

# Jacob's Return

by Peter Brandon

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of experiencing God's presence, preparing ourselves for it, and surrendering to His will in order to receive the blessings of His presence.*

**Duration:** 42:31

**Scripture:** Genesis 35:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Renewal", "God's Presence"

---

## Description

Peter Brandon preaches on Jacob's return to Bethel, emphasizing the importance of dwelling in God's presence and the need for spiritual preparation by putting away foreign gods and being cleansed. He highlights that Bethel represents not just a physical location but a spiritual state where God's presence brings awe, peace, joy, and love. Brandon encourages believers to seek revival by returning to the essence of their faith, allowing God's power to manifest in their lives and communities. He reminds the congregation that God can bless at any age, and true revival is about getting back to the presence and glory of God.

---

## Transcript

Well, dear friends, it's Genesis 35. Back to Bethel. And God said unto Jacob, Arise, and go up to Bethel, and dwell there.

Notice the word dwell there, not have an excursion there, but to dwell there. And make there an altar unto God, who appeared unto thee, when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household and to all that were with him, Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments.

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 in which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the foreign gods that were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears. And Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.

And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them. And they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. And Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him.

And he built there an altar, and called the place, notice, El Bethel, because there God appeared unto him when he fled from the face of his brother. And Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak, and the name of it was called Alembacher. And God appeared unto Jacob again when he came out of Padanarum, and blessed him.

And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob. Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name. And he called his name Israel.

And that was the name that he always had, Israel, from that moment. Go on. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty.

Be fruitful and multiply, and nation and a company of nations shall be of thee. And kings shall come out of thy loins. And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it.

And to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone.

And he poured a drink offering on it, notice that, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel. And they journeyed from Bethel.

We'll leave it there. Jacob was 21 years in Padanarum. And therefore, when he came back, he must have been a man in his early 80s.

And that means God never finishes with us. God can bless us in our youth, and he can bless us in our retirement. And when he was eventually told by God to go to Bethel, he must have been over 90.

Now that's some age. I know he lived until he was 147. That means he had roughly 50 years of spiritual living.

But God met him in his 90th year. So we must never give up when we're in retirement. God can make the autumn of our life a springtime.

Now isn't that lovely? And may God raise up both young and old. Now he's coming back to the place where God wanted him, and it's Bethel. There were some ups and downs when Dinah unfortunately went into Shechem.

And there was almost a case of immorality. And this was a great grief. And then there was murder.

And there was great discontent. But now God has said to him at last, Arise and go up to Bethel and dwell there. Stay there.

Always remember that. Now, how are we going to look at this? We look now very carefully at the presence of God and the nature of Bethel. Just leave it there, the nature of Bethel.

Then we look secondly at the preparation which Bethel demands. Now we see that very clearly outlined. And then lastly we see the blessings that Bethel bestows.

And there's the terror of God. There's the altar of God. And there's the blessings of God.

Blessing on his servant. Blessing on his seed. And blessing on the lamb.

And then right at the end, he journeyed from Bethel. Now why is that? If you go through the Old Testament, you will see on the surface of the text, when God's people were going to Bethel, God blessed them. But many times they went away from Bethel.

Again, you'll remember, when there was idolatry in Bethel, God shut down the place and rightly so. And then there was the tabernacle and there was the temple. But the same thing.

When God's people are seeking to get back to the spiritual presence of God, there's always blessing. When they're moving away from God and they're beginning to worship idols, there's always barrenness. Now here is a man going up to Bethel.

Now the first thing with Bethel, and I'm taking it from a New Testament sense and not an Old Testament sense, because there is a difference. In the Old Testament, it was a place. And if they worshipped outside that place, it was called a high place.

And it was wrong. In the New Testament, it's not a place, it's a person. We're gathered unto the Lord Jesus, and not a place.

In the Old Testament, it was not only a place, but they had Levitical priests when the priesthood was outlined. Now all God's people are priests. Again, in the Old Testament, they had offerings.

But all these offerings were fulfilled in the death of Christ. In the Old Testament, they had a priesthood and they had symbolism. But all the symbolism now has been formed in the Lord Jesus.

