

10.10 Benjamin Is Born; Rachel and Isaac Die (Genesis 35:1–29)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *earrings*: women commonly wore earrings, but the ones in today’s story were associated with idols, either decorating the idols or worn by idolaters (people who worshiped idols), of which some were in Jacob’s household (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-35-4.html>).
- *terebinth tree*: This tree produces pistachio nuts. It can grow very large—as much as 40 ft. high and quite wide. Perhaps that is why it is sometimes called an oak tree (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/terebinth/>).
- *labor*: the term for the process of birthing a child; a lot of pain accompanies labor

Scripture (ESV)

Genesis 35:1 God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.” 2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. 3 Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.” 4 So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

5 And as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. 6 And Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him, 7 and there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother. 8 And Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried under an oak below Bethel. So he called its name Allon-bacuth.

9 God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. 10 And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.” So he called his name Israel. 11 And God said to him, “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. 12 The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.” 13 Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him. 14 And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it. 15 So Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him Bethel.

16 Then they journeyed from Bethel. When they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel went into labor, and she had hard labor. 17 And when her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, “Do not fear, for you have another son.” 18 And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. 19 So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem), 20 and Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb. It is the pillar of Rachel’s tomb, which is there to this day. 21 Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.

22 While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine. And Israel heard of it.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. 23 The sons of Leah: Reuben (Jacob's firstborn), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. 24 The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. 25 The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant: Dan and Naphtali. 26 The sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.

27 And Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. 28 Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. 29 And Isaac breathed his last, and he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Genesis 48:7 As for me, when I came from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem.)"

Introduction/Review:

Fearful Jacob had prayed that Esau would receive him. God answered that prayer miraculously. Esau accepted Jacob's gifts of 540 animals. He ran to meet Jacob. The brothers embraced and made peace. Then they went their own ways—Esau to Edom [locate] and Jacob to Shechem. Two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, slew the male inhabitants of that city. It was no wonder, then, that Jacob feared he would be attacked by other cities. However, God protected Jacob by putting the fear of God on all these people, and they did not attack.

Story:

Bethel

God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there." Bethel. Where have we heard that name before? It is the place where Jacob had seen the dream of angels on a heavenly ladder, the place where he had erected a stone, anointed it with oil, and had named the place—what? Bethel—house of God! Now God wanted Jacob to go back there. He said, "Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."

House-cleaning

Before Jacob could go to Bethel, he knew he needed to do some house-cleaning. Remember the idols Rachel had stolen from her father, Laban? It seems that idols besides Rachel's were present among Jacob's household (his family and servants). Jacob said, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you." So the members of his household gave to Jacob all the foreign gods they had, and the rings that were in their ears.

When Jacob had gathered all this valuable gold and silver, he dug a hole and buried it, hiding the idolatrous things under the terebinth tree that was near the town of Shechem.

More house-cleaning came about, for Jacob said to all who were with him, "Purify yourselves—wash up—and change your clothes. Then let's get going to Bethel so that I may make an altar to God there—to God who answers me when I'm in distress and has been with me wherever I have gone."

Remembering

I remember what Jacob had promised God when he had been at Bethel the first time: "If God will be with me and will give me food and clothing so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God." Now, after wrestling with God face-to-face and seeing His miraculous answers to prayer, Jacob was finally acknowledging the Lord as his own God by saying, "I will make an altar to the God who answers and has been with me."

So Jacob came to Bethel and built an altar and called the place El-bethel, meaning the God of the House of God. The Bible tells us the reason for this name was because God had revealed himself there when he fled from his brother.

Blessing

God appeared to Jacob again at Bethel and blessed him, repeating what He had said in the wrestling match during which he had changed Jacob's name to Israel: "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." God added words that sound very much like the promises He had made to Abraham and Isaac: "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you."

When God went up from him, Jacob set up another pillar of stone at Bethel. He poured out a drink offering and oil on it. Then he gathered his household and headed toward Bethlehem.

