



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 58



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literat Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

JACOB JOURNEYS TO BETHEL WHERE GOD APPEARS TO HIM

Gen 35:1 "And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. ²Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: ³And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. ⁴And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. ⁵And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. ⁶So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. ⁷And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother. ⁸But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allonbachuth. ⁹And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him. ¹⁰And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. ¹¹And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; ¹²And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. ¹³And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. ¹⁴And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. ¹⁵And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel. ¹⁶And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. ¹⁷And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. ¹⁸And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. ¹⁹And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. ²⁰And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day. ²¹And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar. ²²And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: ²³The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun: ²⁴The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: ²⁵And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali: ²⁶And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padanaram. ²⁷And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. ²⁸And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. ²⁹And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him. Genesis 35:1-29)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT
God commands Jacob to return to Bethel, where He appeared to Jacob

when he was fleeing from Esau – twenty years earlier. In preparation, Jacob tells his household to remove all

strange gods, be clean, and change their garments. After burying them all under an oak tree, they commenced

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their journey to Bethel. No one dared to touched them along the way. Having arrived at Bethel, he built an altar. At that time Rachel's longtime nurse died, and was buried. God appeared to Jacob, blessed him, changed his name, and renewed the Abrahamic covenant with him. Jacob officially names the place "Bethel." Rachel gives birth to Benjamin, and dies in the process. She was buried in Bethlehem. Jacob camps beyond the tower of Edar, and Reuben lay with Jacob's concubine Bilhah. Isaac arrives at Mamre, the residence of his father Isaac. Isaac dies at one hundred and eighty years of age, and is buried by Esau and Jacob.

THE ANALYSIS OF LIFE

In the life of Jacob, as well as that

of Abraham and Isaac, we are exposed to the Divine analysis of a person's life. The same was true of Adam, Cain, Abel, and Noah. The lives of these people were not viewed from a mere biographical point of view. That would allow for unprofitable conclusions to be drawn by the readers. They would also assign priorities that did not reflect the mind of the Lord. **Men are never to be assessed within the context of other men.** That is why Adam was assessed without regard to any peers. **Therefore, we read the following concerning Adam.**

- ➔ THE CREATION OF ADAM: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen 2:7).
- ➔ ADAM NAMES THE ANIMALS. "And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof" (Gen 2:19).
- ➔ GOD GIVES ADAM A WIFE. "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Gen 2:21-24).
- ➔ ADAM'S SIN, CURSING, AND EXPULSION FROM THE GARDEN. "And when the

woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened

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unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen 3:24).

➔ **ADAM BEGETS CAIN AND ABEL.** *"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." (Gen 4:1-2).*

➔ **ADAM BEGETS SETH, THE PROGENITOR OF THE MESSIANIC LINEAGE.** *"And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew" (Gen 4:25).*

➔ **ADAM DIES AT THE AGE OF 930.** *"And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died" (Gen 5:4-5)*

➔ **ADAM OWNS THE TRANSGRESSION.** *"Adam's transgression" (Rom 5:14a).*

➔ **A TYPE OF CHRIST.** He *"is the figure of One to come" (Rom 5:124b).*

➔ **THE IMPACT OF HIS SIN, #1.** *"Through the offence of one, many be dead" (Rom 5:15).*

➔ **THE IMPACT OF HIS SIN, #2.** *"One that sinned . . . for the judgment was by one unto condemnation" (Rom 5:16).*

➔ **THE IMPACT OF HIS SIN, #3.** *"By one man's offence sin reigned" (Rom 5:17).*

➔ **THE IMPACT OF HIS SIN, #4.** *"By the offence of one judgment came upon all men" (Rom 5:18).*

➔ **THE IMPACT OF HIS SIN, #5.** *"By one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Rom 5:19).*

➔ **THE IMPACT OF HIS SIN, #6.** *"In Adam all die" (1 Cor 15:22).*

➔ **MADE A LIVING SOUL.** *"The first man Adam was made a living soul" (1 Cor 5:45).*

➔ **WAS "OF THE EARTH."** *"The first man was of the earth, earthy" (1 Cor 15:47).*

➔ **ADAM WAS FORMED FIRST.** *"Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Tim 2:13).*

➔ **ADAM WAS NOT DECEIVED.** *"Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Tim 2:14).*

THIS IS WHAT IS REVEALED ABOUT ADAM

Although Adam lived for nine hundred and thirty years, everything we know about him, excluding his death, covered very few days within a one hundred and thirty year period. While this listing is a bit cumbersome, I felt it necessary to establish a vital point concerning the manner in which God

reveals past personalities.

Some have juvenily proclaimed, "We know Scriptural accounts are true because they reveal men's faults as well as their virtues. It shows them fully to us, warts and all." First of all, this is not true of all men revealed in Scripture. There are no specific sins recorded against the persons listed below. Second, these are the mere lispings of, at the very best, spiritual infants.

It is not that these people did not sin, for *"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom 3:23). Some men, however, were not given as examples of sinners, even though they by nature were sinners. Moses, for example, was not raised up for the same purpose as Pharaoh (Ex 9:16; Rom 9:17). It would be a grievous sin to say "Moses was a sinner like Pharaoh," for he is not so represented.

NO SIN RECORDED AGAINST

➔ Abel	➔ Mary (Lazarus' sister)	➔ Alphaeus
➔ Shem	➔ John the Baptist	➔ Simon the Canaanite
➔ Japheth	➔ Matthew	➔ Stephen
➔ Joseph	➔ Luke	➔ Philip the Evangelist
➔ Isaiah	➔ John	➔ Silas
➔ Jeremiah	➔ Ananias (sent to Saul of Tarsus)	➔ Lois
➔ Nehemiah	➔ Andrew	➔ Eunice
➔ Ezra	➔ Bartholomew	➔ Timothy
➔ Shadrach	➔ James the son of	➔ Titus
➔ Meshach		➔ Aquila
➔ Abednego		➔ Priscilla
➔ Ezekiel		➔ Lydia
➔ Daniel		➔ Phebe
➔ Elizabeth		➔ Gaius
➔ Mary		
➔ Joseph		

WHAT IS TRUE ABOUT THE FATHERS, ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB

The point of the record of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is not to establish they were sinners – although they were. **Rather, in them God set forth what it means to be chosen by God, what it means to have faith, how the Lord directs men, and set the stage for the coming of the Savior.**

What can be said of those who point out, what they perceive to be, the sins of these men? What moves them to do something God himself did not do? Where is any man of understanding represented as pointing

out the sins of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Did Jesus ever refer to them in this manner? Did any of the apostles? Or Mark? Or Luke? Or James? Or Jude? How were they consistently represented by of the New Covenant era who drew attention to them? Where were any of them said to have been rebuked for sin? Where did Moses ever make an editorial remark about those men being guilty of a transgression? Or being dominated by unbelief?

Why is there an absence of such

a reference to the patriarchs? **It is because that is not now God the Creator wanted them to be seen. Their record is not intended to placate sinners, but to challenge saints.** That record has been deliberately crafted to make more precise, and enlarge our concepts of, Divine purpose, choice, and direction; and to set before our eyes what faith moves a person to do. It also is intended to provide the proper context for the entrance of the Savior into the world. That entrance would be through a specific God-formed race, in

a God-chosen country, and at a God-chosen time.

When men misrepresent these patriarchs by drawing attention to what they define as blunders and sins, they have **not** done so to glorify God, but to make sinners *“at ease in Zion”* (Amos 6:1). Their purpose is not in any way noble or commendable. They have sought to impose their opinion on Scripture, and move men to think differently of the patriarchs than they are presented by the Almighty God.

GO TO BETHEL AND DWELL THERE

Gen 35:1 ***“And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.”***

GOD SAID TO JACOB

“And God said unto Jacob . . .” Other versions read, *“Then God said to Jacob,”* ^{NKJV} *“In the meantime God said to Jacob”* ^{DOUAY} *“God told Jacob,”* ^{CEV} and *“Later, God told Jacob.”* ^{ISV}

obviously managed by the Lord. Jacob was so concerned about that meeting that he prayed to the Lord, that He would deliver him from Esau, because he feared his own brother (Gen 32:11). All of this is the background to our text. For mere men, such things would not have left them particularly sensitive to God. Some men would have dared to be angry with God. But such was not the case with Jacob. He heard God, and immediately responded in faith to Him.

did, not leaving it up to Jacob to figure out what he should do next. The God who condemns men for walking after their own devices (Jer 18:12-17), will not leave them to trust in such things. He will make His will known to those who walk by faith, confessing they are strangers and pilgrims in the earth.