Again, in the Old Testament, they had feast days. Now all those feast days are fulfilled in the coming of Christ, and then in the second coming. When the great day of atonement, when Israel will get their eyes open to see that the Messiah that they crucified was the Lord of Glory.

So the symbols are over, but we have the facts. Now what are the facts for today? With the presence of God, when God's presence is manifested among his people, there's always a sense of awe. How can I say this? Let me say it slowly.

God is among us. Let me say it again. The Almighty God among us.

The awe of God's presence. Now in God's presence, there must never be disorder, like you had in 1 Corinthians 14. In God's presence, the awe of God will bring discipline.

And we need that revival. Now why? When Moses was contacted by God in Genesis 17, he fell flat before him, and he was face to face on the ground before the Lord. Again, when Moses saw the burning bush, he was told to remove his shoes.

Again, when Joshua saw the captain of the Lord of Hosts, it was not the shoes, it was a shoe. Why? One foot was for possession. The bare foot was for the presence of the Lord.

When Isaiah saw the Lord, although previously he had been condemning Israel for their sins, he was broken before the Lord. A sense of awe. Now when God's presence is manifested among the saints, there's no awe in relation to the building.

That's idolatry. It's awe in relation to God. And there should be stillness and quietness.

That has gone almost today. In fact, the presence of God is just happy birthday. You know what I mean, don't you? And we must bring back the awe of God.

But more than that. With the presence of God, there's peace. Now what do we mean by peace? In the Old Testament word for peace, meaning the Hebrew, it's binding together.

Now what does that mean? Sin disintegrates. For instance, immediately man sinned, his spirit went dead. Disintegration.

Then you will notice as it develops, society is disintegrated. And would you believe it eventually, family is disintegrated. And then marriage becomes a disintegration.

Broken marriages. But not with peace. It binds man together, so that he becomes body, soul and spirit.

It binds the family together. It binds society together, especially Christian society. And anything that spoils that peace really needs to be dealt with immediately.

You see, I'm not thinking now of peace with God. That's judicial. Or the God of peace.

That's mental, bringing peace. But the real God of peace that binds us together in one body. Presence.

Now we know that most of the western world is living on tranquilizers. And probably they are necessary in some cases. But in the presence of God, there's peace upon peace upon peace.

And that's what Peter says. Peace multiplies. Therefore, in the house of God, we must not disturb that peace.

Any problems, any difficulties, go to the brother, put it right. Go to the sister, put it right. Don't disturb the peace of God among His people.

And that means, in a gospel meeting in particular, you could bring someone into that meeting and they sense peace. Perfect peace. You can't find that in the world.

But in the house of God, there should be peace multiplied. What a lovely place Bethel is. But more.

With the presence of God, there's joy. You say, where do you find that? When Jacob anointed the pillar in Genesis 35, he poured a drink offering on it. Speaks of his joy in the presence of God.

It wasn't just an awesome place. It's a joyous place. I love the Psalms.

I'll tell you why. I love the Psalms of Jubilation. When David was really filled with the Spirit, he was full of joy.

He was in a state of ecstasy when he was going to the house of God. Think of that great Psalm 103. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me.

Bless His holy name. You know, I don't know why, but we've given all the hallelujahs, all the amen, all the praises to the Charismatics. Now, isn't that sad? And all we have is an ignorant grunt.

Have you heard it? Someone said to me, there are two kinds of brethren. I said, what are they? The Charismatics and the Rheumatics. I think that's an exaggeration.

But there must be more joy. The joy of the Lord among the Lord's people. And it's wonderful when someone stands up to pray or to worship.

You hear those quiet, Amen. Praise the Lord. And in a prayer meeting, when someone is praying, it's lovely to hear those responses.

Amen. Why? We're lifting up one voice to God. Not two voices.

The person who leads in worship is speaking on behalf of all the others. And therefore, we all join in with our amen, or in which case, the praise, hallelujah, or praise God. And may God bring back the joy of the Lord.

And then, with the presence of God, there's love. God is love. Now, love isn't an attribute of God.

