

THIS IS THE GATE OF HEAVEN



Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven." So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called the name of that place Bethel...

Genesis 28:10-19a

This was the turning point in Jacob's life. This was his first encounter with God. And it was from this point on that Jacob began to change from Jacob the supplanter, the cheat into Israel, the man who strives with God.

Jacob called the name of the place Bethel. Beth Elohim - house of God. And it was here at Bethel, sleeping with this stone for his pillow that Jacob learned the three basic lessons of the Kingdom of God that absolutely must get through to our hearts if it's going to make any sense to us at all, or ever be real in our lives.

That he is living his life under a holy eye.

One, he is living his life under the holy eye of God. How awesome is this place? This is none other than the house of God. This is the gate of Heaven. It was like a window through which he now sees the holy. This is his first vision of the living God.

God is with him.

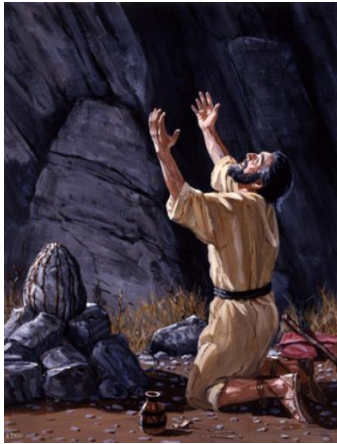
The second lesson Jacob learned that night was that God is with him. That he's not alone. Now he's on this journey because he's scared to death, his brother Esau's going to kill him. So now he has set out all by himself and he's lonely and he's frightened and he's homesick. But now he sees that he's not alone, that God is in fact, right there with him.

He has a purpose on this earth beyond himself.

The third lesson Jacob learns. Is that he has a purpose on this Earth beyond himself. That this land on which he's been sleeping is to be given to him and to his children, and children's children, his descendants. And that in a mysterious way, all the families of the earth are to be blessed through him and through them.

So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.

He called the name of that place Bethel.



Bethel, Beth Elohim, house of God.

Every man or woman or child, whoever comes into the Kingdom of God starts at Bethel, begins by learning these three lessons with Jacob.

1. That you are living your life under the eye of a holy God.

He's not just your buddy. He's not out to get you and throw you into hell, but he watches, observes, remembers and to that eye, each of us has to answer.

2. That God is with you.

This awesome and wonderful God is right here with you to help and to bless you.

3. That you are on this earth for a purpose beyond satisfying your own needs.

You are on this earth to fulfill a purpose beyond yourself. Since the birth, life, death, resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, since he poured out his Spirit upon the assembled believers on the day of Pentecost.... Bethel, the house of God, the gate of Heaven on this earth, the place where people meet God, where they encounter the holy.... is where these followers of Jesus are functioning as his body.

Whenever and wherever believers are truly functioning as his body...



.... is the House of God.

.... is the gate of Heaven.

Wherever this is the case on earth today, this miracle reoccurs. You could say that today, in a mystery, in ways beyond our comprehension.....a thousand Jacobs are stumbling into a thousand Bethels and meeting God.

But the thing we need to get clear.... very, very clear in our minds is that we have been ordained to be one of these Bethels. We gather together in our fellowships in exact spots on earth to be meeting places with God for the wandering Jacobs, the travelers who come our way. The only reason we're on this earth and the only reason we've been gathered together into fellowships and we go forth from them, and gather again and go forth from them again is so that these Jacobs, male and female, who are wandering the earth and looking for something.... can stumble into their midst and learn these same three lessons;

That they are living their life under a holy eye;

That God is with them;

It's now time for them to give themselves to a purpose beyond themselves.

That's why we're here.

We're here to be a Bethel.

The model we have in the New Testament for this Bethel is not the temple. It begins not with the temple, not with the synagogue, but with a private home, an ordinary private home, where two sisters and a brother are living.

And this home is a wonderful Bethel.

We find that this home doesn't have any spotlights on it, no heavenly music hovering above it. This is an ordinary private home with all the problems of any private home. But the thing that makes it a Bethel is that Jesus is totally welcomed into this home. And he's received into this home as a friend. And he's especially received into this home with high, high honor.

