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JACOB OR "I AM THE GOD OF BETHEL"

By Gordon F. Nelson

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5.

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:6.

The faithfulness and ability to perform all that God had said is what the God of Bethel stands for. At the instruction of Jacob's mother, Rebekah, and a charge given by his father, *"Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan"* (Genesis 28:1), sent Jacob scurrying for his very life from Esau, his brother, to find a wife.

"And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him (Esau being the perfect type of the prodigal son's elder brother, who also was the first born): and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob." Genesis 27:41. These words were reported to Rebekah.

"Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain (Heb.-gentle, upright, pious) man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob." Genesis 25:27-28. Jacob had absolutely nothing in common with his father. Isaac, his father, loved Esau. I used to have "coffee break time" with a bunch of hunters. It was like another world. If you didn't enjoy caribou hunting--drop dead! They talked of nothing else. I can sympathize with Jacob.

Esau related to this earth. Esau's *"wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish."* James 3:15. *"And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife"* two Hittites (Heb.-terror, an aboriginal Canaanite). These two Canaanitish women *"were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah."* Genesis 26:34-35. Esau never regarded his parents at all in the selection of wives he would be bringing into their home.

Is it any wonder that the father, Isaac, charged Jacob, *"Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan."* Genesis 28:1. Jacob obeyed his father and mother. *"And Rebekah said to Issaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth (these Canaanitish women): if Jacob (does the same)...what good shall my life do me?"* Genesis 27:46. You can literally take all peace from the home by a marriage, and even premature death to your parents. *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers"* (2 Corinthians 6:14), has been a command of God since Cain (type of Esau) slew Abel.

You can tell an awful lot about a man or woman's character by whom they marry. Often, that choice reflects his or her eternal destination as well. *"And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father,"* went and married two Ishmaelites. Genesis 28:8-9. Adding insult to injury, he adds two more wives this time, that have a *"form of godliness,"* or religion, as appeasement for his marrying two Canaanitish women.

"They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Romans 9:8. *"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* Romans 9:13. How would you like being hated by God before you were ever born? (*"For the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God ACCORDING TO ELECTION (not religion) might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;"*) *It was said unto her (Rebekah), The elder shall serve the younger....So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy...Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."* Romans 9:11-18.

Esau was hated by God before he was ever born. He was the first born, therefore would inherit all of Isaac's wealth. He had Christian parents to show him the way. He was a favored child of his father because of his *"cunning ability to hunt."* He had everything going for him, but died and went to hell. *"Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."* Revelation 3:11. Jacob literally took his brother's crown for the price of a mess of pottage.

"And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die." Genesis 25:32. I have been at that point ever since I turned 70, seven years ago. Should I call up Dr. Kevorkian? Do I need Kaiser's "euthanasia doctors" from Hong Kong to come visit me? *"I am at the point to die."* Esau had no real faith in God. My mother made 101. Who am I to tell God, *"I am at the point to die,"* and then base that on a decision.

"I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." Genesis 31:13. It has been twenty years since Jacob has been to Bethel.

The word, "beth-el" in Greek means "the house of God." Therefore, in the past, before all these "Christian Centers" were born, "Bethel Temple" was a very popular name to give a church. The Capital Christian Center, which has undergone three name changes, was originally Bethel Temple when first Glen Cole became its pastor.

Bethel is a high point in the life of Jacob. His life is important for the church to comprehend because Jacob represents "unmerited favor," or grace. He had nothing going for him, except loving and coveting the "promises" given unto his grandfather, Abraham. *"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will*

bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Genesis 12:2-3.

Esau was more concerned about a “deer hunting trip” than God’s promises. You see in the life of Jacob the New Testament principle of the violent (more energetic) taking the kingdom of heaven by force. Matthew 11:12. If you don’t want to go to heaven, don’t worry about it! You’ll not be there!

