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Genesis

Genesis is the book of beginnings. It is the story of how the world began. It tells how God created all things, including human beings. It describes God's care for and trouble with humans. Genesis also tells how God planned to deal with human sin and bring his blessings to the whole world. It is a series of stories about the people God chose to complete his purposes. Genesis is the first book of the Torah, a name meaning "instruction" or "law", which refers to the first five books of the Old Testament.

Genesis begins with the story of creation. It tells how God changed a mass of confusion into an orderly universe. First, he created three areas: water, sky and land. Then God filled each area with amazing creations, including human beings. In the second chapter, God is called the LORD God. And the story here is about God's purpose in creating human beings. He creates them to rule over and take care of his creation. The writer deals with God's relationship with humans and their relationship to the rest of creation.

But the humans would soon lose the ideal world God made for them to enjoy. They did not obey God. So they were forced to leave the paradise that God had made for them. And this changed the good relationship humans had with God.

Genesis describes how humans fell deeper and deeper into sin. They became so evil that God decided to destroy most of his creation with a flood. He chose one good man named Noah to protect from the

flood. God gave Noah a way to save his family as well as all forms of life. But even after the flood, people continued to do evil.

God provided a solution to this problem: a faithful couple named Abram (or later, Abraham) and Sarah. He chose them and their family to be his special people. He promised to give Abraham and his family their own land. But what is more important, God promised to bless all people through Abraham, his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob. This was how God planned to bring everyone back into a good relationship with himself.

Genesis continues with the story about Abraham's family. It tells how they ended up in Egypt as a part of God's plan. Jacob's son Joseph was the first of them to go there. He was taken to Egypt through a surprising series of events. Joseph had some amazing experiences in Egypt, which included great victories as well as painful problems. But through all of Joseph's suffering and success, God was faithful to him and his family. Joseph is an example of how God used Abraham's family to bless the whole world.

Throughout Genesis we see that God cares deeply for human beings. And he is faithful to his promises. We also see how God deals with human failure.

In the book of Genesis, God begins...

To create an orderly and beautiful world (1:1 – 2:3)

To have a relationship with humans (2:4-25)

To deal with human sin (3:1 – 11:32)

To bring his blessings to the whole world through one family (12:1 – 36:40)

To prepare his people to complete his plan by their experience in a new land (37:1 – 50:26)

The Beginning of the World

1 In the beginning, when God created the earth and sky,* ²the earth was without form and not yet useful for anything. Deep waters covered the earth, and darkness covered the water. God's Spirit[†] was moving like a storm over the surface of the water.

The First Day—Light

³Then God said, "Let there be light!" And light began to shine. ⁴He saw the light, and he knew that it was good. Then God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵He named the light "day" and the darkness "night".

There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the first day.

The Second Day—Sky

⁶Then God said, "Let there be a dome[‡] to separate the water above from the water below."⁷ So God made the dome and used it to separate the water. Some water stayed below the dome and some water was above it. ⁸God named that dome "sky".

There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the second day.

The Third Day—Dry Land and Plants

⁹Then God said, "Let the water under the sky come together in one place.

Then dry land will appear." And so it happened.[¶] ¹⁰God named the dry land "earth" and the water that had come together "seas". And God saw that this was good.

¹¹Then God said, "Let the earth produce all kinds of plants. Let there be plants that produce grain and trees that produce fruit containing seed." And so it happened. ¹²The earth produced plants. There were all kinds of plants that produce grain and all kinds of trees that produce fruit containing seeds. And God saw that this was good.

¹³There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the third day.

The Fourth Day—Sun, Moon and Stars

¹⁴Then God said, "Let there be lights on the surface of the sky to separate the day from the night. These lights will mark the beginning and end of days and years. And they will be used to mark the times for festivals.[§] ¹⁵Let these lights shine from the sky to give light to the earth." And so it happened.

¹⁶So God made two great lights. He made the stronger light to rule over the day. And he made the other light to rule over the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God put these lights in the sky to give light to the earth. ¹⁸He put them there to rule over the day and the night and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that this was good.

¹⁹There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the fourth day.

*1:1 Or "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

†1:2 *God's Spirit* Or "A wind from God".

‡1:6 *dome* Or "vault". The Hebrew word can refer to a piece of metal that has been hammered into the shape of a bowl.

¶1:9 The ancient Greek version and one of the Dead Sea Scrolls add these words: "The waters under the sky came together in their places. And the dry land appeared."

§1:14 *festivals* The Israelites used the sun and moon to decide when the months and years began. Many Israelite festivals and special meetings began at the time of the new moon or full moon.

The Fifth Day—Fish and Birds

²⁰ Then God said, “Let the waters be filled with huge numbers of living things. And let there be birds to fly in the sky over the earth.” ²¹ So God created the great creatures that live in the sea. He created all the different kinds of living things that swim around and fill the sea. And he created all kinds of birds. And God saw that this was good.

²² God blessed all the living things he had made. And he said to them, “Produce many young ones.” He told the living things in the sea, “Increase in number and fill the sea.” And he told the birds to increase in number on the earth.

²³ There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the fifth day.

The Sixth Day—Land Animals and Humans

²⁴ Then God said, “Let the earth produce all kinds of living things: tame animals, small creatures that crawl on the ground and wild animals of every kind.” And so it happened.

²⁵ God made all kinds of wild animals, tame animals and all the small creatures that crawl on the ground. And God saw that this was good.

²⁶ Then God said, “Now let us make humans** who will be like us.†† They will rule over all the fish, the birds and the tame animals. They will rule over all the large animals and small creatures that crawl on the ground.”

²⁷ So God created humans in his own image. He created them to be like himself.‡‡ He created both male and female.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Have many children who will also have many children. Fill the earth with people and take control of it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky. Rule over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

²⁹ God said, “I now give you every plant on earth that produces grain and every tree that produces fruit. They will be food for you. ³⁰ And I give all the green plants as food for all the other living, breathing things on earth. These plants will be food for the wild animals, the birds and the small creatures that crawl on the ground.” And so it happened.

³¹ God looked at everything he had made. And he saw that everything was very good.

There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the sixth day.

The Seventh Day—Rest

2 So God finished creating the sky, the earth and everything in them. ² God finished all the work he was doing, so on the seventh day he rested from his work. ³ God blessed the seventh day and made it a holy day. He made it special because on that day he rested from all the work he did while creating the world.

The First Man and the Garden of Eden

⁴ This is the story about the creation of the earth and the sky. When the LORD God made the earth and sky, ⁵ there were no plants growing in the fields. No crops of grain or even wild plants were growing. That’s because the LORD God had

**1:26 *humans* The Hebrew word means “man”, “people” or the name “Adam”. It is like the word meaning “earth” or “red clay”.

††1:26 *Now let us make humans ... like us* Or “Now let us make humans in our image and in our likeness.”

‡‡1:27 *So God created humans ... himself* Or “So God created them in his image. In the image of God he created them.” Compare Gen. 5:1,3.

not yet made it rain on the earth, and there were no people to work the soil. ⁶So water^f came up from the earth and spread over the ground.

