

Message One

The Dream of Bethel

Scripture Reading: Gen. 28:10-22; John 1:51

- I. Jacob's dream was a dream of God's goal, the dream of Bethel, the dream of the house of God (Gen. 28:10-22), which is the church today (1 Tim. 3:15) and which will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal dwelling place of God and His redeemed elect (Rev. 21:3, 22):**
- A. God had a dream, and that dream was to have the New Jerusalem, a built-up city, as the consummation of His economy; this building is the building of God into man and of man into God—God's building is a God-man, a building in which God is man's home (Psa. 90:1; 91:1, 9) and man is God's home (Isa. 66:1-2; 57:15; John 14:20, 23; 15:5; Rev. 21:3, 22).
 - B. Our dream is to become the New Jerusalem as the consummation of God's economy—vv. 9-10.
 - C. The principle of a dream is that in it something impossible happens to us—cf. Luke 1:37; 18:27; Job 42:2-3; Psa. 126:1; Jer. 32:27:
 - 1. Every spiritual vision is a dream; every spiritual experience is a dream.
 - 2. Most heavenly visions come in times of suffering, when we are cut off from what is of man and put our trust in what is of God—cf. Gen. 28:10-12.
 - 3. The first dream of our spiritual life is our salvation; coming into the church life is a dream; knowing the practicality of the church is also a dream.
 - 4. The center of every spiritual dream is Christ as the ladder, as the One who brings heaven to earth and joins earth to heaven—John 1:51.
- II. Jacob's dream in Genesis 28 is the most crucial point in the whole book of Genesis and the most crucial word in the revelation of God:**
- A. Christ, in His being the heavenly ladder at Bethel, speaks to us concerning how God desires to have a house on the earth constituted with His redeemed and transformed elect so that He may bring heaven (God) to earth (man) and join earth (man) to heaven (God), to make the two as one for eternity—John 1:51; Gen. 28:10-22.

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- B. In the account of Jacob's dream, the stone (vv. 11, 18, 22), the pillar (v. 18), the house of God (vv. 17, 19, 22), and the oil (v. 18) are outstanding items and are the basic factors with which the Bible is composed:
1. The stone symbolizes Christ as the foundation stone, the topstone, and the cornerstone for God's building, His spiritual house—Isa. 28:16; Zech. 4:7; Acts 4:10-12.
 2. It also symbolizes the transformed man, who has been constituted with Christ as the transforming element to be the material for the building of God's house (Gen. 2:12; Matt. 16:18; John 1:42; 1 Cor. 3:12; 1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 21:11, 18-20), which is the church today (1 Tim. 3:15) and which will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal dwelling place of God and His redeemed elect (Rev. 21:3, 22; John 14:23).
 3. Jacob used a stone for a pillow, signifying that the divine element of Christ constituted into our being through our subjective experience of Him becomes a pillow for our rest (which includes satisfaction), the solid support within us—cf. Matt. 11:28.
 4. After awaking from his dream, Jacob set up the pillow-stone as a pillar, signifying that the Christ whom we have experienced, who has been wrought into us, and on whom we rest becomes the material and the support for God's building, God's house—cf. 1 Kings 7:17, 21; Gal. 2:9; Rev. 3:12.
 5. Eventually, Jacob poured oil, a symbol of the Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God reaching man (Exo. 30:23-30; Luke 4:18), on the pillar, symbolizing that the transformed man is one with the Triune God and expresses Him.
 6. That stone became Bethel, the house of God (Gen. 28:17, 19, 22):
 - a. God's house is the mutual dwelling place of God and His redeemed (John 14:2, 23)—man as God's dwelling place (Isa. 66:1-2; 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:22; Heb. 3:6; Rev. 21:3) and God as man's dwelling place (Psa. 90:1; 91:1; John 15:5; Rev. 21:22).

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- b. Hence, the house of God is constituted of God and man mingled together as one; in God's house God expresses Himself in humanity, and both God and man find mutual and eternal satisfaction and rest—Psa. 132:13-14.
- 7. Today in the church life we are in the reality of Bethel, in the fulfillment of Jacob's dream with the heavenly ladder, the stone, the pillar, God's house, and the oil; this will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal Bethel, the eternal house of God—1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 21:3, 22.
- 8. The house of God is constituted of God and man united, mingled, and incorporated together as one—John 14:23; 1 John 4:15-16; cf. Acts 17:24.

III. “And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it” (Gen. 28:12); “and He said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, You shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man” (John 1:51):

- A. The ladder is the center, the focus, of Jacob's dream; this dream is a revelation of Christ, for Christ is the reality of the ladder that Jacob saw.
- B. Christ as the Son of Man, in His humanity, is the ladder set up on earth that brings heaven (God) to earth (man) and joins earth and heaven as one—cf. 14:6:
 - 1. By His coming through incarnation, the Lord Jesus brought God into man—1:14.
 - 2. By His going through death and resurrection, the Lord Jesus brought man into God—14:6, 20.
- C. Our regenerated spirit, which is God's dwelling place today (Eph. 2:22), is the base on earth where Christ as the heavenly ladder has been set up (Gen. 28:12; 2 Tim. 4:22); hence, whenever we turn to our spirit, we experience Christ as the ladder bringing God to us and us to God:
 - 1. “Having therefore, brothers, boldness for entering the Holy of Holies in the blood of Jesus”—Heb. 10:19:
 - a. The Holy of Holies today is in heaven, where the Lord Jesus is (9:12, 24); how, then, can we enter the Holy of Holies while we are still on earth?

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- b. The secret is our spirit, referred to in Hebrews 4:12; the very Christ who is in heaven is now also in our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22.
 - c. As the heavenly ladder (Gen. 28:12; John 1:51), He joins our spirit to heaven and brings heaven into our spirit; hence, whenever we turn to our spirit, we enter into the Holy of Holies; there we meet with God, who is on the throne of grace.
2. “Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help”—Heb. 4:16:
- a. Undoubtedly, the throne mentioned here is the throne of God, which is in heaven (Rev. 4:2); the throne of God is the throne of authority toward all the universe (Dan. 7:9; Rev. 5:1).
 - b. But toward us, the believers, it becomes the throne of grace, signified by the expiation cover (the mercy seat) within the Holy of Holies (Exo. 25:17, 21); this throne is the throne of both God and the Lamb (Rev. 22:1).
 - c. How can we come to the throne of God and of the Lamb, Christ, in heaven while we still live on earth? The secret is our spirit, referred to in Hebrews 4:12.
 - d. The very Christ who is sitting on the throne in heaven (Rom. 8:34) is also now in us (v. 10), that is, in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22), where the habitation of God is (Eph. 2:22).
 - e. At Bethel, the house of God, the habitation of God, which is the gate of heaven, Christ is the ladder that joins earth to heaven and brings heaven to earth (Gen. 28:12-17; John 1:51); since today our spirit is the place of God’s habitation, it is now the gate of heaven, where Christ is the ladder that joins us, the people on earth, to heaven and brings heaven to us.
 - f. Hence, whenever we turn to our spirit, we enter through the gate of heaven and touch the throne of grace in heaven through Christ as the heavenly ladder.
- D. Where this ladder is, there are an open heaven, the transformed man, the anointing upon this man, and the building up of the house of God with this man.

GENESIS (3)

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- E. The issue of Christ as the heavenly ladder is Bethel, the church, the Body of Christ; and the consummation of this ladder is the New Jerusalem.