

~BETHEL 1 (926)

(Beth'el) [House of God]

- A prominent city of Israel, more frequently mentioned in the Bible than any other except Jerusalem. It is identified with the ruins by the modern village of **Beitin**, about 17 kilometers (11 miles) North of Jerusalem.
- It thus lay on a rocky ridge in the extreme southern part of the mountainous region of Ephraim at about 900 meters (3,000 feet) above sea level. The surrounding area today is quite barren, consisting of a stony plateau with sparse vegetation. Yet the existence of several springs there shows that the ancient city had an excellent water supply.
- **Bethel's** position was strategic and contributed greatly to its importance. Situated on the backbone of the central mountain range, it was on the important North-South route that followed the watershed line, running all the way from Shechem southward through **Bethel**, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, and down to Beer-sheba.
- Finally they said; Look! There is a festival of Yehowah from year to year in Shiloh, which is to the north of **Bethel**, toward the east of the highway that goes up from **Bethel** to Shechem and toward the south of Lebonah. (**Judges 21:19**)
- Another route connected **Bethel** with Joppa to the West on the Mediterranean and with Jericho to the East near the Jordan. **Bethel** was thus a crossroads town, as were Samaria, Jerusalem, Hebron, and Beer-sheba. Additionally, the evidence indicates that the area between Jerusalem and **Bethel** was a region of dense population, having a greater concentration of towns than any other part of Palestine.
- Archaeological excavations at **Beitin** reveal it to be a site of great antiquity, the suggestion being given that the original settlement dated back to about the **21st Century B.C.E.** Evidence was also found of a severe destruction and conflagration leaving debris and ashes 1.5 meters (5 feet) deep in some places, and this is believed likely to have occurred during the conquest of Canaan by Israel.

- Upon Abraham's entry into Canaan, he stopped at Shechem and then moved South to the mountainous region to the east of **Bethel** and pitched his tent with **Bethel** on the west and Ai on the east.
- Later he moved from there to the mountainous region to the east of **Bethel** and pitched his tent with **Bethel** on the west and Ai on the east. Then he built an altar there to Yehowah and began to call on the name of Yehowah. (**Genesis 12:8**)
- After spending some time in Egypt because of a famine in Canaan, Abraham again settled to the East of **Bethel**, in company with his nephew Lot. Since in both cases Abraham pitched tent to the East of **Bethel**, it is suggested that the site of his encampment was at **Burj Beitin**, a short distance Southeast of **Beitin**, which has been called **one of the great view-points of Palestine**. [*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, edited by T. K. Cheyne, London, 1899, Vol. I, col. 552]
- It may have been from such a vantage point that Abraham invited Lot to select the direction in which he would go upon separating from Abraham, with the result that Lot raised his eyes and saw the whole District of the Jordan and decided in favor of that region.
- Hence Abram said to Lot; Please, do not let any quarreling continue between me and you and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we men are brothers. (**Genesis 13:8**)
- Is not the whole land available to you? Please, separate from me. If you go to the left, then I will go to the right, but if you go to the right, then I will go to the left. (**Genesis 13:9**)
- So Lot raised his eyes and saw the whole District of the Jordan, that all of it was a wellwatered region before Yehowah brought Sodom and Gomorrah to ruin, like the garden of Yehowah, like the land of Egypt as far as Zoar. (**Genesis 13:10**)
- Then Lot chose for himself the whole District of the Jordan, and Lot moved his camp to the east. So they separated the one from the other. (**Genesis 13:11**)
- Yehowah thereafter invited Abraham to view the land in all directions, assuring him that it would be for an inheritance to him and his seed.
- And Yehowah said to Abram after Lot had separated from him,

Raise your eyes, please, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward. (Genesis 13:14)

