

Message Two

The Reality of Bethel

Scripture Reading: Gen. 32:22-32; 35:1-15

- I. God's building is the desire of God's heart and the goal of God's salvation—Exo. 25:8:**
- A. God's building is the Triune God as life being wrought into us so that we may become His corporate expression—Eph. 3:17a, 19b, 21.
 - B. God's building is the mingling of God with man; the principle of God's building is that God builds Himself into us and builds us into Himself—John 14:20; 15:4a; Eph. 3:17a.
 - C. To be built up with fellow believers is the Lord's supreme and highest requirement of His faithful seekers according to the divine oneness of the Divine Trinity—John 17.
- II. Jacob's life shows us that God has to break our natural life, that He has to touch our natural life in a drastic way—Gen. 32:22-32:**
- A. The Lord wrestled with Jacob in order to expose to him how natural he was and how great his natural strength was—v. 24.
 - B. After Jacob was broken by God, outwardly he was the same as before, but inwardly his natural life had been dealt with—33:1-4:
 - 1. It was not the outward living that was touched by the Lord; it was the inward, natural strength that was touched by Him—32:32b.
 - 2. When the Lord touches us at a certain crucial spot, we are lame and are no longer whole—v. 25.
 - C. After Jacob was broken, “the sun rose upon him,” and “he limped because of his hip”; this indicates that anyone in the Lord's recovery who has light must be a crippled one—v. 31.
- III. In Genesis 35 the vision of Bethel came again; however, this time it did not come as a dream—it came as a reality:**
- A. We all come into the church life twice—28:12, 16-17; 35:15:
 - 1. The first time we come in a dream, and the second time we come in reality; we need both the dream and the reality.
 - 2. The dream in the beginning was a true picture, and everything in the reality is the same as that in the dream.
 - B. God's desire was to bring Jacob back to Bethel; the first thing Jacob did at Bethel was to build an altar according to God's desire—vv. 1, 3, 7.
 - C. At Bethel Jacob set up a pillar and poured out a drink offering on it; this indicates that the drink offering is for God's building—v. 14a.
 - D. Our pouring ourselves out as a drink offering to God brings in the outpouring of the Spirit for God's building—v. 14b.
- IV. At Bethel Jacob's name was changed to Israel, indicating that his being had been changed; now he was Israel at Bethel—32:28; 35:10.**