

## GENERAL SUBJECT: BETHEL—THE HOUSE OF GOD

### Message One

#### The Dream of Bethel

Scripture Reading: Gen. 28:10-22; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21-22

“Lord, we love you. How amazing is this place! It is the house of God and the gates of heaven. Lord, we come here tonight, we pray that you take off the veils. Lord, give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Lord, we pray that we may see this dream, that the dream of Jacob may be our dream. Lord, we pray that this vision would govern us. God and man, man and God, a mutual dwelling place.”

It is a joy to be here with you. This weekend, we will be covering from Genesis 28 to 35. The topic is: Bethel—the house of God. If you have an opportunity this weekend, I encourage you to cover this portion of the word from Genesis 28 to chapter 35.

In this first message we will be touching specifically the dream of Bethel. This was Jacob’s dream. Genesis 28:10-22 is the story of Jacob’s dream; but really it was God’s dream. God’s dream became Jacob’s dream. We hope that it also becomes our dream because we are all Jacobs. We all can identify with Jacob. What happened in Genesis 28? God opened His heart, and He showed Jacob what was in His heart. If God could open His heart to you, and you could touch the pulse of His heart, you would enter into Jacob’s dream. In Genesis 28 God opened His heart. There is a good pleasure in God.

The desire of God’s heart, His good pleasure, is to obtain a mutual dwelling place with man. This is *Bethel*, which means *The house of God*. That which causes God’s heart to beat—His good pleasure that makes Him happy—is to obtain a mutual dwelling with man where God dwells in man, and man dwells in Him. Due to the fact that we love Him because He loved us first, then we want to enter into this good pleasure so that God’s good pleasure may become our good pleasure. In fact, to enter into these messages we should pray this way: “Lord, may Your good pleasure become my good pleasure. Lord, I want to desire the same thing that You desire, to choose the same thing that You choose, to long for what You long for.” So God’s longing, His good pleasure, is to have a dwelling place with man. Along with this good pleasure is the central thought of divine revelation in the scriptures which is that in order to obtain this dwelling place, God has to wrought Himself into man and wrought man within God Himself. This has been completely missed over the centuries. They have overlooked it; they have forgotten it; they have neglected it; it is something that they have truly overlooked. But if you go to the end of the Bible, there it is; in Revelation 21 and 22 you see the New Jerusalem. There, God dwells in man and man dwells in God. So, this is God’s good pleasure, the central thought of the Bible. In order for God to obtain His good pleasure, He must wrought Himself into man. This is carried out as a union in life, a mingling of nature, and an incorporation of persons. For this to happen, God was willing to go through a process. He was incarnated, He had a marvellous human living, He entered into an all-inclusive death, had a transcendental resurrection, and became the Spirit to be poured out into man, in order to gain a group of people who would enter into Him.

In the Bible we can see three works: (1) the work of creation, (2) the work of redemption, and (3) the work of building. In Genesis 1 and 2, there is the work of creation. There in six days God produced the material. This was creation and recreation, but it only lasted 6 days. But because man fell, Christ carried out a work of redemption. This took 33½ years. In this way God could recover and restore these materials that He had formed but that had fallen. But in Matthew 16:18, the Lord

said, "I will build My church." So, the work of creation, and the work of redemption, have a goal; the goal is the building. This building work has been going on for 2,000 years, and this is now the process by which those created materials which were restored, need to be built up together. What do you think is the most important work? The building work. In fact this is the central work of God. God has to make His home in our heart. God has to be wrought and worked into you and me. This is the central work of God because this is what carries out His plan and His good pleasure. If you see this, this will revolutionize your life and your church life. Paul saw it and that's why he prayed in Ephesians 3 that Christ may make His home in us. This is God making His dwelling in us.