- **Because all the land at which you are looking, to you and to your seed I am going to give it until time indefinite. (Genesis 13:15)**
- **Although Moses, in compiling the Genesis account, speaks of the town near which Abraham camped as **Bethel**, the subsequent record shows its original Canaanite name to have been Luz.**
- **Jacob spent the night near the city when traveling from Beersheba to Haran, and after having a dream of a ladder reaching to the heavens and hearing God's confirmation of the Abrahamic promise, he thereafter set up a pillar and called the name of the place **Bethel**, although **Luz was the city's name formerly**.**
- **And Jacob continued on his way out from Beersheba and kept going to Haran. (Genesis 28:10)**
- **In time he came across a place and set about spending the night there because the sun had set. So he took one of the stones of the place and set it as his head supporter and lay down in that place. (Genesis 28:11)**
- **And he began to dream, and, look! There was a ladder stationed upon the earth and its top reaching up to the heavens, and, look! There were God's angels ascending and descending on it. (Genesis 28:12)**
- **And, look! There was Yehowah stationed above it, and he proceeded to say; I am Yehowah the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land upon which you are lying, to you I am going to give it and to your seed. (Genesis 28:13)**
- **And your seed will certainly become like the dust particles of the earth, and you will certainly spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and by means of you and by means of your seed all the families of the ground will certainly bless themselves. (Genesis 28:14)**
- **And here I am with you and I will keep you in all the way you are going and I will return you to this ground, because I am not going to leave you until I have actually done what I have spoken**

to you. (**Genesis 28:15**)

- Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said; Truly Yehowah is in this place and I myself did not know it. (**Genesis 28:16**)
- And he grew fearful and added; How fear-inspiring this place is! This is nothing else but the house of God and this is the gate of the heavens. (**Genesis 28:17**)
- So Jacob got up early in the morning and took the stone that was there as his head supporter and he set it up as a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. (**Genesis 28:18**)
- Further, he called the name of that place **Bethel**, but the fact is, **Luz was the city's name formerly**. (**Genesis 28:19**)
- Some 20 years later God spoke to Jacob at Haran, identifying himself as the one who had addressed Jacob at **Bethel**, and instructed him to return to Canaan.
- I am the true God of **Bethel**, where you anointed a pillar and where you vowed a vow to me. Now get up, go out of this land and return to the land of your birth. (**Genesis 31:13**)

See Also LUZ 1

- Following the defilement of Dinah at Shechem and the act of vengeance executed by Jacob's sons against the Shechemites, Jacob received God's instruction to return to **Bethel**. After eliminating false religious articles from his household and servants, he traveled to **Bethel** under divine protection, built an altar there, and restated the name he had given the place earlier, calling it **El-bethel**, meaning, **The God of Bethel**.
- Here Rebekah's nursing woman Deborah died and was buried. Here, too, Yehowah confirmed the change of Jacob's name to Israel, restating the Abrahamic promise.
- After that God said to Jacob; Rise, go up to **Bethel** and dwell there, and make an altar there to the true God who appeared to you when you were running away from Esau your brother. (**Genesis 35:1**)
- Then Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him:

Put away the foreign gods that are in the midst of you and cleanse yourselves and change your mantles. (Genesis 35:2)

- **And let us rise and go up to Bethel. And there I shall make an altar to the true God who answered me in the day of my distress in that he proved to be with me in the way that I have gone. (Genesis 35:3)**
- **So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods that were in their hands and the earrings that were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the big tree that was close by Shechem. (Genesis 35:4)**
- **After that they pulled away, and the terror of God came to be upon the cities that were round about them, so that they did not chase after the sons of Jacob. (Genesis 35:5)**
- **Eventually Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is to say; Bethel, he and all the people who were with him. (Genesis 35:6)**
- **Then he built an altar there and began to call the place Elbethel, because there the true God had revealed himself to him at the time of his running away from his brother. (Genesis 35:7)**
- **Later Deborah the nursing woman of Rebekah died and was buried at the foot of Bethel under a massive tree. Hence he called its name Allonbacuth. (Genesis 35:8)**
- **God now appeared to Jacob once again during his coming from Paddanaram and blessed him. (Genesis 35:9)**
- **And God went on to say to him; Your name is Jacob. No longer is your name to be called Jacob, but Israel will your name become. And he began to call his name Israel. (Genesis 35:10)**
- **And God said further to him; I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and become many. Nations and a congregation of nations will proceed out of you, and kings will come out of your loins. (Genesis 35:11)**
- **As for the land that I have given to Abraham and to Isaac, to you I shall give it, and to your seed after you I shall give the land. (Genesis 35:12)**