GO UP TO BETHEL

“ . . . Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there . . .” Other versions read, *“live there,”* ^{NASB} *“settle there,”* ^{NIV} *“make your living-place there”* ^{BBE} and *“remain there.”* ^{TNK}

Jacob has just passed through a difficult time, receiving the news that his only daughter had been defiled, and that his sons had slaughtered all of the males in the city of Hamor, Shechem’s father. Further, that had followed the time of testing when he confronted Esau, which confrontation was obviously managed by the Lord.

Thus, Jacob is called to relocate in another place. This was frequently required. Abraham was called to relocate in a land the Lord would show him (Gen 12:1). He left and stopped in Haran, remaining there until God called him to complete the journey to the promised land (Gen 12:4-5). Abraham did not move until the Father told him to, and when he was told, he moved immediately.

Isaac was called to go to, and remain in Gerar during the time of famine in Canaan (Gen 26:1-3).

Jacob was called through Isaac to leave Canaan and go to Padanaram to find a wife from his mother’s brother (Gen 28:2). After spending twenty years with Laban, God told Jacob to *“return”* to the land of his fathers –

Jacob has just passed through a difficult time, receiving the news that his only daughter had been defiled, and that his sons had slaughtered all of the males in the city of Hamor, Shechem’s father. Further, that had followed the time of testing when he confronted Esau, which confrontation was

Now, having mercy upon Jacob, the Lord speaks to him to lift him into another area of thought. This confirms His care for Jacob, and that a higher purpose was being worked out through him. We do not know how the Lord spoke to Jacob. The point is that He

Canaan (Gen 31:3). Now, Jacob is further directed to go to Bethel, and take up residence there. **Thus we see that Jacob was directed to return to the land of Canaan, and to locate in a specific place in that land.**

MAKE THEE AN ALTAR UNTO GOD

" . . . and make there an altar unto God . . . " Other versions read *"build an altar,"* ^{NIV} and *"put up an altar."* ^{BBE}

The patriarchs were noted for building altars.

- ➡ When Abraham first arrived in Canaan, he built an altar (Gen 12:7).
- ➡ When Abraham later *"was located near Bethel, which was "on the west,"* he again *"build an altar unto the Lord"* (Gen 12:8; 13:3).
- ➡ When he came to Hebron, he once again *"built there an altar unto the Lord"* (Gen 13:18).
- ➡ On the mountain where he was to sacrifice Isaac, *"Abraham built an altar"* (Gen 22:9).
- ➡ When God appeared to Isaac in Beersheba, Isaac builded an altar there" (Gen 26:25).
- ➡ When Jacob was on his way to Padanaram, and had the vision of a ladder reaching into heaven, he set up a pillar of stone and poured oil upon it, sanctifying the place (Gen 28:18).
- ➡ When Jacob bought a piece of land from Hamor, *"he erected an altar"* there (Gen 33:20).

Now the Lord tells Jacob to build another altar. Although he was in the vicinity where other altars had been

Now the Lord tells Jacob to build another altar. Although he was in the vicinity where other altars had been built, they would not suffice for this occasion. A new altar, with a new set of memories.

built, they would not suffice for this occasion. A new altar, with a new set of memories and associations, was required.

Something to Be Learned

There is a certain freshness that is to characterize our holy recollections. The only things of the past on which we can profitably rely are those which have been wrought by Jesus Christ: His death, resurrection, and enthronement. Those occurred only one time. Atonement is associated with only one altar, as it was with the Tabernacle, and later with the Temple.

THAT APPEARED UNTO THEE

" . . . that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother."

The appearing to which the Lord referred took more than twenty years ago when, after he had been blessed by Isaac who thought he was Esau. At that time his mother, Rebekah, said, *"Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?"* (Gen 27:43-45). Isaac had confirmed her word by saying, *"Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the*

daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people" (Gen 28:2-3).

It was during the flight that he came to *"a certain place"* where *"he tarried all night."* That night *"he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it"* (Gen 28:12). God spoke to Jacob at that time confirming the following.

- ➡ His seed would be as the dust of the earth.
- ➡ His progeny would spread abroad to the west, east, north, and south.
- ➡ In him and in his seed all families of the earth would be blessed.
- ➡ He would keep Jacob in all places that he went.
- ➡ He would bring him back to Canaan.
- ➡ He would not leave Jacob until He had done He had promised him. (Gen 28:13-15).

Now, having passed through the experiences of the last twenty-plus years, he was to return to that original place of blessing. This time he would have a whole new series of personal experiences that confirmed the faithfulness of God.

PUT AWAY THE STRANGE GODS

" 2 Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments."

We will find that Jacob was acutely aware of the contaminating effects of the worship of false gods – particularly when it is found within the perimeter of one's authority or responsibility.

JACOB SAID

"Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him . . ." Other versions read, "to all his people," ^{BBE} "his family, and all who were with him," ^{CSB} "having called together all his household" ^{DOUAY} "everyone in his household" ^{NLT} and "his family and to everyone else who was traveling with him." ^{CEV}



The people addressed by Jacob included everyone traveling with him. This included Rachel and Joseph; Leah and her children: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah; Bilhah with Dan and Naphtali; Zilpah with Gad and Asher; the servants and any wives and children they may have had. Do not forget those wives and little children that Jacob's sons had taken captive from Shechem. They were included also. None of them were excluded from the requirement that Jacob now sets before them.

Jacob is going to meet with God, and he knows the implications of such a confrontation. Nothing could be found with him or upon his person, that was not acceptable to God. This was also true of every person traveling with him. Although they themselves would not be meeting with the Lord, because they

were with Jacob, they would have to prepare themselves.

What Was Required of Israel

The same sort of preparations were necessary for Israel when the Lord descended on Mount Sinai. They were told, "sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai" (Ex 19:11). Moses even told the men, "Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives." (Ex 19:15).

The Modern Loss of This Awareness

There has been a near-total loss of this kind of awareness in our generation. There is such an utter disdain for God Himself and the things of God that the people are unable to make an association of their appearance with the Living God. This is all driven by a distorted view of both the love and grace of God – both of which were part of God's nature of old time as well as now.

PUT AWAY THE STRANGE GODS

" . . . Put away the strange gods that are among you . . ." Other versions read, "the foreign gods," ^{NKJV} "alien gods," ^{TNK} "the gods of the stranger," ^{YLT} "destroy the idols," ^{LIVING} "get rid of the foreign gods," ^{GW} "the [images of] strange gods." ^{AMPLIFIED}

In Scripture, the idea of "strange" or "foreign" is not simply something from another country. Rather, it is someone or something for which God has made no place. In the world, for example, the people of God are "strangers" (1 Pet 2:11).

"Strange gods" were really no gods at all (Gal 4:8), and there was no place made for them in Jacob's house. They were to be removed, for their very presence encouraged the worship of them, which required the neglect of the true God.

The Application to Us

Among the saints of God, there are to be no "strange gods" – whether

reflected in false doctrine or material idols. Those who have embraced "another Jesus" (1 Cor 11:4) must put such away, excluding all their doctrinal aberration from both thought and speech.

Keep Yourselves from Idols

After declaring that Jesus has come to give us an understanding of God, that we might know Him, and stating "This is the true God, and eternal life," John solemnly exhorts, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen" (1 John 5:20-21).

The "idols" of reference are not the images of Baal, and other gods that are fashioned from wood and stone. These are intellectual idols – gods that have not been taught by Jesus. It is essential that Jesus teach men of the true God, for, as He declared, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt 11:27). These words will make no sense to the legalist. Such will ask how Jesus teaches, and what He has to say. To all such inquirers we say, "But go and learn what this means" ^{NKJV} (Matt 9:13). Jesus invites those who are aware of Him, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and **LEARN FROM ME**, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" ^{NKJV} (Matt 11:28-30).

