



**A**ND he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. 13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law (that is of the flesh), but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. 16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (Romans 4:11-16)

*To Thee, whose temple is all space,  
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies!  
One chorus let all being raise!  
All Nature's incense rise!*

~ by Alexander Pope.

It is difficult to consider the village of Bethel without remembering Jacob. Bethel is the old homestead of every believing Christian. In the Hebrew the name, Beth-El, means House of God. Mention is made of this village many times in the Old Testament. Bethel is the place where our great grandfather, Jacob, (to the 8<sup>th</sup> degree) wrestled with the Angel of the Lord when he sojourned there when traveling from Beersheba to Haran. *And he built there an altar, and called the place El-Bethel (God Of Beth-El): because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.* Genesis 35:7 As the spiritual descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, members of the true and believing Church of God share a blood relationship that surpasses any worldly kin - black, white, Asian, or Indian. We are related by that blood of our Lord which He shed for us in our redemption. We are of One Family – the Family of God.

This hymn is approaching 300 years in age, having been written by Dr. Philip Doddridge in 1737. The original hymn tune is entitled, *DUNDEE*, taken from the Scotch Psalter.

## God of Jacob by Whose Hand

O God of Jacob, by Whose hand  
Thy people still are fed,  
Who through this weary pilgrimage  
Hast all our fathers led.

Our vows, our prayers, we now present  
Before Thy throne of grace;  
God of our fathers, be the God  
Of their succeeding race.

Through each perplexing path of life  
Our wandering footsteps guide;  
Give us each day our daily bread,  
And raiment fit provide.

O spread Thy covering wings around  
Till all our wanderings cease,  
And at our Father's loved abode  
Our souls arrive in peace.

Such blessings from Thy gracious hand  
Our humble prayers implore;  
And Thou shalt be our chosen God,  
And portion evermore.

*O God of Jacob, by Whose hand Thy people still are fed, Who through this weary pilgrimage Hast all our fathers led.* Our reference to Jacob is by no means ancestor worship. We refer to the same 'God of Jacob' who is also our God. If we have believed the promise made to Abraham and his 'spiritual' descendants, then the God of Jacob is also our own God, regardless the human blood that flows in our veins: *For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.* What loving father does not feed his children? And our Father is the very Author of Love and the first Cause of it. Just as Abraham wandered the wilderness in search of a city, so do the disciples of Christ wander in the world of sin seeking a better home not made with hands (Kingdom of God).

*Our vows, our prayers, we now present Before Thy throne of grace; God of our fathers, be the God of their succeeding race.* The rising of the smoke of the incense at the Table before the Veil in the Tabernacle represented our prayers rising up to God before the Mercy Seat behind the Veil of the Holy of Holies. The succeeding race to which Doddridge refers is certainly not that of England, France or Germany; but to all those succeeding generations of men and women who have believed the God of Abraham and the Promised Seed to come. Abraham looked forward by faith to the consummation of that Promise in Christ; we have the easier ground for faith in that we look back to the historical and fulfilled event.

*Through each perplexing path of life Our wandering footsteps guide; Give us each day our daily bread, And raiment fit provide.* Our Father Abraham travelled that 'perplexing path of life.' Like we all have done, Abraham had moments of doubt. Whenever he launched out on his own wisdom, he wound up lying to save his own

skin: *And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.* (Gen 12:10) God did not lead Abraham to go into Egypt – it was a moment of abandon at which Abraham used his own logic and almost lost Sarai to Pharaoh. Abraham had the same lapse of faith in his travels to Gerar when King Abimelech also wanted to take his wife whom Abraham claimed was his ‘sister.’ If we will but follow God’s will, He will place us in green pastures and feed us with the Manna of Heaven even if famine prevails in the land.

*O spread Thy covering wings around Till all our wanderings cease, And at our Father’s loved abode Our souls arrive in peace.* The wings of God are, indeed, a secure shelter under all circumstances. Even as we wander through the wilderness of this world, His wings are there to protect and comfort us in our journeys. *Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.* (Psalm 63:7) *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.* Isaiah 26:3 (KJV) Our Lord Himself used the same metaphor of the wings of the hen to describe His overshadowing care: *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.* (Matt 23:37-38)

*Such blessings from Thy gracious hand Our humble prayers implore; And Thou shalt be our chosen God, And portion evermore.* There is no other God to chose! He is the only God of Heaven. Allah is an idol of the heathen. Allah has no Son, no Holy Ghost, no Mercy, and no Grace. He has no standing whatsoever. He is a cruel idol of superstition which advocates murder, rape and plunder. We do not choose God – He chooses us. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.* (John 15:16) All good things come from God our Father. Even when we feel rejected by others, this is often a blessing of God. Later, we may learn that what we at first considered a setback for us turns to be the most perfect solution for our lives: *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.* (James 1:17-18)

Are you among those ‘*first fruits,*’ or do you linger in doubt and unbelief among the children of men. Be of God, and act of God!