

God Directs Jacob back to Bethel, a Birth, & Several Deaths (Gen 35)

Grace Chapel March 10, 2010 Dr. John Niemelä

INTRODUCTION

CHRONOLOGY

- Isaac born 2066 BC
- Isaac (age 40) married Rebekah 2026 BC
Genesis 24:55 calls Rebekah a young woman (perhaps she was in her late teens)
- Rebekah bore Jacob & Esau to Isaac (age 60) 2006 BC
- Jacob (age 83) married Leah & Rachel 1923 BC
(the sisters were likely in their late teens)
- Dinah raped; revenge by Simeon & Levi 1902 BC (Isaac = age 164)
- Isaac (age 180) died 1886 BC

The events of Genesis 35 occurred during the last fifteen years of Isaac's life, but Moses does not narrow down the timeline further.

JACOB'S THIRTEEN CHILDREN ARRANGED BY THEIR MOTHERS

	LEAH	ZILPAH	RACHEL	BILHAH
1	Reuben	Gad	Joseph	Dan
2	Simeon	Asher	Benjamin	Naphtali
3	Levi			
4	Judah			
5	Issachar			
6	Zebulun			
7	Dinah (daughter)			

Other than Benjamin, all of the children were born in Haran.

GOD SENT JACOB BACK TO BETHEL & THEY BURIED DEBORAH (35:1–8)

(35:1) God directed Jacob back to Bethel, where God had appeared & Jacob had vowed

(35:2–4) Jacob made his family give up all their idols before going to Bethel

(35:5–6) God protected Jacob as he returned to Bethel

(35:7) Jacob built an altar at Bethel, where God had appeared to him

(35:8) Deborah (Rebekah's nurse) died on the way to Bethel & was buried at Bethel

Two possibilities exist for the phrase: Rebekah's nurse

1. Deborah might have suckled Rebekah as a child
In that case, she would probably have been over 160 years old.
2. Rebekah may have hired Deborah to help her suckle the twins (Jacob & Esau)
In that case, she probably would have been at least 120 years old.

I favor the latter, because (if she had suckled Jacob), it is easy to see why she would travel with Jacob (rather than staying with Isaac & Rebekah).

GOD RECONFIRMED THE COVENANT TO JACOB (35:9–15)

(35:9) God appeared to Jacob & blessed him

(35:10) God reconfirmed the renaming of Jacob to Israel (cf. 32:28)

(35:11–12) God promised the Abrahamic blessing of nations & land to Jacob & his seed

(35:13) God went up from there

(35:14–15) Jacob erected a pillar, poured a drink offering & oil, & called it Bethel

JACOB'S LAST SON WAS BORN, BUT DEATHS & INCEST INTRUDED (35:16–29)
(35:16–17) Shortly before reaching Ephrath (Bethlehem) went into hard labor

(35:18) As Rachel was dying, she named her son Ben-Oni (Son of my sorrow), but Jacob called him Benjamin (Son of the right hand)

(35:19–20) Rachel died and was buried near Bethlehem & Jacob erected a pillar which remained in Moses' day

(35:22a) Reuben [attempted to claim firstborn rights & to usurp Jacob by] having intercourse with Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid

Genesis 49:2–4, says that this action caused Reuben to lose his firstborn status

(35:22b–26) The twelve sons of Israel (the progenitors of the twelve tribes) are named

Dinah (who was not a progenitor of a tribe) is not named here.

(35:27–29) Jacob & Esau came to Isaac at Hebron when he died at 180 & buried him

SUMMARY (This passage ends the Isaac *Toledot*—25:19–35:29)

Gen 36:1–37:1 is the Esau *Toledot*; Gen 37:2–50:26 is the Jacob *Toledot*.