascended and will descend again with the angels through the open heaven. John alludes to the dream of Jacob in Gn 28:12 for the main story of christianity. The diagram below explains the relation between Jacob's vision and the New Testament.



Between the times of Jacob and Jesus, Ezekiel and Daniel saw the heavenly vision, and Jesus shared this vision with his followers. Even though John and

Jesus' followers expected the fulfilment of this vision during their life, the expectation about the parousia of the Son of Man continued in the early church. Apparently, the eschatology of Judaism and the eschatology of christianity differs, even though there are many similarities, because they used the same Old Testament tradition. It differs because the authors of the New Testament interpreted it with their application of it to Jesus and it took mainly the form of realized eschatology.

## 8.2 Theological synthesis and development

There are many theological aspects in Jn 1:51, because of the three concepts that were alluded to from Ezk 1:1, Gn 28:12, and Dn 7:13. The Son of Man refers to the christology of John's gospel. The concept of the angels of God ascending and descending shows the understanding about angels. Even though all these concepts have an eschatological character, the main concept of eschatology is the opened heaven.

### 8.2.1 The Christology of Jn 1:51

The main concept of the christology of John's gospel is the one who was sent by God. It accords with the concept of the ascending and descending of angels on the Son of Man in Jn 1:51. There are many expressions about the one who was sent. It is a most fundamental concept about the christology of John's gospel, as Schnackenburg (1995:248) mentioned;

Perhaps the most fundamental and comprehensive assertion about Jesus Christ is that he is the one sent by the Father into the world.

The exact title is the Son of God who was given by God to the world (Jn 3:16). The other title is the divine Logos who was with God from the beginning and was sent to the world (Jn 1:1). This concept is also expressed in that he is the light that shines in the darkness (Jn 1:5). Jesus is also the prophet like Moses who deliver the word of God and is the Word itself in Jn 6:14 and 7:40 (Kim 2008:66-71). These christological titles relate to the concept of the ascending and descending, because descending means to be sent from God. The Son's position was in heaven the dwelling place of God. It is consistent with the two concepts "above" and "below" in John's gospel (Gilbert 2009:14). Therefore the christology of John's gospel can be named as an ascending and descending christology. It is among the lists of John's christology that was presented by Brown (2003:251-252).

The first title in John's christology is the *Logos* (Jn 1:1-18). John 1:1 alludes to Gn 1:1 and starts with the presuppositional phrase, "in the beginning" (Bauckham 2005:150). It is related to the existence of the Logos. The verb ἦν (Joh 1:1) does not mean the starting of his existence, but demonstrate his existence like the next ἦν. The Logos was with God. It is related with the existence of God that was explained in front of Moses by God in Ex 3:14, "I am who I am". Therefore the Logos was described with the same words for God. The Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. The main point of the Logos christology is the incarnation of the Logos (Jn 1:14). It indicates the first descension of Jesus. The point of the Logos christology is that the divine Logos who was with God in the beginning descended to the earth to take on a human body.

The next title is the *light* (Jn 1:4). The light was created on the first day in Genesis. After the phrase, "in the beginning", the expression of the light as a metaphor for

the Son relates with the order of Genesis. However it does not imply that the Son was first created in the creation, because the Logos existed before creation. According to Endo (2002:244), the concept is ideal to indicate the “saving revelation” in John’s gospel, because the Servant of God was prophesized as the light to the nations in Is 42:6. 49:6, and 51:4. However the more effective function of the light is that it is the opposite concept of darkness. The light shined in the darkness which indicates the world. It means the origin of the light is not the world, and it is accorded with the one who was sent by God.

The most important title is the concept of “*the Son*”. The Son is also related as the one who was sent by the Father. It is demonstrated plainly by Jesus himself, and John demonstrated his aim with his gospel as that the people may believe that Jesus is the Son of God. The title Son of God is used to emphasise his divine sonship.

Jesus Himself of John, his interpreter, seems to identify divine sonship with His role as God’s envoy in several texts (X: 36; XVI:27). But more often the divine sonship of Jesus is openly and definitely proclaimed as a truth (one among many) clarified by a post paschal revelation (Sabourin 1967:247).

Jesus frequently mentioned the relationship between the Father and the Son in John’s gospel. The Son was sent by the Father to the world.