⁷Then the LORD God took dust from the ground and formed a man^{§§} from it. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nose, and the man became a living being. ⁸The LORD God planted a garden in the east, in a place named Eden. And that is where he put the man he had made. ⁹Then the LORD God caused all kinds of trees to grow in the garden. The trees were beautiful and produced tasty fruit. In the middle of the garden, he placed two special trees. One produced fruit that gives life to people. The other produced fruit that gives people knowledge about good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed from Eden and watered the garden. Then this river divided and became four rivers. ¹¹The name of the first river is Pishon. It flows all the way through the land of Havilah. There is gold in Havilah, ¹²and the gold is pure. Havilah also produces a valuable sap used for perfume. And the precious stone carnelian is found there. ¹³The name of the second river is Gihon. This river flows through the land of Cush.* ¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris. It flows east of Assyria.† The fourth river is called Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God put the man in the Garden of Eden to work in it and take care of it. ¹⁶The LORD God gave him this command: "You may eat the fruit from any tree in the garden except one. ¹⁷You must not eat any fruit from the

tree that gives knowledge about good and evil. When you eat fruit from that tree, on that day you will certainly die!"

A Companion for the First Man

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make the companion he needs, one just right for him."

¹⁹The LORD God used dust from the ground to form all the animals on the earth and all the birds in the sky. He brought them all to the man to see what name he would give them. And the man gave every living thing its name. ²⁰He gave names to all the tame animals, to all the birds in the sky and to all the wild animals. But none of these was a companion that was right for the man. ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to sleep very deeply. Then he took one of the ribs from the man's body and closed the opening. ²²The LORD God used the rib from the man to make a woman. Then he brought the woman to the man. ²³And the man said,

"Finally! One like me, with bones from my bones and a body from my body. She came out of man, so I will call her 'woman'."

²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins together with his wife. In this way the two people become one.

²⁵At that time the man and his wife were both naked, but they were not ashamed.

^f2:6 *water* Or "a mist".

^{§§}2:7 *man* The Hebrew word means "man", "people" or the name "Adam". It is like the Hebrew word meaning "earth" or "red clay".

*2:13 *Cush* This usually means an area in northern Africa, but here, it clearly means an area in or near Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). Cush could be a different spelling for Kish, which was in the same general area as modern Iran.

†2:14 *east of Assyria* Or "east of the city of Asshur".

The Beginning of Sin

3 The snake was very clever and sly, more than all the other animals the LORD God had made. The snake asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

²The woman answered, “God said we may eat fruit from all the trees in the garden, ³except one. He said, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden. You must not even touch that tree, or else you will die.’”

⁴But the snake said to the woman, “No, you will not die. ⁵God knows that when you eat the fruit from that tree you will learn about good and evil, and then you will be like God!”

⁶The woman could see that the tree was beautiful. And the fruit looked so good to eat. She also liked the idea that it would make her wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Her husband was there with her. She also gave him some of the fruit, and he ate it too.

⁷Then it was as if their eyes opened, and they saw things differently. They saw that they were naked. So they sewed some fig leaves together and tied them around their waists.

⁸That day, the wind began to blow, and they could hear the LORD God moving through the garden. The man and his wife heard him coming, so they hid among the trees. ⁹The LORD God called to the man and said, “Where are you?”

¹⁰The man said, “I heard you in the garden. And I was afraid because I was naked. So I hid.”

¹¹God said to the man, “Where did you get the idea that you were naked? Did you eat the fruit I told you not to eat?”

¹²The man said, “The woman you put here with me gave me some of the fruit from that tree, so I ate it.”

¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What have you done?”

She said, “The snake tricked me, so I ate the fruit.”

¹⁴The LORD God said to the snake, “To punish you for what you did, I put a curse on you.

Among all the animals, tame or wild, I will punish only you in this way. You must crawl on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life.

¹⁵I will cause you and the woman to hate each other.

Your offspring and hers will be enemies. Her offspring will strike at your head, and you will strike at his heel.”

¹⁶Then God said to the woman, “When you become pregnant, you will still have to work hard.[‡]

And along with the troublesome work, you will have many children to take care of.[¶]

You will want to rule over[§] your husband, but he will keep you under control.”**

¹⁷Then God said to the man, “I told you not to eat the fruit from that tree,

but you listened to your wife and ate it.

[‡]3:16 *When ... work hard* Or “I will cause you to have more trouble when you are pregnant.”

[¶]3:16 *And along ... take care of* Or “And when you give birth to children, you will suffer pain.”

[§]3:16 *want to rule over* Or “have a strong desire for”.

**3:16 *You will want ... control* Compare the last two lines in Gen. 4:7, where these same words are found.

So, because of what you did, I will put a curse on the ground.

To get food from it, you will have to work hard all your life.

¹⁸The ground will grow thorns and weeds,

but for food you will have to grow plants in the fields.^{††}

¹⁹You will have to work hard for your food,

and sweat will drip from your face.

You will work until the day you die,

and then you will become dust again.

I made you from the dust,

and when you die, you will become dust again.”

²⁰The man named his wife Eve.^{‡‡} He gave her this name because she would be the mother of everyone who ever lived.

²¹The LORD God used animal skins to make clothes for the man and his wife to wear.

²²The LORD God said, “Look, these humans have become like us. Now they know about good and evil. We must not let them take any fruit from the tree of life, or they will live forever.”

²³So the LORD God forced them out of the Garden of Eden to work the soil the man was made from. ²⁴After sending them out, God put winged creatures and a flaming sword at the entrance to the garden to protect it. The sword turned around and around, guarding the way to the tree of life.

The First Family

4 Adam had sex with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and had a son.

Eve said, “With the LORD’s help, I have made a child!” So she named him Cain.^{¶¶}

²Later, Eve had another son, Cain’s brother Abel. Abel became a shepherd, and Cain became a farmer.

The First Murder

³Some time passed, and Cain brought some of the food he had grown to offer as a gift to the LORD. ⁴Abel also brought a gift. He chose some of his best sheep and offered their best parts. The LORD accepted Abel and the gift he offered, ⁵but he did not accept Cain or his gift. This made Cain very angry, and his face showed how he felt.

⁶The LORD asked Cain, “Why are you angry? Why do you look so unhappy?”

⁷You know that if you do what is right, I will accept you. But when you fail to do what is right, you are in danger. Sin is always there ready to attack you.^{§§} Sin wants to rule over you, but you must keep it under control.”

⁸Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the fields.”* When they were in the fields, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁹Later, the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

Cain answered, “I don’t know. I am not responsible for my brother, am I?”

^{10–11}Then the LORD said, “What have you done? Your brother’s blood dripped from your hands and soaked the ground. Listen! His blood is crying out from the ground, asking me for justice. So now I put a curse on you that will force you to stop farming the land. ¹²If you try to

^{††}3:18 See Gen. 1:29-30.

^{‡‡}3:20 *Eve* This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “life”.

^{¶¶}4:1 *Cain* This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “made” or “got”.

^{§§}4:7 *ready to attack you* Or “like a demon waiting for you”.

*4:8 *Let’s go ... fields* This sentence is found in the ancient versions and in one Hebrew copy, but it is not in the traditional Hebrew text.

farm the land, it will not produce crops for you. So now you will not have a home. You will wander from place to place.”