- After that God went up from above him at the place where he had spoken with him. (**Genesis 35:13**)
- Consequently Jacob stationed a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured a drink offering upon it and poured oil upon it. (**Genesis 35:14**)
- And Jacob continued to call the name of the place where God had spoken with him **Bethel**. (**Genesis 35:15**)
- Then they pulled away from **Bethel**. And while there was yet a good stretch of land before coming to Ephrath, Rachel proceeded to give birth, and it was going hard with her in making the delivery. (**Genesis 35:16**)
- Centuries later, upon the entry of the nation of Israel into Canaan **1473 B.C.E**, the name **Bethel** is again used to refer to the city previously called **Luz** rather than to the camping site of Abraham and Jacob. In the account of the attack upon Ai, the record indicates that the Canaanite men of **Bethel** endeavored to support the men of that neighboring city, but to no avail. If not at that point, then at a later time **Bethel's** king met defeat by Joshua's forces.
- Then Joshua sent men out from Jericho to Ai, which is close by Beth-aven, to the east of **Bethel**, and said to them; Go up and spy on the land. Accordingly the men went up and spied on Ai. (**Joshua 7:2**)
- After that Joshua sent them out and they marched to the place of ambush and took up quarters between **Bethel** and Ai to the west of Ai, while Joshua kept lodging on that night in the midst of the people. (**Joshua 8:9**)
- In the meantime he took about five thousand men and set them as an ambush between **Bethel** and Ai, to the west of the city. (**Joshua 8:12**)
- And there was not a man remaining in Ai and **Bethel** that did not go out after Israel, so that they left the city wide open and went chasing after Israel. (**Joshua 8:17**)
- He king of Jericho, one. The king of Ai, which was beside **Bethel**, one. (**Joshua 12:9**)

- The king of Makkedah, one, the king of **Bethel**, one. (**Joshua 12:16**)
- **Bethel** thereafter appears as a boundary city between the territories of the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin. It is listed as assigned to Benjamin, but the record shows that it was the house of Joseph, of which Ephraim was a part, that effected the conquest of the city.
- And the lot came out for the sons of Joseph from the Jordan at Jericho to the waters of Jericho eastward, the wilderness going up from Jericho into the mountainous region of **Bethel**. (**Joshua 16:1**)
- And it went out from **Bethel** belonging to Luz and passed over to the boundary of the Archites at Ataroth. (**Joshua 16:2**)
- And the boundary passed over from there to Luz, at the southern slope of Luz, that is to say; **Bethel**, and the boundary went down to Ataroth-addar upon the mountain that is on the south of Lower Beth-horon. (**Joshua 18:13**)
- And the cities of the tribe of the sons of Benjamin by their families proved to be Jericho and Beth-hoglah and Emek-keziz. (**Joshua 18:21**)
- And the cities of the tribe of the sons of Benjamin by their families proved to be Jericho and Beth-hoglah and Emek-keziz. (**Joshua 18:21**)
- Meantime the house of Joseph itself also went up against **Bethel**, and Yehowah was with them. (**Judges 1:22**)
- And the house of Joseph began to spy on **Bethel**, incidentally, the name of the city before that was **Luz**. (**Judges 1:23**)
- And the watchers got to see a man going out of the city. So they said to him, Show us, please, the way to get into the city, and we shall certainly exercise kindness toward you. (**Judges 1:24**)
- Accordingly the man showed them the way to get into the city, and they went striking the city with the edge of the sword, but the man and all his family they let go. (**Judges 1:25**)

- Upon that the man went to the land of the Hittites and built a city and called its name **Luz**. That is its name down to this day. (**Judges 1:26**)
- From this point forward the name **Luz** is no longer applied to the city.
- During the period of the Judges, the dwelling place of Deborah the prophetess was located between Ramah and **Bethel** in the mountainous region of Ephraim.
- Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that particular time. (**Judges 4:4**)
- And she was dwelling under Deborah's palm tree between Ramah and **Bethel** in the mountainous region of Ephraim, and the sons of Israel would go up to her for judgment. (**Judges 4:5**)
- It appears that, at the time of meting out justice to the tribe of Benjamin for the crime committed by its members, the ark of the covenant had been temporarily transported from Shiloh to **Bethel**, this latter city being considerably nearer the scene of the conflict centering around Gibeah, about 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) South of **Bethel**.
- Consequently all the sons of Israel went out and the assembly congregated themselves as one man, from Dan down to Beer-sheba along with the land of Gilead, to Yehowah at Mizpah. (**Judges 20:1**)
- And they proceeded to rise up and go on up to **Bethel** and to inquire of God. Then the sons of Israel said; Who of us should go up in the lead to the battle against the sons of Benjamin? To this Yehowah said; Judah in the lead. (**Judges 20:18**)
- At that all the sons of Israel, even all the people, went on up and came to **Bethel** and wept and sat there before Yehowah and fasted on that day until the evening and offered up burnt offerings and communion offerings before Yehowah. (**Judges 20:26**)
- After that the sons of Israel inquired of Yehowah, as it was there that the ark of the covenant of the true God was in those days. (**Judges 20:27**)

