

# Genesis 35:1

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of returning to Bethel as a place of personal encounter and commitment to God.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 28:10

**Topics:** "Spiritual Renewal", "Returning to God"

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## Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes the significance of returning to Bethel, where God first revealed Himself to Jacob, paralleling this with the call for the church to return to its first love. He highlights that God approached Jacob during a dark time in his life, showcasing His mercy and kindness, and that Bethel symbolizes a place of divine encounter and promise. Jacob's experience at Bethel marked the beginning of his true awareness of God and his first commitment, albeit imperfect. Smith encourages listeners to reflect on their own spiritual journeys and consider returning to their 'Bethels' for renewed commitment and connection with God. Ultimately, he reassures that God is always present and ready to renew His promises to those who seek Him.

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## Transcript

"BACK TO BETHEL"

Intro: The Call of Gad for Jacob to return to Bethel is much like the call of Christ to the church of Ephesus to return to its first love.

I. IT IS AT BETHEL GOD FIRST REVEALED HIMSELF TO JACOB.

A. A God of mercy and kindness.

1. Jacob was not really seeking God at the time.

a. He was fleeing for his life.

b. His treacherous sowing was ready to bear harvest.

c. Yet God came to him uninvited.

2. It was a dark and lonely night in his life.

- a. His twin brother was rugged, tough, a hunter and man of the fields.
  - b. Jacob was plain and dwelt in tents.
  - c. His heart no doubt filled with loneliness and fear.
  - d. It is often in those dark hours of our lives that God comes to us.
- B. A God who is building bridges to man.
- 1. Natural difficulty created by vastness of God and smartness of man.
    - a. "When I consider thy heavens...."
    - b. Job, "How can a man be just with God?"
  - 2. Jacob saw the ladder from earth to heaven.
  - 3. He called the name of the place, Bethel, "the house of God."
    - a. When we speak of the house of God so often, we are referring to some building.
    - b. There were no buildings here at Bethel, God does not dwell in houses made with hands.
    - c. "The fullness of the Godhead bodily" dwelt in Jesus Christ. He is the "house of God."
  - 4. Man today is still seeking to build his towers to reach into heaven.
  - 5. In Jesus Christ God made a bridge to reach man.
- C. The God of Bethel was a God of promise.
- 1. Promised him the land.
  - 2. Promised him great prosperity.
  - 3. Promised him the Messiah.
- D. The God of providence, "I am with thee in all places, and will keep thee whither thou goest, and will bring you again into this land, for I will not

leave thee, until I have done all I have spoken to thee."

1. Be with you wherever you go.

2. He will provide for you all the way.

## II. AT BETHEL JACOB FIRST BECAME TRULY CONSCIOUS OF GOD.

A. Of course he believed in God.

1. From a child he had heard the stories of God.

B. He had never had his own personal vital encounter with God until Bethel.

1. Some of you know and believe, yet have never truly met God.

C. "Truly the Lord is in this place and I. knew it not."

## III. AT BETHEL HE MADE HIS FIRST COMMITMENT TO GOD.

A. Not a total commitment to be sure.

1. He was still very much Jacob (surplanter).

2. Much refining before he would become Israel (God governed..

## IV. GOD IS CALLING HIM NOW BACK TO BETHEL.

A. God is calling some of you this day back to your Bethels.

1. That first love, joy, consciousness, experience.

B. What Jacob discovered when he returned. "God made a new commitment to him!"

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