In Isaac’s charge, *“Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan,”* both Isaac and Jacob knew they were in contention for the Abrahamic blessing. *“And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; AND GIVE THEE THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM.”* Genesis 28:1,3-4. Jacob had a “fear of Isaac,” in that he felt the responsibility to bring into play in the earth, “The Abrahamic Blessing.”

Mysteriously, those same “Abrahamic Blessings,” through Jesus Christ, are still to be contended for. *“The law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.”* Galatians 3:12. Religion, churchianity, can get you out of the way in contending to inherit these Abrahamic blessings. *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: (why?) That the BLESSING OF ABRAHAM might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might RECEIVE THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT through faith.”* Galatians 3:13-14. This is a promise from God that can only be inherited through receiving “*THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT*” first. Are you interested in receiving this “*promise of the Spirit,*” or would you rather go to Rome’s games!

Sacramento will soon have their own stadium to show off the bodies of the young gladiators in the new coliseum. Most men only read the sports page in a newspaper, drink their coffee, dunk the donut, and off they go to the office. Like Esau of old, to them the only real world is totally “earthly.”

Randy, my son in the faith for over thirty years, became a contender for these “Abrahamic blessings.” It is because of this belief system I had ingrained into him, was the only reason I was welcomed aboard an American Airlines plane to Kauai, Hawaii. His wife, who was left home, looked on the whole thing as some sort of chicanery. Go to Hawaii during the Thanksgiving season and leave your wife home! You try it! “What are you doing, Randy? Taking your rabbit’s foot (yours truly!) to Hawaii?” she asked.

We felt we were on a mission that had higher priority than a wife’s unjustified babbling! none of which is faith. *“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”* Hebrews 11:6. Randy had financial problems that could possibly topple the very house that his wife and children live in. How do you explain that to a wife? You can go to your Thanksgiving party, attend various functions of the holiday

season, and possibly miss the prime time of the year to sell your property. Besides, he did not have the money to take his wife. I had my own fare.

It is a wonderful experience to step out in faith to see this God of Abraham reveal His hand. I hadn't had a cup of coffee in over a year. A couple of days before leaving for Hawaii, I took to drinking coffee all over again. If I hadn't, I would never have insisted on going to the golf course coffee shop. Randy didn't even know that every golf course has a coffee shop.

The waitress that waited on us, Sandy, so encouraged us with her positive affirmation. Any devil can speak unbelief! Job's wife told him, Why don't you "*curse God, and die.*" Job 2:9. At a time when a man is facing possible bankruptcy, he does not need remarks from an unbelieving wife. But Sandy was the exact opposite. "If you fellows cannot sell that house, I will." Just what we needed to hear. Needless to say, Sandy is now the manager of "The Byrd of Paradise," a name she gave this executive mansion that overlooks the golf course and the ocean.

Did you know that unbelief is sin? "*But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.*" Revelation 21:8. Like a Doubting Thomas, some just can't believe!

Seldom can a wife see God in her own husband: even more so, if they were not virgins when they married. They reason, "How could a man have faith who was a chief participant in an orgasm?" Sex is viewed as created by the devil and unclean! This is the main reason that the Levitical priests could only marry a virgin. "*And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*" Hebrews 3:18-19. You don't believe! Please don't open your mouth and reveal your shame to all.

I was invited to board the American Airlines flight because of my faith. Two believers can put ten thousand devils to flight! We did not need any "unbelievers" to be aboard this trip! We were on a mission of faith and works. We only saw the beach one day out of fifteen. We were busy putting our faith to work, attempting to bring this ship, "Byrd of Paradise," up to ship-shape. Our first customer, a Japanese man, paid \$250 a night for two weeks. His only comment was that the price was, "Too cheap!" We heeded his advice to equalize the price to that of the only hotel on Kauai, at \$300 per night.

Both Randy and I felt we were completely in His hands. Only victory can tame the tongues of unbelief! "*Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*" James 2:18. Randy and I were determined to show his wife our faith by our works!

