

→ Return to Bethel

God told Jacob when he was in his uncle's house.

Gen 31:13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now **leave this land at once and go back to your native land.**"

→ Wrestling with God: God meets Esau. The Penuel Experience

- 1) Jacob's hip socket is dislocated [he begins to limp]
- 2) Jacob's name is changed to Israel [from "deceiver" to "one who wrestles with God"]

→ Reconciliation with his older brother Esau:

After reconciling with his older brother, **Jacob stayed in Shechem**

Gen 33:15 Esau said, "Then let me leave some of my men with you." "But why do that?" Jacob asked. "Just let me find favor in the eyes of my lord." 16 So that day Esau started on his way back to Seir. 17 **Jacob, however, went to Sukkoth**, where he built a place for himself and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place is called Sukkoth. 18 After Jacob came from Paddan Aram, he arrived safely **at the city of Shechem in Canaan and camped within sight of the city.** 19 For a hundred pieces of silver, he bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, the plot of ground where he pitched his tent. 20 **There he set up an altar and called it El Elohe Israel.**

→ Trouble in Shechem 【Genesis 34】

- Jacob did not go to the land promised to him by his brother
- Jacob did not go to Bethel, as God had told him
But He stayed in **Shechem**
- His family faced the threat of extinction
His daughter Dinah was raped in the land of Shechem
Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi, carried out an act of vengeance and plunder
- 34:30 ³⁰ Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me obnoxious to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land. We are few in number, and if they join forces against me and attack me, I and my household will be destroyed."



God's intervention

Gen 35: 1 Then God said to Jacob, **"Go up to Bethel and settle there,** and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau."

→ Jacob's obedience

Gen 35:2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes. ³ Then come, **let us go up to Bethel,** where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone." ⁴ So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem.

Gen 35:6 Jacob and all the people with him came to Luz (that is, Bethel) in the land of Canaan. ⁷There he built an altar, and he called the place **El Bethel** because it was there that God revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother.

➔ God's response and blessing

Gen 35:9 After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him. ¹⁰God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel. ¹¹And God said to him, "I am God Almighty^[d]; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants. ¹²The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you." ¹³Then God went up from him at the place where he had talked with him. ¹⁴Jacob set up a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. ¹⁵Jacob called the place where God had talked with him Bethel.

➔ Lessons from Jacob's Life

- Even after encountering God, if you follow your own desires, you may face trials. Although he was told, "Return to Bethel," Jacob chose to stay in Shechem. As a result, his entire family faced the threat of annihilation.
- 1. God in His mercy, guides us along His path. God appeared to Jacob again and said, "Go to Bethel and build an altar there." Jacob obeyed God's word and set out for Bethel.
- 2. God protected Jacob from the hands of his enemies.
 - a) Jacob returned to God's ways [repented]
Jacob told his entire family that they were returning to Bethel and set out on their journey.
 - b) Jacob built an altar to God
Jacob commanded his entire family to discard their idols and purify themselves.
 - c) Jacob worshiped God
- 3. God appeared to Jacob again and blessed him.
 - 1) Confirming his name to Israel
 - 2) Confirming the covenant of Abraham and Isaac.

➔ A Place to Build an Altar to God

- 1. Jacob settled in Shechem and built an altar there. [His family faced a crisis.]
- 2. God commanded him to settle in Bethel and build an altar there.
Bethel was the place where Jacob experienced God's presence during his time of distress. It was the place where he received a promise from God. It was the place where Jacob first worshiped the Lord.

➔ What about us? Are we facing hardships, worries, and suffering?

Let us return to Bethel, to the Lord. [God's Word, God's Church]

Let us repent of our own thoughts and plans before the Lord.

Let us offer heartfelt worship to the Lord. Let us acknowledge that the Lord is the Lord of our lives.

God's blessing has been reaffirmed—from Jacob to Israel, the blessing of Abraham. [Christian]

➔ Let us become true worshippers

- 1. Since God is Spirit, true worshippers worship in spirit and in truth. [John 4:23]
- 2. Offer ourselves to God as a pure and living sacrifice [Romans 12:1–2]
Separate ourselves from the world; do not associate with it. A way of life. Sanctification.
- 3. A life in which God is Lord.
- 4. Receive the Lord's grace, mercy, and blessings.