

GENERAL SUBJECT: BETHEL—THE HOUSE OF GOD

Message One

The Dream of Bethel

Scripture Reading: Gen. 28:10-22; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21-22

- I. **We need to be enlightened by and fully saturated with the thought that in this universe God is doing only one thing—building His eternal habitation—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21-22; Rev. 21:2-3.**
- II. **The account of Jacob’s dream at Bethel is the most crucial word in the revelation of God, including the whole Bible in its scope and requiring the rest of the Bible to explain it—Gen. 28:10-22; Matt. 16:18; 1 Tim. 3:15:**
 - A. Genesis 28:10-22 is the first place in Scripture where God reveals that His intention is to build Himself together with man and to have a dwelling place, a Bethel, on earth.
 - B. Jacob’s dream is a revelation of Christ, for the center of this dream is Christ as the ladder—v. 12; John 1:51:
 1. The purpose of the dream at Bethel is always that we see Christ as the ladder; this ladder issues in Bethel, the house of God on earth.
 2. Christ, in His being the heavenly ladder at Bethel, speaks to us how God desires to have a house on earth constituted with His redeemed and transformed elect, that He may bring heaven to earth and join earth to heaven, to make the two as one for eternity.
 - C. In the account of Jacob’s dream at Bethel, there are four outstanding items: the stone, the pillar, the oil, and the house of God—Gen. 28:11, 17-19, 22:
 1. The stone signifies the Christ who has been wrought into our being to become our rest—v. 11.
 2. Jacob set up the stone for a pillar; this signifies that the Christ who has been wrought into us becomes material for God’s building—v. 18a.
 3. Jacob’s pouring oil upon the stone which was set up as a pillar signifies the Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God reaching man—v. 18b.
 4. After the oil was poured upon the pillar, the pillar became the house of God—v.v. 19a, 22a.
 - D. Every step of Jacob’s life was involved with Bethel—v. 19; 35:1, 3, 6-7, 15.
- III. **Jacob’s history is a picture of the discipline of the Holy Spirit—31:38-41; 47:9; 48:15-16a; Heb. 12:9-11:**
 - A. Although God unveiled to Jacob the desire of His heart to have Bethel, this did not transform Jacob at all; Jacob still needed to be dealt with, broken, and transformed—Gen. 28:20-21.
 - B. The discipline of the Holy Spirit refers to what the Holy Spirit is doing in our outward environment, to His arranging of all people, things, and happenings through which we are being dealt with and disciplined—Rom. 8:28.
 - C. Through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, God completely tears down our old creation so that the element of the new creation may be built up in us.
 - D. As our natural life is dealt with through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, Christ is constituted into us—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17a.
 - E. Everything and everyone in our environment is an instrument of sovereignty used by God for our transformation; this is for Bethel—Rom. 8:28; 12:4-5.