¹³ Then Cain said to the LORD, “This punishment is too much for me! ¹⁴ You are forcing me to leave the land, and I will not be able to be near you or have a home! Now I must wander from place to place, and anyone I meet could kill me.”

¹⁵ But the LORD said, “I do not want that to happen. So here’s my warning to everyone: ‘If you kill Cain, seven people in your family will die to pay for it.’” The LORD gave this warning to protect Cain so that no one he met would kill him.

Cain’s Family

¹⁶ Cain went away from the LORD and lived in the land of Nod[†] east of Eden.

¹⁷ Cain had sex with his wife, and she became pregnant and had a son named Enoch. Cain built a city and gave the city the same name as his son Enoch.

¹⁸ Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad had a son named Mehujael. Mehujael had a son named Methushael. And Methushael had a son named Lamech.

¹⁹ Lamech married two women. One wife was named Adah, and the other was named Zillah. ²⁰ Adah had a son named Jabal. Jabal was the first person to live in tents and raise cattle. ²¹ Jabal had a brother named Jubal. Jubal was the first person to play the harp and flute. ²² Zillah had a son named Tubal-Cain. Tubal-Cain was the first person to make tools from bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-Cain was named Naamah.

²³ Lamech said to his wives:

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice!
You wives of Lamech, listen to me.
I will kill any man who hurts me.
I will kill even a young man who hits me.
²⁴ Do you remember the warning,
‘Whoever kills Cain will lose seven of his
people to pay for it’?
Well, whoever kills me will lose
seventy-seven of his people!”

Adam and Eve Have a New Son

²⁵ Adam and his wife Eve had another son. Eve named him Seth.[‡] She said, “God has given me another son. Cain killed Abel, but now I have Seth.” ²⁶ Seth also had a son. He named him Enosh. At that time people began worshipping the LORD.[†]

Adam’s Descendants

5 This is the record of Adam’s descendants. When God created people, he made them like himself. ² He created them male and female. And when he made them, he blessed them and called them “humans”.[§]

³ When Adam was 130 years old, he had a son. This son was just like Adam, an image of his father. Adam named him Seth. ⁴ After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ⁵ Adam was 930 years old when he died.

⁶ When Seth was 105 years old, he had a son named Enosh. ⁷ After Enosh was born, Seth lived 807 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ⁸ Seth was 912 years old when he died.

⁹ When Enosh was 90 years old, he had a son named Kenan. ¹⁰ After Kenan

[†]4:16 *Nod* This name means “wandering”.

[‡]4:25 *Seth* This is like a Hebrew word meaning “to give”.

[¶]4:26 *people ... the LORD* Literally, “people began calling on the name YAHWEH”.

[§]5:2 *humans* The Hebrew word means “Adam”, “mankind” or “people”. See 2:7,21-23.

was born, Enosh lived 815 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ¹¹ Enosh was 905 years old when he died.

¹² When Kenan was 70 years old, he had a son named Mahalalel. ¹³ After Mahalalel was born, Kenan lived 840 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Kenan was 910 years old when he died.

¹⁵ When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he had a son named Jared. ¹⁶ After Jared was born, Mahalalel lived 830 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷ Mahalalel was 895 years old when he died.

¹⁸ When Jared was 162 years old, he had a son named Enoch. ¹⁹ After Enoch was born, Jared lived 800 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ²⁰ Jared was 962 years old when he died.

²¹ When Enoch was 65 years old, he had a son named Methuselah. ²² After Methuselah was born, Enoch walked with God for 300 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ²³ Enoch lived 365 years. ²⁴ One day Enoch was walking with God, and suddenly, he was gone because God took him away.

²⁵ When Methuselah was 187 years old, he had a son named Lamech. ²⁶ After Lamech was born, Methuselah lived 782 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ²⁷ Methuselah was 969 years old when he died.

²⁸ When Lamech was 182 years old, he had a son. ²⁹ Lamech named his son Noah. ^{**} Lamech said, “He will bring us the comfort we need because we work so hard to farm this land that the LORD has put under a curse.”

³⁰ After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ³¹ Lamech was 777 years old when he died.

³² After Noah was 500 years old, he had three sons. They were Shem, Ham and Japheth.

God Sees All People Become Evil

6 The number of people on earth began to increase greatly as they had more and more children. ² The sons of God^{††} saw how beautiful the daughters of the humans were. So they chose the women they wanted and took them to be their wives. ³ Then the LORD said, “The spirit I give people^{‡‡} will not keep them alive forever. They are humans, so they will die. They will live only 120 years.”^{¶¶}

⁴ The sons of God had children with the human women they desired. The children became the powerful warriors who have been famous since that time so long ago. They were the men with amazing power^{§§} who lived in the land at that time and also later.

⁵ The LORD saw that the people on earth were doing more and more evil things. In fact, every single thought that entered their minds was evil. ⁶ The LORD was sorry he had made them. He

^{**}5:29 **Noah** This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “to rest” or “comfort”.

^{††}6:2 **sons of God** Or “heavenly beings”. It might also mean “kings”. See Job 1:6; 2:1, where it seems to mean “angels”.

^{‡‡}6:3 **spirit I give people** Or “breath of life I give people”. Literally, “My spirit/breath”. See 2:7.

^{¶¶}6:3 **120 years** Or “120 more years”. This would be the number of years left until the time of the flood.

^{§§}6:4 **men with amazing power** Literally, “Nephilim”. Later, the Nephilim were a famous family whose men were tall and powerful fighters. See Num. 13:32-33.

was deeply upset. ⁷ So the LORD said, “I will destroy these human beings I created. I will destroy them all, together with the large animals, the small creatures that crawl on the ground and the birds in the air. I am sorry I made them.”

⁸ But the LORD was pleased with one man named Noah.

Noah and the Great Flood

⁹ This is the record of Noah and his family. Noah always did what was right. In fact, he was the only man of his time who was completely free from blame. He lived as a friend of God. ¹⁰ Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

¹¹ When God looked at the earth, he saw how people had ruined it. People everywhere were doing wrong to each other. ¹² God could see how evil the earth was now. All the people had lost their way.

¹³ So God said to Noah, “Everywhere on earth people are fighting and killing each other. That’s why I have decided to destroy them all. And I will destroy the earth too. ¹⁴ I want you to build a huge boat* from cypress wood. Cover it with tar inside and out, and divide the space inside into rooms.

¹⁵ “Make the boat 133 metres† long, 22 metres wide and 13 metres high. ¹⁶ Make a roof for it, but leave an opening of 45 centimetres between the roof and the sides. Put a door in one side of the boat. And make three floors inside: a top deck, a middle deck and a lower deck.”

¹⁷ Then God said, “I am ready to flood the earth with water that will destroy everything that breathes. Everything on earth will die, ¹⁸ but I make this promise to you: When you go into the boat with

your wife, your sons and their wives, you will be safe. ¹⁹ You will take into the boat with you a male and a female of every living thing on earth to keep them alive. ²⁰ A pair of every kind of bird and of every kind of animal, large and small, will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹ Also, you will take every kind of food into the boat with you. You will keep it there for you and the animals to eat.”

