

Genesis 35:1-15 **Altar at Bethel**

¹ Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother." ² And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. ³ Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone." ⁴ So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem.

⁵ And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all 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 And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.

⁸ Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth.

⁹ Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. ¹⁰ And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel. ¹¹ Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. ¹² The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land." ¹³ Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him. ¹⁴ So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it. ¹⁵ And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel. NKJV

Facts revealed:

- ✧ Elohiym said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there, make an altar there to El Who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother."
- ✧ Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, (that would include his servants from Padan Aram as well as the people of Shechem whom his sons had taken captive), "Put away the foreign elohey (gods) that are among you, purify yourselves and change your garments, then let us arise and go up to Bethel and I will make an altar there to El, Who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone." The foreign gods among them were not just the household gods of Laban that were stolen by Rachel when they left Padan Aram, [Genesis 31:19] but also the gods of his servants and the gods of the people of Shechem that were with him.

It is interesting to note that the foreign gods given to Jacob to be hidden included the earrings that were in their ears.

- ✧ They journeyed, and the terror of Elohiym was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.
- ✧ They all came to Bethel and Jacob built an altar and called it El Bethel (God of the House of God) because that was where Elohiym had appeared to him when he fled from Esau. [Genesis 28:12-22]

- ✧ It is not clear how Rebekah's nurse came to be with Jacob as he was staying at Bethel since Isaac is still at Hebron where he was when Jacob left to go to Padan Aram, and he is still there when he dies at age 180 and is buried. [\[Genesis 35:27-29\]](#)
 - It is possible that Rebekah sent her to accompany Jacob all the way, but it is not so recorded. However it seems that she is not with Isaac in Hebron at the time of her death but rather she is with Jacob and is buried at Bethel.
- ✧ Elohiym appeared to Jacob again and renewed His covenant with him.
 - ✧ God again called his name Israel. [\[Genesis 32:28\]](#)
 - ✧ Elohiym identified Himself as El Shaday.
 - ✧ God commanded him with a promise: "Be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body.
 - ✧ The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you and to your descendants after you I give this land."
- ✧ Then Elohiym went up from him in the place where He talked with him. This is the second time described where God ascended from before someone as He had done before Abraham. [\[Genesis 17:22\]](#)
- ✧ Jacob again set up a pillar of stone in the place where God talked with him, poured a drink offering on it, poured oil on it, and called the name of the place Bethel (House of God). [\[Genesis 28:16-22\]](#)