All professing Christians must thrust from themselves any and all gods that are at variance with the teaching of Jesus. This will require self examination, and some understanding of the true God (John 17:3; 1 Thess 1:9; 1 John 5:20).

It is possible for a person to be serving an untrue God – one that was made known in "another gospel" (2 Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6). I realize that this is a very sensitive subject with men – but it is even more so with "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Pet

1:3). All of this highlights the absolute necessity of speaking *“the things which become sound doctrine”* (Tit 2:1), and thereby feeding the flock of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2).

BE CLEAN

“ . . . and be clean . . . ” Other versions read, *“purify yourselves,”* ^{NKJV} *“make yourselves clean,”* ^{BBE} *“clean yourselves,”* ^{CEB} *“cleanse yourselves,”* ^{DARBY} *“wash yourselves until you are ritually clean”* ^{GWN} *“make yourselves acceptable to worship God,”* ^{CEV} *“make yourselves pure,”* ^{ERV} and *“take a good bath.”* ^{MESSAGE}

Some of the translations are misleading. *“wash yourselves until you are ritually clean”* ^{GWN} *“make yourselves acceptable to worship God,”* ^{CEV} *“make yourselves pure,”* ^{ERV} This is all language of the Law, or First Covenant, which had not yet been given. Further, the word “wash” in all of its varied forms occurs only three times prior to this text (Gen 18:4; 19:2; 24:32). These all have to do with washing feet, and had nothing whatsoever to do with ritual or ceremony. Some are of the opinion that the word had to do with husbands staying away from their wives, as when the Law was given. ^{JOHN GILL} (Ex 19:15). Others feel as though this was a ceremony. ^{JOHN CALVIN} Further, the word “worship” in all of its varied forms is used four times prior to this text (Gen 22:5; 24:26,48,52). The first occurrence is credited to Abraham when he went to sacrifice Isaac, as God had commanded him. When arriving at the proper mountain, he told those with him and Isaac, *“Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.”* (Gen 22:5). The last three times refer to the servant of Abraham, who went to obtain a wife for Isaac from Abraham’s kin. All three of those occurrences state that the servant worshiped God by bowing down.

All of this is to point out that the very concept of “worship” remained in a very rudimentary form. It was not, in my judgment, sufficient for Jacob to admonish the people to do something in the anticipation of worshipping the Lord.

I take it that this referred to the washing of the body with a mind to being clean as they prepared for the journey to the appointed place. This may also have been related to the fact that Jacob’s sons had defiled themselves by slaying a number of men, and sacking the city identified with Hamor. In addition, we need to remember that the wives and little ones of Hamor’s clan had been taken captive, and were now with them (Gen

robes,” ^{ABP} *“put on clean clothes,”* ^{CEV} and *“change [into fresh] garments.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

There was special clothing for working, and for sleeping. There was also a wedding garment (Matt 22:11), a widow’s garment (Gen 38:14), *“mourning apparel”* (2 Sam 14:12), garments that pertained to a man (Deut 22:5), and *“a woman’s garment”* (Deut 22:5). Now they must put on fresh apparel that was suitable for traveling.

However, of particular importance is the way we cloth our spirit and soul. Peter admonishes us to be “clothed with humility.” The Psalmist wrote of being clothed “with salvation.” Speaking through Zechariah, God spoke of the day of salvation, “I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” Isaiah declared God would give “the garment of praise” for the “spirit of heaviness”

34:29). **These people also, from a heathen background, were required to put away any gods they had brought with them, and cleanse themselves.** They would have been included in the phrase, *“all that were with him.”*

The Requirement for Purity in Jesus

Purity, or cleanness, is still required in Jesus. Solemnly we are warned, *“touch not the unclean thing”* (2 Cor 6:17). An *“unclean person,”* the Spirit witnesses does not have *“any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God”* (Eph 5:5). Again, believers are admonished, *“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (2 Cor 7:1). James wrote those whose profession did not match their conduct, *“cleanse your hands, ye sinners”* (James 4:8).

CHANGE YOUR GARMENTS

“ . . . and change your garments.” Other versions read, *“change your clothes,”* ^{NIV} *“change your clothing,”* ^{BBE} *“put on fresh clothing,”* ^{LIVING} *“change your*

I am assuming Jacob was admonishing them to dress appropriately for travel – something like Moses did when Israel prepared to leave Egypt: *“And thus shall ye eat it [the Passover lamb]; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD’S Passover”* (Ex 12:11).

Something to Note

Those in Christ are also to be concerned about what they wear. So far as outward apparel is concerned, it is to be *“modest,”* and not drawing undue attention to the flesh (1 Tim 2:9; 1 Pet 3:3).

However, of particular importance is the way we cloth our spirit and soul. Peter admonishes us to be *“clothed with humility”* (1 Pet 5:5). The Psalmist wrote of being clothed *“with salvation”* (Psa 132:16). Speaking through Zechariah, God spoke of the day of salvation, *“I will clothe thee with change of raiment.”* (Zech 3:4). Isaiah declared God would give *“the garment*

of praise” for the “spirit of heaviness” (Isa 61:3).

Believers Are Exhorted To

➔ “Put on the armor of light” (Rom 13:12).

➔ “Put on the new man” (Eph 4:24).

➔ “Put on the whole armor of God” (Eph 6:11).

➔ Put on “bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (Col 3:12).

➔ “Put on charity” (Col 3:14).

Before we commence the journey to glory, we must have acquired and put on the proper clothes – traveling clothes. Putting them on is not merely fulfilling a law, it is adapting ourselves to the trip, or sojourn to glory.

I WILL MAKE THERE AN ALTAR

I WILL MAKE THERE AN ALTAR UNTO GOD

“³ And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.”

“And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God . . .”

This is what God told Jacob to do, and this is what he will do. This was an unvarying trait of the fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

➔ *“So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.” (Gen 12:4)*

➔ *“Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.” (Gen 13:17). OBEYED: “Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.” (Gen 13:18).*

➔ *“And he brought him forth abroad,*

OBEYED: *“And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.” (Gen 15:10)*

➔ *“And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.” (Gen 17:11-13).*

OBEYED: *“In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.” (Gen 17:26-27)*

➔ *“And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.” (Gen 21:12-13). OBEYED: “And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of*

“And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God . . .”
This is what God told Jacob to do, and this is what he will do. This was an unvarying trait of the fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

ABRAHAM

➔ *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee” (Gen 12:1). OBEYED: “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” (Heb 11:8).*

and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.” BELIEVED: And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” (Gen 15:5-6)

➔ *“And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon” (Gen 15:9).*

Beersheba." (Gen 21:14)

- ➔ "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Gen 22:2). **OBEYED:** "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him." (Gen 22:3). "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son" (Heb 11:17).

ISAAC

- ➔ "And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father" (Gen 26:2-3). **OBEYED:** "And Isaac dwelt in Gerar" (Gen 26:6).

JACOB

- ➔ Through Isaac: "Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother" (Gen 28:2). **OBEY:** ". . . he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother" (Gen 28:5).
- ➔ "And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee" (Gen 31:3). **OBEYED:** "Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels; And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the

cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padanaram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan" (Gen 31:17-18).

- ➔ "And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother" (Gen 35:1). **OBEYED:** "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered

"affliction," ^{DOUAY} "tribulation," ^{GENEVA} "when I was troubled," ^{GWN} and "the day of calamity." ^{SEPTUAGINT}

The lexical meaning of the word translated "distress" is "STRAITS, DISTRESS, TROUBLE." ^{STRONG'S} The word "straits" carries the idea of hemmed in by trouble, and unable to find a way out. The word "distress" stresses the impact of the difficulty upon the human spirit. The word "trouble" carries the idea of making life difficult – like sailing on a troubled sea.

When Jacob went to Padanaram he was fleeing from Esau who had pledged to kill him (Gen 27:43; 35:1).

In this text, however, Jacob says God answered him, and there is no record of a prayer being offered up by Jacob at that time.

me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went" (Gen 35:2-3).

