

## Pillar of the Truth

He stood a large stone up on its end and called it a house.

'He' was Jacob and the place became known as Bethel, meaning: House of God. At that place Jacob wrestled with an angel of God in the night. He awakened in fear as he realized his encounter with the divine. So, he took the stone on which he had rested his head during the night and set it up as a memorial pillar. The pillar stood with meaning. It supported no roof nor was it part of a physical building. Yet it was the place where God had met Jacob: Bethel.

The Apostle Paul, when writing to Timothy, referred to the household of God:

**"...which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:15)**

While many writers consider this illustration to be that of *a building with pillars* supporting a roof, it is just as likely, perhaps more likely, that the pillar is like Jacob's pillar called Bethel.

After all, truth does not need to be supported. Truth IS. Truth stands independent of man and his perceptions and interpretations.

The pillar to which Paul refers is not holding up truth, but rather is composed of 'the' truth. The sentence structure may not be smooth for us, but remember Lot's wife who became a pillar 'of' salt. Now, think of the church of the living God as a pillar 'of' the truth.

This is not an exercise in word play.

God's desire is for 'the truth' to be expressed. Jesus taught the truth and Jesus embodied the truth: "I am the way, *the truth*, and the life," he said. The truth is the gospel of Jesus Christ as Paul described in the next verse as the mystery of godliness, or the mystery of our faith:

**By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness:**

**He who was revealed in the flesh,  
Was vindicated in the Spirit,  
Seen by angels,  
Proclaimed among the nations,  
Believed on in the world,  
Taken up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:16)**

This is a reference to Christ who was 'revealed in the flesh' and ultimately 'taken up in glory.' The church is the living testimony of the gospel in the world today, even in our own community.

Paul referred to the church as the household of God, something that is made up of people, *living* people. He then referred to this living entity as the 'church of the living God.' The church of God is alive with believers and the living God dwells in His living church.

It has been said in the past that we, the church, are the only Bible that some people will ever read. Perhaps that is the essence of Paul's statement to Timothy. The truth of God was revealed in the Law of Moses and through the prophets in the Old Testament. Then God revealed Himself to mankind through His Son, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. Now, the body of Christ, the church is the 'pillar of the truth' revealing our holy God to a watching world.

Are WE, in this place, at this time, a *pillar* expressing 'the truth' of God in our fallen world?

Are WE, demonstrating the loving character of God through our love for one another?

Are WE, demonstrating to an immoral world the holiness of God through lives devoted to purity and truth?

Are WE the 'pillar of the truth'?

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