

## BETH-EL

Beth-el, House of God, the LORD has returned to you and has fulfilled the promises made to Abraham in the day when He did appear to him and say, "Unto thy Seed will I give this Land" (Genesis 12:7); in that day when Abraham laid claim to you with his Altars, and when he called upon the Name of the LORD, even in your domain. Did not Abraham in this solitary act make a profound and mighty declaration, when he consecrated and dedicated the Land unto the LORD; yes, even when he was a stranger and sojourner therein? Did he not show forth great faith, when he believed the word he heard from the mouth of the LORD? Indeed, Abraham did believe and thereby set his claim and put the Name of the LORD on the Land; even between Beth-el and Ai in his day, when he "removed from Shechem unto a mountain on the East of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the West, and Ai on the East and there he built an Altar unto the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD" (Genesis 12:8).

### **The Altar of Abraham and the Tents of Joshua**

Oh, the precision of the LORD! Oh, the exactness of His knowledge and foresight. Beth-el do you recall these things? For it was at the very place of Abraham's Altar that Joshua and the armies of Israel pitched their tents in the day of battle at Ai when "Joshua sent them forth: and they went to lie in ambush, and abode between Beth-el and Ai. . . And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Beth-el and Ai, on the West side of the City" (Joshua 8:9,12). Oh, Beth-el, you were witness to the great slaughter and the King of Ai taken alive, whom Joshua did slay and hung on a tree (cp. Joshua 8:29).

### **The Altar at the Place of the Curse**

"Then Joshua built an Altar unto the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal" (Joshua 8:30). In Mount Ebal, the place of the curse (cp. Deuteronomy 11:29) and the hanging on a tree of the King of Ai. At that place did Joshua build an Altar for burnt offerings to the LORD, for sacrifices and the *Shelem*, peace and fellowship offerings by the Priests (Joshua 8:31), even according to the command of Moses to the children of Israel.

Do not these things pre-figure the coming of the One, who would become the curse for us? Do not the Scriptures tell us in Deuteronomy 21:23, "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is cursed of God); that thy Land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God gives thee for an inheritance." Did not the Apostle Paul make reference to this in his Epistle to the Galatians? "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, 'Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree'" (Galatians 3:13). *Yes, the Altar is built at the place of the curse, to remove the curse and defilement from the Land.* The Altar is the place of sacrifice to the LORD, a sweet smelling savor, that He might be satisfied. Oh, the Lamb and the Cross, *the Crucified Christ*, has become the sacrifice, the propitiation and expiation for sin and all uncleanness, and at that Altar the Land is cleansed, the curse is removed and the LORD is pleased (cp. Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10).

### **Jacob and the Gate of Heaven**

Beth-el, do you remember when your name was Luz (Genesis 28:19), when Jacob came to you on his journey to Padan-aram to take a wife of the daughters of Laban, Rebekah's brother? (cp. Genesis 28:2). Do you remember when. . .

*Jacob lighted upon you, and tarried with you all night because the sun was set; when he took of your stones and put them for his pillows; and lay down to sleep. And he dreamed and behold a ladder (staircase) was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.*

*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 you lie, to thee will I give it, and to thy Seed.*

*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.*

*And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither you 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.*

*And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. 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.*

*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.*

*And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.*

*(Genesis 28:11-19; 48:3)*

Beth-el, reveal to us the mystery of the Staircase and the Gate of Heaven shown to Jacob in his dream on the night he spent in your domain. Is it not a revelation of Christ? Did not our LORD speak of this to Nathanael when he declared Jesus to be the Son of God, the King of Israel? (cp. John 1:49). Did not Jesus say to him in reply:

*Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, you believe? Thou shalt see greater things than these.*

*And Jesus said unto Nathanael, Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter you shall see Heaven Open (Heaven's Gate), and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man (the Staircase).  
(John 1:50-51)*

Yes, Beth-el, Jacob saw a vision of Christ, the coming Messiah, the King of Israel. Christ is Heaven's Gate and Staircase (cp. John 14:6), even the Seed to Whom the promise to Jacob was made. It is as the Apostle Paul declared in Galatians 3:16, "Now to Abraham and his Seed were

the promises made. He does not say, 'and to seeds' as of many; but as of One, 'and to thy Seed,' which is Christ."