Benjamin

Now, a few years before, when Rachel had birthed Joseph, she had given him a name meaning, "God shall add another son to me." God *did* add another son. ✓ In fact, she was heavy with child at Bethel. The family hadn't gotten to their destination at Bethlehem, called Ephrath, when Rachel went into labor. Rachel's labor was extremely hard. When she was in the most pain just as she delivered, the midwife (the lady who helped her) said to her, "Don't be afraid. You have another son."

"Name him Ben-oni," answered Rachel, "for he is what his name means—son of my sorrow."

Now, in those days and even up until recent history, many times a woman died as she was having a child. Rachel called her baby boy "Son of My Sorrow" because she was dying; she died in childbirth. That baby boy never knew his own mother,* and Jacob's beloved wife was gone.

Jacob, full of sorrow himself, buried Rachel where she had died, on the way to Ephrath (Bethlehem). He set up a pillar over her tomb, now called Rachel's Tomb. Instead of calling his new baby Ben-oni, he renamed him Benjamin—Son of My Right Hand.

Hebron

Israel/Jacob journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder [located just north of Bethlehem]. But ✓ he was eager to get to Mamre, where the three visitors had visited Abraham to announce his father Isaac's birth. Mamre was located at Hebron [locate], and that is where Jacob's father, Isaac, still lived. Jacob's mother, Rebekah, had died, but Isaac, who had seemed to be so close to death twenty years before, still was alive. Jacob was able to reunite with him before Isaac actually did pass away at the ripe old age of 180 years. When Isaac died, both of his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him.

We see this chapter has been a chapter of death—Rachel's and Isaac's. Death will come to us all. Will we be ready to appear before God?

*Who became Benjamin's "mother"? Bible teachers think Rachel's maid, Bilhah, reared Benjamin.

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:
The city of Bethlehem, near the place of Rachel's death, is the birthplace of Jesus.
When the boy babies in Bethlehem were slaughtered by Herod, the Bible states, "Rachel [was] weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more" (Matthew 2:18, a fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:15-17).
- God protects: He put His fear on all the cities of Canaan so that no one hurt Jacob.
- Even though God is with us, we sometimes suffer hardships and sorrow.

Activities:

- Play dough: stone pillar; tombstone with Rachel's name on it; a baby

- Discuss some idols people have today: money; video games; cell phones; *etc.* In some cases it would be good to bury or burn these things physically; *e.g.*, a “dirty” book or CD or movie.
- Tell younger students that today’s Bible story is about twelve brothers. Do the following actions together twelve times to count to 12: Jump; give high-fives; hop; stomp; make circles with hands (<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e2aca903596e711036dac1/t/59c52d95be42d65bf30e7a5f/1506094487247/Wk+5+-+Promises+-+3-SK.pdf>).
- Snack: pistachio pudding and pistachio nuts
- Sing all of “Jacob” found at Lesson 10.01 or on the Songs page at teachingthebibleto kids.org.
- Sing Diana Dow’s “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” The song sheet and audio may be found at <http://www.biblesongsandmore.com/songs/old-testament-songs/abrahamsong/>.
- Review questions: (Game: Write a name of the twelve sons of Jacob on twelve Popsicle® sticks. When a student answers a question correctly, [s]he may place a stick in a container.) (Most of the following questions are from https://www.quia.com/quiz/3458917.html?AP_rand=1704490499.)
 1. What did Jacob tell his household to do before they went to Bethel? [Get rid of foreign gods; clean up; change clothes.]
 2. Who or what did Jacob bury under the oak at Shechem? [Foreign gods and earrings]
 3. Why did no one pursue Jacob when he set out for Bethel? [The terror of God fell upon the towns around him.]
 4. What name did Jacob give the altar he built in Bethel? [El Bethel.]
 5. What did God say would come from Jacob’s body? [A great nation of God.]
 6. What did Rachel name her last son as she was dying? [Ben-Oni.]
 7. How many sons did Jacob have? [Twelve.]
 8. What did Jacob rename Ben-oni? [Benjamin.]
 9. Who were the two sons of Rachel? [Joseph and Benjamin.]
 10. How old was Isaac when he died? [180 years.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Genesis 35:3—[Jacob said,] “Let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.”