After Ephesians 3, there is Ephesians 4 where there is a man who is wrought into God, because there it says the Body, the Spirit, the Son, and the Father (Eph. 4:4-6). So there is a Body, but there is also the Spirit, the Father, and the Lord. So there man is wrought into God. To whom was this revealed? We can affectionately call Jacob a bandit. He was a usurper. He was one who lied. He was one who cheated. In this story we see that he was running away because his brother was going to kill him. Why was his brother going to kill him? I do not know if any of you have a brother who wants to kill you, but he was fleeing because he had taken away his blessing. How did he take away the blessing? He put on some goat skins because he had no hair, he was hairless. But for the father to give him the blessing, which was the plot of the mother who was behind all this, he introduced himself to his father, he made his voice hoarse, and he had to make himself smell like the field, because he had never been in the field. Then he took away his brother's blessing by deceiving his dad who was only interested in the food and who was blind. Before that, he had already cheated his brother Esau from his birthright. This is the person to whom God showed His heart. The most unexpected of all people. It truly is a surprise that God opened His heart, this is the first time that God in the whole Bible opened His heart to show what His good pleasure is. Maybe you would say, "And why Jacob?" Because he was someone chosen by God, period. By divine decree, God loved Jacob (Rom 9:13), so God chose him. It was not because of any merit of Jacob. And God also chose you, period! This is a divine decree. We have been chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy, without blemish before Him in love (Eph. 1:4). So your destiny is already fixed. Your destination is secure. You and I have been chosen!

What was this encounter about? Consider that Jacob had no home. He was running away, he was a homeless person. God was also homeless. As the Lord said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matt. 8:20). This was the encounter of two homeless people. Two people did not have a roof over their head. Jacob had no home, and God did not have a home either. God still does not have a house. You have a house, but God has no house. If we can see this, we will touch the desire of God's heart. Because God's good pleasure is to have a dwelling place in you, in me, in all of us, in a corporate way. So God showed Jacob, one who had no home, that God's desire is to have a house. Jacob saw it. This passage in Genesis 28 truly requires the entire Bible for us to understand it.

What happened there? While Jacob was fleeing, night came. He had to sleep and grabbed a stone as a pillow. I would worry a lot, if while I am staying here in hospitality I found that they put a big stone there as a pillow. So, every detail of this story is significant. He took a stone and made it his pillow. Then he had a dream, and in this dream there is Jehovah, the heavens are opened, and the main thing of this dream was that he saw a ladder. The ladder did not descend from the heavens, but the ladder was supported on the earth. The ladder was already resting on the earth, connecting it to the heavens. The angels did not descend and ascend, but instead they were ascending and descending. So Jacob woke up and with a reverent fear, with a holy fear, he said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17). He saw

it. In that small dream, he saw that this is the house of God, this is Bethel!

Then Jacob took the stone, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on it. I do not know if when you are fleeing your home, you say to yourself, “Well, on the trip, I’m going to take some oil with me.” I don’t know where he got the oil from? But the oil was there. The oil is needed! We all need the oil! He poured the oil on the stone that had been set up as the pillar and said, “Bethel, the house of God.” We need the whole Bible to understand this. It truly is something marvellous. Only God could have written the Bible.

This weekend, we are going to enter into this dream a little bit. This was the first time in the whole Bible that God opened His heart’s desire to have a dwelling place. But you can follow this thought, and His good pleasure throughout the entire Bible. Hundreds of years later, after the people of God had been enslaved and began their exodus, they passed through the Red Sea, passed through the wilderness, and came to the mountain. God told Moses, the one who had already been prepared by God for 80 years, to go up the mountain. And what did God do there? He opened His heart again. And what did He say? “I want you to build Me a dwelling place; build Me a Tabernacle so that I may dwell with My people.” This is recorded in Exodus 25 to 40. There all the blueprint is given, and then they built it. Then when they set it up, God, the Shekinah glory, descended on the tabernacle. Later the tabernacle was expanded to become the temple. Then the temple was lost and then recovered again.

This is all in the Old Testament, but when we go to the New Testament, John 1:14 tells us, “And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us....” There is God dwelling in man. Then He passes through death and resurrection, and His body was expanded to become the mystical body of Christ, which is the Church. Finally it becomes the New Jerusalem. What is this? It is the mutual dwelling of God! From Genesis to Revelation God has always had this desire to have a dwelling place. So, tonight we hope that the Lord would awaken our spirit! We hope that our spirits be touched, be awakened, so that we could truly see this dream; so that Jacob’s dream, which really is God’s dream, may become our dream. In other words, we hope that this dream would become our vision so that it governs us, so that this dream would really be what directs us and governs us.

