

## PUT AWAY THE STRANGE GODS

BAKHT SINGH

The enemy has gained entrance into many believing homes through fear, and as a result the influence of worldly associations and friendships has brought ruin upon them. Jacob was tempted to settle down at Shechem. Having fled from Laban, he now wanted to live in peace at Shechem. But God told him that that was not the place of his rest. Even though Shechem appeared to be a wealthy and comfortable place, God told him to leave it and go to Bethel. Jacob obeyed and put away all the strange gods in his household. That was why God made His terror to fall upon all the people round about Jacob. No one dared to do him any harm. When we faithfully obey the Lord, He will watch over us and bless us.

There are several reasons for which people keep away from the House of God. Some keep away for the sake of their business. Their argument is that because they have more children they need to earn more money to feed, clothe and educate them. Besides keeping away from the House of God, they also cut down their time of prayer and devotion. At one time they might have taken part very happily in the service of the House of God. But now something has happened, and some strange god has come into their heart. In this way, they have brought upon themselves not gain, but loss. Naomi thought that by going away from Bethlehem she would get more food and be happy. Instead of that she lost her husband and two sons. It was only when she came back to Bethlehem, the house of bread, that she was blessed again. Away from Bethlehem she fell into sorrow and worry; but when she came back to Bethlehem she became the happy grandmother of Obed and the blessed great grand mother of David, the king of Israel. So do not let your worldly wisdom keep you away from the House of God. However busy your life may be, God has the first claim over you.

As Jacob journeyed towards Bethel, God appeared to him and spoke to him. "And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee" (Gen.32:9). What a great privilege it is to hear God's voice! It was as if God was saying, because Jacob had put away all the strange gods in his household He was pleased with him and was able to love him and speak to him freely. Now God was able to bless him fully and fulfill all that He had promised some years ago. "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, 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" (Gen.28: 15).

Most of us have received promises from God's Word at different times: on a New Year's Day or on a birthday, or on some other special occasion. But perhaps you feel that in your case God has not fulfilled His promises. It is quite possible that your case is just like Jacob's: firstly, there might be some strange god in your life, and secondly, you might be still far away from Bethel. Do not be satisfied with the fact that you have received many blessings in the past. It was so with Jacob; he had received many blessings already, but God wanted to give him much more. "And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he 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 ascending and descending on it" (Gen.28:10-12).

God had called Jacob Israel, a prince, after twenty years, judging by his behavior he had been only a beggar. So God was speaking to him once again asking him to live like a prince and not as a beggar any longer. By this time he was ready to learn to walk like a prince. This is evident by the way he put away the strange gods in his household and journeyed towards Bethel. Therefore, God was saying to him, "You are a prince and I will bring kings out of your loins" (Gen.35: 11,12). From that time Jacob entered into the experience of being God's prince, prophet and friend. That is why before he died he called all his sons and blessed them with the blessings of God.

The Lord said to Jacob, "I am God Almighty be fruitful and multiply". When you also become prince you will know God's power in your life. You will not be a coward any more. We read in Deut.32: 9, "Jacob is the is His inheritance". In other words, God was say "Jacob, you belong to Me forever. You are more precious to Me than the whole world." God never called the sun, moon or stars His inheritance.

The privilege given by God to Jacob was great indeed. Praise God, the same privilege is given to us as well. We are called God's inheritance. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of is calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in saints" (Eph.1:18). Then we read, "He...led him about instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye" (Deut.32:10). This also will happen to you provided you are willing to put away all your strange gods "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; after the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple his eye"(Zech.2:8).

In Deut.32: 11 we read, "As an eagle stir up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them her wings:" The mother eagle usually builds nest on a high place, such as the side of a high When her young ones are grown she break up her nest so that they may learn to fly. As the little ones fall from the nest they might think that mother is very cruel. But as they fall, the mo eagle comes underneath them and bears them on her wings, and then drops them again. In this way she teaches them to fly. Similarly, the Lord may stir you out of your nest also, because He wants you to learn to fly Of) high places.

While I was in Yugoslavia I found that grapes were served for breakfast, lunch and tea. They were large, luscious grapes too, and big bunches of them were on the table in abundance. That reminded me how God wants to give us everything in abundance provided we put away all our strange gods and return to Bethel. That is the only way to receive God's blessings fully. Do not let your wife, or husband, or friends, relations or your business or your pleasures keep you away from Bethel, God says, "I am the Almighty God", He is mighty to save you, to keep you, to lead you and bless you. Make Deut.32: 7 to 14 your personal experience. Ask the Lord to give you His best and show you your full portion in Bethel, the House of God.