God is love. God is light. These are two absolutes that fill that glorious character of the infinite God.

Love and light. And therefore, when God is present, there's light. Divine light.

Spiritual light. Divine revelation. Opening the eyes of God's people.

And when God is present, there's love. It's Calvary's love. Now, where do we see that? Well, it's Calvary's love.

And when Jesus Christ died upon the cross and brought glory to God in the way in which he dealt with sin so that God could remain just and still justify the sinner, that was the final and the complete manifestation of God's love. Now, here it is. He takes the seed form of that love, Calvary's love.

He sows it in our hearts so that the love of God is shed abroad in all its glory in our hearts. And that's why there should be no bitterness in the house of God. It's an antithesis to love.

And there should be real love. Now, isn't Bethel a lovely place? Can't you feel it and sense it? Arise and go up to Bethel and dwell there. The awe of God, the peace of God, the joy of God, the light of God and the love of God.

All there. But you say, well, Brother Peter, we don't often see that. No, we don't.

But we want to. That's revival. Revival is not just getting very strong evangelically.

It's getting back to God. Getting back to His glory. Perhaps we haven't seen this for years but true revival is getting back to the presence and the glory of God.

And God's people are beginning to see this and are seeking His face. That's why just before the Lord comes I believe there'll be little revivals among the people of God. But it's getting back to Bethel.

But it's not only Bethel, it's El Bethel. Did you notice that? What does that mean? Not only the presence of God but the presidency of God. Now, aren't we strange people? We all believe individually that the Lord can control us and guide us and empower us.

But when it comes to public meeting, no. We must have a leader. Don't interfere with the Lord's Supper.

Can I repeat that? Do you know what I mean? Don't interfere with it. It can be heaven upon earth when He's in control. And therefore, Jacob right back here before the law was really fully given, he could see the presidency of the Lord.

EI. Bethel. The God of Bethel.

Or if you like, the Lord of Bethel. That means He gives the gifts to the local church. The gifts of the Spirit.

The gifts of God. The gifts of the risen Lord who are men. He controls all the activity in the local church.

That means when a teacher is functioning, that's one activity. When a preacher is functioning, that's another activity. And none of the meetings should be marked by monotony.

Immediately there's monotony, the Spirit of God's being grieved. It's variety that God wants. And there can be wonderful variety in the house of God when we hold or let go the hold of the reins and give them to the law.

May we see that more and more in these last days. And with the presence of God, there's power. Why? Immediately He was moving in the direction of Bethel.

We read this, the terror of God fell upon the people. Now, where's the contra? In the previous chapter, the terror of the people fell upon Jacob and his household. Why? Because their evil treatment to those people of Shechem.

But now He's moving in direction of Bethel and the terror of God falls upon them. What is that? Divine conviction. We need that in our preaching.

Now, we mustn't preach an anemic gospel. Don't misunderstand me. When we preach the gospel, it's no good preaching the gospel in Victorian language for a modern society.

We've got to use modern language so that people will understand the gospel. But it must be the pure gospel that's outlined in the Romans. I wish I could share with you some of the things I've heard in England concerning pagan people who know nothing at all about the gospel.

And when we use some of these long salvation terms, and we've got to use them, but we've got to explain them in a language in which the people can understand. Now, that's vital. But then, in the preaching of the gospel, when we are back in Bethel, the terror of God.

Now, that's what's missing. How many times have you been in a gospel meeting, and the person has preached the gospel, and you felt the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to such an extent that people are broken. You see, in Acts 2, they were pricked to the heart when Peter preached.

And you know what that word means. It's the strongest word for pain outside of hell's fire. It's the idea of red-hot needles going into the heart, and the person shouts up, natural language of course, Oh! And they shouted, Men and Breathing, what shall we do? Wouldn't you like to see that again? I would.

In touches of revival that we've had over the years, we see that, and it's humbling to witness it. People broken. And then we need the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, or perhaps I should use another word, the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit when the cross is preached.

God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Now, what is that? Divine revelation coming concerning the cross. No preacher can bring that.

