

GOSPEL AUTHORITY IN THE ANCIENT GATES

“The Importance of Identity: Reeds, Stones and Pillars”

(Genesis 28:10-22; Matthew 16:14-19)

“Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. 11 And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! 13 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, ‘I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. 14 Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.’ 16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.’ 17 And he was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’ 18 So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. 19 He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first. 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, ‘If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, 21 so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, 22 and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God’s house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you.’” (Genesis 28:10-22)

❖ **The Master’s Plan**

Notice that Jacob’s journey was in ...

- A Divine Direction
 - A Certain Place – A Land of Opportunity

In God’s plan there is always a CERTAIN PLACE. The direction and the place that God led Jacob was CERTAIN - a land of opportunity. But even in that place, we must submit ourselves to what it will reveal to us. So Jacob took ...

- A Stone from the Place – A Rock of Revelation

Jacob took a stone from the place and laid his head upon it. As a result, he had a dream. It symbolizes the ROCK OF REVELATION that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 16. It is clear that the dream Jacob had was revelatory. Jesus responded to Peter in Matthew 16:15-19 and said,

"He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' 16 Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' 17 And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock² I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

The Bible says that Jacob went to sleep in that place and experienced transformation by having ...

- A Divine Dream

In this dream, God was showing Jacob that there was ...

- Activity in that Place

If we could truly see into the spiritual realm, we would see the activity of angels at work on heaven's behalf.

- Offering of that Place

While God deserves and requires an offering, He is actually giving us an offering – the land, the territory where He has led and placed us.

He has offered us the same! He has called us to TEND OUR GARDENS. It begins with our family, then our community and beyond!

- Promise of that Place

God made a promise to Jacob and He makes a promise to us through Christ Jesus. Look at verse 13-15.

"And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. 14 Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.'" (vs. 13-15)

- Presence in that Place

"For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." (Vs. 15)

God is true to His Word and will not let any of His promises fail! He knows that we cannot be what we are called to be without His presence and this includes His power and provision.

- A Determined Devotion

"Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.' 17 And he was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' 18 So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. 19 He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first. 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, 21 so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, 22 and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you.'" (vs. 16-22)

Jacob got a ...

- Picture of that Place

Jacob admits that God was present but he did not know it. Perhaps he had been so distracted by his own desires, plans and manipulative behavior that he missed the Lord.

- A Position in that Place

Jacob established a position in that place. He took the stone (rock of revelation) and set it up as a pillar in that place. He anointed it and established an identity – Bethel, the house of God! Jacob said ...

- A Prayer in that Place

Prayer always follows an encounter with God. It is because of re-established relationship! The Word tells us to seek God while He is near. Cry out to God and make your heart known to Him!

- Pledge in that Place

Jacob made a pledge in that place. He committed himself to God as well as a full tenth of all that God blessed him with.

❖ **The Material Produced**

Jesus prayed, *"Father, thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven."* He also states in Matthew 16 that He will build His church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

- Reed or Rock

Let's return to the Scripture that we read earlier in Matthew.

- Rock of Revelation

Matthew 16 teaches us that the church was and is built upon the revelation that Jesus Christ is the Son of God! This revelation is capable of building the church because it first transforms the individual who receives it.

- Rock of Transformation

We see this so clearly in the life of Saint Peter. Before Peter was called Peter, he was called Simon.

- Simon the Reed

"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it." (Matthew 16:14-19)

- Peter the Rock

The name Peter means "a piece of rock or a stone". Peter became a small piece of a greater thing.

- Stones and Pillars

The New Testament makes reference to several types of stones. First, there is ...

- Living Stones

"And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in Scriptures: BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNERSTONE AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED. This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNESTONE, A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE. They stumble because they are disobedient to the word and to this doom they were also appointed. But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY." (I Peter 2:4-10)

- Building Stones (II Chronicles 2:1,9; 6:2; Psalms 127:1; I Corinthians 3:10)

"Then the king commanded, and they quarried great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house with cut stones. So Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gebalites cut them, and prepared the timbers and the stones to build the house." (I Kings 5:17-18)

"The house, while it was being built, was built of stone prepared at the quarry, and there was neither hammer nor axe nor any iron tool heard in the house while it was being built." (I Kings 6:7)

- The House of God is Built with Stone People

First, let ask, What are REED PEOPLE?

✓ Reed People

"For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith." (Romans 12:3)

o Signs of Immaturity

- Poor Judgment
- Feels a Sense of Entitlement
- See Himself as an Innocent Victim.
- Does not learn from past mistakes.
- Is incredibly selfish.
- Has a bad case of irresponsibility. Always has an excuse.
- Has a disregard for consequences.
- Has a pleasure-madness. Lacks self-discipline.
- Demands to make his feelings known all the time.

✓ Stone People

Stone people are placed people. Through right decisions and responses to Scripture, they become faithful and vital to the house.

- o Signs of Maturity

- Accepts responsibility for his own behavior
- Is pleased to receive constructive criticism and is sincerely glad to have the opportunity to improve
- Doesn't expect special treatment
- Meets emergencies with poise
- Wins without gloating
- Harbors no jealousy
- Is considerate of the opinions and feelings of others
- Plans for the future.

- The House of God Expands with Stone Pillars - Pillar People

"Jacob took the stone ... set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it." Gen. 28:18)

We have declared that it is the STONE PEOPLE that build the church, but it is the PILLAR PEOPLE who expand the church!

- ✓ Strength and Health is Achieved
- ✓ Efficiency is Increased – not only by what is accomplished but also by what is relinquished!
- ✓ Pillar people both accept and delegate responsibility. They know how to build!