

Genesis 35

Verses 1-4

Then God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and live there, and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.”² So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Remove the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments;³ and let’s arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me on the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.”⁴ So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which they had and the rings which were in their ears and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem.

Then God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and live there, and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau

See Map 3505



Arise, go up to Bethel

Bethel is 23 miles, about a day's journey, south of Shechem

So how could Jacob go up to Bethel?

Bethel is 900 feet above Shechem in altitude; 2900 vs 2000 feet above Sea Level

And make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau

The massacre at Shechem made Jacob very uncomfortable, and most likely this is why God told Jacob to move

There would have been relatives in nearby towns that figured out what had happened and called for action against Jacob and his tribe

Just as Jacob had to flee from Esau after he deceived him, Jacob must now flee from the relatives of Shechem after his two sons deceived the people of Shechem

Then Jacob said, remove the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments;

This would have included the idols stolen from Laban by Rachel

The ear-rings were unholy because they were thought to provide protective power

Their garments needed to be clean, representing cleanliness in their hearts

Maybe this is the origin of our custom to wear our Sunday best

Verses 5 - 8

⁵ As they journeyed, there was a great terror upon the cities which were around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. ⁶ So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. ⁷ Then he built an altar there, and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed Himself to him when he fled from his brother. ⁸ Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak; and it was named Allon-bacuth.

As they journeyed, there was a great terror upon the cities which were around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob

His two sons had indeed put the whole tribe at risk

But God put a great terror in the hearts of the people to save Israel

A similar thing fell upon the citizens of Jericho at the approach of the Israelites

See Joshua 2:9

God used this same device many times to protect the Chosen People.

Then he built an altar there, and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed Himself to him when he fled from his brother

Jacob had promised to return to this spot during his flight from Esau, but it seems that God had to remind him of his promise

Jacob had promise that if God watched over him, then God would be his God

And that he would give God 10% of all he had to God

Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak; and it was named Allon-bacuth.

Rebekah was buried in the cave of Machpelah

See Genesis 49:31

But the time and circumstances of her death are not recorded

So isn't it interesting that the death of her nurse is recorded

Deborah, a woman of low estate, was given this special recognition

The place of Deborah's burial means Oak of Weeping

Indicating Deborah was highly respected and sincerely loved

So how old was Deborah at the time of her death?

See chart 3510

Ch	Person	Event	Age	Year
21	Abraham	Isaac born	100	1896
22	Abraham	Abraham Tested	120	1876
23	Sarah	Sarah dies	127	1859
24	Isaac	Marries Rebekah	40	1856
25	Isaac	Esau and Jacob born	60	1836
25	Abraham	Abraham dies	175	1821
26	Esau	Marries two Hittites	40	1796
25	Ishmael	Ismael dies	137	1773
27 - 28	Isaac	blessing	137	1759
27 - 28	Jacob	Trip to Haran	77	1759
29	Jacob	7 years for Rachel	77-84	1752
29 - 30	Jacob	7 years and 11 kids	84-91	1752 - 1745
30	Jacob	Joseph born	91	1745
31	Jacob	6 years for the flocks	97	1739
32-33		Jacon & Esau reunite	97	1739
35	Deborah	Buried near Bethel	??	1739
35	Jacob	Benjamin born	97	1739
35	Rachel	Dies giving birth	35	1739

Isaac married Rebekah in 1856 BC and Deborah was her Nurse

Then she passed away around 1739, 117 years later.

If Deborah was just 30 years old when Rebekah married Isaac, then she died at 147.

Her age is not the most important part of this story, but it is interesting that Jacob who was very blessed by God lived to the age of.....wait for it..... 147!!

By the way, we would have no idea how old she was if we did not keep a close count of when certain events took place.

This is one aspect of bible study that many students have overlook because many teachers and preachers of the bible have failed to set the example.

Verses 9-15

⁹ Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him. ¹⁰ God said to him,

**“Your name is Jacob;
You shall no longer be called Jacob,
But Israel shall be your name.”**

So He called him Israel. ¹¹ God also said to him,

**“I am God Almighty;
Be fruitful and multiply;
A nation and a multitude of nations shall come from you,
And kings shall come from you.**

**¹² And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac,
I will give to you,
And I will give the land to your descendants after you.”**

¹³ Then God went up from him at the place where He had spoken with him. ¹⁴ So Jacob set up a memorial stone in the place where He had spoken with him, a memorial of stone, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. ¹⁵ And Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel.

God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; You shall no longer be called Jacob, But Israel shall be your name.” So He called him Israel.