It's the work of the Spirit when He says, Let there be light. Now, last night in the house, and she'll be here on Sunday, there was a Japanese young lady, beautifully dressed, could hardly speak English, and she was struggling to know the Gospel. And I had to go over the ground three or four times, and then when it clicked, there was light.

Oh, oh, I see it, I see it. Then again we would start, and then suddenly light would come. Oh, oh, oh, I see that, see that.

That's the revelation of the Holy Spirit. And we desperately need this in our meetings where God says, Let there be light. And when you see that, what happens? You see the density of your sinning causing Christ to die.

You see the utter reality of His love in loving you unto death. And then salvation takes place. They don't need to have an interview with a preacher that had an encounter with God in the meeting.

And that is Bethel. Can you see we need it? And with Bethel, there's the power of God. You take for instance the Bethel in the time of the tabernacle.

Two priests went in, probably under the influence of drink, and they were smitten with death. You can't do what you like in Bethel. The power of God.

Do you remember when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost? And I love this. I've shared this with you before, so I'm not going to mention it again. He came in the form of a rushing mighty wind, or perhaps better, the sound of a rush.

Have you ever been in a rushing mighty wind? I was at Shetland's walking around the cliff edge, and the wind was so strong, and then I weighed fourteen and a half stone, and it nearly took me into the sea. I was hanging on to the rock. The rushing mighty wind.

When Peter stood up and preached, and I love this, it's the greatest sermon that's given in the book of Acts. Far better than Paul at Athens. It has a beautiful beginning.

It has a wonderful centrality, and it has almost a perfect conclusion. Now, he didn't have a bunch of notes. He stood up and preached under the power of the Spirit.

And when he preached, they were pricked to the heart, and cried out, hundreds of them, men and brethren, what shall we do? That's power. Then take, for instance, the next chapter. When he preached, somewhere around the beautiful gate, five thousand men were saved.

That's power. Ah, but you say, brother Peter, wait a moment. We're living in the last days, and in the last days, there's going to be departure.

Ah, but can I now come back to you? Has the Holy Spirit changed? Has he lost his power? Look what he's doing in China. I've just received a letter from Michael Brown, who's working now in India, and he started a gospel mission in one of the halls. They had to move out of the hall, and the last night, there were ten thousand people.

God moving in mighty power. Do you know, He can move in power in Australia. He's going to take our toys away shortly, and we're going to see Him.

And in this very hall, there can be a manifestation of the power of God, and in the respect of the family's death. What a lovely place Bethany. A place of His presence, a place of His presidency, and a place of His power.

Immediately, God said to him, Arise and go up to Bethel and dwell there. He went to the family. Now, He says, I know you've brought them back, these Terraphims, household gods.

We can't go up to Bethel with Terraphims. There's only one God. Thou shalt have no other gods beside me.

Of course, that law wasn't given then, but they knew it. Now, He says, Put away the strange gods that are among you. Now, these Terraphims, what were they? When a woman was going to do any cocaine, she would consult a Terraphim.

When she was going to do some needlework that was difficult, she would consult a Terraphim. When she had to make a serious decision in the home, she would consult. It was like losing your right arm.

It was everything to them. Now, says Jacob, if I may paraphrase, I know, Rachel, you were sitting on them when Laban came. We mustn't do that.

Let's get rid of the Terraphims. And that was like, again I repeat, cutting the arm off. But they did it.

Now, what are the Terraphims? The principle of an idol, basically, is the thing that you love most. That's why the commandment says, Thou shalt have no other gods beside me. The paraphrase of it, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself.

It's the thing you love most. Now, God needs to sort that out. Do I love myself more than God? Do I love my wife more than God? Do I love my children more than God? Do I love my business more than God? Is God my chief love? We need to go over it.

And if we can put those things right, God can bless us. When we put God first, and you know as well as I do, the word hate there doesn't mean a malicious hate, it means second. So you put God first, the family and friends second, and everything else.

Esau have I loved, Jacob have I hated, Esau have I hated. It doesn't mean that the Lord had a malicious hate. That's impossible.

It meant He was second. Jacob was second. So we put away the strange gods that are among us.

