

Genesis 35:1-4: God instructs Jacob to pack up his (95) stuff and return to Bethel (the place where he wrestled with God). Jacob had named that place Bethel because in Hebrew that meant "House of God". So Jacob tells his people to "put away their foreign gods, ...". This is troubling in many ways! First, and foremost, it meant that Jacob must have known that the people had idol worship objects and therefore must have practiced idol worship. Maybe he even found out that Rachel had stolen her father's idols (Genesis 31:22-35). But what did he do about it as leader of the clan? Absolutely nothing! After all, it is only a little bit of horiscope here, or fortune telling there. It's only some harmless tarot cards, or a piece of wood used for a Ouija board. And it doesn't affect my worship of God, it's just a little bit of fun on the side. Like "that magic charm that I carry around for good luck".

Jacob tolerated his people cracking the door open to Satan. Jacob overlooked his people practicing the Occult. And secondly, now that they are heading to "the place of God" he collects all the false gods and "hides" them. What? Why wouldn't he burn them. Why let them survive, so that someone might find them, or worse, return to retrieve them when times get tough.

Jacob's mindset is shocking, yet all too common. He is trying to "clean-up" the posse so they can present themselves pure when they get to the "house of God". I too am guilty of trying to clean myself up when I go before God; constantly forgetting that God is always seeing me long before I am approaching Him. And especially

in today's religious mindset, "I am going to go (96) to church to be with God", No, your not! Or, "I am going to go to my prayer closet to pray to God". Ok, that's fine but He also hears you when you pray in the shower, on your way to work, in your tears when your curled up in a ball and can't even utter a thought, He hears you because the Holy Spirit that dwells in you prays for you, On your behalf.

Moses made the same mistake after he killed the egyptian (see printout Exodus 2). "He looked this way and that way, ..." But he didn't look up!

Jacob was afraid of getting caught with idols when he went back to Bethel, when he was already caught before Rachel even stole them to begin with. Maybe God even had Jacob return to Bethel so that he would put his foot down and remove the idols from his people before it became too late to do so; before the cancer of idolatry led to being terminal.

Genesis 35:5-7: Upon re-entry to Bethel, Jacob built an altar there and now called it: El-Bethel which is "God is in the house of God". A testimony of a deeper longing for the God who dwells in the house of God.

Genesis 35:8-11 God re-affirms that "Israel" is Jacob's new name (wrestles with God / struggles with God). In verse 11 it is written: Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply, ...". This has always been God's command to His people. It started with Adam & Eve in the Garden: (Genesis 1:28) "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it" (Not: "lessen your carbon footprint by not having children and worship the earth") - Notice satan in both these being opposite of what God said.

And many times in the Old and New Testaments bearing (97) (good) fruit is a command from God not a suggestion. This

does not only mean fruitful in population. No, it also means being fruitful in your faith and leading many people to Christ through your testimony. That too is being fruitful and multiplying. And this being fruitful for God is not measured by numbers but rather by allotment. Billy Graham was created to have the potential of reaching millions with his message, whereas our allotment might be 10, 20, 50, or 100. The clock starts ticking when one becomes a believer. For some it is in childhood and for some it is at the end of life. But in all cases the words, "well done My good and faithful servant" will be spoken to all who become fruitful and multiply once they are saved. And that is why Jesus told us the "parable about the Talents" (see printout ^{Matthew 25}).

Genesis 35:12-20 On his journey Jacob's beloved Rachel goes in to painful labor and passes away. She names the boy Ben-Oni (son of my sorrow) but Jacob can not bear letting the boy go through life named the son of my sorrow and so he changes it to Benjamin, which means son of my right hand. Jacob placed a gravemarker on her grave and it was still there at the time Moses scribed (Holy Spirit guided) the Pentateuch / Torah which is Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The 1st 5 Books cover around 1400 years and are word for word exactly as they were spoken and exactly recall the events as they happened. So much so that God places His Hand on the complete Bible and swears, "This is My Truth, My Whole Truth, and nothing but My Truth, so help Me Myself". (And so we can, and should, bet our life on it.)

Genesis 35:21-25 Notice that the name Jacob and Israel

are at times interchanged. I used to think that the name Jacob was used during times of his unbelief ⁽⁹⁸⁾ and the name Israel when his faith was strong, but these verses don't follow that theory. They just seem to be random in nature. I am sure though that the Lord has a reason for the altering use but am not smart enough to know what it is.

In verses 23-26 we read the complete names of the 12 "tribes" of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. (These names are not in order of birth). From this time on people took meticulous care in recording ancestry because Israelites/Jews proved their inclusion by proclaiming which tribe they descended from.

Genesis 35:27-29 Isaac passes away at the ripe age of 180 years old. And his sons Jacob and Esau buried him. Together. Here we read, "and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days". In the whole old Testament people are "gathered" to their people, where? In either paradise, the righteous side, or in Hades, the torment side. Those on the righteous side of the inner earth world were gathered there in comfort awaiting the Messiah who would come and redeem them and sanctify them so that they could finally be in the presence of God. Jesus did this during His three days in the heart of the earth. For those on the torment side it was the worst time of their eternal lives! They heard Jesus proclaiming the Gospel and setting the captives free and realized that they would be left behind awaiting an awful condemnation at the White Throne Judgement in front of the same Lord Jesus Christ. —————➔

Not many scholars however believe this to be how it played out. So, I will give my (only my),

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thesis on why this was as I stated.

In the Old Testament days one would be counted as righteous for their faith. And faith is defined as taking God at His Word. For example, when being told to "get up and go to a land that I will show you"; or, "take your son and sacrifice him on the mountain" Abraham did so. He took God at His Word. He was counted as righteous, and all of his mistakes were blotted out, never to be recalled. Upon his death he was "gathered to his people". Where? In Paradise. Why? Because all those who had faith also knew that God would someday send the Messiah promised in the Garden, who would defeat sin, and they would be sanctified and as such were now purified and could now once again be in the presence of the Holy God. Something that had not been able to be since the day mankind (through Adam) were kicked out of God's presence in the Garden of Eden. All of the faithful who lived from Abel to the Thief on the Cross were placed in Paradise until the cleansing blood of Jesus purified them. ^{FOR, today you will be with me in Paradise.} Then on the third day they were set free from that holding place. From then on: to be absent from life (as a faithful believer) meant to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8). No more need for Paradise.

However, those of no faith; who did not take God at His Word, who lived life for themselves, selfishly, or all those who rejected Christ (this side of the cross) still occupy hell, or hades. They have no chance of salvation, ever. They wait until the White Throne judgement when death and Hades will give up the dead. (Revelation 20: 11-13) See Scriptures on my belief of above statements.