### **The God of Beth-el**

Oh, Beth-el, House of God, you are so blessed to have been favored to be the place of promise. And by your name did the LORD speak further to Jacob when he was instructed to leave Padan-aram and Laban's house and return to the house of his father, Isaac. For the Angel of the LORD said to Jacob at that time: "I am the God of Beth-el, where you anointed the pillar, and where you made your vow unto Me: now arise out from this land, and return unto the Land of thy kindred" (Genesis 31:13). Yes, Beth-el Jacob did, indeed, return to the Land promised him and the Seed; even unto you, and Shechem, Hebron, and Beersheba; yes, even to all the Land of his sojourn there.

Beth-el the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, have acted foolishly in Shechem when their sister, Dinah, was defiled by Shechem, son of Hamor. Now the LORD has instructed Jacob to move from there and return to you saying, "Arise, go up to Beth-el and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when you fled from the face of Esau thy brother" (Genesis 35:1). Beth-el, may you ever be a place of refuge in our times of trouble. Oh, House of God, we turn to you for solace and to offer up a sacrifice upon your Altar there.

Yes, Beth-el, it was in you, that Jacob was given his new name, Israel (Genesis 35:10); for the LORD spoke unto him saying, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; And the Land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the Land" (Genesis 35:11-12). Now Jacob has set up another pillar in you, Beth-el, in that place where the

LORD spoke to him. Yes, a pillar like unto the first, a pillar of stone: and Israel has poured a drink offering upon it, along with oil thereon, even in you O' House of God and Gate of Heaven (cp. Genesis 35:14-15).

### **The Sons of Israel Return**

Beth-el, after so long a time, the children of Israel commanded by Joshua, son of Nun and all the Tribes have returned to you; they have built Altars to the LORD and laid claim to the Land. Yes, and have now taken possession of all that was promised to and claimed by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, according to the command given to Moses by the mouth of the LORD.

### **Welcome the Prophets**

Beth-el, you are an ancient city and have become a chief and principal city in Benjamin with your Court of Justice to which the prophets and judges Deborah (Judges 4:5) and Samuel (1 Samuel 7:16) have presided. Yes, and the School of the Prophets in your domain is a center for instruction, worship and prayers by those who prophesy in the Name of the LORD: Nathan, Gad, Elijah, Elishah and many other unnamed ones who have passed through your Gates.

### **Jeroboam, the Evil King**

Oh, Beth-el, beware, for an evil King has risen in Israel. Jeroboam, son of Nebat, by name (1 Kings 12:2). Yet, even now the prophets have raised their voice against him. For he has corrupted the Altar of the Lord with idolatrous offerings and sacrifices to other gods, even golden calves, which abominations he had learned in Egypt (cp. 1 Kings 12:32-33). He has corrupted the priesthood and has replaced the worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, saying to the people: "it is too much for you to go to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 12:28). He has set a new feast day "like unto the

feast that is in Judah, and offered sacrifices upon the altar" (1 Kings 12:32). Now, Beth-el by the word of the LORD through the prophet, Ahijah, Jeroboam shall be judged for he "has done evil above all that were before him: for he has gone and made other gods, and molten images, to provoke the LORD to anger, and has cast the LORD behind his back" (1 Kings 14:9).

### **Beware the False Prophets**

Oh, Beth-el, beware of false prophets and teachers (cp. II Peter 2:1-3), and all those who would lead to apostasy, to corrupt the right way of the LORD; who lead the people astray, who turn the people to another. Beware of those who would "trouble you and pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again; If any man preaches any other Gospel unto you than that which you have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:7-9).

### **A Faithful High Priest**

Now, Beth-el, the promises of God stand sure. We have a faithful "High Priest over the [Beth-el] of God: therefore, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is Faithful Who Promises)" (Hebrews 10:21-23). Amen and Amen.