- Now Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was standing before it in those days, saying; Shall I go out yet again to battle against the sons of Benjamin my brother or shall I cease to? To this Yehowah said; Go up, because tomorrow I shall give him into your hand. (**Judges 20:28**)
- Consequently the people came to **Bethel** and kept sitting there before the true God until the evening and continued to raise their voice and indulge in a great deal of weeping. (**Judges 21:2**)
- **Bethel** was on the circuit visited by Samuel as he judged the people annually at that city as well as at Gilgal and Mizpah, and it was still viewed as a place favored for worship.
- And he traveled from year to year and made the circuit of **Bethel** and Gilgal and Mizpah and judged Israel at all these places. (**1 Samuel 7:16**)
- And you must pass on from there still farther and come as far as the big tree of Tabor, and there, there must encounter you three men going up to the true God at **Bethel**, one carrying three kids and one carrying three round loaves of bread and one carrying a large jar of wine. (**1 Samuel 10:3**)
- However, from then till the division of the kingdom **997 B.C.E**, **Bethel** is mentioned only in connection with King Saul's stationing of troops in preparation for combat with the Philistines.
- And Saul proceeded to choose for himself three thousand men out of Israel, and two thousand came to be with Saul at Michmash and in the mountainous region of **Bethel**, and a thousand proved to be with Jonathan at Gibeah of Benjamin, and the rest of the people he sent away, each one to his tent. (**1 Samuel 13:2**)
- As a major city of the northern kingdom under Jeroboam, **Bethel**, once prominent as a place of revelation by the true God, now became **renowned as a center of false worship**. At **Bethel**, in the extreme South of the newly formed kingdom of Israel, and at Dan, in the extreme North thereof, **Jeroboam set up the golden calves in his effort to dissuade the people of his realm from going to the temple at Jerusalem**.
- If this people continues going up to render sacrifices in the house

- of Yehowah in Jerusalem, the heart of this people will also be bound to return to their lord, Rehoboam the king of Judah, and they will certainly kill me and return to Rehoboam the king of Judah. (**1 Kings 12:27**)
- Consequently the king took counsel and made two golden calves and said to the people; It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here is your God, O Israel, that brought you up out of the land of Egypt. (**1 Kings 12:28**)
 - Then he placed the one in **Bethel**, and the other he put in Dan. (**1 Kings 12:29**)
 - With **its own religious house and altar, a specially invented festival time, and priests selected from among the non-Levitical tribes, Bethel** became a symbol of **rank apostasy from true worship**.
 - And he began to make a house of high places and to make priests from the people in general, who did not happen to be of the sons of Levi. (**1 Kings 12:31**)
 - And Jeroboam went on to make a festival in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the festival that was in Judah, that he might make offerings upon the altar that he had made in **Bethel**, to sacrifice to the calves that he had made, and he put in attendance at **Bethel** the priests of the high places that he had made. (**1 Kings 12:32**)
 - And he began to make offerings upon the altar that he had made in **Bethel** on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month that he had invented by himself, and he proceeded to make a festival for the sons of Israel and to make offerings upon the altar to make sacrificial smoke. (**1 Kings 12:33**)
 - Yehowah God did not delay in expressing his disapproval through a man of the true God sent to **Bethel** to pronounce judgment against the altar used in connection with calf worship. The ripping apart of this altar served as a portent, confirming the sure fulfillment of the prophets words.
 - After leaving **Bethel**, however, this man of the true God allowed himself to be induced by an old prophet of **Bethel** to accept and act on a supposed message from an angel in violation of the direct orders from God, with disastrous consequences to himself.