God can only have His dwelling place with one kind of person or persons, in a corporate way. These are what? Persons who are transformed. That is why He cannot build with clay, he needs stones. From clay we need to become stones. This is the process of transformation. The regeneration of our spirit occurred in an instant. The transfiguration of our body will also be in an instant. But the transformation of our soul takes a long process. So then, from clay we become precious stones, living stones. This means that there will be some dealings, some breaking, the discipline of the Spirit for us to go through. But what is the goal? The goal is not for you to become a museum piece. The goal is not individual. The goal is not something personal, not some kind of individual spirituality. That stone needs to be set up as a column as part of the house. So the transformation has as a goal that we would be buildable. That is the purpose of the transformation. Transformation is with a view to building, so that the clay would become a stone, and that stone would become a pillar in the house of God. Little by little, if this starts awakening within us, then we begin to have a concern for God’s heart desire. Little by little, we begin to be governed by the central thought of God concerning man. There begins to be, little by little, a genuine growth in life, and finally we can become buildable with others to be the dwelling place of God. So, a prayer should be bubbling within us that we open ourselves to the Lord saying, “Lord, work Yourself into me for Your house. Lord, transform me for Your house.”

Now, let’s go through the outline. This is truly the burden, but we have been slowly touching some of the points in the outline.

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#### **I. We need to be enlightened by and fully saturated with the thought that in this universe God is doing only one thing—building His eternal habitation—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21-22; Rev. 21:2-3.**

In the beginning we have to be enlightened, but this is only the beginning; in the end we have to be saturated. Perhaps we are not fully saturated, and we may not be satisfied with the measure of saturation, which means that within us there are certain thoughts that have to be removed. There are certain thoughts within us that have to be given up, discarded, in order that the thought that is presented here may fully saturate us. God is doing only one thing; He is building His eternal habitation. Why is it important that this saturates our way of thinking? Because our thoughts direct our being. Hymn 841 says in verse 6, “Build me up with others, / Till in us Thou see / Thy complete expression / Glorifying Thee.” God is building His House. He knows what He wants. He knows what He likes. When we begin to enter into that building, within us there is a very precious inner feeling that God is satisfied because it is His house that makes God happy.

Psalms 132:13-14 says, “For Jehovah has chosen Zion, / He has desired it for His habitation. This is My resting place forever; / Here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” God’s dwelling place is where He is expressed, where He is happy, where He is satisfied, where He finds His rest. When we enter together with Him to build His dwelling place, also within us there is a sense of rest. There is a sense of satisfaction. There is a sense of joy in being one with God in carrying out His good pleasure.

#### **II. The account of Jacob’s dream at Bethel is the most crucial word in the revelation of God, including the whole Bible in its scope and requiring the rest of the Bible to explain it—Gen. 28:10-22; Matt. 16:18; 1 Tim. 3:15:**

We have already presented this development: there is the tabernacle, then the temple, then the recovered temple. This is the Old Testament. This is the typology, but in the reality of the New Testament, there is the incarnation of Christ, then the Church produced in resurrection. Then the Body of Christ is built up. Then the manifestation of the New Jerusalem in the Kingdom. Finally the manifestation of the New Jerusalem for eternity. So we must exercise ourselves, so that it is a dream become our dream. In the sense that this would be our reality, and that we begin to pray for this, and we begin to live this. And then that becomes what directs us, and controls and starts to govern our living.

- A. Genesis 28:10-22 is the first place in Scripture where God reveals that His intention is to build Himself together with man and to have a dwelling place, a Bethel, on earth.
- B. Jacob’s dream is a revelation of Christ, for the center of this dream is Christ as the ladder—v. 12; John 1:51:

The center of all genuine revelation is Christ. In Revelation 1:1, it tells us that this is “The revelation of Jesus Christ....” The entire book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ. So in this dream, the center of the revelation is the ladder. Christ is the ladder as it is shown to us in John 1:51. The Lord explains this in John 1:51 saying, “... you shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” So Christ is the ladder and the ladder is what produces the building.

1. The purpose of the dream at Bethel is always that we see Christ as the ladder; this ladder issues in Bethel, the house of God on earth.