I am the God of Bethel! *“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”*
Numbers 23:19.

“I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, (of Laban), and return unto the land of thy kindred.” Genesis 31:13. Bethel had no large crowds! No congregation singing praises unto God, only angels ascending and descending upon a ladder. Jacob, *“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. 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 (His messengers, not yours) ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the Lord GOD of Abraham thy (grand) father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.”* Genesis 28:11-13.

This is Bethel! Bethel is to Jacob what the “burning bush” was to Moses. *“Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”* Exodus 3:5. Bethel is your invitation from God to walk with Him in *“this way.”* Jacob vowed a vow at Bethel, at all the display of the miraculous, *“If God will be with me, and will keep me in THIS WAY that I go...I will surely give THE TENTH unto thee.”* Genesis 28:20,22. Jacob was introduced to *“this way”* to serve God that was totally independent of crowds. The same crowds that cried, *“Hosanna to the son of David!”* to Jesus upon entering Jerusalem riding on an ass, would cry, *“Crucify him!”* one week later. Only *“this way”* that Jacob was referring to can deliver a soul from the fickleness of the people--Laodicea (Gk.-democracy, rule of the people [the hireling system]).

Before Jacob ever reached Bethel, he had been under the law (school master to lead us to Christ). He was under the law of Isaac, his father, and Rebekah, his mother, to tell him the way. *“Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is UNDER TUTORS AND GOVERNORS (type of the law) UNTIL THE TIME appointed of the father.”* Galatians 4:1-2. *“And Jacob obeyed his father and his mother”* in refusing to marry Canaanitish women. He was under tutors and governors; he was not a “free spirit.” The law led him to Christ (Bethel).

From Bethel, Jacob prayed for God to keep him in *“this way,”* the way of the supernatural; angels, ladders, voices, and Almighty God giving him assurance of his return to this land. At Bethel, he became free from the law of tutors and governors by God’s introduction to *“this way.”* Communication with the God of Bethel frees one from the *“law of sin and death”* (Romans 8:2), and explains why the Apostle Paul declared, *“All things are lawful for me”* (1 Corinthians 10:23), by being a type of the *“Holy Ghost*

and fire.” Matthew 3:11. Paul even shaved his head and played the part of a hypocrite to deceive the Jews. Acts 21:24-26.

One of the big errors of Pentecostal theology is their reliance upon “*the law, which is not of faith*” (Galatians 3:12), to “justify” them (Galatians 2:16). It is possible that Jacob provided John Bunyan the inspiration for the immortal classic, The Pilgrim’s Progress. At Bethel you become convinced that God is able to perform that which He declares He will do!

As a new convert, I had one of the most glorious conversions I have ever seen in over fifty-five years in Pentecostalism. He knew I needed a lot of tender love from my heavenly Father to survive the course. He had a master plan for my life. I didn’t need any “Toronto Canada Blessing!” I was “laughing in the spirit” on a couch in our living room for days! I absolutely was bathed in “liquid love,” as D.L. Moody described the Baptism of the Holy Ghost in his own life.

“Laughing in the spirit,” is not for adults. God gives extra grace to babies who will die without love. A baby is totally dependent upon their feelings to accept love.

At the close of every Billy Graham Crusade, the new babies are directed to “go to the church of your choice.” The Mormons, sad to say, are better mid-wives than Christians. What does a brand new baby, birthed into the kingdom, know about religion? At the altar a baby reaches out to whoever cares the most. They know they need love and affection. It is a shame that cultists often meet this need of a baby crying for affection better than Christians. Far too often, it is the cultist that does the follow up work of a crusade. The cults are unhindered in their growth by either a Promise Keepers gathering of men, or a Billy Graham Crusade. Next, Bill McCartney is laying a foundation for Promise Keepers for women.

Can anything be a man’s?

Women find a Promise to keep

April gathering at Arco modeled on for-men-only religious rallies

By Bill Lindelof

Bee Religion Writer

Helen McCullough has some high aspirations for an all-women conference planned for Arco Arena.

