

Bethel – the House of God

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 2/4/2017

Brethren, do you realize how precarious these times are in which we live? Most people are oblivious to what is taking place, but we—the people of God—we can know what is happening. We need to know and understand God’s point of view. People say, “Everyone has a right to their own opinion.” Brethren, we want God’s opinion to be our opinion. It must be.

In today’s sermon: Let’s notice the change taking place in Jacob over many years as God brings him to conversion.

1Thessalonians 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

What is the time and season the world is in today? Looking into the Scriptures we see how we came to where we are today. To the **world**, God says in:

1Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

Jacob’s trouble is almost upon us – no one is going to know what hit them – it will be unbelievable and incredulous.

But to the brethren of God’s Church there is much more:

1Thessalonians 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

We are not in darkness – we know what is happening – God has shown us.

1Thessalonians 5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

1Thessalonians 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

1Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

God has enlightened our eyes to see what He is working out.

What were the big things that struck you as magnificent when God first called you to His truth?

The First Thing

Having been raised to believe that heaven was the reward of the righteous, “If you are good you go to heaven,” the **first thing** that I learned about God’s truth that was absolutely overwhelming to me, was that **we will be God** – in the Family of God.

1John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the **Children of God**: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not.

1John 3:2 Beloved, **now** are we the Children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like Him**; for we shall see him as he is.

Now are we the **Children of God** – won’t we be something new? Jesus Christ came in the flesh as the Son of God. We were created to be God’s Children as well – making us brothers and sisters to Jesus:

Romans 8:29 For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the **image of his Son**, that He [Jesus Christ] might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Only God is worshipped – not the angels or anything else.

Revelation 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and **worship before thy feet**, and to know that I have loved thee.

If we will be worshipped – and only “God” is worshipped, and be brothers to Jesus – who is God also – what else could we be, except God beings?

Kind after kind is the principle and pattern God gives us. Dogs have dogs, and cats have cats, humans have humans. God is reproducing “God beings.”

Now that I’m old, I look just like my dad looked – no surprise there. I’m still his son – and I’m not taking anything away from him being my father – with all the honor and respect that will always be due him.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Jesus gives us the embryo analogy where He says that we must be born again. The baby in the womb develops and becomes a person.

John 3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

When we are **born again** in the Kingdom of God the Father – what will we be born as?

The person with God as his Father grows in Godly character and becomes – at the resurrection – a God person. John tells us that we are already spiritual sons? Once we are spirit born – we will be spirit God beings.

1John 3:2 ... **we shall be like Him**.

God the Father will be our spiritual Father – we will be **like He is**.

We will be in the God Family – that was the first great revelation to me when first called.

The Second Thing

The **second thing** that surprised me the most was finding out that God was “hands-on-involved” in sustaining the **ascendancy and dominance** of America and Great Britain.

I read – as so many of you have read, “The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy,” – the US and BC. That book literally changed the lives of so many of us in God’s Church.

God was still instrumental – all these thousands of years after creation – in the affairs of our nations – establishing the supremacy that is given our nation through the blessings and birthright. God has always been in control, and we see that involvement clearly in the lives of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

There is something very special about the Patriarch Jacob and his life that God would devote so much space in the Bible to his story – and even choose his name for the people of God ever more.

Jesus changed Jacob’s name to Israel – and the Church of God has acquired that name – the Israel of God.

Galatians 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the **Israel of God**.

We have seen in previous sermons that Jacob began by trying to bless himself, and obtain the **birthright** [Jacob #1 “Prince of God”] and the blessing [Jacob #2 “Teach Me Thy Paths”] by devious means.

Finally, after many sore trials Jacob sought God’s direct blessing and wrestled with Jesus all night long for it. (Genesis 32:24-31)

Romans 9:4 that it was God intention all along that His **promises**, and His **covenants**, and the **sonship**, and the **glory** and the **service** of God, be passed down from Abraham, and Isaac through Jacob, but not through Esau, Ishmael or Keturah’s line.

When the Bible speaks of the **children of Abraham** – it is speaking of the covenant lineage and not Esau’s, Ishmael’s or Keturah’s children.

Muslims trace their lineage back to Abraham – not willing to admit that they are specifically excluded from the covenant promises.

The apostle Paul even had to make that very clear distinction in his day.

Paul in his own inimitable way said it like this:

Romans 9:7 Neither, because they are the children of Abraham, **are they all children**: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

The politically correct, **media promoted and advanced**, position with regard to our national greatness has become to **dilute** our birthright blessings with the Muslims.

Esau's descendants want to encroach on the blessings given to Jacob. The Muslims want Great Britain and the USA for their own!

Deuteronomy 28:43 The foreigner that is within thee shall get up above thee **very high**; and thou shall come down **very low**.