Ephesians 2:21-22 are key verses here. I would like to read them: “In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.” So God’s dwelling place is in the spirit. And we are being built up together as the dwelling place of God in spirit. So, Bethel with the ladder is in your mingled spirit. In our spirit is the ladder; and this ladder is Christ the Son of Man, who is divinely human and humanly divine. In this ladder, there is much traffic. I think tonight, there is much traffic in our spirit. God is showing us His house, and within our spirit is emerging a cooperation for God’s house. So, on this ladder there is much traffic which connects the heavens with the earth and unites the heavens to the earth. Jacob said, “This is the house of God, the gate of heaven!” Everyone wants to go to heaven but God wants to come to the earth! How do we enter into heaven? Through our spirit! It is by entering into our spirit that we have contact with Christ who is in our spirit! There is much traffic there. In this Christ who is now in our spirit there can be this two-way traffic, so that the heavens and the earth can be united, so that God would work Himself into us and we would be worked into God. In this way the corporate dwelling place of God can be produced. “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17). We are joined together with the Lord as one spirit.

In Christ, in our spirit, is the ladder, and there is this constant two way traffic in our spirit. Normally we do not like traffic, but this traffic is very good. In 1980, I touched the church life in Fullerton, California, and the whole meeting was about Philippians 3. The brothers were praying, declaring and proclaiming; it was a “holy disorder” and I saw Christ, and I saw the dwelling place of God. I could not express it, but I saw something. Why? Because I touched my spirit. I saw that it was worth leaving everything behind: “I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord... that I may gain Christ And be found in Him” (Phil. 3:8-9). One year went by, and I was wandering in the wilderness. I was “homeless.” I got to Oklahoma where I got a job knocking on doors selling books. I knocked on the door of a family, and a sister came to the door. I asked her for a glass of water and she began to minister Christ to my spirit. Within a few minutes, I asked, “Do you know ... do you know the church in Fullerton? Do you know Witness Lee?” Everything came back to me. Why? Because I tasted the spirit! Her jaw dropped and she said, “What ...?” Because I had touched my spirit a year ago, I was looking for that taste, but I did not know where this taste was. I had turned on the switch, but I did not know where the switch was. I had turned on the light, but I still did not know where the switch was. When I had that fellowship with that sister, my spirit became enlivened. The best shepherding for anyone is for them to touch their spirit, because then the gates of heaven are open and they will enter into this divine two-way traffic. The dwelling place of God is there; there is Bethel; there is the gate of heaven. Oh, Hallelujah for our spirit.

2. Christ, in His being the heavenly ladder at Bethel, speaks to us how God desires to have a house on earth constituted with His redeemed and transformed elect, that He may bring heaven to earth and join earth to heaven, to make the two as one for eternity.
- C. In the account of Jacob’s dream at Bethel, there are four outstanding items: the stone, the pillar, the oil and the house of God—Gen. 28:11, 17-19, 22.
1. The stone signifies the Christ who has been wrought into our being to become our rest—v. 11.

What is the stone? The stone represents the Christ who has worked Himself into us to become

our rest. So Christ is the material for God's building. But which Christ is that? It is the Christ who has been worked into us to become our rest. There are many elements within us that do not give us rest: there is anxiety, there are worldly thoughts, and there are unstable moods. There are many elements within us that causes us not to have rest. To have rest in our soul is a product of having Christ wrought into our being. You will not have rest until Christ is worked into you to become this stone. In Matthew 11:28-30 He says, "Come to Me, all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." The house of God is the most secure place in the whole universe. What do you think bothers God? Is there something that bothers God? Is there something that keeps Him uneasy? Is there something that takes away His peace, His rest? No. When we enjoy this Christ and this Christ is worked into us, then we enter into the rest of God.

Now we are being built up. 1 Peter 2:4-5 tells us that we are being built up together as living stones: "Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men, but with God chosen and precious, You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood ..." This requires that we would see it; and if we see it, then we need to pray. To pray something as simple as this: "Lord, make me a living stone for Your house." This causes us to enter into God's good pleasure. Paul saw it, and then he prayed it, that's why in Ephesians 3:17, he prayed "that Christ may make His home in your hearts..." In the New Testament, the heart of the divine revelation is Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians; those books are the heart of the divine revelation. The heart of the heart is Ephesians, and the heart of the heart of the heart is Ephesians 3:17. So, tonight we are in the heart of the heart of the heart of the divine revelation, that Christ would make His home in our hearts. If you see it, you will pray about it. Paul saw it, so he prayed about it. And I tell you, if this becomes your intrinsic prayer, God will answer it, God will carry it out.

