

Message Two

The Reality of Bethel

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

I. God's building is the desire of God's heart and the goal of God's salvation—Exo.

25:8:

- A. God's building is the Triune God as life being wrought into us so that we may become His corporate expression—Eph. 3:17a, 19b, 21.
- B. God's building is the mingling of God with man; the principle of God's building is that God builds Himself into us and builds us into Himself—John 14:20; 15:4a; Eph. 3:17a.
- C. To be built up with fellow believers is the Lord's supreme and highest requirement of His faithful seekers according to the divine oneness of the Divine Trinity—John 17.

II. Jacob's life shows us that God has to break our natural life, that He has to touch our natural life in a drastic way—Gen. 32:22-32:

- A. The Lord wrestled with Jacob in order to expose to him how natural he was and how great his natural strength was—v. 24.
- B. After Jacob was broken by God, outwardly he was the same as before, but inwardly his natural life had been dealt with—33:1-4:
 - 1. It was not the outward living that was touched by the Lord; it was the inward, natural strength that was touched by Him—32:32b.
 - 2. When the Lord touches us at a certain crucial spot, we are lame and are no longer whole—v. 25.
- C. After Jacob was broken, "the sun rose upon him," and "he limped because of his hip"; this indicates that anyone in the Lord's recovery who has light must be a crippled one—v. 31.

III. In Genesis 35 the vision of Bethel came again; however, this time it did not come as a dream—it came as a reality:

- A. We all come into the church life twice—28:12, 16-17; 35:15:
 - 1. The first time we come in a dream, and the second time we come in reality; we need both the dream and the reality.
 - 2. The dream in the beginning was a true picture, and everything in the reality is the same as that in the dream.
- B. God's desire was to bring Jacob back to Bethel; the first thing Jacob did at Bethel was to build an altar according to God's desire—vv. 1, 3, 7.
- C. At Bethel Jacob set up a pillar and poured out a drink offering on it; this indicates that the drink offering is for God's building—v. 14a.
- D. Our pouring ourselves out as a drink offering to God brings in the outpouring of the Spirit for God's building—v. 14b.

IV. At Bethel Jacob's name was changed to Israel, indicating that his being had been changed; now he was Israel at Bethel—32:28; 35:10.