Handwork:

- Do the Stack-a-Word puzzle of Jacob’s sons found below. The answers, going down on the left and coming up on the right are as follows: Levi, Issachar, Reuben, Zebulon, Benjamin, Simeon, Asher, Joseph, Judah, Naphtali, Dan, Gad.

earrings

terebinth tree

labor

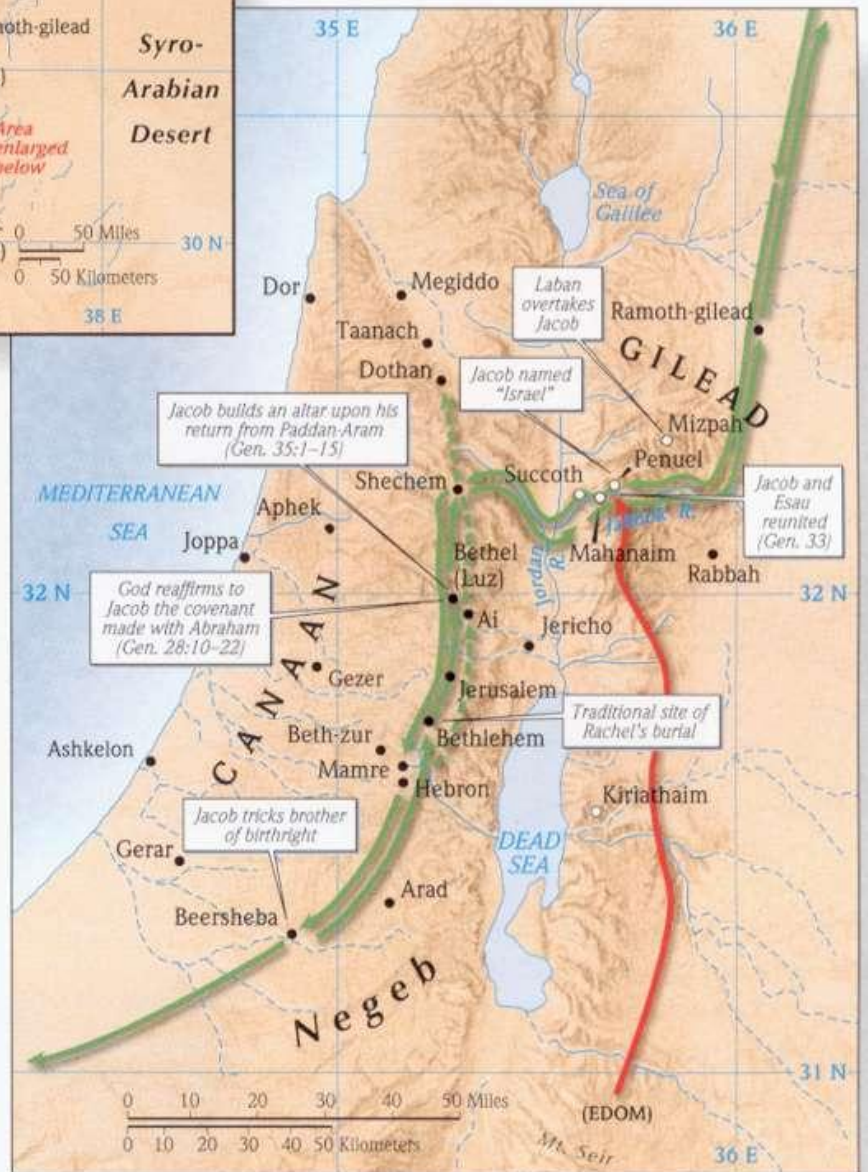
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TRAVELS OF JACOB

GEN. 28-33; 35

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- Jacob's journey
- Jacob's sons seek pasturage
- Esau's journey