No. I can't direct that to you. If I've got strange gods in my life, then I've got to deal with them.

And all of us have. God must be first. And then there's blessing.

Then secondly he says, put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean. Now let me say this again. We have been cleansed through the blood, but have we been cleansed through the word? Now would you allow me to say something that's very sensitive, that I feel I must say it before I die.

At my age, I don't know if I'll be back. And therefore I must say this to be faithful to the Lord, that I want to say it in love. We are masters at hearing the word of God and doing nothing.

And that's why we're not seeing blessing. When God gives us the word, it should cleanse us. And that means when God gives us a prophetic word, by that I mean a word that comes from himself, we shouldn't all rush home.

We should bow in prayer and ask God to work it out. Now I have seen that over and over again, especially at conferences, when someone gives a word of the Lord, and we know it's a word from the Lord, it couldn't be clearer. And you stand at the back, and they all go and talk about their friends, and they all have a good old laugh, and you see the word hasn't softened us, it's hardened us.

And so when the word comes, it should cleanse us. Beloved, can I say that again? Beloved, let it cleanse us. Let it have an effect.

Let not the word harden us. And then God can do something with us. And then change your garments.

Don't go to Bethel in your old clothes. Look nice. Look respectable.

Well, what does that mean in New Testament terms? Put off the old man. That's the man you were before you were saved. Put it off.

And it's all in the heiress tent. Put it off immediately and completely. And put on Christ.

What does that mean? Let Christ be formed in your life. I think I can mention this. In one place in Australia, I was giving a series on the Holy Spirit, and I think I can say this.

I thought that assembly would close in a few years' time. And then I stood at the back, and they said good night to me. No one ever thanked me for the message.

And I went home and wept before the Lord. The next night they came, and they were different. The next night they came, they were more different.

The third night they came, and they were radiant. And souls were saved in the meeting. What was it? They all went home and had dealings with God.

That's it. There was cleansing, and they put on their new clothes like Christ. And those people became beautiful.

And I'd just finished a mission there, and there was great blessing again. And God is blessing them. And the place will not close, but all kinds of people are being saved.

Why? There was a cleansing, and a purging, and a putting away of idols, and God blessed them. And at that time, they were nearly all people over 50 or 60. But now people have come in, and been saved, and God is blessing them.

You see, if we go over that process, there can be blessing. Now let's look at the blessing. The terror of God fell upon the people.

If ever we need a time when there is that mighty conviction of sin is now. Unfortunately, there is sin in the evangelical church. My son who works for the IDF, and ministers to students, he said to me the other day,

it's only the cream of the evangelicals, and the cream of the Catholics, that go into marriage in virginity.

Can you see the problem? Sin in the local church. Now we'll never discover better why that is so. All of us need that cleansing.

And we need to be before the Lord, in brokenness, if we're going to see the blessing of God. And the terror of God fell upon the people. In one place where they have seen revival, I was told by an unsaved person, when the mission was on, the awe of God fell upon the place, and it was terrifying.

It was the convicting power of the Spirit, revealing the glory of God to the people. And when he has come, he will convict of sin, and he will bring the enlightenment. And then he builds an altar to God, and it's not just Bethel, it's El Bethel.

And then God pronounces his blessing to him. And what blessing? The blessing of his presence. The blessing upon his seed.

The blessing upon the nations. And forgive me raising my voice, but that blessing is going to be fulfilled in all its glory in the millennium. And it was made almost 4,000 years ago.

And those promises to Jacob will be fulfilled, because God will take up Israel. They converted Israel, they enlightened Israel, and through them will enlarge the great millennium that's going to come, when he shall reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. All here with Bethel.

So the blessing of God comes, and he builds his altar, and he pours oil upon it, but he pours a drink offering. And now it's not just an awesome place, but it's a place that's full of joy and happiness in the Lord. Beloved, these are my closing words.

Let's figuratively, notice the word I'm using, figuratively join hands. Let's hear the Lord speaking to us. Here it is.

Arise and go up to Bethel. Dwell there, and let's move toward Bethel, and God will give us untold blessings. Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32333.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/peter-brandon/jacobs-return/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**