

Gen. 35:1 And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.

Gen. 35:2 Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that *were* with him, Put away the strange gods that *are* among you, and be clean, and change your garments:

Gen. 35:3 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 which I went.

Gen. 35:4 And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which *were* in their hand, and *all their* earrings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which *was* by Shechem.

Gen. 35:5 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.

God speaks to Jacob and tells him to settle at Bethel and build an altar to God there. This was where the Lord had appeared to him at the top of the ladder to heaven in his dream when he was fleeing from Esau. Jacob tells his whole household to get rid of their foreign gods, purify themselves and change their clothes. Then he told them they were going to Bethel to build an altar to God, the source of Jacob's blessings. So the people gave Jacob their foreign gods and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem. Then they set out for Bethel. God filled the towns all around with terror and no one pursued them.

Thoughts – Why did they still have foreign gods? I guess it is like when we say we are giving God our lives, but we really mean He can have it all except for certain parts we choose to retain control of. We really don't want to give Him complete control. Was getting rid of the rings in the ears part of purifying themselves? It is sort of like they were leaving all identifiable association with sin at Shechem and making a fresh start.

Verse 5 is just another example of a sovereign God. He chose Jacob to be his vessel for a certain purpose, and in spite of some bad choices by Jacob and his family along the way, God's plan was not thwarted.

Gen. 35:6 So Jacob came to Luz, which *is* in the land of Canaan, that *is*, Bethel, he and all the people that *were* with him.

Gen. 35:7 And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

Gen. 35:8 But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allonbachuth.

Jacob and his entourage arrive at Bethel, and he built an altar in obedience to God. He named the place of the altar "Elbethel," (God of the house of God) in memory of God's appearance to him there in a dream when he was fleeing from Esau. Then we are told that Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, Jacob's mom, died and was buried under the oak below Bethel. It was named "Allonbachuth," oak of weeping.

Thoughts – When did his mother’s nurse join his household? It is interesting that Deborah’s death is given special mention and Rebekah’s is given no mention at all.

(1/11) In Genesis 49:31 we are told where Rebekah is buried. Jacob gives instruction for his sons to bury him with his grandparents, Abraham and Sarah, his father and mother, Isaac and Rebekah, and his wife Leah in the Cave of Machpelah.

Gen. 35:9 And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him.

Gen. 35:10 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.

Gen. 35:11 And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;

Gen. 35:12 And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

Gen. 35:13 And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.

Gen. 35:14 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 thereon, and he poured oil thereon.

Gen. 35:15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel.

God appears to Jacob again and blesses him. He again tells him that his name is no longer Jacob, but Israel. Then He affirms that He is God Almighty, El Shaddai. He commands Israel to be fruitful and increase in number. Jacob is told that **nations** and kings will come from him. (I don’t understand this statement since all the descendants of Jacob are Israelites. The kings would be the kings of Israel/Judah; but what other nations?) The land He gave to Abraham and Isaac was also Israel’s and his descendants’. Then God “went up” from him. Jacob set a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him and poured a drink offering on it and poured oil on it. Again, he called it Bethel, “house of God.”

Thoughts – I often wonder why God repeats Himself so many times to the patriarchs. It came to my mind that it is because of His love and desire for them to grow in faith. If I were never to hear “I love you” but one time from my husband and children, I’m not sure I would feel loved no matter how much they showed it. What God was telling these men was huge and must have been really hard to hold onto as true from their limited perspective and day-to-day “normal” living. I know I’m very much a creature of the “present” in my actions and attitudes. I respond to what is happening in my life at any given time. These guys were holding on to a promise and staying obedient to the Lord regarding a fulfillment that would take many turns in the road before final future fulfillment far beyond their lifetimes. I guess all I’m thinking is that I’m sure a few reminders along the way were welcomed.

Gen. 35:16 And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour.

Gen. 35:17 And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.

Gen. 35:18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

Gen. 35:19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.

Gen. 35:20 And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.

Jacob and his entourage left Bethel. Rachel went into labor during this journey and gave birth to another son. This was a very difficult delivery and cost Rachel her life. Right before she died, she named her son Benoni, "son of my trouble." Jacob changed his name to Benjamin, "son of my right hand." Rachel was buried near Bethlehem, and Jacob erected a pillar to mark her tomb.

(7/09) "her soul was in departing" – The soul departs the body at death and the body turns back to dust. The soul is the life force of the body. The health of the body and the health of the soul are independent of one another. The soul is eternal, but it is either spiritually alive or spiritually dead through faith in or rejection of God's provision for our salvation through his Son.

Gen. 35:21 And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar.

Gen. 35:22 And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

They continued their journey, and at one point Jacob heard that Reuben, his firstborn, slept with Bilhah, Rachel's maid, Jacob's concubine, and the mother of two of his half brothers. (At this point, I see no purpose for us being given this information. ????) (7/09) It establishes the reason that Reuben loses the blessing of the first-born.

Gen. 35:23 The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun:

Gen. 35:24 The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin:

Gen. 35:25 And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali:

Gen. 35:26 And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padanaram.

Next, we are given a listing of all of Jacob's 12 sons:

By Leah – Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

By Rachel – Joseph and Benjamin

By Bilhah (Rachel's handmaid) – Dan and Naphtali

By Zilpah (Leah's handmaid) – Gad and Asher

Gen. 35:27 And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned.

Gen. 35:28 And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years.

Gen. 35:29 And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Jacob finally came to Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac had lived. Isaac lived 180 years and then died and was buried by both his sons—Esau and Jacob.

It's at least twenty years distant from the time that Jacob deceived Isaac that Isaac finally dies.