Through the record of these men, God has established several things to us – things that can direct the way we think.

- ➔ Those with faith obey God.
- ➔ Those who are chosen by God obey Him. The solitary exception to this is Judas – although, in a sense, he was intended to be the one through Jesus would be betrayed.
- ➔ Those who truly know God obey Him.
- ➔ Those who are duly appointed leaders obey God.

WHO ANSWERED ME IN THE DAY OF MY DISTRESS

". . . who answered me in the day of my distress . . ." Other versions read, "day of my trouble," ^{BBE}

At that time, God appeared to him saying, "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen 28:15). In this text, however, Jacob says God answered him, and there is no record of a prayer being offered up by Jacob at that time.

However, when he was fleeing from Laban (Gen 31:20-22), doing so at the command of the Lord to return to Canaan (Gen 31:3), he had prayed to the Lord. Here are his words, "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau:

for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children" (Gen 32:9-11). That is the prayer the Lord had answered.

AND WAS WITH ME IN THE WAY WHICH I WENT

"... and was with me in the way which I went."

When Jacob had the dream of a ladder reaching into heaven, he had vowed, "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, **If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will**

give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God" (Gen 28:20-21). God had later promised, "*I will be with thee*" (Gen 31:3).

The Lord was with him ion leaving his father's house to go to the house of Laban. He had been with him through his twenty-year stint with Laban, and He had been with him in confronting Esau, and making the journey to Shechem. Jacob now acknowledges this, citing is as the reason to once

again do what the Lord said to do.

An Application to Us

For us, the faithfulness of God to this point is reason enough to continue our trek to glory. **No further incentive is required, although there are many other constraining factors.** However, when we review our lives and beheld the hand of the Lord in directing us, providing for us, and protecting us, it becomes unreasonable not to continue running the race with patience (He 12:1-2). Believers should develop a keen mind for remembering the works of God.

THEY GAVE THE STRANGE GODS TO JACOB

"⁴ And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem."

THEY GAVE ALL THEIR STRANGE GODS TO JACOB

"And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand ..." Other versions read, and "which they had," NASB "in their possession." CJB

The women who had born children to Jacob – Rachel, Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah – together with his servants (Gen 32:16), and the wives taken captive from Shechem (Gen 34:28), gathered together their gods, or idols, and gave them all to Jacob. The wording of this verse suggests there were quite a few of these idols brought to Jacob.

The sensitivity of Jacob to the presence of the Lord is to be duly noted. He seemed to sense the absolute inappropriateness of any representation of another god or object of worship when in the vicinity of "the true God" (Jer 10:10).

I see very little of this kind of sensitiveness in the modern church. I have frequently sensed worldly preferences being brought into assembly of believers, with men conducting themselves as though this

was acceptable. They enter into the congregation with a preference for worldly music, worldly attire, and the world's preference for religious brevity. Some will dare to chide those of us who object to this form of worldly defilement. However, "*But wisdom is justified of all her children*" (Luke 7:35). Other versions read, "*But wisdom is proved right by all her children,*" NIV "*Nevertheless, wisdom is vindicated by all her children,*" NRSV and "*Yet wisdom is vindicated (shown to be true and divine) by all her children [by their life, character, and deeds].*" AMPLIFIED

AND THEIR EARRINGS

"... and all their earrings which were in their ears ..." Other versions read, "*all the rings they were wearing in their ears,*" ERV "*along with their lucky-charm earrings,*" MESSAGE and "*and their earrings which were [worn as charms against evil] in their ears.*" AMPLIFIED

The fact that the command of Jacob to "put away the strange gods that are among you" was answered by the removal and committal of both idols and earrings confirms that these were earrings associated with idolatry.

Jacob's household not only gathered all the idols in their possession, but apparently everything associated with those idols, which included their earrings.

CONCERNING EARRINGS

"I.E. THOSE EMPLOYED FOR PURPOSES OF IDOLATROUS WORSHIP, WHICH WERE OFTEN COVERED WITH ALLEGORICAL FIGURES AND MYSTERIOUS SENTENCES, AND SUPPOSED TO BE ENDOWED WITH A TALISMANIC VIRTUE (JUDGES 8:21; ISAIAH 3:20; HOSEA 2:13). PULPIT COMMENTARY

"... WHICH WERE WORN IN THE EARS OF THE STRANGE GODS OR IDOLS; FOR SUCH USED, IT SEEMS, ACCORDING TO SOME WRITERS, TO BE DECORATED AND ORNAMENTED AFTER THAT MANNER; OR RATHER IN THE EARS OF THE IDOLATERS THEMSELVES, WORN BY THEM IN A SUPERSTITIOUS WAY, HAVING THE IMAGES OF THESE IDOLS ON THEM: SO THE TARGUM OF JONATHAN, "AND THE EARRINGS WHICH WERE IN THE EARS OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE CITY OF SHECHEM, IN WHICH WERE FORMED THE LIKENESS OF THEIR IDOLS." JOHN GILL

"THE EARRINGS WERE DOUBTLESS BADGES OF SUPERSTITION; AS AT THIS DAY INNUMERABLE TRIFLES ARE SEEN IN THE PAPACY, BY WHICH IMPIETY DISPLAYS ITSELF." JOHN CALVIN

"... THE RINGS WHICH WERE WORN AS AMULETS OR CHARMS." ALBERT BARNES

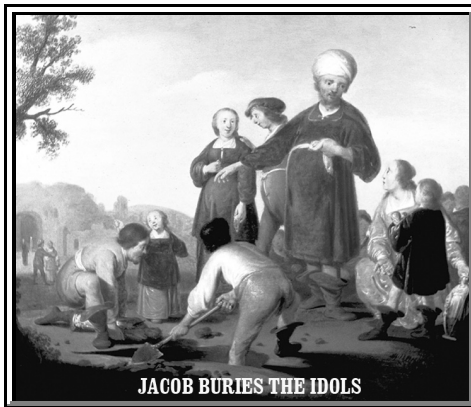
Earrings themselves were not considered wrong, or associated with idols. When Abraham's servant was in quest of a wife for Isaac, he gave "a golden earring" to Rebekah, which proved to be Isaac's appointed wife (Gen 24:22). When the various materials were gathered for the building of the Tabernacle, bracelets and earrings of gold were included (Ex 35:22; Num 31:50-52). At the conclusion of Job's trial, each one of his relatives and friends gave him "an earring of gold" (Job 42:11). God said, in speaking of the manner in which He

raised up Israel, *"And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head."* (Ezek 16:12).

However, there were special earrings that were associated with the worship of false gods (Isa 3:18-20; Hos 2:13). These are the type of earrings that Jacob's household brought to him.

JACOB HID THEM

" . . . and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem." Other versions read, *"buried them,"* ^{NIV} *"put them away,"* ^{BBE} *"hid them under the turpentine tree which is in Secima, and destroyed them to this day"* ^{LXE} and *"buried and hid them under the oak near Shechem."* ^{AMPLIFIED}



The idea is that he hid the idolatrous items by burying them out of sight. In this way, a desire for these items could not be awakened by vision.

A Lesson to Be Learned

These figures and earrings could not be converted to remembrances of the Almighty God of heaven. They were soiled by their association with idols,

and could therefore not remain in the possession of anyone in Jacob's house.

In our time, it is not uncommon to see professing Christians retain items that previously associated with the world. Prominent in these associations are things related to music. The world has its style of music, and it generally differs radically from sacred music. This is generally faddish music that accommodates the fickle nature of the flesh.

Those who wear the name of Jesus need to give some diligent heed to the implications of several words Divinely addressed to them.

- ➔ *"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, **Save yourselves from this untoward generation**"* (Acts 2:40).
- ➔ *"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, **ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life**"* (Rom 6:22).
- ➔ *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and **touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you**"* (2 Cor 6:17).
- ➔ *"And have no fellowship with the **unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them**"* (Eph 5:11).
- ➔ *"Love not the world, **neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of***

life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:15-16).

While men are not wise enough to craft laws or procedures that are thorough enough to enable the child of God to be holy, each professing believer must devote himself to the holy work of sanctification. As it is written, *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God"* (1 Thess 4:3-5).