No one in the **media** has any understanding at all as to the thousands of years of animosity that exists between the children of Esau and the children of Jacob.

We have just had eight years of the Muslims rising up.

When Herbert W Armstrong died there were 300,000 Muslims in the USA – and that was counting the likes of Cassius Clay and Louis Farrakhan. Today there are four million or more – and expected to double quickly.

During the very first year of Obama's presidency, he went on his infamous "apology tour." He went to the Middle East and spoke from the podium saying that "The United States was founded and has always been lead by Muslims and Muslim teachings." **That is not true**. The videotape of that speech is on the internet.

America was founded on Judeo-Christian principles and beliefs.

Thomas Jefferson our third President fought against the widespread Muslim Barbary piracy in the Mediterranean in the early 1800's. That piracy had been going on for years.

One cannot get around what Thomas Jefferson heard when he went with John Adams to wait upon Tripoli's ambassador to London in March 1785.

When they inquired by what right the Muslim Barbary states preyed upon American shipping, **enslaving** both crews and passengers, America's two foremost envoys, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, were informed that,

"...It was **written in the Koran**, that all Nations who should not have acknowledged their [Muslim] authority were sinners, that it was their right and duty to make war upon whoever they could find and to make Slaves of all they could take as prisoners, and that every Mussulman [Muslim] who should be slain in battle was sure to go to Paradise."

That teaching in the Koran has not been repudiated – but today finds more adherents than ever.

Historically, Muslims have not been a friend of the USA.

Brethren, ask yourself, "Why the never-ending **hostility** toward the US and BC? We saw its origin in the last sermon when Esau said of Jacob – I will kill him.

Genesis 27:41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will slay my brother Jacob.

Brethren, look at how **Christian thought and practice** is ridiculed in Great Britain and the USA today.

At a time when Christians cannot **post** the Ten Commandments, **quote** the Bible publically, or **pray** publically, without incurring the wrath of government officials, we find the Muslims **rising up**.

Brethren, are you watching the changing times?

On Sunday, this week, thousands of Detroit Muslims, and thousands of Dallas/Fort Worth Muslims assembled at their respective airport terminal baggage pick-up areas, as did protesters from dozens of locations from Boise, Idaho to Miami, Florida around the country to "pray." Many of the Muslim activists gathered in Seattle, Newark, Houston and Boston and said, "Let's pray right here." One of the prayerful Muslims said, "It was kind of spontaneous."

That was not spontaneity.

That was the boldest and most intimidating move that I have seen in my lifetime against the principles and morals this nation was founded on.

I place it right up there with the attack on Pearl Harbor. It was an intimation of superiority. That is how Muslims show their dominance in a country that they are seeking to takeover.

Would any Islamic country allow Christians or Jews to gather in an airport and demonstrate like that?

Most honest people instinctively and inherently sense that this is wrong. How did the USA come to be in such deplorable circumstances? More importantly, what can we do to extricate ourselves from this horrid predicament?

I see leading evangelists exclaiming that everyone must enjoy religious freedom in the USA – meaning the Muslims. “Those poor worn torn people – it is the “Christian thing to do – to open wide our doors to them.” “We must open our doors to the downtrodden Muslim terrorists of the world.”

No one stops to think that the Muslims have ruined their nations – and now they want to come to America and bring their ungodly sharia law – derived from the religious precepts of Islam, particularly the Koran and the Hadith.

Brethren, It is God who has drawn the line between Esau and Jacob.

There is a great benefit to receiving the birthright first given to Abraham.

And yes, salvation will come to **all men** on earth through the **blessing** that passed through Jacob and through Judah to Christ – but it was never God’s intent that America and Great Britain squander their **birthright**.

That is taking place because of the curses of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

Genesis 25:22 And the [unborn] children [Esau and Jacob] struggled together within [Rebekah]; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.

Genesis 25:23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations [ethnically different] are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy womb; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

Jacob would receive the birthright and Esau would be subservient to him. God declared before Jacob was born that he would eventually inherit Abraham’s, and Isaac’s estate.

In fact, Jacob would become the “head of state” of the new nation, Israel, that was being raised up beginning with Abraham. God told Abraham:

Genesis 12:2 I will make of thee **a great nation**, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: [Like Isaac said when he realized that he had been duped by Jacob, “He shall be blessed (27:33)].

The birthright was an authority and responsibility bestowed on the firstborn. Jacob and Esau were not identical twins – they were ethnically diverse fraternal twins – developing from separate fertilized ova – genetically distinct and not similar in appearance.

God clearly knew their personalities and potentials before birth! God saw something in Jacob.

The **blessing** pointed to Jesus Christ – the “one seed” of Abraham, but salvation is meant for all humanity as we see in Galatians 3.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made.

