

Back to Bethel

Genesis 35:1 - 37:1

by Don Falkos

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Jacob told his people, "Get rid of all your pagan idols, purify yourselves, and put on clean clothing. God, who has been with me wherever I've gone, has said to me, 'Go back to Bethel and build an altar at the place where I appeared to you when you were running from your brother Esau.' "

So they gave Jacob all their pagan idols as well as the earrings they wore as good luck charms. He buried them under a tree near Shechem. As they set out for Bethel, God caused a terror to sweep over all the people they would be passing by, so that no one would attack them.

When they arrived at Bethel, Jacob built an altar. God once again appeared to him saying, "From now on your name will be Israel." Then the Lord blessed Jacob, promising him land and many descendants.

From Bethel, Jacob traveled south. Along the way Rachel went into labor. She had a long and very difficult delivery. Rachel died giving birth to her son, Benjamin. She was buried near Bethlehem.

Jacob returned to his father, Isaac, who lived to a ripe old age, and when he died, he was buried by his sons, Esau and Jacob. Jacob settled in the land of Canaan, where his father, Isaac, had lived.