

Jacob's Spiritual Renewal at Bethel

35: 1-15

After his mountaintop experience at Peniel, **Jacob** had inexplicably fallen away from **God**. Instead of immediately returning to **Bethel**, he had lingered at the city of Shechem. **His** grandfather Abraham had also been disobedient. He stayed in **Hebron** when he should have gone on to the Promised Land (**11:31b**). Then he went to **Egypt** when he should have stayed in Palestine. **Jacob** would go to **Bethel**, but only after **God** had commanded him to go (**35:1**).

Ya'akov was in the world (**First John 2:15-17**) and the time spent in Shechem was disastrous. It revealed a spiritual vacuum in the hearts of his family.⁵³¹ The only cure for worldliness is holiness . . . to be set apart. As for **Jacob**, he needed to be alone again with **Elohim** and be spiritually renewed. So **God** commanded him to go to **Bethel**. It was there, **twenty years** previous (**31:38**), that **Ya'akov** first met the **LORD** and agreed to walk with **Him**. While there was no mention of **God's** name in **Chapter 34**, here in **Chapter 35** His name is mentioned twelve times.

God's patient work in **Jacob's** life offers a lesson as we learn how the **LORD** can bring us each along step by step in the process of spiritual maturity. We may look at where we are in our spiritual walk and feel as if we haven't gotten anywhere. We can feel overwhelmed by our failures and our inability to master life with Yeshua. Those are the times when we need to pause and look back so that we can gain an appreciation of how far **ADONAI** has brought us. As is clearly seen by **His** dealings with **Ya'akov**, **God** does not demand instant perfection, but **He** leads us little by little, making inroads into our self-centeredness and doing **His** work in our lives one step at a time.⁵³²