We have a mandate from heaven *"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy"* (1 Pet 1:15-16). Part of that work is divesting ourselves of things, ideas, and manners that are identified with a wicked generation. In so doing, we will be addressing the solemn exhortation, *"Save yourselves from this untoward generation"* (Acts 2:40). This is something that must be done, just as surely as all of things associated with *"strange gods"* had to be removed from Jacob's dwelling. **If Jacob was going to dwell in Canaan, it had to be without these things. It is no different with us.**

Remaining in heavenly places requires that things incompatible with them be thrust from us. That ought to be so obvious that it requires no further comment – at least not ideally speaking. None of us can afford to ignore this requirement, no matter how unreasonable it may appear to the flesh.

THE TERROR OF THE LORD WAS UPON THE CITIES

"⁵ And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob."

AS THEY JOURNEYED THE TERROR OF THE GOD WAS

UPON THE CITIES

" And they journeyed and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them . . ." Other versions read, "As they journeyed, there was a great terror upon the cities which were around them," ^{NASB} *fell upon the*

cities all around them," ^{NRSV} *"the fear of God was on the towns round about"* ^{BBE} *"God made all of the surrounding cities fearful"* ^{CEB} *"a great terror was upon the cities that were round about them"* ^{ERV} *"God made the people of the cities that were all around them*

terrified" ^{GWN} "a divine terror struck the towns round about," ^{NJB} and "a terror from God spread over the people in all the towns of that area." ^{NLT}

According to The Interlinear Analyzer, the literal rendering of the text is, "as they are journeying and he is becoming dismay of Elohim on the cities which round about them." That is, as they were journeying, when Jacob himself was noted, the fear or dismay coming from God came upon all of the cities through and around which they passed. The "terror of God" refers to a certain fear and terror that came from Him – "of" referring the Source of the fear, not its Object. The rest of the verse confirms this is the meaning.

This was another fulfillment of God's promise to Jacob, "I will be with thee" (Gen 31:3).

The Ability of God

Many of the ancients sensed this – that God can restrain men from harming His people.

- ➔ God restrained Abimelech from defiling Sarah (Gen 20:6).
- ➔ When He delivered them from Egypt, God promised Israel, "**The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased**" (Ex 15:16).
- ➔ Again God promised Israel, "**I will send My fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee**" (Ex 23:27).
- ➔ Before they entered the promised land, Moses reminded the people, "There shall no man be able to stand

before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you" (Deu 11:25).

- ➔ In the days of Samuel it is written, " . . . and the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent" (1 Sam 11:7).
- ➔ The Lord kept any of Paul's enemies

to be taken for granted. It is to be admitted that a greater degree of sensitivity in this area should be developed in this age of safety systems, alarms, etc.

THEY DID NOT PURSUE THEM

" . . . and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob." Other versions read, "they made no attack," ^{BBE} and "they did not follow after." ^{GENEVA}
No one considered them to be

No one considered them to be vulnerable, followed them with the intention of doing them evil, or plan a strategy to take their possessions from them, or make them their slaves, as Jacob's sons did the wives and children of the Shechemites.

from harming him in Corinth (Acts 18:10).

- ➔ The early church was protected by God so that none of their enemies were inclined to become identified with them (Acts 5:13).

However, lest men become complacent and assume too much, we must remember that the fear of God did not come upon Shechem when he ravished Dinah. Nor, indeed, the fear of God fall upon the Jews when they had Paul beaten five times (2 Cor 11:24). However, in order to keep faith and hope alive, the people of God are to know that, when it suits His purpose, God is able to make our enemies cringe in fear.

Keep in mind that Jacob had many flocks and herds, and a great number of women – the wives of the Shechemites being taken captive by his sons. These would ordinarily have enticed worldly men to fight to obtain them – but they did not. **God controlled the situation.** In Jacob, the words of the Psalmist were fulfilled: "**The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them**" (Psa 34:7).

The safety of God's people is not

vulnerable, followed them with the intention of doing them evil, or plan a strategy to take their possessions from them, or make them their slaves, as Jacob's sons did the wives and children of the Shechemites.

This is similar to what was experienced by the Israelites centuries later, when all of the men went to observe the Lord's feasts three times a year, "**For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year**" (Ex 34:24).

A Thought to Ponder

Each of us must, live in such a manner that God would be inclined to protect us during times of seeming vulnerability. **It also behooves us not to be simplistic in our thoughts on this matter, so that we are confused when we pass through intended trials.** There are burdens that are intended to be borne, or carried (Gal 6:5). If we live close to the Lord, we will be able to make good sense out of our lives, and enjoy the peace of God, which will keep our hearts and minds through Christ.

BECAUSE GOD APPEARED TO HIM THERE

All of this confirms the prominence of the Lord and the things pertaining to him that existed in those who lived by faith.

"⁶ So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. ⁷ And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother."

SO JACOB CAME TO LUZ

"So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. . ."

"Luz" was a Canaanitish city near the site of Bethel. Scriptures indicate that the name of this city was later changed to Bethel.

➔ *"And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first." (Gen 28:18-19)*

➔ *"So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him." (Gen 35:6)*

➔ *"And the border went over from thence toward Luz, to the side of Luz, which is Bethel, southward; and the border descended to Atarothadar, near the hill that lieth on the south side of the nether Bethhoron." (Josh 18:13)*

➔ *"And the house of Joseph sent to descry [spy out] Bethel. (Now the name of the city before was Luz)." (Judg 1:23)*

The name "Luz" means "almond tree," SMITH'S DICTIONARY which indicates what was there by nature. The word "Bethel" means "house of God" (Gen 28:17-19), which speaks of what took place there supernaturally.

Of old time, places were sanctified because of the Lord's presence, appearing, or revelations. Some of those names include the following:

➔ **BEERLAHAIRO:** *"And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered." (Gen 16:13-14)*

➔ **JEHOVAHJIRE:** *"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen." (Gen 22:14)*

➔ **REHOBOTH:** *"And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." (Gen 26:22)*

➔ **BETHEL:** *"And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel: but*

the name of that city was called Luz at the first; but the name of that city was called Luz at the first." (Gen 28:18-19)

"And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel." (Gen 35:15)

➔ **MAHANAIM:** *"And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim." (Gen 32:2)*

➔ **PENIEL:** *"And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." (Gen 32:30)*

All of this confirms the prominence of the Lord and the things pertaining to him that existed in those who lived by faith.

HE BUILT THERE AN ALTAR

" . . . And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel . . ."

Notice that the building of an altar was never attended by any thought of inconvenience or tediousness – even though it often must have required a considerable amount of work. After all, the altar was "built."

Jacob called "the **place**" "Elbethel" – "The God of Bethel." "El" = the God, and "Bethel" = the location called "Bethel." The word "place" means "A STANDING, I.E. A SPOT; BUT USED WIDELY OF A LOCALITY (GENERAL OR SPECIFIC)" STRONG'S

When Abraham located permanently in Canaan, he was near to Bethel, described as "**the place of the altar**" which he built there (Gen 13:3-4). During the time when Sodom was destroyed by the Lord, it is said that Abraham got up early in the morning, and went "**to the place where he stood before the LORD**" (Gen 19:27). Earlier, when Jacob had wrestled with an angel, he "**called the name of the place**

Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen 32:30).

Frequently, Scripture refers to places that were special to those who visited them. The Garden of Gethsemane is described as a place where *"Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples"* (John 18:2). Lydia and those with her resorted to *"by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made"* (Acts 16:13). Who can forget the association of Mount Sinai with the giving of the Law (Neh 9:13; Gal 4:24-25), or the Savior's reference to the Temple as *"My Father's house"* (John 2:16), and *"the house of prayer"* (Matt 21:13).

This is not to say that we are to hallow certain places as being exclusive – such as the reference of the woman and the well of Jacob: *"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship"* (John 4:20). Jesus made clear that the worship of God was not contingent upon where it took place. *"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:21-24).

My point is that holy men have made holy associations, based upon their experiences with God. David expressed this well when he said, *"For a day in thy courts is better than a*

thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psa 84:10). This is why the custom of Jesus was to be in the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Lk 4:16). It is why He was daily in the Temple (Matt 26:55).