It would not bother her a bit if the conference was the first step toward a national movement - the female equivalent of Promise Keepers, which may be the fastest-growing religious phenomenon in the United States.

Promise Keepers, an all-male Christian movement, has grown from 4,200 participants in 1991 to 1 million men in stadium rallies this year. Next year, the Colorado-based Promise Keepers will stage its own “million-man march” on Washington.

McCullough, Sacramento founder of “I’m a Woman Ministry,” expects the “Women of Promise Conference” on April 12 at Arco Arena will draw 7,500 to hear nationally known Christian speakers and a mass choir. On April 11 thousands of women are expected to gather at the Capitol for “repentance and prayer.”

A kickoff luncheon for the conference, with Holly Phillips, wife of Promise Keepers president Randy Phillips, will be held Tuesday at the Red Lion Hotel. McCullough expects 5600 participants.

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The women want to keep Promise, too!

The C.R.I. (Christian Research Institute) of Hank Hanegraaff, just doesn't realize how vital "feelings" are to a baby. Why babies even make messes in their diapers! Who cleans them up? I did a whole lot of weird things in church as a squalling baby. Did I ever have a set of lungs! I would spill my pabulum and splatter good church men who had been "in the way" for forty years. The first time I even heard about "tongues," no argument out of me! Sure, why not! How do I receive? One would scream over me, "Fill him, Lord!" while another shouted, "Empty him out!" but I was at that altar every night for six months until I received. To testify in church, without eventually dancing before the Lord, was a complete physical impossibility for me. Only those who travail in childbearing have the temperament and patience involved in raising babies. What a joyous experience. Truly, I knew by my feelings that God loved me, but could hardly quote John 3:16.

But, for adults to go on acting as babies, is what the so-called "Toronto Blessing" consists of. The Rev. John Wimber and his Vineyard Followers have been deceived. The Bible tells us, "*But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" 2 Peter 3:18. "*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man (matured), I put away childish things.*" 1 Corinthians 13:11.

Jewish evangelist, Mike Evans, while conducting an outdoor service sponsored by Trinity Church in Sacramento, displayed many instances in the congregation gripped by this manifestation of "laughing in the spirit." In every case, they were young children that had recently found the Lord. It was a beautiful sight to behold.

The command of scripture, "*quench not the Spirit,*" is applicable to adults who can't stand a baby slobbering pabulum in church. Hence the adult quotes 1 Corinthians 14:40, "*Let all things be done decently and in order.*" If they are not "stillborn," babies just make a lot of noise. Babies are seldom "*decently and in order.*" Zion travailed and they are yours!

There are solemn warnings to adults in the care of their own young. "*But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*" Matthew 18:6.

Robert J. Ashcroft, Sr., an ordained Assembly of God minister, father to the Senator from Missouri in the U.S. Senate, was my first pastor. He had a lot of patience and wisdom in dealing with babies in the Lord. Mrs. Robert Ashcroft, the pastor's wife, showed me the list of those her "prayer band" were praying to be saved. I was at the top of her list! They birthed me by their own travail in prayer. Now,

they must clean up my diapers and squalling until I can learn to come into faith. Babies don't even know how to walk. they must be told everything!

But, Bethel was altogether different! Here, I would learn security in the Father's love by the introduction of His voice. *"He goeth before them (His sheep), and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."* John 10:4. At Bethel, you put away childish things, and discover *"THIS WAY"* of knowing "His voice."

At my initial Bethel, unlike that of Jacob, I did not dream about ladders, angels ascending and descending, and God speaking out of heaven. However, I did dream a dream and acted upon it. It proved to be "my Bethel," for in twenty-eight days I was completely exonerated from the Armed Services of our country. In obedience to this dream God gave me, I was introduced to *"this way"* that Jacob came to love. Wow! I didn't mind serving such a God of power.