²² Noah was careful to do everything that God told him to do.

The Flood Begins

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, “I have seen that you are different from the other people living now. You are the only person who does what is right. So now gather your family, and go inside the boat. ² Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, one female for each male. And take one pair of every kind of the other animals on the earth. ³ And take seven pairs of every kind of bird. Each pair will have a male and a female. Take with you all these different kinds of animals and birds so that they will continue to live throughout the earth after the flood. ⁴ Seven days from now, I will cause rain to fall on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. I will use this flood to destroy every living thing I have made.”

⁵ Noah did everything the LORD told him to do.

⁶ Noah was 600 years old when the water flooded the earth. ⁷ He went into the boat to escape the flood. His wife and his sons and their wives all went inside with him. ⁸⁻⁹ All kinds of animals, clean and unclean, and all kinds of birds and small creatures that crawl on the ground

*6:14 *boat* Or “ark”. It was the shape of a rectangular box, built only for floating, not for sailing.

†6:15 *133 metres* Literally, “300 cubits”.

went into the boat with Noah. They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded. ¹⁰Seven days later, the flood began to cover the earth.

¹¹⁻¹²That is when the underground springs broke through the earth, and water flowed out everywhere. The windows[‡] of the sky opened up and rain poured down.

The rain fell on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. This all began on the seventeenth day of the second month when Noah was 600 years old. ¹³That was the day Noah entered the boat with his wife and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth and their wives. ¹⁴With them were all kinds of wild animals, tame animals and all the small creatures that crawl on the ground and all kinds of birds. ¹⁵⁻¹⁶So all kinds of living, breathing things went into the boat with Noah. They entered in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded. Then the LORD closed the door behind Noah.

¹⁷The next 40 days, water flooded the earth. As the water rose, it lifted the boat off the ground. ¹⁸The water continued to rise, and the boat floated on top of the water. ¹⁹The water rose so much that even the highest mountains were covered. ²⁰The water rose until it was about seven metres[¶] above the highest mountain.

²¹Every living thing on earth died. All the birds, all the tame and wild animals and all the other living things that fill the earth died. And every human died. ²²Yes, everything that breathed and lived on dry land died. ²³In this way

God destroyed every living thing on the earth. He destroyed the people, the large animals, the small creatures that crawl on the ground and the birds in the air. All that was left was Noah and what was with him in the boat. ²⁴And the water covered the earth for 150 days.

The Flood Ends

8 But God did not forget about Noah and the animals with him in the boat. God made a wind blow over the earth, and the water began going down.

²Rain stopped pouring from the windows[§] of the sky, and the underground springs stopped flowing. ³The water that covered the earth continued to go down. After 150 days, the water had gone down enough ⁴for the boat to touch land. On the seventeenth day of the seventh month, it came to rest on one of the mountains of Ararat. ⁵The water continued to go down. By the first day of the tenth month, Noah could see the tops of the distant mountains.

⁶Forty days later, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat. ⁷He sent out a raven, and it flew from place to place until the water was gone and the ground was dry. ⁸Noah also let a dove fly out. He wanted to see if the water had gone down enough for the dove to find dry ground.

⁹The dove could not find a place to rest, because water still covered the earth, so it came back to the boat. Noah reached out his hand and brought the dove inside.

¹⁰After seven days, Noah sent the dove out again. ¹¹At the end of the day, the dove came back with a fresh olive

[‡]7:11-12 *windows* This refers to openings in the sky or “dome” described in 1:6-7. The description here follows the ancient Hebrew view of how the earth was constructed.

[¶]7:20 *about seven metres* Literally, “15 cubits”.

[§]8:2 *windows* See note at 7:11-12.

leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the flood had gone down. ¹²Seven days later, Noah let the dove go out again. And this time it did not come back.

¹³On the first day of the first month of the year that Noah turned 601, the water from the flood was gone. Noah removed the covering on the roof of the boat and saw that the ground was drying. ¹⁴By the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the ground was completely dry.

¹⁵God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Leave the boat. You and your wife and your sons and their wives should go out now. ¹⁷Take every living thing out of the boat with you—all the birds, the animals and the small creatures that crawl on the ground. These will all produce many more living things, and they will fill the earth again.”

¹⁸So Noah went out with his wife and his sons and their wives. ¹⁹All the animals, large and small, and every bird left the boat. All the things that live on earth came out of the boat in groups of their own kind.

Noah Offers Sacrifices to God

²⁰Then Noah built an altar. He took some of all the kinds of clean animals and birds and offered them to the LORD on the altar as burnt offerings.

²¹The smell of the smoke pleased the LORD. And he said to himself, “I will never again put a curse on the earth because of what people do. They cannot help themselves. Their thoughts are evil from the time they are young. So I will never again destroy every living thing on the earth as I did this time.

²²“As long as the earth remains, there will always be a time for planting and a time for harvest. There will always be cold and hot weather,

summer and winter, day and night.”

A New Beginning

9 God blessed Noah and his sons and told them to have more and more children. He said, “Fill the earth with people. ²Every animal on earth and every bird in the air will fear you. And all the animals that crawl on the ground and all the fish in the sea will be afraid of you. I put you in charge of them all. ³Every living thing that moves will be food for you. I already gave you the green plants to eat. Now I give you everything on earth. ⁴But you must not eat meat that still has blood in it, because that means it still has life in it. ⁵Your blood also has life in it, and I will punish with death any animal or person who takes your life. Any animal that kills someone must be killed. And any person who kills another person must be killed. ⁶The reason for this is that “God created humans in his own image, so whoever kills a person must be killed by another person.

⁷Have many children who will also have many children. I want you and your family to fill the earth with people.”

⁸Then God said to Noah and his sons, ⁹“I now make an agreement with you and all your descendants. ¹⁰This includes every living thing that was with you: all the birds and all the tame and wild animals that came out of the boat with you. It includes every living thing on earth. ¹¹This is my agreement with you: never again will water from a flood kill all living things. There will never be another flood that will destroy the earth.”

12-13 And God said, “I will put a rainbow** in the clouds as a sign of this agreement that I am making with you and every living thing. This rainbow will be a reminder that I will keep this agreement as long as there are people on earth. 14 You will be able to see the rainbow when I send clouds over the earth. 15 Whenever it appears, I will remember this agreement I made with you and every living thing: never again will water from a flood kill all living things. 16 When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the agreement I made that will continue forever. It is an agreement between God and every living thing on the earth.”

17 So God said to Noah, “This rainbow is proof of the agreement I made with all living things on earth.”

Problems in Noah’s Family

18 Noah had three sons who came out of the boat with him. They were Shem, Ham, who became the father of Canaan, and Japheth. 19 All the people on earth came from these three sons of Noah.

20 Noah was a farmer, and the first thing he did after the flood was to plant a vineyard. 21 He used the grapes to make wine. One day he drank so much that he became drunk. He went into his tent and took off all his clothes. 22 Ham, who became the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and told his brothers who were outside the tent. 23 Shem and Japheth took Noah’s robe, put it across

their shoulders and walked backwards into the tent. They covered their father without looking at him.