Jacob was a supplanter, one who wrongfully seizes and holds the place of another

This was first seen at his birth, Genesis 25; when he held onto his brothers heel

Then in Genesis 27 at the age of 77 he stole his brothers blessing

Israel means one who wrestled with God

This occurred in Genesis 32:24-28 before Jacob met with his brother

God says that Jacob shall be called Israel because he had contended with God and with man and prevailed

And God said to him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply

At this point Jacob already had 4 wives and many kids, and he would soon have one more son

He also had many herds, flocks and other possessions.as revealed in chapter 32

So why does God say this to Jacob at this point in his life?

Being fruitful implies more than an increase in physical possessions

See 2 Peter1:5-7

A company of nations shall be of you, and kings shall come out of your loins

During the course of Israel's history there were 41 kings

Three kings while the nation was united and 38 after the nation split

¹² And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you.

Jacob is 97 years old and the year is 1739 BC

This promise will be fulfilled under the leadership of Joshua beginning in 1406 BC

By his descendants God means those who will be living 333 years in the future

¹⁴ So Jacob set up a memorial stone in the place where He had spoken with him, a memorial of stone, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. ¹⁵ And Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel.

Jacob's response to God was one of worship

This is similar to the experience he had at the same spot in Genesis 28

However, in Genesis 28 he had a dream, whereas here it says that God appeared to him

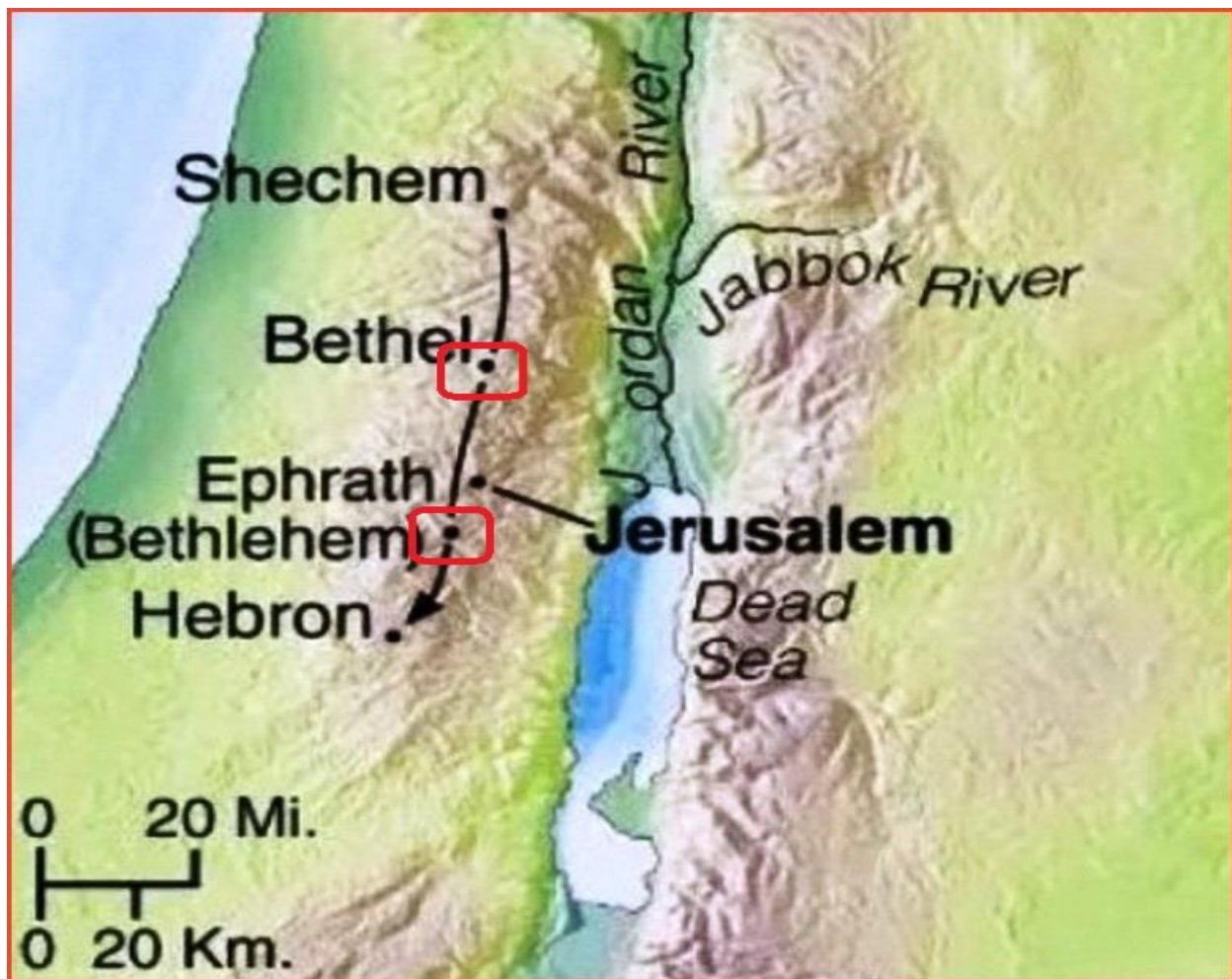
We don't know all the details of how God appeared to him but appearing seems to imply some kind of physical form as opposed to having a dream