At the beginning, we may not be that open; we may be afraid. Perhaps there are things within our soul, within our heart, that we do not want to share with God, so we don't want God to get into that room. It has three locks on it. We are seeing the "heart" of the "heart" of the "heart," so, there are also rooms that have a lock, after a lock, after a lock, and the key gets thrown into the sea, so no one would find it. But God is so patient with us, and little by little, we begin to have a relationship with Him, and we begin to have transactions with Him. Little by little we start trusting Him, and little by little, He begins to touch us, and then enters into us to make His home in our hearts. When I was working in New York, I used to always wear a tie. I would always choose the tie that I was going to wear to work, and I had a very favorite tie. I put it on one time, and then I felt something within me that said "Do not put on this tie." And I replied, "But Lord, this is my favorite tie! Do you not have other things to do in the universe, than to bother me about my tie?" So, I went to work, and I grabbed an orange juice, and the lid came off. I don't know how, but the juice spilled, and it landed just on my tie. I took it to the dry cleaners, so that I would be able to put it on again, but when I put it on again, the Lord told me again, "I do not want you to put on that tie." I put on my tie anyway but while I had breakfast, I spilled the grease from my breakfast all over my tie. That's when I said to the Lord, "Ok Lord, forget it, I'm going to get rid of this tie."

The Lord takes care of every detail in our life. So, we begin to have these kinds of transactions with the Lord, and we start to see that the Lord is real. We realize that He is really real with us. Little by little, I realized that the Lord cares about what I wear, so I began to go through all my wardrobe to see what the Lord would allow me to have, and not allow me to have. When I was a student, I was in Oklahoma, because I came into the church life through the church in Oklahoma City. The Lord

began to touch me to tithe because at that time, I did not have the habit of tithing. I did not have the habit nor did I have the money to tithe. The Lord began to touch me, so we have to relate to the Lord in a real way. I touched the Lord and He told me an amount. When the Lord gives you an amount, just do it, and do not start bargaining. Sure, we may bargain, but eventually we learn not to bargain. I went to drop in my offering, at that time the offering box was a hole in the wall, and you would just put your tithe in there, so I put the tithe in the hole. As I was leaving, a brother came to me and said, "Good to see you. Here, I have something for you." He gave me the exact same amount that I had just put in the "hole". The same amount! What did this mean? The Lord told me, "I do not need your money, but He wanted me to strip myself off money, because that occupies our heart." Then the brother said to me, "This is for you to get a haircut." So the Lord has a sense of humor. All these things happen when we say, "Lord, make your home in my heart, transform me for Your house."

2. Jacob set up the stone for a pillar; this signifies that the Christ who has been wrought into us becomes material for God's building—v. 18a..

This signifies that the stone is for the house, because the stone was set up as a pillar. What indicates to us that Christ is being worked in us? The indicator that Christ is being formed in you is that you begin to care for the house. You begin to have a concern for the church. You begin to have a concern for the saints. You begin to be concerned for the churches. You begin to be concerned for the Body of Christ, for the blending, for the building. This is the indicator that Christ is really making home in our heart because now the stone is being set up as a pillar.

On Sundays, my wife and I usually invite the saints, or the guests who come to the meeting, to our house for lunch. One Sunday we had agreed not to invite anyone because we had other things to do. A Chinese-speaking family brought a Spanish-speaking person to the meeting on that Sunday morning. When that person stood up, the Lord told me, "Invite them to eat." I said to the Lord, "Lord, my wife is going to kill me." You know, she does not draw the sword but her eyes. I asked her, "Miriam, can I ask you a question?" Women already know so she asked me, "What do you want?" Then I answered, "Look, I want to invite this family. Do not worry, I will go to Pollo Loco and bring the food. Don't worry, you don't have to do anything." They stayed until about 4 pm and my wife was smiling; she was happy. This is the concern within us when there is someone new. When Christ is being wrought into us there is a concern for the other members of the Body of Christ.

There was a brother who was entering into the church life and he told the Lord, "Lord, I do not like it here because nobody invites me to eat." Then the Lord answered, "No one can invite you because you leave quickly after the meeting ends." So he said "Ok" and when the meeting was over, he went and stood at the door. He did not leave, but he remained right at the door. Someone came to him and said, "Can you come to eat at my house?" The Lord is very real. So, the indicator is that we begin to take care of the members of the Body. We begin to have body consciousness. Within us there begins to be concern for the other members, a living concern for the other members, prayers for the other members. This is the indicator that the stone has now been set up as a pillar. This Christ, in making His home in our heart, produces three aspects that are related to the stone as a pillar: (1) He will make us intrinsically burdened or concerned for God's good pleasure. (2) He will lead us to have intrinsic prayers and a living concern for the saints and for the church. And (3) a Body consciousness will be produced.