Common among these three titles is the one who descended from heaven, the dwelling place of God. The Logos was with God and became human, and the true light came to the world to give light to every man (Jn 1:9). The Father gave the begotten Son to the world (Jn 3:16) and God sent his Son into the world to save the world through him (v. 17). This concept is concerned with the descending of the Son of Man. The title that was used in Jn 1:51 is the “Son of Man”. The Son

of Man in John's gospel is described as the one who descended from heaven (Jn 3:13). Heaven is the place where the Son of Man was before and at the same time the place to ascend to (Jn 6:62). The Son of Man have to be lifted up in this world like the snake made by Moses (Jn 3:14; 8:28; 12:34) to give his flesh and blood to the people (Jn 6:53). From his lifting up in front of the people, the Son of Man is glorified and the Father is glorified (Jn 12:23; 13:31). The Son of Man has the authority to judge (Jn 5:27).

There is an apparent concept of ascending and descending of the Son of Man in John's gospel, so the concept of ascending and descending is the main concept of John's gospel. The concept of ascending and descending is connected to the adverbs "above" and "below", as Meeks (1972:67) explains Jn 8:23;

The dualistic tendency of the motif in John can be seen most sharply in the elliptical use of the adverbs "above" and "below" in 8:23:

ὕμεῖς ἐκ τῶν κάτω ἐστέ,  
ἐγὼ ἐκ τῶν ἄνω εἰμί·  
ὕμεῖς ἐκ τούτου τοῦ κόσμου ἐστέ,  
ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμί ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου.

From the comparison between "above" and "below", there is a certain division between heaven and earth. It is certain that this concept of "above" and "below" is described in Jn 1:51 also, from the motif of the open heaven with the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

### **8.2.2 Angelology in the motifs in Jn 1:51**

The concept of the angels in John's gospel is a part of his christology, because the angels were sent by God and returned to heaven like the Son of Man. The

role of the angels in John's gospel is to assist the Son of Man. According to Steyn (2003:1118), the angels are inferior to Christ in the New Testament:

In Hebrews, 1 Peter and Revelation angels receive far more attention – which is probably indicative of some progressive belief in angels amongst early Christian communities as time progressed towards the end of the first century AD. Heb 1:14 describes angels as ministering spirits engaged in the service of the saints. Peter also emphasizes the supremacy of Jesus over all angelic beings (1 Pt 3:22).

In John's gospel there are three appearances of the angels (Jn 5:4 [BYZ], 12:29, 20:12). It is a small usage compared to the other gospels. The story about the angel that went down into the pool and stirred up the water in Jn 5:4 is only in the Byzantine text. It is a superstitious belief of the people who sought healing from the miracle by the angel. The angels are the spiritual beings and the agents of God. In the Old Testament tradition, no healing of sick people by angels was recorded. In Jn 12:29, there is no appearance of an angel but the people guessed that the voice from heaven was the voice of an angel. Therefore the real appearance of angels is only of the two angels who appeared after Jesus was resurrected in Jn 20:12. The angels in Jn 1:51 is also not a real appearance, because it is the vision that Jesus promised about the future.

A theological synthesis about the angels is difficult in John. However it can be reached through the angelology in Jn 1:51. The first is the fact of ascending and descending of the angels of God. Even though the angels are the celestial existences, their working area is both heaven and earth. In the vision of John about the celestial world in Rv 5:11, one of the roles of the angels is to give praise to the holy God (cf. Rv 7:11). The earthly works of the angels are to bring the prayers of the saints to God (Rv 8:1-4), to deliver the message of God to the people, to guard the saints (Ac 5:19), to fight the spiritual fighting with the evil

powers (Rv 12:7-8, 20:1-3), and to interpret the vision that was shown by God. Aune (2006:22) regards Rv 21:9-22:9 as the interpretation of the angels;

In Rev 21:9-22:9, the figure of an angelus interpret appears for the second time in the narrative. However, in this context, unlike his first appearance in 17:1-8, the angelus interpret has very little to explain to the seer, none of which can actually be considered interpretive. In fact, the only statement attributed to this angel is an invitation to the seer in 21:9.

The concept of the angels ascending and descending implied both the angels' heavenly and earthly works, because ascending and descending are included in both places. The descriptions of the angels in Revelation is accorded the same character.

### **8.2.3 Eschatology of the motifs in Jn 1:51**

John 1:51 is located at the beginning of John's gospel with three eschatological themes; An open heaven, angels ascending and descending, and the Son of Man. These three themes are used in the whole of John's gospel. It means that eschatological themes have an important role in the whole of John's gospel, as Ladd pointed out;

The question of the eschatological teaching of the Fourth gospel brings the entire Johannine problem into sharp focus (Ladd 1974:298)

There are many different opinions among scholars about John's eschatology, because of different interpretations of Jesus' sayings in the gospels. Weiss insisted that the kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed is a future kingdom, because it has the prophetic background and the apocalyptic perspective of Judaism. Schweitzer developed the opinion and popularized it to a consistent eschatology. He mentioned that Jesus believed in an imminent eschatology of



the Jewish apocalyptic literature, that the people believed the messiah will bring the historical eschatology to them (Schweitzer 2000).