- **Slain by a lion, he was buried at **Bethel** in the personal burial place of the old prophet who saw in all these events the certainty of the fulfillment of Yehowah's word and thus requested that his own body be buried at death in the same burial site.**
- **And here there was a man of God that had come out of Judah by the word of Yehowah to **Bethel**, while Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make sacrificial smoke. (1 Kings 13:1)**
- **Then he called out against the altar by the word of Yehowah and said, O altar, altar, this is what Yehowah has said; Look! A son born to the house of David, whose name is Josiah! And he will certainly sacrifice upon you the priests of the high places that are making sacrificial smoke upon you, and men's bones he will burn upon you. (1 Kings 13:2)**
- **And he gave a portent on that day, saying; This is the portent of which Yehowah has spoken; Look! The altar is ripped apart, and the fatty ashes that are upon it will certainly be spilled out. (1 Kings 13:3)**
- **And it came about that, as soon as the king heard the word of the man of the true God that he had called out against the altar in **Bethel**, Jeroboam at once thrust out his hand from off the altar, saying; You men, grab hold of him! Immediately his hand that he had thrust out against him became dried up, and he was not able to draw it back to himself. (1 Kings 13:4)**
- **And the altar itself was ripped apart so that the fatty ashes were spilled out from the altar, according to the portent that the man of the true God had given by the word of Yehowah. (1 Kings 13:5)**
- **The king now answered and said to the man of the true God: Soften, please, the face of Yehowah your God and pray in my behalf that my hand may be restored to me. At this the man of the true God softened the face of Yehowah, so that the king's hand was restored to him, and it came to be as at first. (1 Kings 13:6)**
- **And the king went on to say to the man of the true God; Do come with me to the house and take sustenance, and let me give you a gift. (1 Kings 13:7)**

- But the man of the true God said to the king; If you gave me half of your house I would not come with you and eat bread or drink water in this place. (1 Kings 13:8)
- For that is the way he commanded me by the word of Yehowah, saying; You must not eat bread or drink water, and you must not return by the way that you went. (1 Kings 13:9)
- And he began to go by another way, and he did not return by the way by which he had come to Bethel. (1 Kings 13:10)
- And a certain old prophet was dwelling in Bethel, and his sons now came in and related to him all the work that the man of the true God had done that day in Bethel and the words that he had spoken to the king, and they went on relating them to their father. (1 Kings 13:11)
- Then their father spoke to them; Which way, then, did he go? So his sons showed him the way that the man of the true God that had come out of Judah had gone. (1 Kings 13:12)
- He now said to his sons; Saddle the ass for me. Accordingly they saddled the ass for him, and he went riding on it. (1 Kings 13:13)
- And he went following the man of the true God and got to find him sitting under the big tree. Then he said to him; Are you the man of the true God who has come out of Judah? to which he said, I am. (1 Kings 13:14)
- And he went on to say to him; Go with me to the house and eat bread. (1 Kings 13:15)
- But he said; I am not able to go back with you or to come in with you, and I may not eat bread or drink water with you in this place. (1 Kings 13:16)
- For it has been spoken to me by the word of Yehowah; You must not eat bread or drink water there. You must not go back again by the way by which you went. (1 Kings 13:17)
- At this he said to him; I too am a prophet like you, and an angel himself spoke to me by the word of Yehowah, saying; Have him come back with you to your house that he may eat bread and

drink water. (He deceived him.) (1 Kings 13:18)

- So he went back with him that he might eat bread in his house and drink water. (1 Kings 13:19)
- And it came about, while they were sitting at the table, that the word of Yehowah came to the prophet that had brought him back. (1 Kings 13:20)
- And he began to call out to the man of the true God that had come out of Judah, saying; This is what Yehowah has said; For the reason that you rebelled against the order of Yehowah and did not keep the commandment with which Yehowah your God commanded you. (1 Kings 13:21)
- But you went back that you might eat bread and drink water in the place about which he spoke to you; Do not eat bread or drink water, your dead body will not come into the burial place of your forefathers. (1 Kings 13:22)
- And it came about after his eating bread and after his drinking that he at once saddled for him the ass, that is, for the prophet whom he had brought back. (1 Kings 13:23)
- And he got on his way. Later a lion found him on the road and put him to death, and his dead body came to be thrown onto the road. And the ass was standing beside it, and the lion was standing beside the dead body. (1 Kings 13:24)
- And here there were men passing by, so that they got to see the dead body thrown onto the road and the lion standing beside the dead body. Then they came in and spoke of it in the city in which the old prophet was dwelling. (1 Kings 13:25)
- When the prophet that had brought him back from the way heard of it, he immediately said; It is the man of the true God that rebelled against the order of Yehowah, and so Yehowah gave him to the lion, that he might crush him and put him to death, according to the word of Yehowah that he spoke to him. (1 Kings 13:26)
- And he went on to speak to his sons, saying; Saddle the ass for me. So they saddled it. (1 Kings 13:27)

