

A friend of mine highlighted to me some possible links between Rachel's death and her stealing the household gods and Jacob's curse. Jacob is a divine spokesperson in Genesis and so his words have weight. I wonder if Rachel did not put away the foreign gods when she came into God's presence at Bethel – that would be a possible cause of death. Maybe Jacob's curse and her not giving up the idols? I think my friend has made a really good observation not made in most commentaries ... thanks!

Genesis 29:17-20 Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." ... So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

Genesis 30:1 When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, "**Give me children, or I shall die!**" (Having children will cause her to die).

Genesis 31:32 Jacob answered and said to Laban, "**Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live.** In the presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours, and take it." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

Genesis 35:1-2,4 God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God ... 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.**" ... 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.

Genesis 35:19-20 **So Rachel died**, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem), and Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb.

I could only find two commentators who linked Rachel's stealing of the household gods with her death (Allen P. Ross; Matthew Henry). Henry's comment is listed below:

Yet perhaps he spoke too hastily and inconsiderately when he said, "Whoever had taken them, *let him not live;*" upon this he might reflect with some bitterness when, not long after, Rachel who had taken them died suddenly in travail. How just soever we think ourselves to be, it is best to forbear imprecations, lest they fall heavier than we imagine.

Source: Matthew Henry (Genesis 31:32)