24 Noah was still sleeping because of the wine he had drunk. When he woke up, he learned what his youngest son Ham had done. 25 He said, “I pray that Canaan†† will be under this curse:

May he be a slave to his brothers!”

26 Noah also said, “I pray that the LORD my God will bless Shem.‡‡

May Canaan be his slave!

27 May God give more land to Japheth. May Japheth and Shem live together in peace,

and may Canaan be their slave.”

28 After the flood, Noah lived 350 years. 29 He was 950 years old when he died.

Noah’s Family

10 This is the record of the families that came from Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. These sons all had descendants born after the flood.

Japheth’s Descendants

²Japheth’s descendants were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras.

³Gomer’s descendants were Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah.

⁴Javan’s descendants were Elishah, Tarshish and the people of Cyprus

**9:12-13 *rainbow* Literally, “bow”, a weapon used to shoot arrows. This might be a picture of a soldier hanging up his bow to show that he will not use it again.

††9:25 *Canaan* Ham’s son, possibly the result of Ham’s sinful act with his father’s wife. The descendants of Canaan lived along the coast of Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. Later, God gave this land to the Israelites.

‡‡9:26 *I pray ... Shem* Or “Blessed be the God that Shem worships.”

and Rhodes.[¶] ⁵These are the people who moved to different areas along the coast.

These descendants of Japheth are listed by their different families. These families had their own languages, lived in their own areas and became different nations.

Ham's Descendants

⁶Ham's descendants were Cush, Egypt, Put and Canaan.

⁷Cush's descendants were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteca.

Raamah's descendants were Sheba and Dedan.

⁸Cush also had a descendant named Nimrod, who became a powerful ruler, more powerful than anyone before him.

⁹He was also the greatest hunter in the world.^{§§} That is why people still compare a good hunter to Nimrod. They say, "You are like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world."

¹⁰Nimrod's kingdom spread from Babylon to Erech, to Akkad and then to Calneh in the land of Babylonia.*

¹¹Nimrod also went into Assyria, where he built the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah and ¹²Resen. Resen is the city between Nineveh and the great city of Calah.

¹³Egypt was the ancestor of the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphthuh, ¹⁴Pathrus, Casluh, where the Philistines came from, and Caphtor.

¹⁵Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. He also had a son named Heth, the ancestor of the Hittites. ¹⁶Canaan was also the ancestor of the Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites.

Later the families of Canaan spread to different parts of the land ¹⁹until their territory covered a large area. It went from Sidon down along the coast to Gerar and Gaza. From Gaza it went as far east as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

²⁰These descendants of Ham are listed by their different families. These families had their own languages, lived in their own areas and became different nations.

Shem's Descendants

²¹Shem was Japheth's older brother. Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber.[†]

²²Shem's descendants were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram.

²³Aram's descendants were Uz, Hul, Gether and Mash.

²⁴Arphaxad had a son named Shelah, who was the father of Eber. ²⁵Eber had two sons. One was named Peleg.[‡] He was given this name because during his life the people of the world were divided. The other son was named Joktan.

[¶]10:4 *Rhodes* This is from the ancient Greek version and some Hebrew copies, which have "Rodanim" here, meaning "people of Rhodes". Most Hebrew copies have "Dodanim" here. The same list in 1 Chr. 1:7 has "people of Rhodes" (Hebrew, Rodanim).

^{§§}10:9 *the greatest ... world* Literally, "a great hunter before the LORD".

*10:10 *Babylonia* Literally, "Shinar", which may be a form of the name Sumer. Also in 11:2; 14:1.

†10:21 *descendants of Eber* Or "Hebrews".

‡10:25 *Peleg* This name means "division".

²⁶Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. These were all Joktan's descendants. ³⁰They lived in the area between Mesha and Sephar, in the eastern hill country.

³¹These descendants of Shem are listed by their different families. These families had their own languages, lived in their own areas and became different nations.

³²This completes the list of Noah's sons and the families who descended from them. They are listed by the nations they formed. From these families came the nations that spread over the earth after the flood.

The Tower of Babel

11 At first everyone in the world spoke the same language and used the same words. ²Then people began to move from[†] the east. When they came to a plain in the land of Babylonia, they settled there. ³⁻⁴One day they had the idea of building a temple city with a tower.[§] They did not have stone there, so they said to each other, "We can make bricks of mud and bake them until they are hard." They used bricks like stones, and they used tar like mortar to hold the bricks together. Then the people said, "Building this will keep us together so that we will not be scattered all over the world. Come, let's build the city with a tower that will reach to the sky. It will be a monument that will cause people to remember us."

⁵Then the LORD came down to see the city and the tower. ⁶And he said, "These people all speak the same language, and they have joined together to do this work. This is only the beginning of what they can do. Soon nothing will be able to stop them from doing whatever they plan. ⁷Come, let us go down and change the language they speak so that they will not understand each other."

⁸And that is how the LORD stopped them from building the city and caused them to scatter all over the earth. ⁹So that place is now called Babel** because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. This is how he scattered them all over the earth.

Shem's Family

¹⁰This is the record of Shem's family. Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he had a son named Arphaxad. ¹¹After that, Shem lived 500 years. He had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arphaxad was 35 years old, he had a son named Shelah. ¹³After that, Arphaxad lived 403 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴When Shelah was 30 years old, he had a son named Eber. ¹⁵After that, Shelah lived 403 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber was 34 years old, he had a son named Peleg. ¹⁷After that, Eber lived 430 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg was 30 years old, he had a son named Reu. ¹⁹After that, Peleg lived 209 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters.

[†]11:2 *from* Or "towards".

[§]11:3-4 *a temple ... tower* Literally, "a city and a tower". In ancient times people would build a temple area with a tower to make it easy for a god to come down to enjoy their worship and bless them.

** 11:9 *Babel* Or "Babylon". This is like a word meaning "confuse".

²⁰ When Reu was 32 years old, he had a son named Serug. ²¹ After that, Reu lived 207 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters.

²² When Serug was 30 years old, he had a son named Nahor. ²³ After that, Serug lived 200 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters.

²⁴ When Nahor was 29 years old, he had a son named Terah. ²⁵ After that, Nahor lived 119 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters.

²⁶ After Terah was 70 years old, he had three sons named Abram, Nahor and Haran.

Terah's Family

²⁷ This is the record of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot. ²⁸ Haran died in Ur, the city in the land of the Chaldeans, where he was born. His father Terah was still living. ²⁹⁻³⁰ Abram married a woman named Sarai, but Sarai was not able to have children. Nahor married Milcah, the daughter of Haran. Haran also had another daughter named Iscah.

³¹ Terah left Ur to go to the land of Canaan. He took his son Abram and Abram's wife Sarai with him. He also took his grandson Lot son of Haran. They were on their way to Canaan, but when they came to the city of Haran, they decided to settle there. ³² Terah lived 205 years, and he was still living in Haran when he died.

God Chooses Abram to Bless All People

12 The LORD said to Abram, "Leave your country and your people.

Leave your father's family and go to the land that I will show you.

² "I will make you and your descendants a great nation.

I will bless you

and make you famous.

I will do this to make you a blessing to others.

