GREAT LOVE XXXVIII

So Jacob came to Luz, which *is* in the land of Canaan, that *is*, Bethel, he and all the people that *were* with him. Gen 35:6 (KJV)

Oh the love of God that will bring us home again. Bethel was not Jacob’s home but it was the place where God had revealed himself in a personal way to Jacob. God had been the God of Abraham and Isaac but at Bethel he became the God of Jacob. As Jacob approached Bethel the first time he was concerned for his life. As he nears Bethel this time he has the weight of a whole tribe of people on his shoulders. Thus we hear him say “And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.” Gen 35:3 (KJV).

What a blessing to hear God calling us back to Bethel? God is so loving and gracious to bring us back again to the place where he first revealed himself to us. This is the place where Heaven came down and glory filled our soul. Surely this must be the house of God! It is indeed glorious when we have a past, present and future with the Lord God Jehovah!

The love of God reminds us of what we have been brought from. When I was in distress he saw me yet loved me and took away the distress that had weighed heavy upon my life. I was reminded that he has kept me safe from harm. Esau has not bothered me. He has kept me safe through all the deceit of Laban and his wily ways. To return to Bethel reminds me that God will be with me and keep me the rest of my life.

The wonderful love of God leads us into meaningful and grateful worship.  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. Gen 35:1 (KJV). Building the altar was an open and very public act of worship. Jacob needed to do it. His family needed to see it being done. This would lead his family into being monotheistic or having only one God.  Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that *were* with him, Put away the strange gods that *are* among you, and be clean, and change your garments: Gen 35:2 (KJV). He also worshipped because he was grateful that God had kept him and had not forgotten him.

As we celebrate this homecoming, may we worship because he wants us to and because we truly want to. He is worthy of all our worship and praise. He was with us in our distress and we have been kept safe thus far. “Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.”

Yours in Christ,

Brother Randy Burtram