

# ARISE GO UP TO BETHEL

## GENESIS 35

Text: Genesis 35:1

### **Genesis 35:1 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> 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.

Introduction:

The life of Jacob is an interesting study. Some Bible characters burst onto the scene and we can know very little about them, but Jacob's life is detailed in the Scriptures so that we can really get to know him. We know about his birth, youth, manhood, dreams, aspirations, deceptions, old age, and death. The Word of God gives us an un-retouched photo of Jacob's life. He was both bad and good. He was a cheater, a liar, a deceiver, a schemer, and a swindler. At the same time we see he wrestles with an angel of God pleading for a blessing. In our text this morning we find him cleansing his household of evil as he prepares to get back to Bethel and back to God.

He had been to Bethel in the past. He had seen the Lord in a way that changed his life. But time and distance had taken their toll on him. He had gotten away from

the Lord and been involved in all sorts of difficulty. Now God orders him back to Bethel. He tells him to go back to that place of blessing in his past.

### **1. What was Bethel?**

A. It was a geographical location near the city of Luz where Jacob had spent an incredible night.

1. He was fleeing from his brother Esau whom he had tricked into selling his birthright.

2. Esau was angry with him and was threatening to kill him. Ge. 27:41-44

(Genesis 27:41-44) "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 will I slay my brother Jacob. {42} And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, *purposing* to kill thee. {43} Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; {44} And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away;"

3. Sin drove Jacob from his home and family.

a. Sin will not let you stay put.

b. Sin always drives a person away from their home, friends, joy, and peace.

c. Examples:

1) Adam & Eve were driven out of the garden.

2) The prodigal son left his home because he wanted to live a life of sin.

3) Peter sinned and denied his Lord and the Bible says he went out.

4) Sin has an impact on those around us and often will drive us or them away.

B. It was a place of great victory for Jacob.

1. He came upon this place while he was on the run, and God met with him there.

2. There God affirmed the covenant with him, and promised His presence, protection, and provision.

3. Note: Genesis 28:10-15

(Genesis 28:10-15) "And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. {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 put *them for* his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. {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. {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 liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; {14} 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. {15} 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."

C. It was a place of spiritual commitment for Jacob. cf. Ge. 28:16-22

(Genesis 28:16-22) "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew *it* not. {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. {18} 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. {19} And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city *was called* Luz

at the first. {20} 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, {21} So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: {22} And this stone, which I have set *for* a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

1. He named the place Bethel (which means the house of God).
2. He made some promises to God there.
  - a. He promised to be faithful to Him: "the Lord shall be my God."
  - b. He promised to remember the place as God's house, where God had met with him, and set up a stone for a memorial.
  - c. He promised to tithe on all of God's blessings to him.

**Note:**

For any who might think that tithing is only for those under the law, this was years before the law was given. Tithing, giving back to God a tenth of what He has given to us, is a biblical principle which we find throughout the Scriptures.

## **2. What did it mean for Jacob to get back to Bethel?**

A. He had to put away his idols.

1. Jacob had not been to Bethel in perhaps thirty years.
2. In that amount of time he had built altars to God, but he had also tolerated the false worship of idols.
3. What had happened to him was he had developed a philosophy of worship that embraced the world while trying to maintain a relationship with God.
4. It didn't work with Jacob, and it won't work for us!

B. He had to clean up and make a change.

1. That is what repentance is all about.
2. Too many want to get near God without cleansing themselves from the filth of this world.
3. If we are truly repentant, we will turn our backs upon sin and turn towards a holy and righteous God.

C. He led his family back to God.

1. His family had followed his lead before.

a. His sons had become deceptive and murderous.

b. His wives were involved with idolatry.

c. Every step away from God, his family took with him.

2. Now it was time for him to get back to God and to take his family with him.

3. God has established the husband and father to be the spiritual leader in the home, and all too often they lead their families away from God rather than toward Him.

***Illustration:***

A little girl looked up at her daddy while sitting on his lap and asked, "Daddy, is God dead?" The father said, "What would make you ask such a question?" His daughter replied, "Well, I never hear you talk to Him anymore."

4. Jacob took the lead and brought his family with him when he returned to Bethel.

### **3. What does all this mean to us today?**

A. It means getting back to our first Love.

1. The Lord rebuked the church at Ephesus because they had left their first love.

2. Remember the joy and excitement that you knew when you first became a Christian?

3. The desire that you had to spend time in God's Word, in God's House, and with God's people?

4. Have you grown cold toward the things of God? Get back to Bethel.

B. It means putting away our idols.

1. Don't fool yourself, anything that you hold more dear than the Lord is an idol.

2. That can be a job, a family, or material possessions.

3. Where do we put our priorities? That will tell us much about what are idols in our lives.

4. Jacob buried all the idols under an oak tree, we must put away anything that



hinders our relationship with our Lord and get back to Bethel.

C. It means getting back to active service for the Lord.

1. There is no stopping place for the child of God when it comes to serving the Lord.

2. You may retire from your occupation, but not from serving the Lord.

3. There are far too many "used of beens" and "should be nows" in the church.

4. God did not save us to sit...He saved us to serve!

5. We need to get back to Bethel!

***Close:***

We have been talking about the importance of getting back to God this morning. But, perhaps there are some here today who have never met the Lord personally. You can today! God loves you and desires to be your Lord and Savior; will you come and trust Him this morning?

Christian, has God shown you that you need to get back to Bethel? Why wait? Get back to the place of

blessings. Get back to the place of service. Get back to the place where God wants you to be. Do it today!