³ I will bless those who bless you,

but I will put a curse on anyone who dishonours you.

It is through you that blessings will come to all the families on earth."^{††}

Abram Goes to the Land of Canaan

⁴ So Abram obeyed the LORD and left Haran, and Lot went with him. At that time, Abram was 75 years old. ⁵ He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot and everything they owned, including all the servants that had become a part of their household while living in Haran. They began travelling to the land of Canaan. When they arrived, ⁶ Abram travelled through the land as far as the town of Shechem. There he stopped by the famous oak tree of Moreh. That was during the time the Canaanites were still living in the land.

⁷ The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants."^{‡‡} So Abram built an altar to honour the LORD at the place where he had seen him. ⁸ Then he left and travelled to the hill country east of Bethel. There he set up camp. He was between the towns

^{††}12:3 *It is through you ... on earth* Or "All people on earth will want me to bless them as I have blessed you."

^{‡‡}12:7 *descendants* Or "family". Literally, "seed". Also in 13:15, 17:7 and 24:7.

of Bethel to the west and Ai^f to the east. Abram built another altar at that place to honour the LORD. He offered a sacrifice and prayed to the LORD there. ⁹Then he moved on towards southern Canaan, stopping at several places on the way.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

¹⁰A time of famine came to Canaan. Food was so scarce that Abram had to go down to Egypt to live for a while. ¹¹Just before they arrived in Egypt, Abram said to Sarai, “Here is what I am thinking. You are a very beautiful woman. ¹²When the Egyptian men see you, they will be jealous that you are my wife. They will kill me so that they can have you for themselves. ¹³Tell them you are my sister. Then they will let me live and be good to me because they will want to please you.”

¹⁴When Abram arrived in Egypt, the Egyptians noticed that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. ¹⁵Some of the king’s officials saw her and told the king how beautiful she was. So the king ordered them to bring her to live in his palace. ¹⁶The king was very good to Abram because he thought Abram was Sarai’s brother. He gave Abram sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and men and women slaves.

¹⁷Because the king took Abram’s wife Sarai, the LORD made the king and the people in his palace sick with terrible diseases. ¹⁸So the king called Abram and said, “Why have you caused me all this trouble? Why didn’t you tell me Sarai was your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say, ‘She is my sister’? That’s why I felt free to take her as my wife. But she is your wife, so now I give her back to you. Take her and go!” ²⁰Then the king commanded his men to make sure that Abram and his

wife left Egypt. And they left with everything they owned.

Abram Returns to Canaan

13 So Abram left Egypt and travelled back to the southern part of Canaan with his wife and all he owned. Lot was also with them. ²Abram was very rich, with many cattle, sheep and goats. And he had a lot of silver and gold.

³From southern Canaan, Abram continued travelling north. He set up camp in several different places on the way to Bethel. Finally, he settled between the towns of Bethel and Ai, where he and his family had lived before. ⁴Abram had built an altar in that place. So he again offered sacrifices and prayed to the LORD there.

Abram and Lot Separate

⁵During all this time, Lot had been travelling with Abram. Lot also had cattle, sheep and goats, as well as his own family and slaves. ⁶Abram and Lot had so many animals that the land could not produce enough food for all of them living together. ⁷The men who took care of Abram’s animals and those who took care of Lot’s animals were always quarrelling with each other. Also, the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in that same area.

⁸Abram said to Lot, “You and I are family. There should be no arguing between us or between your people and my people. ⁹We should separate. You can choose the land you want. If you choose the land to the north, I will take the land to the south. If you want the land to the south, I will take the land to the north.”

¹⁰Lot looked around and saw that the Jordan Valley had plenty of water all the way to Zoar. This was before the LORD

^f12:8 Ai The name of this town means “the ruins”.

destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, so the whole valley was green, like the garden of the LORD in Eden or like the land of Egypt. ¹¹ So Lot chose to live in the Jordan Valley. The two men separated, and Lot travelled east. ¹² Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities in the valley. He settled near Sodom. ¹³ Sodom was a city where evil men were insulting the LORD with their horrible sins.

¹⁴ After Lot moved away, the LORD said to Abram, “Look around you. Look north, south, east and west. ¹⁵ I will give you all this land that you see. It will belong to you and your descendants forever. ¹⁶ You will have more descendants than anyone could ever count. It would be like counting all the specks of dust on earth. ¹⁷ Go now. Take a walk through the land and look around. I am giving it all to you.”

¹⁸ So Abram took down his tents and went to live near the famous oak trees of Mamre near Hebron. There he built an altar to honour the LORD.

Lot Is Captured in a Time of War

14 About this time, King Amraphel of Babylonia, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam and King Tidal of Goiim ² started a war. Their armies attacked the armies of King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim and the king of Bela, a city also known as Zoar.

³ These last five kings brought their armies together in the Valley of Siddim, which is in the area of the Dead Sea. ⁴ They had served under King Kedorlaomer for twelve years. But in the thirteenth year, these five kings rebelled

against him. ⁵ Then in the fourteenth year, King Kedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came to fight against the other kings. And they defeated them all. They defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim. They also defeated the Zuzites in Ham. They defeated the Emites in Shaveh Kiriathaim. ⁶ They also defeated the Horites in the hill country of Edom. They went all the way to El Paran near the desert. ⁷ Then they turned back and went to the city of En Mishpat, also called Kadesh. They defeated the Amalekites and took over their land. They also defeated the Amorites living in Hazazon Tamar.

⁸⁻⁹ Then the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Bela, also known as Zoar, brought their armies together in the Valley of Siddim. They fought against the armies of these four kings: King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Babylonia and King Arioch of Ellasar.

¹⁰ The Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah with their armies ran away, some of the soldiers fell into these holes. The rest of them ran away to the hills.

¹¹ Before the armies of the four kings returned home, they went into the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. They took everything from the people, including all their food. ¹² They captured Abram’s nephew Lot, who was living in Sodom. They took him away with everything he owned. ¹³ One of the men who had escaped went to Abram the Hebrew^{§§} and told him what had happened. Abram was living near the oak trees that belonged to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his brothers, Eshcol and Aner, had

§§ **14:13 Hebrew** Or “wanderer”. The word was used in this early time to describe people who were away from or did not have a homeland, something for which Abram and his descendants were well known.

made an agreement with Abram to help protect each other.

Abram Rescues Lot

¹⁴ When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he called together 318 trained soldiers. These were the slaves who had been with him their whole lives. He led them all the way to the town of Dan to find the enemy. ¹⁵ He divided his men into two groups to attack by night. They defeated the enemy and chased them all the way to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶ Then Abram brought back everything the enemy had taken. This included his nephew Lot and everything Lot owned, as well as the women and others who had been captured.

¹⁷ Then Abram went home after he defeated Kedorlaomer and the kings who had joined him. On his way home, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh, which is now called King's Valley.

Melchizedek

¹⁸ Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, also went to meet Abram. He brought bread and wine for him. ¹⁹ He prayed for God to bless Abram. He said, "Abram, may God Most High bless you. He is the one who made heaven and earth.

²⁰ And we praise God Most High, who helped you defeat your enemies." Abram gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything he had taken during the battle.