- Then he got on his way and found the dead body of him thrown onto the road with the ass and the lion standing beside the dead body. The lion had not eaten the dead body, nor had it crushed the ass. (**1 Kings 13:28**)
- And the prophet proceeded to lift up the dead body of the man of the true God and to deposit him upon the ass and to bring him back. Thus he came into the city of the old prophet to bewail and bury him. (**1 Kings 13:29**)
- Accordingly he deposited his dead body in his own burial place, and they kept wailing over him; Too bad, my brother! (**1 Kings 13:30**)
- And it came about after his burying him that he went on to say to his sons; When I die you must bury me in the burial place in which the man of the true God is buried. Beside his bones deposit my own bones. (**1 Kings 13:31**)
- For without fail the word that he called out by the word of Yehowah against the altar that is in **Bethel** and against all the houses of the high places that are in the cities of Samaria will take place. (**1 Kings 13:32**)
- King Abijah of Judah temporarily wrested **Bethel** and other towns from the control of the northern kingdom
- And Abijah kept chasing after Jeroboam and got to capture cities from him, **Bethel** and its dependent towns, and Jeshanah and its dependent towns, and Ephraim and its dependent towns. (**2 Chronicles 13:19**)
- And Jeroboam did not retain any more power in the days of Abijah, but Yehowah dealt him a blow, so that he died. (**2 Chronicles 13:20**)
- But it appears that **Bethel** had been restored to the northern kingdom at least by the time of King Baasha of Israel, since he endeavored to fortify Ramah, considerably to the South of **Bethel**.
- So Baasha the king of Israel came up against Judah and began to build Ramah, to allow no one to go out or come in to Asa the king of Judah. (**1 Kings 15:17**)

- In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha the king of Israel came up against Judah and began to build Ramah, so as not to allow anyone to go out or come in to Asa the king of Judah. (**2 Chronicles 16:1**)
- Even though King Jehu later eradicated Baal worship from Israel, the golden calves continued undisturbed at Dan and **Bethel**.
- Thus Jehu annihilated Baal out of Israel. (**2 Kings 10:28**)
- It was only the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he caused Israel to sin, that Jehu did not turn aside from following them, that is, the golden calves of which one was in **Bethel** and one in Dan. (**2 Kings 10:29**)
- Despite the prevalence of false worship there, the record shows **Bethel** as the location of a group of prophets in the time of Elijah and Elisha. Bethel was also the home of the group of jeering boys who mocked Elisha, this costing many of them their lives as a result of divine execution. (**2 Kings 2:1-3,23,24**)
- The prophets Amos and Hosea, in the late ninth and **Mid-Eighth Centuries B.C.E**, proclaimed God's condemnation of the religious corruption centered at **Bethel**. Although Hosea makes direct mention of **Bethel**, meaning **House of God**, only when recalling God's revelation of himself to faithful Jacob there.
- And he kept contending with an angel and gradually prevailed. He wept, that he might implore favor for himself. At **Bethel** He got to find him, and there He began talking with us. (**Hosea 12:4**)
- He evidently employs the name **Beth-aven**, meaning **House of Hurtfulness, Something Hurtful**, as applying to that city and the effect of its false religious practices.
- Although you are committing fornication, O Israel, let not Judah become guilty, and do not you people come to Gilgal, **neither go up to Beth-aven nor swear** As Yehowah is alive! (**Hosea 4:15**)
- Blow a horn in Gibeah, a trumpet in Ramah! Shout a war cry at **Beth-aven**, after you, O Benjamin! (**Hosea 5:8**)
- He warns that its calf idol served by foreign-god priests will come to be a cause for mourning to idolatrous Israel, its high places will be

annihilated, and thorns and thistles will cover its altars, while the people, faced with exile in Assyria, cry out to the mountains; Cover us! and to the hills; Fall over us!