3. Jacob's pouring oil upon the stone, which was set up as a pillar signifies the Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God reaching man—v.18b.

4. After the oil was poured upon the pillar, the pillar became the house of God—v. 19a, 22a.

So you are now for God's building. The Spirit is poured out and mingled with you for God's building. After the oil was poured upon the pillar, the pillar became the house of God. So now the pillar becomes the house of God. The more the Triune God is applied to us by transforming us, the more we then become part of the building.

Revelation 3:12 says, "He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore...." Last week we were having fellowship with a brother, and the brother said to me "I worry that one day I will leave." But here is a promise, "He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore." You have to put this together with Revelation 21 and 22, where John, seeing the New Jerusalem, says, "And I saw no temple in it" (21:22). John did not see a temple in the New Jerusalem. "For the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." What does it mean that you have been made a pillar in the temple of God? In the New Jerusalem there is no temple because God is the temple. This means that in this process, you are becoming a structural part of the Triune God economically, not essentially but economically, because we are being built as pillars in the temple. But God is the temple! This means that we are being built up in God! God is wrought into us and we are being wrought into Him. This is the mutual dwelling place. This is the New Jerusalem. This is Bethel! This is the dwelling place of God. This is the "Pum, Pum, Pum" of God's heart; this is what makes God's heart to beat. God dwells in man and man dwells in God. The two are being built up into one another.

- D. Every step of Jacob's life was involved with Bethel—v. 19; 35:1, 3, 6-7, 15.

Why? Because God has to produce these stones and make them part of God's house. That is, everything depends on the kind of persons we are. We now have to be buildable material. Jacob saw the dream but it did not change him. He saw the dream, but intrinsically, it did not change him. So the rest of the weekend we will see what has to happen for us to become the type of person who can be the stone with the oil as a pillar in the house of God. It is most encouraging to see Jacob at the end, because in the end he is part of the building. It is very encouraging to read the story from the end to the beginning. In the end, Jacob becomes Israel! You and I will also become Israel. Amen!

### **III. Jacob's history is a picture of the discipline of the Holy Spirit—31:38-41; 47:9; 48:5-16a; Heb. 12:9-11:**

- A. Although God unveiled to Jacob the desire of His heart to have Bethel, this did not transform Jacob at all; Jacob still needed to be dealt with, broken, and transformed—Gen. 28:20-21.

We have to see the dream and respond to the dream. Then allow the Spirit, at the appropriate time, to apply all the necessary experiences, which are the dealings, the breaking, and the transformation, in this order.

- B. The discipline of the Holy Spirit refers to what the Holy Spirit is doing in our outward environment, to His arranging of all people, things and happenings through which we are being dealt with and disciplined—Rom. 8:28.
- C. Through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, God completely tears down our old creation so that the element of the new creation may be built up in us.

- D. As our natural life is dealt with through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, Christ is constituted into us—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17a.
- E. Everything and everyone in our environment is an instrument of sovereignty used by God for our transformation; this is for Bethel—Rom. 8:28; 12:4-5.

Do not pray for the dealings, forget about that. Simply pray in a positive way: “Lord, work Yourself into me for Your building. Make Your home in me for Your house.” In time, the discipline of the Spirit will come to carry this out in our lives in particular ways. All things and all people present in our environment are instruments that God uses sovereignly for our transformation. This is for Bethel! So from God’s perspective, all that happened to Jacob was for the fulfillment of the dream. He began as clay and had to be made into stone. That stone had to be mingled with the Spirit, with the oil, to become a pillar in the house of God. God accomplishes certain things through certain dealings that He has with us. Then comes a crisis, the encounter with Esau. There comes the decisive moment of breaking. Then the transformation begins. Then another crisis, the loss of Rachel. There begins the process of maturity. Then another crisis, he loses Joseph. Still later he needs to let go of Benjamin also and maturity comes to its consummation. Jacob becomes Israel. That is your story. In the end we all become Israel; we all become the house of God. To finish, let us pray that this dream would become our dream. Let us respond with this type of prayer that Christ would make His home in our heart for the house of God, and that we would receive the grace and mercy to accept the discipline of the Holy Spirit for our transformation with a view for the building of the house of God.