BECAUSE GOD APPEARED UNTO HIM THERE

" . . . because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother."

Returning to this place, particular when directed to do so by the Lord Himself, summoned up a wealth of holy memories. After meeting with Esau shortly before this, there was a marked change in Jacob. He no longer was

this place previously he had promised, *"And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of"* (Gen 28:13-15).

Now, Jacob returns with twenty

My point is that holy men have made holy associations, based upon their experiences with God. David expressed this well when he said, "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness"

fleeing from Esau, or anything else. The friction between him and Esau had been resolved, as well as the abrasive experience with Laban. When he was fleeing twenty years ago, he did not have a wife or any possessions. Now he had wives, children, a host of servants, and flocks and herds.

When God had appeared to him in

years of the experience of faith, and it easily be seen as a down-payment to all that God had promised.

It is good to live close enough to the Lord that holy memories are retained, and are easily stirred up. Our lives should not be filled up with distracting clutter. The circumference of living should be ordered so as to encompass holy memories.

DEBORAH, REBEKAH'S NURSE, DIES

"⁸ But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allonbachuth."

REBEKAH'S NURSE DIED
"But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died . . ."

Deborah had apparently been with Rebekah since she was born – at least that was the custom as I understand it (Num 11:12). When Rebekah was given

to Isaac to be his wife, her nurse Deborah, came along with her (Gen 24:59). Now, some years later, and even many years later, she had apparently taken up residence with Jacob. It seems to me that here the Lord begins to remove all of the influences of Laban from Jacob's house. Even when Rachel left her father's house, she took some of its idols with her (Gen 31:19). Deborah had been therein Laban's household as well, and it is possible that she had not restrained Rebekah from taking those images, suggesting that she might very well have taken some herself, convinced they were real gods, and could protect them.

I am not sure why Deborah is found with Jacob's clan at this point. She would have been of considerable age. Some do feel that she was sent with Jacob to go to Laban's house, but this is not likely, and there is nothing in the text to suggest this was the case. It is also possible that after they arrived in Canaan, Deborah went to meet them. However, alas, we must finally that we do not know the answer to the question concerning why Deborah was with the clan in Bethel.

SHE WAS BURIED

" . . . and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called

Allonbachuth." As was the consistent custom of the patriarchs, they buried their dead (Gen 15:15; 23:4,6,8,,11,13,15,19; 25:9,10).

The name "*Allonbachuth*," means "*oak of weeping*." This indicates it was a sad occasion when this long-time helper passed away.

"THE JEWS HAVE A TRADITION THAT THE OCCASION OF THIS WEeping, OR AT LEAST OF THE INCREASE OF IT, WAS, THAT JACOB AT THIS TIME HAD THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF REBEKAH HIS MOTHER; SO THE TARGUM OF JONATHAN, "THERE TIDINGS WERE BROUGHT TO JACOB OF THE DEATH OF REBEKAH HIS MOTHER, AND HE CALLED THE NAME OF IT ANOTHER WEeping;" AND SO JARCHI." JOHN GILL

GOD APPEARED UNTO JACOB AGAIN

"⁹ And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him."

GOD APPEARED UNTO JACOB AGAIN

Many times, in Scripture, obedience is the prelude to blessing and further revelation. Thus far, this has been confirmed in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

"And God appeared unto Jacob again . . ."

Prior to their journey to Bethel, God had said to Jacob, "*Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother*" (Gen 35:1)

- ➔ Jacob had ordered that all strange gods be removed from his house, that every be clean, and change their garments (Gen 35:2-3).
- ➔ All of the strange gods, and the paraphernalia associated with them had been buried by Jacob under a great oak tree.
- ➔ They had journeyed through cities, with the terror of the Lord being

upon the cities, so that no one dared to pursue them. In their travels they moved all of their herds and flocks along also.

Now God appears to him again, while he is in the act of obedience – arriving at Bethel and building an altar, as he was commanded to do.

WHEN HE CAME OUT

" . . . when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him." Other versions read, "*when he came from,*" NKJV "*after Jacob returned from Paddan Aram,*" NIV "*on his way from Paddan-aram,*" BBE "*while he was on his way back*" CEB "*After Ya'akov arrived from Paddan-Aram,*" CJB "*in his coming from Padan-Aram*" YLT and "*en route from Paddan-aram.*" LIVING

The idea is that God appeared to Jacob while he was in the act of obeying Him. He had not only left Padanaram, but had arrived in Bethel, and built an altar. He had also assured

that any remnants of false religion that were possessed in the house of Laban had been removed from his encampment.

Many times, in Scripture, obedience is the prelude to blessing and further revelation. Thus far, this has been confirmed in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 24:1; 26:12; 32:29).

Other people said to have been blessed by God include Ishmael (Gen 17:20), Samson (Judges 13:24), Obadedom (1 Chron 26:4-5), and those who are in Christ Jesus (Eph 1:3).

Those God said he would bless include Abraham (Gen 12:2-3), Isaac (Gen 26:3,24), Israel (Ex 20:24; Num 6:27), "*His people*" (Psa 29:11), those who fear Him (Psa 115:13).

To be "*blessed*" by the Lord is to be given certain advantages by Him – advantages that have to do with men's identity with Him. To be blessed by God means to be favored by Him, and to live under His protection and through His guidance. Someone has well said, "The main thing is to get a blessing." Or, to put it another way, no person has any real advantage who is not being blessed by God Almighty.

HE CALLED HIS NAME ISRAEL

“¹⁰ And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and He called his name Israel.”

When Jacob wrestled with an angel, that heavenly messenger told him, *“Thy name **shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed**”* (Gen 32:28). Now, God Himself formalizes the renaming of Jacob: ***“and He called his name Israel.”***

Thus a principle was fulfilled that was articulated by Isaiah the prophet: ***“and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD***

shall name” (Isa 62:2).

This indicates that the validity of the new name was owing to the work of God Himself. In the Divine economy a “new name” is not given because of the works of the individual involved. The changes of Abram to Abraham (Gen 17:5), Sarai to Sarah (Gen 17:15), Jacob to Israel (Gen 32:28; 35:10), Simon to Peter (Matt 16:17-18; Mk 3:16; Lk 6:14), Saul to Paul (Acts 13:9). Or the saints of God, when time will be no more, and they stand before their Savior, they will be given *“a new name”* (Rev 2:17). That name will reflect the work that God has done in them. It will identify that the are *“His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus*

unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10).

So Jacob’s change of name was a kind of announcement of what God would make of Him. The name “Jacob” means “SUPPLANTER . . . TO BITE THE HEEL.” McCLINTOK & STRONG That is, one who took the place of another. But “Israel” means “WHO PREVAILS WITH GOD,” HITCHCOCK or, as the angel announced, *“as a prince he had power with God and prevailed”* (Gen 32:28). It was God who enabled Jacob to prevail against the angel that night, for person-to-person, there was no comparison of Jacob with that mighty angle, whose mere touch threw his hip out of joint (Gen 32:25).

THE COVENANT RESTATED

“¹¹ And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; ¹² And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. ¹³ And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.”

I AM GOD ALMIGHTY

“And God said unto him, I am God Almighty . . .”

Here is a truth with which men have historically grappled – that God is, in fact, *“Almighty.”* Other versions read, *“Ruler of all,”* BBE *“El Shaddai,”* CJB *“all sufficient,”* GENEVA *“thy God,”* NET *Septuagint “the Sovereign God,”* ERV *“The Strong God.”* MESSAGE

The word “Almighty” comes from a word meaning, “¹ ALMIGHTY, MOST POWERFUL 1A) SHADDAI, THE ALMIGHTY (OF GOD).” STRONG’S **This is another way of saying there is no area in which God Himself is not superior.** In the matter of power, ability, and

authority, he has no rivals. **There is nothing right that He cannot do, and nothing wrong that He wills to do.** He has no capability to use His power or ability unlawfully, or in a way that conflicts with His purpose. There is no subservient power that is not governed by Him, or have received their ability from Him. As Paul would say, *“there is no power but of God”* (Rom 13:1).