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."

But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Luke 10:38-42

Now both Martha and Mary want to make Jesus welcome. Martha does it by feeding him. That's a wonderful thing, that's a good thing she's doing here.

But Mary does it by sitting at his feet, drinking in every word, listening. and this is a better thing, better.

Bethel began for Jacob when Jacob listened carefully to every word God spoke to him that night.

That's what made it Bethel for him, he's listening, carefully listening.

And Bethel began in this house.....when Mary sits at Jesus feet, listens, listens, drinks in every word, takes it in. Again and again, the word of the Lord to his sheep...

Be still and listen.

Draw near and listen.

This means more than just going to church, listening to sermons and reading Christian literature.

It means listening for His voice..... as it's coming forth.... from whatever the mouthpiece.

"Listen as I speak in a thousand different ways to you". The word comes from many a mouth, and through many a life. And the Lord is saying to us, "Draw near and listen."

Don't Lose what He's trying to show you and tell you by bustling around in that kitchen, *whatever your kitchen happens to be.*

Don't lose what He's trying to get across to you by fussing over your personal ministry, *whatever your personal ministry happens to be.*

Don't lose what He's trying to say to you by chasing all over the place, *servicing God on your terms.*

Don't lose what He's trying to say to you.... by fuming over Mary who's sitting at His feet, *listening like she should be.*

Settle down, draw near, quiet down, simplify and listen.

Even if it means dropping 90% of the things you think you have to do. Because nothing will happen, and nothing will work until you get the message that He's giving you, the message He's giving to all of us corporately and individually.

A little farther on in the New Testament, we come across this Bethel again. Some time has elapsed. Jesus' ministry of flesh and blood is nearing its close, but this Bethel is brighter than ever.

Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair.

The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

John 12:1-3

Now, this time, Lazarus, who has been raised from the dead by Jesus, is sitting at the table and he's listening. Martha, bless her heart, goes right on serving. God bless her.

But Mary, this Mary who has been sitting at Jesus feet, drinking in, and drinking in, is now ready to pour out. And so she takes a pound of nard, pure nard.... a year's wagesand lavishes the whole thing on those feet of Jesus, where she's been sitting and listening.

She's doing the same thing that Jacob did. Jacob took the stone which had been his pillow, makes it a pillar and pours oil on top of it and anoints the stone.

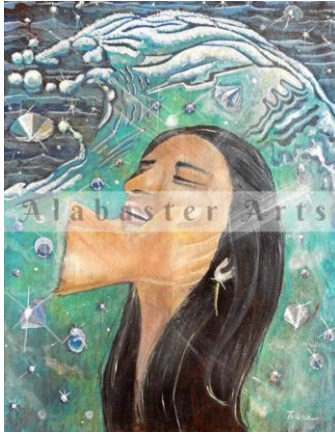
“How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called the name of that place Bethel...

Then Jacob made 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 clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you.”

Genesis 28:17b-22

Jacob makes a commitment to God, placing the pillar as a sign that “Everything I have is yours. I'm giving my life. I'm committing it to you.” He's pouring the oil on the stone as a sign of an offering of himself up to God.

Mary does the same thing. She takes this very, very expensive treasure that she has, she takes the whole thing, and she anoints his feet. And this is a sign in the same way, that she's giving herself to Jesus, just turning herself over, abandoning herself to him.



And as she does this, the house is filled with the fragrance of the ointment. And the fragrance of the ointment is a symbol of the presence of God. Now it's Bethel for sure!

And anybody who walks into that house, with any sense at all, any integrity at all.... can smell the presence of God.

Now for us wherever we gather should be Bethel;

Should be the house of God; the gate of Heaven.

God brings us together from many places and backgrounds and makes us one in his son. He has broken down the wall of partition between us. And if we haven't gone through the hole he made in that wall, it's our fault, not his.

He made us one so that.... lonely, troubled, frightened... Jacobs, male and female, can come among us and find God.