- For the calf idol of **Beth-aven** the residents of Samaria will get frightened, for over it its people will certainly mourn, as well as its foreign-god priests who used to be joyful over it, on account of its glory, because it will have gone into exile away from it. (**Hosea 10:5**)
- Even it, someone will bring to Assyria itself as a gift to a great king. Shame is what Ephraim himself will get, and Israel will be ashamed of its counsel. (**Hosea 10:6**)
- Samaria and her king will certainly be silenced, like a snapped-off twig on the surface of waters. (**Hosea 10:7**)
- And the high places of **Beth-aven**, the sin of Israel, will actually be annihilated. Thorns and thistles themselves will come up upon their altars. And people will in fact say to the mountains, Cover us! and to the hills, Fall over us! (**Hosea 10:8**)
- Then they will start to say to the mountains; Fall over us! And to the hills; Cover us over! (**Luke 23:30**)
- And they keep saying to the mountains and to the rock-masses: Fall over us and hide us from the face of the One seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. (**Revelation 6:16**)
- The prophet Amos spoke in similar vein, showing that, no matter how frequent the sacrifices offered by the people at **Bethel's** altars, their pious pilgrimages to that place only constituted the commission of transgression, and warning that Yehowah's burning anger would blaze against them inextinguishably.
- For, in the day of my holding an accounting for the revolts of Israel against him, I will also hold an accounting against the altars of **Bethel**, and the horns of the altar will certainly be cut off and must fall to the earth. (**Amos 3:14**)
- Come, you people, to **Bethel** and commit transgression. At Gilgal be frequent in committing transgression, and bring your sacrifices in the morning, on the third day, your tenth parts. (**Amos 4:4**)

- And do not search for **Bethel**, and to Gilgal you must not come, and to Beer-sheba you must not pass over, because Gilgal itself will without fail go into exile, and as regards **Bethel**, it will become something uncanny. (**Amos 5:5**)
- Search for Yehowah, and keep living, that he may not become operative just like fire, O house of Joseph, and it may not actually devour, and **Bethel** may not be with no one to extinguish it. (**Amos 5:6**)
- Angered at this prophesying done by Amos right in **Bethel**, the apostate priest Amaziah accused Amos of seditious talk and ordered him to go back to Judah where he came from and there do his prophesying. But at **Bethel** you must no longer do any further prophesying, for it is the sanctuary of a king and it is the house of a kingdom.
- And Amaziah the priest of **Bethel** proceeded to send to Jeroboam the king of Israel, saying; Amos has conspired against you right inside the house of Israel. The land is not able to put up with all his words. (**Amos 7:10**)
- For this is what Amos has said; By the sword Jeroboam will die, and as regards Israel, it will without fail go into exile from its own ground. (**Amos 7:11**)
- And Amaziah proceeded to say to Amos; O visionary, go, run your way off to the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and there you may prophesy. (**Amos 7:12**)
- But at **Bethel** you must no longer do any further prophesying, for it is the sanctuary of a king and it is the house of a kingdom. (**Amos 7:13**)
- **Bethel** continued as an idolatrous sanctuary till the fall of the northern kingdom to Assyria in **740 B.C.E.** Thus Jeremiah, over a century later, could refer to it as a warning example to those trusting in false gods to their eventual shame.
- And the Moabites will have to be ashamed of Chemosh, just as those of the house of Israel have become ashamed of **Bethel** their confidence. (**Jeremiah 48:13**)

- Even thereafter **Bethel** continued as a religious center, for the king of Assyria sent one of the exiled priests back to Israel to teach the lion-plagued people the religion of the God of the land, and this priest settled in **Bethel**, teaching the people as to how they ought to fear Yehowah.
- The results clearly indicate that he was a priest of the golden calf, since it was of Yehowah that they became fearers, but it was of their own gods that they proved to be worshipers, and things continued on the same false and idolatrous basis initiated by Jeroboam.
- And it came about at the start of their dwelling there that they did not fear Yehowah. Therefore Yehowah sent lions among them, and they came to be killers among them. (**2 Kings 17:25**)
- At that the king of Assyria commanded, saying; Have one of the priests go there whom you led into exile from there, that he may go and dwell there and teach them the religion of the God of the land. (**2 Kings 17:27**)
- Accordingly one of the priests whom they had led into exile from Samaria came and began dwelling in **Bethel**, and he came to be a teacher of them as to how they ought to fear Yehowah. (**2 Kings 17:28**)
- However, each different nation came to be a maker of its own god, which they then deposited in the house of the high places that the Samaritans had made, each different nation, in their cities where they were dwelling. (**2 Kings 17:29**)
- And the men of Babylon, for their part, made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth, for their part, made Nergal, and the men of Hamath, for their part, made Ashima. (**2 Kings 17:30**)
- As for the Avvites, they made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites were burning their sons in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech the gods of Sepharvaim. (**2 Kings 17:31**)
- And they came to be fearers of Yehowah and went making for themselves from the people in general priests of high places, and they came to be functionaries for them in the house of the high places. (**2 Kings 17:32**)

