

After Jacob Returned from Paddan Aram, God Appeared to Him Again at Bethel

35: 9-15

DIG: Review the promises God made to Abraham (12:1-3, 15:17-21, 17:1-8, and 22:15-18). How do these compare to the promises God makes to Jacob?

REFLECT: How can El Shaddai meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Yeshua Messiah today?

After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him (35:9). He was back home again. It was here at Bethel, that God once again appeared to Jacob (Hebrew: Ya'akov), renewing the promises that He had made some thirty years before. Reconciliation was complete.

Then, because of the terrible episode at Shechem, God reaffirmed Jacob's new name. He said: Your name is Ya'akov, but you will no longer be called Ya'akov; your name will be Israel." So He named him Isra'el (35:10). From this point on, God only calls him by his new name Isra'el. His name does appear in the narrative as Jacob, but whenever God personally addresses him, He calls him Isra'el. He was a prince of God and he took comfort in that, and lived as one who possessed such a holy calling.

And so, of course, should it be with us today. As those who have been made co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17) of all things (Hebrews 1:2), we have a noble calling and therefore, great responsibilities. The strongest incentive to holy living is the understanding of our holy calling. Rabbi Sha'ul said: As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the holy calling you have received (Ephesians 4:1).⁵³⁵

And then God reconfirmed the Abrahamic Covenant upon Isra'el when He said: I am God Almighty or El Shaddai. This is how God referred to Himself to Abraham (17:1) and Isaac (28:3). The name comes from the idea that all might and power is expressed in the term God or El. The word Almighty comes from a root word meaning strong and powerful, meaning that God is able to meet all our needs. He was able to fulfill all the promises He had made to Abraham and to Isaac. Pray today that God will meet your needs (not wants, but needs). God's Word says: And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

God said: **Be fruitful and increase in number.** He is not thinking of more sons or daughters. Instead, **God** was thinking of a nation. The nation of **Isra'el**, and the congregation *or kahal* of twelve tribes **will come from Isra'el**. In fact, this version of the patriarchal promises contains an element unheard of since the days of **Abraham (17:6,16); kings will come from Jacob's body.** This promise foreshadows the coming Messiah, the centerpiece in **God's** ultimate plan of salvation.⁵³⁶ **The Land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this Land to your descendants after you (35:11-12).**

Then God went up the heavenly ladder back to heaven from **Ya'akov** at the place where **He** had talked with him. And just as he had done some thirty years ago when **God** had spoken to him at **Bethel**, **Jacob** set up a stone pillar at the place where **God** had talked with him, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it (35:13-14). The pillar and the pouring of oil were a repetition of the actions he performed the first time he was here (28:18-22). This is the first mention of the **drink offering** in the Scriptures. In 29:22 **Ya'akov** promised to make this place **the house of God**; now here he fulfills that promise. By pouring out a **drink offering** here, he treats it as such. Later, such **drink offerings**, though not a primary part of the Levitical sacrificial system, were offered frequently as supplementary gifts of devotion and dedication, and it was no doubt with such a motive that **Jacob** acted here.⁵³⁷

Ya'akov called the place where **God** had talked with him **Bethel (35:15)**. He had already done this (28:19, 35:3 and 7); the point is that now it *was* the house of **God**, not only in honor of an event (as when he fled Esau), but now a place of true worship and offering.

The grace of **God** is truly amazing. This is especially true for a repentant believer. We suffer loss in our lives because of our own sin, but **God's** overriding grace can work wonders. We think of **Manasseh** after his idolatry (**Second Kings 21:1-16**), of **David** after his adultery (**Second Samuel 11:1-27**), of **Peter** after his denial (**John 18:15-18, 25-26**); and while we cannot say that we are all we might have been, we, along with **Ya'akov**, can say with absolute certainty that we are something that we should never otherwise have been.⁵³⁸