

Message Four

The Function of Bethel

Scripture Reading: Gen. 25:22-23; 35:1, 16-21, 27

- I. Jacob was chosen before his birth; therefore, in Jacob we see God's selection—Gen. 25:22-23; Rom. 9:11:**
 - A. God's selection depends not on what we are but on God's sovereign mercy—Rom. 9:11-13, 16.
 - B. As those who have been chosen by God, we should cast ourselves upon Him and trust that He will bring us to the point where we are pleasing to Him.
- II. Jacob, a man under God's transforming hand, represents a life of transformation for the corporate expression of Christ—Gen. 32:28; 35:10, 16-21, 27:**
 - A. The trouble Simeon and Levi caused Jacob touched him in the depths of his being, and he began to be transformed—34:30; 49:5-6:
 - 1. After the events recorded in Genesis 34, Jacob could heed God's word about going up to Bethel—35:1.
 - 2. Without being in a difficult environment, we are often unable to listen to the word of God; therefore, before He speaks to us, He waits for certain things to happen to us.
 - B. The birth of Benjamin and the death of Rachel occurred simultaneously; this means that Jacob gained a son by losing Rachel—vv. 16-20:
 - 1. Jacob gained Christ (typified by Benjamin) through the loss of his natural choice (signified by Rachel)—v. 18; 29:9-11, 16-20.
 - 2. Eventually, we will be confronted with a choice—to keep Rachel (our natural choice) or to gain Benjamin (the expression of Christ).
- III. The function of Bethel, the house of God, is to express Christ—Eph. 1:22-23:**
 - A. God's ultimate goal is the expression of Christ, and the expression of Christ is not an individual matter but a corporate matter in the house of God—John 17:22; Eph. 3:21; Rom. 9:23.
 - B. The bringing forth of Christ for the corporate expression of Christ will cost us our natural choice, our natural desire, and our natural life.
- IV. After experiencing deeper and more personal dealings, Jacob entered into full fellowship with the Lord at Hebron; the fellowship at Hebron means intimacy, peace, satisfaction, and joy—Gen. 35:27:**
 - A. Although we are in the church life, we still need to journey on, passing through deeper and more personal dealings until we come to Hebron and enter into full fellowship with the Lord—1 John 1:3, 6; 1 Cor. 1:9.
 - B. The fellowship at Hebron is not only fellowship with God but also with other members of the Body of Christ—Phil. 2:1; 1 John 1:7.
 - C. If our flesh has been dealt with, we will know the life of the Body of Christ, we will see the importance of fellowship, and we will realize that apart from the fellowship of the Body, we cannot live—1 Cor. 12:14-27.