This means that what God does, and the way in which He does it, cannot be questioned.

Whatever He purposes or promises, He can do, will do, and do it fully and effectively.

It was essential for Jacob, together with Abraham and Isaac, perceive, receive, and believe that God is *“Almighty.”* **There was no way that what He had promised them could be done independently of Him.** No man can make what God has promised come to pass. Man is not Almighty, but God is.

The endless arguments that men

have about the ability of men, the works of men, the free will of men, etc., are only symptoms of the reluctance of men to embrace the truth that God is, in fact, *“Almighty.”*

BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY

“ . . . be fruitful and multiply . . .”
This same word was delivered to all the creatures created out of the water (Gen 1:21-22), Adam and Eve (Gen 1:28), the animals Noah took into the ark (Gen 8:17), and Noah and his sons (Gen 9:1).

This was a command accompanied by power, as demonstrated in the impersonal creation, and that of the race of Adam.

NATIONS AND KINGS

“ . . . a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins . . .”

Israel as a whole was *“a nation”* (1 Sam 15:28). It consisted of *“a company of nations:”* Collectively as *“the kingdom of Judah”* (1 Chron 11:7)

and “the kingdom of Israel” (1 Kgs 21:7). A further breakdown is found in “The twelve tribes of Israel,” each with a “prince” (Num 7:2). At Sinai, they were numbered – males from twenty years old and upward – all that were “able to go forth to war” (Num 1:20).

- ➡ TRIBE OF REUBEN: 46,500 (NUM 1:21)
- ➡ TRIBE OF SIMEON: 59,300 (NUM 1:23)
- ➡ TRIBE OF GAD: 45,650 (NUM 1:25).
- ➡ TRIBE OF JUDAH: 74,600 (NUM 1:27)
- ➡ TRIBE OF ISSACHAR: 54,400 (NUM 1:29)
- ➡ TRIBE OF ZEBULUN: 57,400 (NUM 1:31)
- ➡ TRIBE OF EPHRAIM: 40,500 (NUM 1:33)
- ➡ TRIBE OF MANASSEH: 32,200 (NUM 1:35)
- ➡ TRIBE OF BENJAMIN: 35,400 (NUM 1:37)
- ➡ TRIBE OF DAN: 62,700 (NUM 1:39)
- ➡ TRIBE OF ASHER: 41,500 (NUM 1:41)
- ➡ TRIBE OF NAPHTALI: 53,400 (NUM 1:43)

All that were numbered – males twenty years old and upward, who were able to go to war, were 603,550 (Num 1:46).

All of these could be traced back to Jacob. God did, in fact, cause him to multiply.

THE LAND WILL I GIVE THEE AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE

“ . . . And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. . . ”

This is a reiteration of the promise given to both Abraham and Isaac.

1. **ABRAHAM-1:** “And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.” (Gen 12:7)
2. **ABRAHAM-2:** “For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.” (Gen 13:15)
3. **ABRAHAM-3:** “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” (Gen 15:18)

4. **ABRAHAM-4:** “And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” (Gen 17:8)

5. **ISAAC-1:** “Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father;” (Gen 26:3)

6. **JACOB-1:** “And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;” (Gen 28:13)

7. **JACOB-2:** and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.” (Gen 35:12)

There are seven affirmations of the same promise: Four times to Abraham; once to Isaac; twice to Jacob. **Because the promise had not yet been fulfilled, and, indeed, would not be fulfilled until Israel came out of Egypt, it was constantly held before the patriarchs.** Because they were living by faith, and because God continually repeated this promise, they were able to maintain their posture as pilgrims and strangers in the land of promise.

Our Situation Is Similar, Yet Different

The situation of those in Christ Jesus is similar to that of the fathers, yet it is different as well. We also are journeying through the world as strangers and pilgrims. **However, we have received some of the inheritance now, whereas the fathers were not given a piece of their promised land – not even to put their foot on (Acts 7:5).** They even had to buy property in the promised land to bury their dead (Gen 25:10), and for temporary residence (Gen 33:19).

The saints, however, have received “the firstfruits of the Spirit” (Rom 8:23), and are even now tasting

of “the powers of the world to come” (Heb 6:5). We have been “made” to “sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:6), and have “access” to God “with confidence” (Eph 3:12).

Because of this most blessed arrangement, we do not require the New Covenant to be repeated over and over as God’s covenant with Abraham was. **For us, the promise commences its fulfillment now, while we are in the world.** Our experience of the covenant replaces the need for it to be declared over and over. Here is the covenant: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” (Heb 8:10-12).

- ➡ “I will put My laws into their minds.”
- ➡ “I will write my laws in their hearts.”
- ➡ “I will be to them a God.”
- ➡ “They shall be to Me a people.”
- ➡ “All shall know Me from the least to the greatest.”
- ➡ “I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses.”
- ➡ “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

All of these are being fulfilled in those who are in Christ Jesus, living by faith, and walking in the Spirit. It is that fact that enables us to hold the New Covenant in constant remembrance. Now, we can eat at the Table of the Lord where Jesus said, “This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20). Paul quoted this to the carnal Corinthians (1 Cor 11:25).

AND GOD WENT UP FROM HIM

“ . . . And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.”

It is also said that *"God went up from Abraham"* after *"talking with him"* about the soon birth of Isaac (Gen 17:22). By going up from Jacob, the awareness of God was removed from Jacob. **His faith did make Him conscious of God, but not like it does in the New Covenant.** It is true that under the Law it was said, *"(For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them"* (Deut 4:31).

The difference is that until sin was taken away and Jesus was enthroned at the right hand of God, there generally had to be some manifestation of God for the people. This is what moved Gideon to say an angel who had

appeared to him, *"Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites"* (Judg 6:13).

It is true that Moses *"endured as seeing Him who is invisible"* (Heb 11:27). His was an uncommon experience, and even then, he did not exude confidence that God was with him when he was addressed from the burning bush (Ex 3:11-4:19).

Some have criticized Gideon and Moses for their responses to a revelation from God. The responses

were not commendable, to be sure, and they certainly are not to be found among the elect of God. However, we must realize the limitation of the times during which they lived. While there are similarities to be found, it is still true as the letter to the Hebrews states, *"God having provided **some better thing** for us, that they without us should not be made perfect"* (Heb 11:40). This leads me to a twofold conclusion.

- We should not expect the saints of old to have the perfection that is realized in Christ Jesus.
- If we have, in Christ Jesus, and under the New Covenant, *"received"* something that is *"better,"* then we ourselves ought to be *"better."*

IN THE PLACE WHERE GOD TALKED WITH HIM

"¹⁴ And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. ¹⁵ And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel."

JACOB SET UP A PILLAR

"And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone . . ."

This is the second time Jacob has *"set up a pillar,"* the first being when he had the vision of a ladder reaching into heaven – at the same place in which he now finds himself: *"And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it"* (Gen 28:18).

This is the same place, for God had instructed him, *"Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother"* (Gen 35:1).

It will not suffice to re-anoint the

pillar that was set up more than twenty years ago. He will set up another pillar, "in the place where" God *"walked with him."* While it was in Bethel, I do not doubt that it was at a different spot in Bethel that would match the freshness of a renewed promise following the survival of twenty years of diverse and trying circumstances.

Something to Be Learned

It is good to learn that we cannot live on past experiences. The life of faith now requires a fellowship with Christ (1 Cor 1:9), something that was in no way common prior to Christ.

HE POURED A DRINK OFFERING

" . . . and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. . . "

The first time Jacob set up a pillar, he is said to have *"poured oil upon the top of it."* This time, however, he *"poured a drink offering thereon, AND he poured oil thereon."* Other versions read, *"he poured out a libation on it AND he also poured oil on it."*

Is the first time a *"drink offering"*

is mentioned in Scripture. These were instituted under Law was a kind of supplemental offering (Ex 29:40-41; 30:9; Lev 23:13,18,37).

I am not sure of the significance of Jacob pouring a drink offering upon the pillar, unless it had something to sanctifying it before he anointed it.

Paul apparently referred to the sanctifying effects of a committal to the Lord when he alluded to his own drink offering: *"Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all"* ^{NKJV} (Phil 2:17).

