

BACK TO BETHEL - 1



BACK TO BETHEL - Gen.35: 1-5; 28: 10-22

I. Bethel is A Place of Rest & Respite:

Jacob was greatly troubled and in distress when he got to Bethel. He ran away from home after deceiving his father and stealing his brother Esau's birthright who threatened to kill him.

Why are you troubled now? Jacob was tired when he stopped over at Bethel to rest on his way to Laban, his uncle in Haran. Jacob found peace, rest and respite in Bethel. Jesus still gives rest to troubled souls - **Matt.11:28**.

Come to Christ today and you will find lasting peace and joy for your soul.

II. Bethel is A Place of Divine Encounter: - Gen.28: 16-17.

Jacob was so tired when he got to Bethel that he slept using a stone for a pillow. However, he dreamt and saw a long ladder spanning heaven and earth with angels ascending and descending on it and standing at the end of the ladder.

Bethel for Jacob was a place of divine encounter with God. When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, 'so God was in this place and I knew it not'. He then changed the name of the place from Luz (meaning - A Hard Place) to Bethel (meaning House of God). We all need such encounters with God in order to experience Him personally.

III. Bethel is A Place of Prayer: - Gen.28: 20-22; 32: 24-26.

Jacob encountered God at Bethel and prayed to Him. He encountered God at Bethel on his outward journey to Haran and prayed to commit his journey to God.

He encountered God again on his return journey from Haran and prayed also. That was when he wrestled with the Angel of God and prevailed, and his name was changed from Jacob to Israel. Over the years, Jacob had become a mighty man of prayer. We need God's grace and strength also to pray and to prevail like Jacob.

IV. Bethel is A Place of Breakthrough & Blessing: - Gen.28: 13-15; 35: 10-12.

When Jacob first encountered God at Bethel on his way to Haran, he didn't make the best use of that opportunity. We forfeit lots of chances in life also. However, when he encountered God the second time on his return journey from Haran, and perhaps because he had learnt some lessons from his first experience, he held tightly to the Angel of God all through the night and would not let Him go until he blessed him.

The Angel of God touched the root of Jacob's problem and changed his name from Jacob to Israel. Jacob that day got his breakthrough and God's blessing. We don't know the root of our problems a lot of times also but the God of Jacob and of Bethel is able to both identify the root-causes of our problems and minister solutions to them at the same time. As we pray like Jacob, God will touch the root of our problems and we will have our breakthroughs and be blessed like Jacob.

V. Bethel is A Place of Commitment, Covenant & Vow: - Gen.28: 20-22.

Jacob made a commitment to serve God for the rest of His life at Bethel. We need to make this type of long-lasting commitment to serve God also - **Ps.23: 6; 48: 14.**

Jacob vowed to God at Bethel also. A vow is a conditional promise to do certain things after God answers our prayer. Hannah's vow is another classical example - **1Sam.1: 11.**

We make vows when we are desperate in prayers in order to show our seriousness before God.

However, Jacob forgot his commitment vow after a long time but God reminded him and asked Jacob to return to Bethel, the place of his commitment and vow to God and fulfill his promise.

Often, we get so busy and distracted in life that we forget our vows and promises before God. However, we must remember our commitment and vows before God and be faithful to fulfill them. Unfaithfulness to vows and promises to God in itself could be the root-cause of certain problems. So, we must learn to be faithful - **1Cor.4: 1-2.**

God promised to bless Jacob also and we know God cannot lie or fail - **Gen.35: 10-12.**

VI. Bethel is A Place of Separation & Consecration: - Gen.35: 2 & 4.

At Bethel, God asked Jacob to consecrate himself and members of his family to Him. Before now, after Jacob returned from Haran, he settled in Canaan and members of his household had started emulating the lifestyle of the inhabitants of the land to worship their idols. Rachael stole her father's household gods and came along with them also (Gen.31).

By this time, Jacob's family was already in disarray - Dinah, his only daughter was raped and as a result, Simeon and Levi committed murder (Gen.34). Reuben, his first son also slept with

Bilhah, his father's concubine (Gen.35). God therefore challenged Jacob and his household to separate themselves from the ungodly people of the land, put away their strange gods and be consecrated unto Him - God Almighty. God is calling us - His people in the Church to separate and Consecrate ourselves unto Him also - **Rom.12: 1; 2Cor.6: 14-18.**

VII. Bethel is The House of God & A Place of Worship:

Jacob recognized Bethel as the House of God - **Gen.28: 16-18; 35: 1-3, 14-15.**

At Bethel, Jacob raised an altar to God as promised after removing all strange gods and consecrating his family to God. We all need to return to God like Jacob and his family. We should all learn to repair the broken altars of our lives and return to truly worship the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ - **Jn.4: 24.**

Now a days, much that we call worship is nothing but entertainment and absorption with self. However, true and Spirit-filled worship is when we all learn respect God not just with our songs but much more with our thoughts, our words and our lives.