Dodd (1944:71-72) regarded Jn 3:18-19 and 5:25 as proof of his realized eschatology. In his commentary on Jn 3:18-19, he regards John's word that the one who does not believe in the name of Jesus is already condemned as that judgement has already been passed. The everlasting life has already come, because the word μεταβέβηκεν in 5:24 is in the perfect tense, has passed from death to life. It means that the eschatology has already started when Jesus came to the world. Dodd constructed his eschatology with an analysis of the concept of the day of the Lord in his book, "the apostolic preaching and its development" (Dodd 1944:82-86). According to him, in the Old Testament the day of the Lord was regarded as future, but it is present in the New Testament. It means that in the New Testament the kingdom of God is realized. To the authors of the New Testament, the eschatology is realized in history. The rule of God was hidden in the Old Testament, but it is revealed in the New Testament, and the time to come has arrived. He continued his statement that the future advent of Christ, the day of Judgement, and the new heaven and earth have been inserted in the Bible from the apocalyptic literature, in order to solve the delayed advent of Jesus (Dodd 1944:36).

According to Schwarz (2000:125), Bultmann tried an existential eschatology and he quoted Bultmann's opinion about his eschatology: "The mythical eschatology is untenable for the simple reason that the parousia of Christ never took place as the New Testament expected". Bultmann's main theological method was based on demythologising the myths in the Bible. Therefore he insisted that the mythological eschatology had to be interpreted existentially by demythologizing the

message. He concentrated on the events of the last days in the New Testament in the Kerygma. The last day to Bultmann is when the individual meets the Christ. Through this meeting, the individual lives on an existentially new life, and the judgement and resurrection of the Christ is present through repeating it. Namely, the individual's experience of the historical eschatology at the death of an old person meets the Christ through the kerygma, is resurrected through his self identification as a new creature in the kerygma. But according to the study about the role of Jn 1:51 in John's gospel, it cannot be denied that there are future eschatological motifs. To Bultmann they are mythological facts, and have to be demythologised. He regarded the eschatological events in John's gospel, as "already being consummated" (Bultmann 1969:175).

Dodd indicates that they are insertions by the church from the apocalyptic literature on account of the delayed eschatology. It means that there are futuristic eschatological facts in John's gospel, and the scholars are divided about their interpretation. To solve the futuristic eschatological facts in John's gospel, the tension between the already and not yet of eschatology must be seen. There are two antithetic concepts about the eschatology in John's gospel. The judgment has already come and will come in future. It can be applied in the case of the interpretation of Jn 1:51. At the first descension of the Son of Man, the eschatology already started, but the second descension of the Son of Man is still waiting (6:39, 40; 13:33; 14:3; 21:22, 23).

## Conclusion

From the study of the motifs that was used in Jn 1:51 as the allusion to Gn 28:12, it is certain that there are apocalyptic traditions in the background of John's gospel and Revelation. The method of allusion to Gn 28:12 in John's gospel is not simple, because there are also two motifs from other traditions. The open heaven is from Ezekiel, and the Son of Man is from Daniel. However it is complicated by many similar usages of these motifs. These three motifs were used with an eschatological intention in the apocalyptic literature in Judaism. The celestial world was described with the interpretation of the angels of God. Therefore it is certain that the composition of these three eschatological motifs in Jn 1:51 was intentionally.

In spite of the eschatological intention of the allusion to Gn 28:12 in Jn 1:51, there is less mention about the parousia in John's gospel than in the other gospels. From it, the realized eschatology was considered as the eschatology of John's gospel. However it is certain that a futural eschatology is implied in John's gospel including Jn 1:51. It is revealed in Revelation in more detail. John's eschatology is intended to modify the eschatology expected by the people of Israel, including Nathanael. It also raises the expectation about the open heaven as the dwelling place of God and of the Son of Man to which he returned. The fulfillment of the promise in Jn 1:51 is at the parousia which means the second descension of the Son of Man.

Between Jn 1:51 and the motif of "Jacob's Ladder" in Gn 28:12, there are connecting points with the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael as well as between Jesus and the people who were present with Jesus. "Jacob's Ladder" in

Gn 28:12 symbolizes the open heaven and the path to heaven of the angels, so that it refers to the vision of Jacob in Gn 28:12. Jesus omitted these elements and used “the Son of Man” instead. It means that the Son of Man’s role was seen as being symbolized in “Jacob’s Ladder”. John thus reinterprets “Jacob’s Ladder” theologically in terms of Jesus in an eschatological manner.

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