He did not say, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. Paul makes it clear that the Gospel is for all men Gentile and Jew alike.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations [all ethnic groups], baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit:

For all this to fall into place it was necessary that Jacob become a converted believer.

God worked with Jacob, until finally toward the end of his life, God brought Jacob to conversion.

Genesis 27:46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

No chapter break here:

Genesis 28:1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt **not** take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

As Esau had done. {**Gen 36:2** Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite;

Genesis 28:2 Arise, go to Padan-Aram, 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.

Genesis 28:3 And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;

Genesis 28:4 And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

Genesis 28:5 And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

Genesis 28:6 When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;

Genesis 28:7 And that Jacob **obeyed** his father and his mother, and was gone to Padan Aram;

Esau was anything but obedient. Like Ishmael he (Genesis 16:12) And he will be a wild donkey of a man;

Genesis 28:8 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father;

That is outright rebellion!

Genesis 28:9 Then went Esau unto **Ishmael**, and took unto the **wives which he had** Mahalath the daughter of **Ishmael** - Abraham's son - the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

Genesis 28:10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

Jacob knew well, the history of his people. Did you ever stop to think and ask yourself, "Who was keeper of the revealed word of God at this time? As each subsequent generation passed on – who retained the writings of knowledge of creation, and Adam and Eve? Was the entire creation account up to and including the flood only by oral tradition – to be written down by Moses 400 years later? One way or the other, Jacob knew the history of his people.

He knew that Abraham – his grandfather – had traversed this same road that he was traveling upon many years before.

Genesis 12:7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there he built an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

Genesis 12:8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of **Bethel**, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

So Jacob finds himself in this same area – a certain place.

Genesis 28:11 And he lighted upon a **certain place**, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and took one of them for his pillow, and lay down in that place to sleep.

Genesis 28:12 And 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.

Though this is only a dream – it is very real and specific to Jacob. It was not the kind of dream that one would forget. In fact Jacob is moved by the experience.

In Genesis 28:13-14 we find a restatement of God's original promises to Abraham and Isaac.

Genesis 28:13 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 lie, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

Wow! God is reiterating the covenant promise directly to Jacob.

Genesis 28:14 And thy seed [children, offspring] shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shall 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**.

These are the same promises God earlier made to Abraham: **land**; a multitude of **descendants** spreading east, west, north, and south; and the "**Seed**," Jesus Christ, who would bless all the nations.

Genesis 28:13-14 encompasses the birthright and the blessing.

And there is a promise of **protection**. In Jacob's mind he needed to be protected from Esau.

Genesis 28:15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee [protect you] in all places whither thou go, 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.

Genesis 28:16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.

This next verse is one of the places we find the **title** to this sermon:

Gen 28:17 And he was afraid, and said, How **dreadful** is this place! This is none other but **the house of God**, and this is the gate of heaven.

Jacob **dreaded** God because he was guilty of conniving, deceit and stealing.

Genesis 28:18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

There is a lot of history connected with this stone.

My wife, Sharon and I had the occasion many years ago to visit St. Edward's Chapel at Westminster Abbey in London, where this stone sat in an ancient, wooden chair.

It is an old block of sandstone known as the "LIA FAIL" or Coronation Stone of the Scots.

For more than a thousand years the kings and queens of England and Scotland have been crowned over this stone and, as the history of Ireland reveals, the Milesian kings before them.

This stone was brought to Ireland by Jeremiah the Prophet after the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians.

Title from here:

Genesis 28:19 And [Jacob] called the name of that place **Beth-El [The House of God]**: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.

Genesis 28:20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, **If [since]** 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,

This sounds like the old Jacob who like to cut deals – that is what the translators though was happening here:

Genesis 28:21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; **then shall the LORD be my God:**

This is not a good translation because it sounds like Jacob is saying to God – “If you perform like you say you will – then I will accept you as my God.

What is actually happening here is Jacob is saying “**Since** you are the One who will be **with** me, and who will **keep** me in this way that I go, and will **give** me bread to eat, and sustain me, and clothes to wear, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; **then you are the LORD my God.**”

God revealed himself to Jacob – and Jacob believed. It was a statement of **faith** by Jacob. He says, “I won’t forget this place.”

If **America** would pray this same prayer ending with **then you are the LORD my God – then God would heal our land.**

I was surprised that this was not quoted in the inauguration address by the new president on January 20, 2017.

2Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall **humble** themselves, and **pray**, and **seek** my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will **heal** their land.

Genesis 28:22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be **God's house [Beth-El]**: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

This is the beginning of Jacob’s faith - finally Jacob is beginning to interact directly with God.

God is bringing him along – and he doesn’t know it yet – but Jacob is on his way to conversion.

End: Bethel – House of God