

Hey, It's Good to be Back Home Again

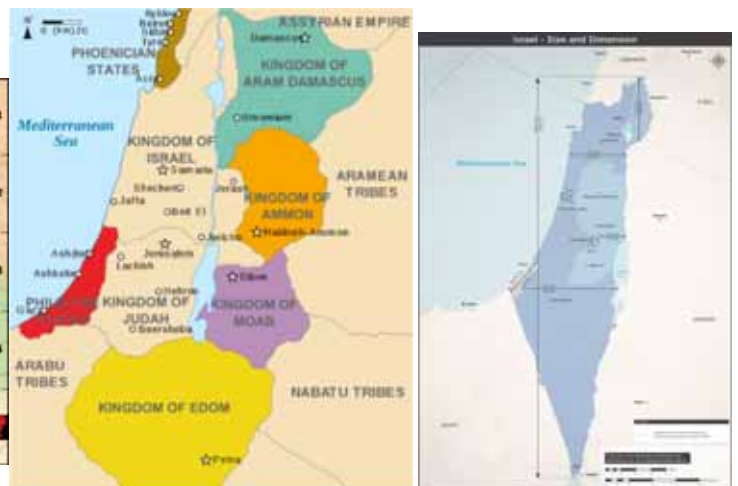
♪ *There's a storm across the valley clouds are rollin' in the afternoon is heavy on your shoulders. There's a truck out on the four lane a mile or more away the whinin' of his wheels just makes it colder. He's an hour away from ridin' on your prayers up in the sky and ten days on the road are barely gone. There's a fire softly burning; supper's on the but it's the light in your eyes that makes him warm.*

♪ *Hey, it's good to be back home again. Sometimes this old farm feels like a long lost friend Yes, 'n, hey it's good to be back home again* ♪

After all the news to tell him: how's you spend your time? And what's the latest thing the neighbors say and your mother called last Friday; 'Sunshine' made her cry and you felt the baby move just yesterday. Hey, it's good...

And oh, the time that I can lay this tired old body down and feel your fingers feather soft up-on me the kisses that I live for, the love that lights my way the happiness that livin' with you brings me. It's the sweetest thing I know of, just spending time with you it's the little things that make a house a home; like a fire softly burning and supper on the stove & the light in your eyes that makes me warm ♪ (<https://youtube.com/watch?v=xiU6vNrKSt0>) {John Denver 1974}

Jacob has withstood much: His twin brother *Esau* vowed to kill him at the first opportunity; his uncle and father-in-law Laban tricked him again and again; he built a family over the course of twenty difficult years; an all night until dawn wrestling match with the *Angel of Adonai*; and *Esau* marched towards him accompanied by four hundred men as *Jacob* and his family advanced toward the Land of Israel. Nevertheless, *Jacob* has survived. Despite all the years and the obstacles placed in his path, and despite the threats on his life, *Jacob* finally returns to Canaan: “¹⁸ So Jacob arrived in shalom to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped right in front of the city. ¹⁹ He purchased the portion of the field there where he had pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for 100 pieces of money. ²⁰ There he set up an altar, and he called it, *El is Israel's God*” (Gen. 33:18-20). The CJB and the NASB translate Gen. 33:18 as: “...Ya'akov arrived safely at the city of Shechem that is in the land of Canaan...” The KJV renders the text as: “And Jacob came to Shalem the city of Shechem that is in the land of Canaan...”



Jacob, like *Abraham*, makes *SHECHEM*, situated between Mount *Gerizim* to the south and Mount *Eval* to the north, his first encampment: “⁵ Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions that they had acquired, and the people that they acquired in Haran, and they left to go to the land of Canaan, and they entered the land of Canaan. ⁶ Abram passed through the land as far as the place of Shechem, as far as Moreh's big tree. (The Canaanites were in the land then)” (Gen. 12:5-6). Later, when the Children of Israel would reclaim the land, they would stand in this same place to hear *Adonai's* blessings and admonitions (See Deut. 11:29-30, 27:12-13; Joshua 8:30-35). It is interesting to note that throughout these verses, the geographical place is called the *city of SHECHEM*!

Even though *Jacob* has arrived in peace (although primarily emotional) to the city of *SHECHEM* that is in the land of Canaan, this is not his final destination. There are things he vowed to God that must be fulfilled: “²⁰ Then

*Jacob made a vow saying, “If God will be with me and watch over me on this way that I am going, and provide me food to eat and clothes to wear,²¹ and I return in shalom to my father’s house, then Adonai will be my God.²² So this stone which I set up as a memorial stone will become God’s House, and of everything You provide me I will definitely give a tenth of it to You” (Gen. 28:20-22). Scripture reminds us: “⁴It is better for you not to vow than to vow and not pay.⁵ Don’t let your mouth lead your flesh to sin, and don’t say before the messenger, “It was a mistake!” Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?⁶ Many dreams and many words are meaningless. Therefore, fear God!” (Eccl. 5:4-6). However, within the land his destination needs to be *Beth-El* (the *House of God*). But like many of us, Jacob stops short of his final destination, and peradventure, the tragedy of *Dinah* is the result. *Yaakov* returns to *Beth-El* only after *Adonai* commands him to go (Genesis 35:1.) The truth is that only in the House of God will *Yaakov* and his family finally feel safe. To me, the time has come for the Children of Jacob (*Benei Israel*) to acknowledge their indebtedness to *Adonai* in bringing them back to their homeland. We, who have been privileged to witness our people’s return to Israel, and have entered into the Land of Promise should do the same. When you finally get *home*, go all the way and defer not to pay your vows and promises to *Adonai*: “Well then, give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Luke 20:25).*