

# Bethel

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- Bethel means “house of God.” (“El” one of the several names for God.)
  - Location:
    - 10½ miles north of Jerusalem
    - Between the site of ancient Ai on the east and Mizpah on the west.
    - Gibeath, one time capital of Saul, is located on a hill across the valley to the southwest.
    - Ramah, the home of Samuel, is on a hill further south.
    - Shiloh and Shechem are on the same road north of Bethel.
    - Located at the junction of the tribes of Benjamin and Ephraim.
    - Located on an important east-west route going from the Mediterranean Sea to Jericho and to the area beyond Jordan.
  - Bethel is mentioned 72 times in the Old Testament
  - With the singular exception of Jerusalem, Bethel is mentioned more times in the Old Testament than any other city.
  - Bethel is not mentioned in the New Testament.
  - Abraham first visited Bethel after leaving Ur of the Chaldees. He built an altar here and prayed unto the Lord. **Genesis 12:8**
  - Both Abraham and Lot returned to Bethel after leaving Egypt. This was before they separated and Lot went to Sodom. **Genesis 13:3-12**
  - It was here that Jacob dreamed of the ladder reaching up to Heaven. **Genesis 28:11-19**
  - Hosea referred to the event in **Hosea 12:4** — “(Jacob) met God at Bethel and there spoke with him.”
  - Bethel was formerly called Luz. **Genesis 28:19; Judges 1:23**
  - Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died at Bethel. **Genesis 35:8**

- Bethel was allotted to the tribe of Benjamin who failed to take it from the inhabitants. Later it was occupied by the sons of Joseph. **Judges 1:22-26**
- Samuel judged the Israelites from Bethel as well as from (Gilgal and Mizpeh). **1 Samuel 7:16**
- Jeroboam, scheming to keep the allegiance of the people, set up a golden calf at Bethel and Dan for them to worship. **1 Kings 12:26-29**
- Jeroboam's hand withered. **1 Kings 12:25 - 13:10**
- The young prophet was deceived by the older prophet and was killed by a lion. **1 Kings 13:11-34**
- Josiah removed these idols and restored the true worship of Jehovah. **2 Kings 23:15-20**
- Elijah and Elisha later passed through Bethel. Later, while here, Elisha was mocked by youths who in turned were attacked by bears. **2 Kings 2:1-3; 2:23-24**
- Bethel was again re-inhabited after the people returned from Babylonian captivity. **Ezra 2:28; Nehemiah 11:3**. Ezra 2:28 reports that 223 men of Bethel and Ai returned under Zerubbabel.
- The prophets denounced Bethel for its idolatry. **Jeremiah 48:13; Hosea 10:15; Amos 3:14; 4:4-6; 5:5-6**