I enlisted in the exact branch of service that was depicted in my dream. I was not a conscientious objector to the war. I fully intended to defend my county in the war with the Japanese government. I was already 1-A and twenty-one years of age. It would only be a matter of a very short time that I would be receiving a letter from the President of the United States saying, "Greetings!"

At Bethel, you are gently introduced into *"this way"* (the way in which God goes before you to prepare the way). *"If God will be with me, and will keep me in THIS WAY."* Genesis 28:20.

God is greater than the law of the land. Anyone can fight! But not just anyone can do the work God had already prepared for my life. If I had been busy fighting the Japanese, who would fight a spiritual warfare going on in Oakland, California where C. Thomas Patten was stealing money from elderly retirees and raping their grandchildren? I was already enlisted for war at Bethel. To win, I must first learn about *"this way."*

I can still hear, C. Thomas Patten, the late husband-manager of Dr. Bebe H. Patten, of Oakland, CA, bellow like a giant Goliath challenging the armies of Israel, "If you have plenty of money and smart lawyers, you can do anything and get by." He hardly got the words out of his mouth and God said to me, as a student in that audience, "And you are going to stop him and bring him down!" "Me?" I retorted, "But I have no money nor smart lawyers to fight this Goliath!" But I pondered those words in my heart while walking in *"this way."* It is only as you walk in *"this way,"* you *"can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* Philippians 4:13. This scripture was on the trunks of the challenger as he defeated Mike Tyson in the ring for the heavyweight championship of the world in boxing. Has Evander Holyfield been to Bethel to accomplish such a fete?

This is what is so wrong with the ministry. The preachers have been to seminary, but know nothing of Bethel. Bethel has nothing to do with crowds, money, success, but rather a way of God communicating with His creation, man. Today's ministry is well versed in "prophesying" over offerings. On Christian TV we see them, but seldom does the God of the TV prophets speak about anything but money. Shouldn't that tell us something?

Only two times in my life did I ever hear God's voice speak to me in regards the subject of money. In both instances God spoke to me in order to protect my own assets from thieves. The reason most Pentecostals are always broke is because a thief came and asked you for your money. You gave it to him, when even your own family members are made to suffer due to your response to a Robert Tilton, etc. "You send me a thousand dollars and God will give back ten thousand." If it were the truth, you would be stupid not to give him the thousand. Did you know the devil is a thief? The Book says so, *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal."* John 10:10. If you attend church, some cutie will try and get you in some investment scheme. She is stealing your money. The devil comes to steal!

They asked Christ, *"Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world."* Matthew 24:3. In answer to this question, Jesus said, *"Take heed (Gk.-look, with wide open eyes) that no man deceive you."* If some man in church stole your money in the name of *"I am (of) Christ,"* you were deceived. I have lost over \$3,000 this past year because I went to church.

Ever since the publishing of Norman Vincent Peale's book, Positive Confession, going to church has changed. Peale brought Christian Science into mainstream religion. Copeland-Hagin went one step beyond Peale to "name it and claim it." Hence, entire church bodies are caught up in "get rich quick" schemes. This is not limited to ministry, but also the layman in the church. It infers there is more panhandling in the church than on the streets. *"For many shall come in my name, saying, I am (of) Christ."* "I am a Christian, therefore lend me your money." Even the world has discovered the soft touch of Christians. "Yeah, sure buddy, here, take it all!" If the father of the prodigal son had been swindled of his farm by the many panhandlers in the church today, would the prodigal have come to his right mind?

Jesus said of this hour, *"For many shall come in my name, (is why you let them in the house) saying, I am (of) Christ,"* you can trust me, loan me your money (without collateral). All you have is their word, *"and shall deceive many."* Matthew 24:5. You loaned them your money, believing they were a Christian--you were deceived, or conned out of your money right in church while worshipping God. You may have got blessed, but you were "conned" out of your money.

"Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Isaiah 66:8