²¹ After this happened, the king of Sodom said to Abram, "All I want from

you are my people who were captured. You can keep everything else."

²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "The LORD, God Most High, is the one who made heaven and earth. To him I make this promise with an oath: ²³ I will not keep anything that is yours, not even a thread or a sandal strap! I don't want you to say, 'I made Abram rich.' ²⁴ The only thing I will accept is the food my young men have eaten. But give Aner, Eshcol and Mamre their share of what we took, because they went with me into battle."

God's Promise to Abram

15 Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision. He said, "Abram, don't be afraid. I will protect you from harm, and I will give you a great reward."

² But Abram said, "Lord GOD, nothing you can give me will make me happy, because I have no son. So when I die, my slave Eliezer from Damascus will get everything I own. ³ You have not given me any children, so this slave of mine will inherit everything I have."

⁴ But then Abram heard the LORD say, "No, he will not be the one who will get what you have. You will have a son of your own who will inherit everything you have."

⁵ Then the LORD led Abram outside and said, "Look up at the sky. Count the stars, if you can.* Your descendants will be like that. You will not be able to count them."

⁶ Abram believed the LORD. And because of his faith, the LORD accepted him as one who has done what is right.†

⁷ The LORD said to Abram, "I brought

***15:5 if you can** This seems to be during the day (see verse 12) when the stars were not visible. So the point may be that Abraham knows the stars are there, even if he cannot see them.

†**15:6 has done what is right** Or "is truly loyal".

you here from Ur, the land of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to have as your own.”

⁸But Abram said, “Lord GOD, how can I know that this land will really belong to me?”

⁹The LORD said to him, “Let me show you something. Bring me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old goat, a three-year-old ram, a dove and a young pigeon.”

¹⁰Abram brought these animals to God and killed them. He cut each of them into two parts and laid each half across from the other half. But he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹Some vultures flew down to eat the animals, but Abram chased them away.

¹²As the sun went down, Abram fell into a deep sleep. And a feeling of terrible darkness and dread came over him.

¹³Then the LORD said to Abram, “You can be sure of this: Your descendants will live as immigrants in a land that is not their own. The people there will be cruel to them and force them to work as slaves for 400 years. ¹⁴But I will punish the nation that makes them slaves. Then your people will leave that land, taking many good things with them.

¹⁵“You yourself will enjoy a good, long life before you die[‡] in peace and are buried. ¹⁶But four generations later, your people will come back to this land where the Amorites live now. I will not drive them out yet. But they will keep on sinning so much that by the time your

people return, the Amorites will deserve to be punished.”

¹⁷After the sun went down, it became very dark. Suddenly a pot filled with smoking coals and a flaming stick[¶] passed between the halves of the dead animals.[§]

¹⁸So on that day the LORD made an agreement with Abram with this promise: “I will give this land to your descendants. I will give them all the land between the river that marks the border with Egypt** and the great river Euphrates. ¹⁹This is the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”

Sarai’s Problem With Hagar

16 Now Sarai was Abram’s wife, but she did not have any children. She had an Egyptian slave named Hagar.

²Sarai told Abram, “The LORD has not allowed me to have children, so go and sleep with my slave. If she has a child, it will be mine.” Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

³So after living ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai gave her Egyptian slave to Abram as a second wife. ⁴Abram had sex with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When Hagar knew she was going to have a baby, she began to feel less respect for Sarai. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, “This is all your fault! I gave my slave woman to you. And as soon as she knew she was pregnant, she began to feel less respect

[‡]15:15 *die* Literally, “go to your fathers”.

[¶]15:17 *pot ... stick* Exactly what these were is not known, but it seems clear that the smoke and fire represent the presence of the LORD.

[§]15:17 *passed between ... animals* This was a way the people of that time showed they were sincere in making an agreement. They walked between the two parts of animals that had been cut in half and took an oath. They said something like, “May this same thing happen to me if I don’t keep the agreement.” See also Jer. 34:17-20.

**15:18 *river ... Egypt* That is, the stream called “Wadi El-Arish”.

for me. The LORD will give you what you deserve for this!”

⁶Abram said, “Listen, she is your slave. You can do whatever you want with her.” Then Sarai was so cruel to Hagar that she finally ran away.

The Lord Speaks to Hagar

⁷The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring of water in the desert on the way to Shur. ⁸The angel said, “Hagar, you are Sarai’s slave woman. So why are you here? Where are you going?”

Hagar said, “I am running away from my owner Sarai.”

⁹The angel said, “Go back to your owner and put up with her cruel treatment.” ¹⁰The angel of the LORD also said, “I will give you so many descendants that no one will be able to count them.”

¹¹Then the angel said to Hagar, “Hagar, you are now pregnant, and you will have a son. You will name him Ishmael,^{††} because the LORD has heard your crying.

¹²Ishmael will live as free as a wild donkey, but he will never be far away from his relatives. Sometimes they will fight each other, but they will often help each other.”^{‡‡}

¹³After the LORD spoke to Hagar, she thought, “Here I saw the one who sees me!” So she began to use a new name for the LORD: “The God Who Sees Me”.^{¶¶}

¹⁴That is why people call the well there,

between Kadesh and Bered, “The Well of the Living One Who Sees Me”.^{§§}

¹⁵So Hagar had a son for Abram, and Abram named him Ishmael. ¹⁶Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.

God’s Promise to Abraham

17 When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God All-Powerful.* Live the way I show you and always do what is right. ²Then I will make an agreement with you. I will promise to give you more descendants than you can imagine.”

³Then Abram bowed down with his face to the ground before God. And God said, ⁴“This is my part of the agreement I am making with you: I will make you the father of many nations. ⁵I will change your name from Abram[†] to Abraham[‡] because I am making you the father of many nations. ⁶I will give you many descendants. New nations and kings will come from you. ⁷I will keep my promise to you and your descendants, an agreement that will never end. I will be your God and the God of all your descendants. ⁸You live here in Canaan now as an immigrant, but I will give this whole land to you and all your descendants. This land will always belong to your people, and I will be their God.”

⁹Then God said to Abraham, “My agreement is with you and all your descendants. So you must all keep your part of the agreement. ¹⁰⁻¹¹You and your descendants must circumcise every

^{††}**16:11** *Ishmael* This name means “God hears”.

^{‡‡}**16:12** This translation is based on two different meanings possible for this verse and assumes that this double meaning was intentional.

^{¶¶}**16:13** *The God Who Sees Me* Literally, “El Roi”.

^{§§}**16:14** *The Well ... Sees Me* Literally, “Beer-lahai-roi”.

* **17:1** *God All-Powerful* Literally, “El Shaddai”.

[†]**17:5** *Abram* This name means “honoured father”.

[‡]**17:5** *Abraham* This name means “great father” or “father of many”.

male in your family. Removing this extra skin will be a sign to show that there is an agreement between me and you. ¹²⁻¹³ From now on, whenever a baby boy is eight days old, you must circumcise him. You must also circumcise those among you who are not your offspring. All your male slaves must be circumcised, whether they were born in your homes or bought from someone else. So the bodies of your men will have a mark to remind you of my agreement, which will last forever. ¹⁴ Any male who is not circumcised will be cut off from his people^f for breaking this agreement with me.”