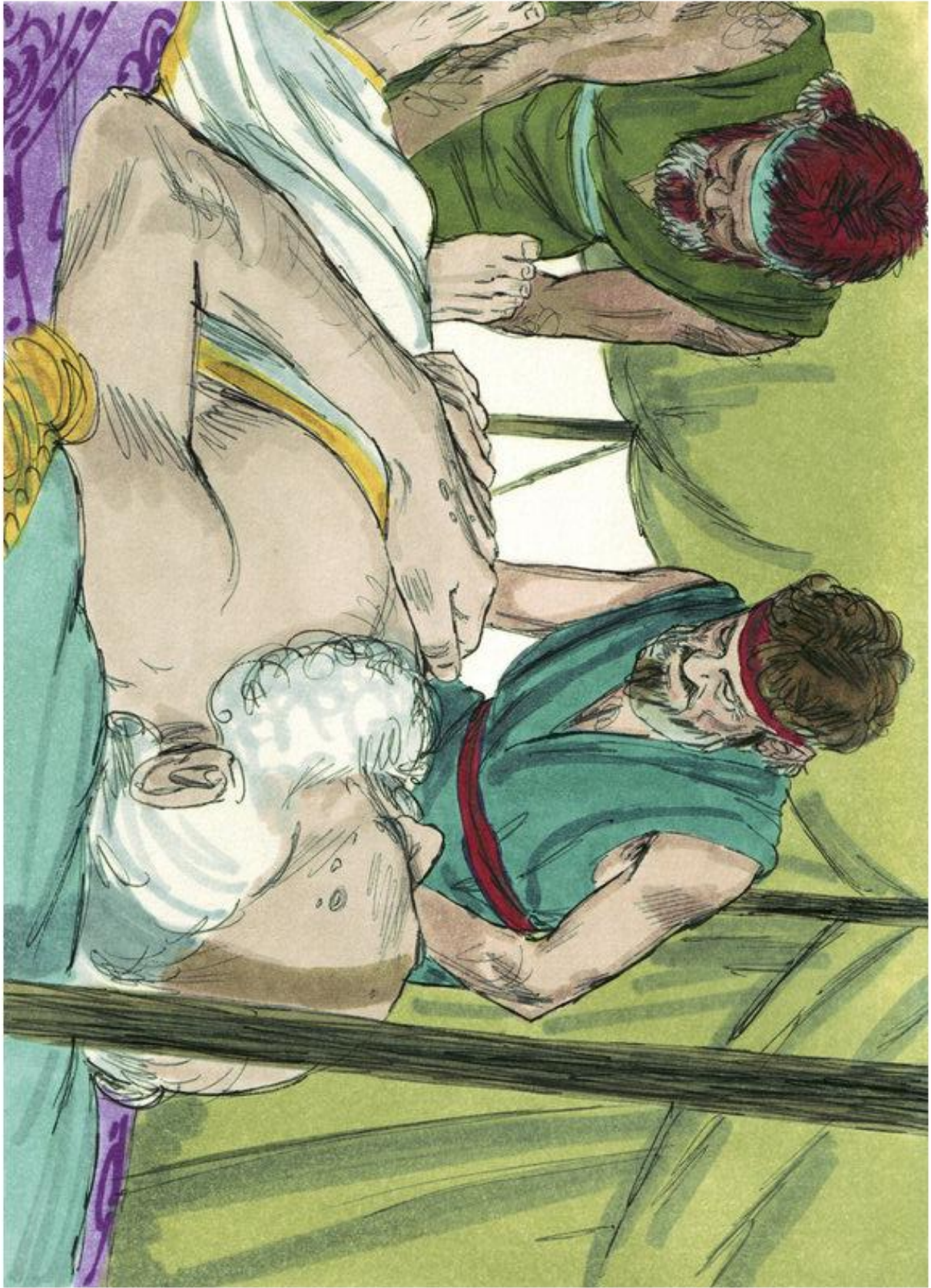
Terebinth tree (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pistacia_palaestina)



Rachel's Tomb as it appears today (<https://shalomisrael.com/rachel%E2%80%99s-tomb/>)
1 Samuel 10:2 states Rachel's tomb is in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah.







God's Covenant with Jacob at Bethel the Second Time

- **No longer shall your name be called Jacob.**
- **Israel shall be your name.**
- **I am God Almighty.**
- **Be fruitful and multiply.**
- **A nation and a company of nations shall come from you.**
- **Kings shall come from your own body.**
- **The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you.**
- **I will give the land to your offspring after you.**

Sons of Jacob

Jacob had twelve sons. Fit their names in the stack-a-word puzzle below.