- It was of Yehowah that they became fearers, but it was of their own gods that they proved to be worshipers, according to the religion of the nations from among whom they had led them into exile. (**2 Kings 17:33**)
- In fulfillment of Hosea's prophecy the golden calf of **Bethel** had been carried off to the king of Assyria.
- For the calf idol of Beth-aven the residents of Samaria will get frightened, for over it its people will certainly mourn, as well as its foreign-god priests who used to be joyful over it, on account of its glory, because it will have gone into exile away from it. (**Hosea 10:5**)
- Even it, someone will bring to Assyria itself as a gift to a great king. Shame is what Ephraim himself will get, and Israel will be ashamed of its counsel. (**Hosea 10:6**)
- But the original altar of Jeroboam was still there in the time of King Josiah of Judah. During or following Josiah's 18th year of rule **642 B.C.E.**, he extended his purge of false religion up into **Bethel** and also to the cities of Samaria.
- Josiah destroyed the site of idolatrous worship in **Bethel**, first burning the bones from nearby tombs on the altar, thereby desecrating it in fulfillment of the prophecy given by the man of the true God over three centuries earlier. The only grave spared was that of the man of the true God, in that way sparing also the bones of the old prophet occupying the same grave.
- And it came about in the eighteenth year of King Josiah that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah the son of Meshullam the secretary to the house of Yehowah, saying; (**2 Kings 22:3**)
- And also the altar that was in **Bethel**, the high place that Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin, had made, even that altar and the high place he pulled down. Then he burned the high place, he ground it to dust and burned the sacred pole. (**2 Kings 23:15**)
- When Josiah turned, he got to see the burial places that were there in the mountain. So he sent and took the bones from the burial places and burned them upon the altar, that he might make it unfit for worship, according to Yehowah's word that the

man of the true God had proclaimed, who proclaimed these things. (2 Kings 23:16)

- Then he said; What is the gravestone over there that I am seeing? At this the men of the city said to him; It is the burial place of the man of the true God that came from Judah and proceeded to proclaim these things that you have done against the altar of Bethel. (2 Kings 23:17)
- So he said; Let him rest. Do not let anyone disturb his bones. Consequently they let his bones alone along with the bones of the prophet that had come from Samaria. (2 Kings 23:18)
- Then he called out against the altar by the word of Yehowah and said, O altar, altar, this is what Yehowah has said; Look! A son born to the house of David, whose name is Josiah! And he will certainly sacrifice upon you the priests of the high places that are making sacrificial smoke upon you, and men's bones he will burn upon you. (1 Kings 13:2)
- And the prophet proceeded to lift up the dead body of the man of the true God and to deposit him upon the ass and to bring him back. Thus he came into the city of the old prophet to bewail and bury him. (1 Kings 13:29)
- Accordingly he deposited his dead body in his own burial place, and they kept wailing over him, Too bad, my brother! (1 Kings 13:30)
- And it came about after his burying him that he went on to say to his sons; When I die you must bury me in the burial place in which the man of the true God is buried. Beside his bones deposit my own bones. (1 Kings 13:31)
- For without fail the word that he called out by the word of Yehowah against the altar that is in Bethel and against all the houses of the high places that are in the cities of Samaria will take place. (1 Kings 13:32)
- Men of Bethel were among the Israelites returning from exile in Babylon.
- And these were the sons of the jurisdictional district that went up out of the captivity of the exiled people whom

Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had taken into exile at Babylon and who later returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each one to his own city. (Ezra 2:1)

- **The men of Bethel and Ai, two hundred and twenty-three. (Ezra 2:28)**
- **The men of Bethel and Ai, a hundred and twenty-three. (Nehemiah 7:32)**
- **And Bethel was resettled by Benjamites.**
- **And the sons of Benjamin were from Geba, Michmash and Aija and Bethel and its dependent towns. (Nehemiah 11:31)**
- **During the Maccabean period it was fortified by Syrian General Bacchides circa 160 B.C.E, and was captured later by Roman General Vespasian prior to his becoming emperor of Rome.**