Verses 16-21

¹⁶ Then they journeyed on from Bethel; but when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe difficulties in her labor. ¹⁷ And when she was suffering severe difficulties in her labor, the midwife said to her, “Do not fear, for you have another son!” ¹⁸ And it came about, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. ¹⁹ So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). ²⁰ And Jacob set up a memorial stone over her grave; that is the memorial stone of Rachel’s grave to this day. ²¹ Then Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.

They journeyed from Bethel to Ephrath (Bethlehem)

See Map 3515



Bethlehem was also known as Bethlehem Ephrathah

See Micah 5:2

¹⁷ And when she was suffering severe difficulties in her labor, the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for you have another son!"

The good news of a son was quickly followed by tragedy

¹⁸ And it came about, as her soul was departing (for she died)

This is a verification of life after death

The body will die but our soul or spirit lives on

This idea is foundational to all believers

So much so, that the phrase her soul was departing is used as a euphemism for death

She called his name Benoni but his father called him Benjamin

Benoni means son of my sorrow and this may be why Jacob renamed him

Benjamin means son of my right hand or son of my old age

And Rachel died, and was buried on the way to Bethlehem

There is some sad irony here

Rachel had cried to Jacob saying, "Give me children, or I die."

See Genesis 30:1

The same is the Pillar of Rachel's grave to this day

Moses wrote the book of Genesis near the end of his life (1406 BC)

So this pillar over Rachel's tomb was still present after 300 years

Israel journeyed and spread his tent beyond the tower of Eder

See Pic 3520



Jerome says that the tower was one Roman mile from **Bethlehem**

Jerome was one of the Fathers of the early Christian Church (347-420 AD)

His major work was the translation of the Scriptures from Hebrew and Greek into Latin

Verses 22 - 26

²² And it came about, while Israel was living in that land, that Reuben went and slept with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard *about it*. Now there were twelve sons of Jacob— ²³ the sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, then Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; ²⁴ the sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin; ²⁵ and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's female slave, were Dan and Naphtali; ²⁶ and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's female slave, were Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.

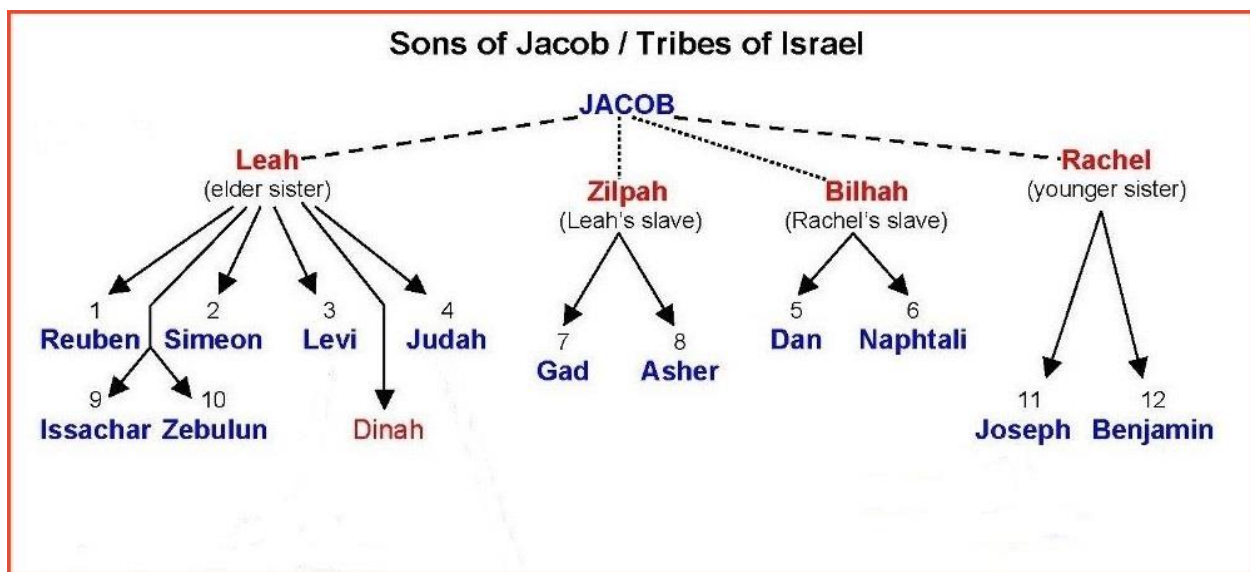
Reuben slept with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard *about it*.