JACOB CALLED THE PLACE BETHEL

" . . . And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel."

Jacob named the place *"Bethel,"* where God first appeared to him (Gen 28:18). Now he calls the place where God has just spoken to him *"Bethel."* Earlier, during this occasion, he had named the place *"Elbethel"* (Gen 35:7) – *"The God of Bethel."* It is quite possible that these were three distinct

places in the area:

- ➔ Where he had the vision of the ladder.

- ➔ Where he had built the altar.
- ➔ Where God had spoken to him on this occasion.

In doing this, Jacob was revealing the value that he placed on communication from the God of heaven.

BENJAMIN IS BORN AND RACHEL DIES

"¹⁶ And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor. ¹⁷ And it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. ¹⁸ And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. ¹⁹ And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. ²⁰ And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day."

RACHEL TRAILS AND GIVES BIRTH

"And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor. ¹⁷ And it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. ¹⁸ And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. . . ."

Already, Jacob has had some heart-rending experiences.

- ➔ Laban deceiving by giving him Leah to be his wife rather than Rachel, who he had promised.
- ➔ The barrenness of Rachel.
- ➔ Laboring fourteen years for Rachel to be his wife.

- ➔ Contention in the home between the wives.
- ➔ Laban changing his wages ten times.
- ➔ Enduing great inconveniences in caring for Laban's flocks.
- ➔ The defilement of Dinah.
- ➔ The slaughter done by Levi and Simeon to the city of Hamor.
- ➔ The fear he had in confronting Esau.

Now, however, there are more trials to come. The life of faith is not intended to be a bed of roses!

The details of this event are quite precise.

- ➔ They were only a little way from Ephrath, which is another name for Bethlehem (Gen 35:19). It is the opinion of many that it was about a mile away.
- ➔ Rachel travailed with severe travail, or "began to give birth with great difficulty." ^{NIV}
- ➔ The midwife told her not to fear, that she would give birth to a son.
- ➔ Rachel's soul was departing from her. Here is a view of death that has not been expressed before – the soul departing from the body.

- ➔ She called the boy "*Benoni*," or "SON OF MY SORROW." ^{STRONG'S}

- ➔ Jacob renamed him "*Benjamin*," or "SON OF THE RIGHT HAND." ^{STRONG'S}

We see in Rachel and Jacob two differing perspectives of the birth of this boy. First, from Rachel's point of view, he was the son of her sorrow. From Jacob's point of view he was a son of favor – the son of his right hand.

RACHEL IS BURIED

" . . . And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem . . ."

Apparently in a place uninhabited, yet in the promised land.

Now, perhaps coincidently, with the passing of Rachel, all influence of Laban's house has been removed.

JACOB SETS UP ANOTHER PILLAR

" . . . And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day."

This was the wife than he loved first, and she was the first of his wives to die. Recognizing that she was a gift from God, the patriarch raises another pillar upon her grave.

The resiliency of Jacob is seen in the manner in which he endured grief. He is an admirable man, indeed.

THE SIN OF REUBEN

"²¹ And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of

Edar. ^{22a} And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben

went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it."

ISRAEL SPREAD HIS TENT

"And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar. . ."

Notice how Jacob is nor referred to as "Israel." He "pitched his tent" NKJV beyond the tower of Edar, apparently a place accommodating to maintaining flocks and herds. This was located about a mile south of Bethlehem, which was near the heart of the promised land, and in the territory that would finally be settled by Judah.

WHEN ISRAEL DWELT IN THAT LAND

"And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it.

Now another moral tragedy takes place. Reuben, Jacob's eldest son lays with his father's concubine, Bilhah. She was the mother of two of his brothers – Dan and Naphtali.

There is no way to justify this act. It is enough to again point out the strong propensity of the flesh. Coupled with a fundamental ignorance of God, His ways, and His will, it opens the door for all manner of transgression.

Those professing Christians who choose remain in spiritual ignorance have put themselves at an unspeakable disadvantage. In fact, they have neglected God's great salvation, and this have trampled on the blood of the

covenant, done despite to the Spirit of grace, refused the tutelage of the Holy Spirit, and rejected the ministry of Jesus.

Jacob heard of this iniquity. Moses was not moved to describe the impact it had upon his spirit, but it must have been significant.

The handicap of living before the Law – before the intelligent definition of sin – is greater than any insensitive soul realizes. "Adultery" is first mentioned by name in the Law (Ex 20:4). Sin did exist prior to that, and some knew (Gen 20:3) – but not many.

THE SONS OF JACOB WERE TWELVE

"^{22b} Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: ²³ The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun: ²⁴ The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: ²⁵ And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali:

²⁶ And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padanaram."

This is the beginning of the formation of the nation of Israel. It will

be divided into twelve tribes, each one bearing some attribute of God.

It is a worthy subject to ponder – what was required to form this nation! Consider the many tests and sorrows of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

THE DEATH OF ISAAC

"²⁷ And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. ²⁸ And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. ²⁹ And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."

ISAAC DIES AT ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY YEARS OF AGE

"And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. . ."

Jacob finally makes it to the place



where Isaac was located – the city of Hebron. This, as the text states, was where Abraham and Isaac dwelt (Gen 13:18). It is where Sarah died and was buried (Gen 23:2,19). This was like the headquarters for the fathers, where they dwelt as strangers and pilgrims.

ISAAC GAVE UP THE GHOST

" . . . And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days..."

Abraham is the first person in Scripture said to have given up the ghost (Gen 25:8). It was also said of Ishmael (Gen 25:17), and of Isaac (Gen 35:29). Other versions read, "breathed his last." NKJV The Amplified Bible

reads, *“Isaac’s spirit departed.”*

This is the part that was breathed into man when God created him (Gen 2:7). It is the part of man that makes the body functional, and without which the body is useless.

There comes a time – an appointed time (Heb 9:27), when the animating part of man leaves the body. That separation of the “brethren of life”

from the body constitutes death.

ESAU AND JACOB BURIED HIM
“ . . .and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.”

Even as Abraham’s sons, Ishmael and Isaac, buried Abraham (Gen 25:9), so Jacob AND Esau join in the burying of their father Isaac. Adam, Abraham, and Isaac, begat sons of a wholly differing nature: Cain and Abel, Ishmael

and Isaac, and Esau and Jacob. In each case, the worst came first, and the best came last. Thereby setting the stage for the coming Savior. Adam first, Christ second (1 Cor 15:45,47). Adam the worst, Jesus the best. Adam brought death, Jesus brought life. And the believer, the same principle is true. The “old man” is first, and *“the new man”* is last. The “old” is the worst, and the “new” is the better.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 5/31/13. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The fifty-ninth lesson will cover verses 1 through 43 of chapter thirty-six: **“THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU.”** The wives of Esau were taken from *“the daughters of Canaan.”* Some of his sons were born in Canaan. Esau moves to Mount Seir, because the land was not large enough to contain both his and Jacob’s massive flocks. Esau is declared to be the father of the Edomites. His sons that were dukes are listed, which were kings that reigned over Edom. The successive reigns of the kings of Edom are listed. The Edomites will play a significant part in the history of Israel. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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THE WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP

WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>

A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

Additional Website for Word of Truth Fellowship: <http://www.forministry.com/USMOINDPTWOTFW>

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

BROTHER BLAKEY'S ON-LINE COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARY on Nehemiah: <http://wotruth.com/nehindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>

COMMENTARY on Hosea: <http://wotruth.com/hoseaindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>

COMMENTARY on Second Corinthians: <http://wotruth.com/2Corinthians.htm>

COMMENTARY on Philippians: <http://wotruth.com/philippiansdindex.htm>

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COMMENTARY on Acts: <http://wotruth.com/Acts.htm>

COMMENTARY on Malachi: <http://wotruth.com/Malachi.htm>

COMMENTARY on Galatians: <http://wotruth.com/Galatiansindex-new.htm>

COMMENTARY on Genesis: <http://wotruth.com/Genesis.htm>

COMMENTARY on Ephesians: <http://wotruth.com/Ephesians.htm>