He made us one so that.... fussing, fretting, fuming, anxious, worried Marthas, male and female, can find peace.

He made us one so that.... Lazarus's can get up out of his tomb.... and live.

Our gatherings are the house of God, Bethel, the gate of Heaven.

And for our gatherings to be such a thing, we need to do only two things on our part.

We drink in.

We pour out.

We drink in, we pour out.

That's what Jacob did. He drank in, poured out. He drank in the words that the Lord gave him in his vision. Then immediately he begins to pour himself out, starting with the oil he pours on the rock.

That's what Mary did. She drank in, poured out. She drinks in these words that Jesus speaks and she takes them as treasure. Other people are walking through the house and fussing and fuming, and they don't even know they're missing priceless treasure that could change their lives. But here's this woman drinking it in. And then she pours out, keeps pouring it out. Pours out the ointment, the nard, anoints his feet, wipes them with her hair, fills the house with the fragrance.

And that's all we have to dodrink in and pour out.



First, we need to drink in. God help us to do what Jacob did, to do what Mary did.

We need to drink in and to listen carefully. Listen.

Nothing, nothing is more important in any of our lives than to hear what the Lord is trying to tell us, than to receive the word the Lord is giving us.

We need to settle down, simplify, listen, concentrate.

We need to ask ourselves, “Am I listening to what he is saying to me? Or am I distracted? Am I so distracted by my own anger, or my own vanity, or my own fears, or my own greed, or my own insistence that I'm right.... that I cannot hear what he's trying to tell me?”

We need to listen to what he's trying to tell us,

“Martha, Martha you're anxious and troubled about many things”.

And here's this woman trying to do her best in a way, but it wasn't her best. She says it's her best, but God says something else is her best. There she is running around the kitchen, anxious and troubled about many things. That's what he's saying to us, “One thing is needful, get the word I'm giving to you, drop everything, let them starve, give them peanut butter sandwiches. It doesn't make any difference. Take in this word, listen; ‘One thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good part, which will not be taken away from her.’ And if you choose the word that I'm giving you, it won't be taken from you either. It will never be stolen.”

And secondly we need to pour out.

We need to pour out.

We need to take the oil like Jacob did, and pour it on the rock.

We need to take the best that we have, the pure nard that Mary has and put it on his feet.

We need to offer up our bodies as a living sacrifice.

We need to present to him the very best that we have.

We need to ask ourselves; “Am I giving him the best that I have?” Am I really?

“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs”.

John 21:15

And give it your best.



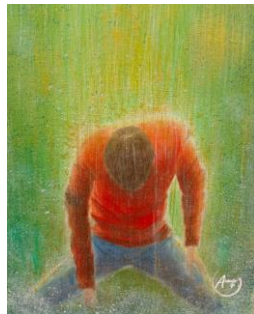
A pure heart, a whole heart offered up to him.

When we take the pure nard, the treasure, the best that we have, and we break that open and we start anointing the feet of the Lord with that; Wherever we are is filled with the fragrance of the offering, the fragrance, which is the presence of God. The fragrance that draws the Jacobs from all over the place so that they can find God, brings the Marthas from all over the place so they can find peace, and the fragrance that raises Lazarus's from the dead.

And wherever we are will be the house of God, the gate of Heaven....

.... if we will we sit at those feet and listen

....and then anoint those feet with the best that we have.



Prayer: Lord, help us to see the gate of Heaven, the wonder of your very presence in our lives. May we know that we are living under your holy eye, that you are always with us, and that we have a purpose on this earth to be the Bethel which brings your very presence to others, where others encounter the holy. Lord, help us to quiet down, settle down, draw near, and listen so we can adoringly drink in your wonderful presence. And as we abandon ourselves to you, as we anoint your feet with our love and adoration, may such a fragrance rise up and fill the atmosphere that no matter where we are...our homes...our churches...our cars...our phones...standing in lines...that we are pouring out your heavenly love....that we are the Bethels that draw others to your presence...to the very gate of Heaven. Amen.

Maranatha Mirror

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Maranatha Mirror Messages

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