Reuben lost the birthright because of this immoral act

See 1 Chronicles 5:1

Now there were twelve sons of Jacob—

See chart 3525



These are the sons of Jacob that were born to him in Paddan-aram.

11 of the 12 sons were born in Paddan-aram

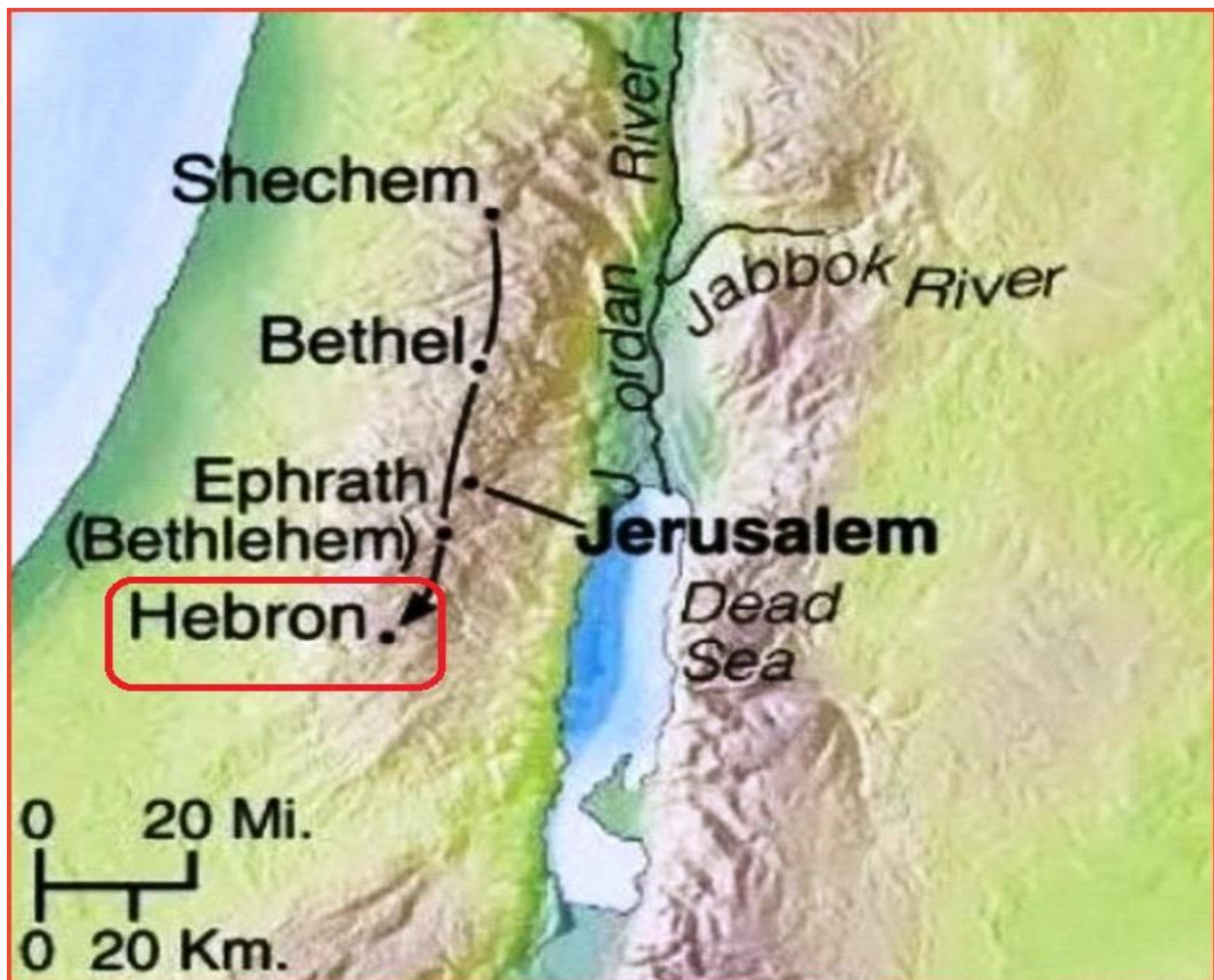
His last son Benjamin was born in Canaan

Verse 27 - 29

²⁷ Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre of Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had resided. ²⁸ Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. ²⁹ Then Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, an old man of ripe age; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre of Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron)

See Map 3530



And the days of Isaac were 180 years

Isaac was 180 when he died so Jacob was 120 years old

In chapter 37, Jacob is 108 years old, so we know this event is not in chronological order.

It was probably stated here simply for the sake of convenience

Esau and Jacob his sons buried him.

Isaac was buried in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron

But that detail is not given in this verse