Isaac, the Promised Son

¹⁵ God said to Abraham, “I want you to stop using the name Sarai for your wife. From now on her name will be Sarah.[§] ¹⁶ I will bless her and give you a son from her. She will be the mother of new nations. Some of her descendants will be kings.”

¹⁷ Abraham bowed face down on the ground. But he began to laugh when he thought, “How can I have a son when I am 100 years old? I know Sarah cannot have a child at her age. She is almost 90!”

¹⁸ Then he said to God, “Why not bless Ishmael to be the son you promised?”

¹⁹ God said, “No, I said that your wife Sarah will have a son. You will name him Isaac.** I will make my agreement with him and all his descendants, an agreement that will last forever.

²⁰ “You mentioned Ishmael, and I heard you. I will bless him, and he will have many descendants. He will be the

father of twelve great leaders, and his family will become a great nation. ²¹ But I will make my agreement with Isaac, the son Sarah will give you. He will be born at this same time next year.” ²² When he finished talking with Abraham, God left him.

²³ That same day, Abraham did what God told him to do. He gathered all the men and boys living among his people. He circumcised Ishmael, all the males born in his camp and the slaves he had bought.

²⁴⁻²⁶ Both Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised that day. Abraham was 99 and Ishmael was 13. ²⁷ On that day, all the men and boys in Abraham’s camp were circumcised. This included all the slaves born in his camp and all the slaves he had bought.

Three Visitors

18 Later, the LORD again appeared to Abraham near the famous oak trees of Mamre. It was the hottest part of the day, and Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent. ² He looked up and saw three men standing nearby. As soon as he saw them, he ran to welcome them. He bowed low to the ground before them. ³ Abraham said, “Sir, please stay awhile and let me serve you. ⁴ I will have someone bring water so that all of you can wash your feet and rest under this tree. ⁵ I will get some food to give you strength for the rest of your journey. You have honoured me with your visit, so let me serve you.”

They said, “Do as you wish.”

⁶ Abraham ran back to the tent where Sarah was and said, “Hurry! Get a

^f**17:14 will be ... people** This probably means that he will no longer be a part of God’s people. But it could also mean that he will be put to death.

[§]**17:15 Sarah** A Hebrew name meaning “princess”. Sarai was probably an Aramaic form of the name.

^{**}**17:19 Isaac** This name in Hebrew sounds like “laugh”.

big sack of our best flour and make some bread.”⁷ Then Abraham ran out to where his herd of cattle was. He chose one of his best young calves and gave it to a servant, who quickly prepared it for the meal.⁸ Abraham took the meat with some milk and cheese and set them down in front of the men. Then he stood nearby as they sat under the tree and ate.

⁹The men asked Abraham, “Where is your wife Sarah?”

Abraham said, “She is there in the tent.”

¹⁰Then one of them said, “I will come back next year about this time. By then your wife Sarah will have a son.”

Not far away, Sarah was listening from the entrance of the tent.¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were very old. Sarah was past the age for having children.¹² So she laughed to herself and said, “I am a tired old woman, and my husband is even older. It is too late for me to have such pleasure.”

¹³Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Sarah laughed and said she was too old to have a baby. Why did she laugh and say that?¹⁴ Is anything too difficult for the LORD? As I said, I will come back this time next year. By then, Sarah will have a son.”

¹⁵When Sarah heard this, she was afraid. So she said, “I did not laugh!”

But the LORD said, “That is not true. You did laugh.”

Abraham Asks God to Change His Plan

¹⁶The three men prepared to leave and started walking towards Sodom. Abraham walked with them to a place where they could see the city in the distance below. There he planned to tell

them goodbye.¹⁷ The LORD said to himself, “I should tell Abraham what I am going to do to Sodom.¹⁸ Abraham is the beginning of a great and powerful nation, and through him blessings will come to all the nations on earth.”^{††}¹⁹ Yes, I must tell him, because I have chosen him. I want him to teach his children and all his descendants to live the way the LORD wants. They must do what is right and be fair to everyone. Then I, the LORD, will do for Abraham all I have promised.”

²⁰Then the LORD said to Abraham, “I have heard many complaints from those who have been mistreated by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. They have done many terrible things.²¹ I will go down and see for myself whether or not all these complaints are true.”

²²Then the two men turned and walked on towards Sodom, but Abraham stayed there to speak to the LORD.²³ Coming close, Abraham asked, “When you punish Sodom, will you really destroy the innocent people together with those who are guilty?²⁴ What if there are fifty good people in that city? Will you still destroy it? Surely you will spare the city for the fifty good people.²⁵ I cannot believe that you would destroy it. You would not kill fifty good people to punish the guilty ones. If that happened, the good people would get the same punishment as those who are evil. I am sure you would not do that. You are the Judge of all people on earth, so I know you will do what is right!”

²⁶The LORD replied, “If I find fifty good people in Sodom, I will spare the whole city to keep those fifty people safe.”

^{††}**18:18 and ... earth** Or “and people of all nations on earth will bless each other using his name”.

²⁷ Then Abraham said, “I know I am only a man and have no right to speak to you like this, my Lord. Please forgive my boldness, ²⁸ but what if there are less than fifty good people in Sodom? What if you can find only forty-five? Will you still destroy the whole city?”

The Lord said, “If I find forty-five good people there, I will not destroy the city.”

²⁹ Abraham spoke again: “What if you find only forty good people there?”

The Lord said, “If there are forty good people there, I will not destroy the city.”

³⁰ Then Abraham said, “Lord, please don’t be angry with me, but let me ask you again. What if you find only thirty good people?”

The Lord said, “If I find thirty good people there, I will not destroy the city.”

³¹ Abraham said, “Lord, please forgive me for being so bold and speaking to you this way, but what if you find only twenty good people?”

The Lord answered, “For twenty good people, I will not destroy the city.”

³² Then Abraham said, “Lord, please don’t be angry with me, but let me ask you this one last time. What if you find only ten good people there?”

The Lord said, “If I find ten good people, I will not destroy the city.”

³³ When the LORD finished speaking to Abraham, he left, and Abraham went back home.

Lot’s Guests Rescue Him From Sodom

19 That evening, the two angels came to the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting in the area by the city gates. When he saw them, he got up and went to greet these visitors. He bowed low to

the ground before them. ² He said, “Sirs, I would be honoured to serve you. Please come to my home. There you can wash your feet and stay the night. Then you can continue your journey early in the morning.”

They replied, “No, we can spend the night here in the city square.”

³ But Lot insisted that they come to his house, so they finally agreed and went with him. Then Lot made sure they had a good meal, including hot flat bread.^{‡‡}

⁴ Later, when it was time for them to go to bed, all the men of Sodom, every single one of them, young and old, gathered outside Lot’s house. ⁵ They started shouting, “Where are the two men who came to stay with you tonight? Bring them out here! We want to have sex with them.”

⁶ Lot went outside and shut the door behind him. ⁷ He said, “No, my friends, please don’t do such a terrible thing! ⁸ These men have come to my house as guests, so I must protect them.”^{¶¶} Look, I have two daughters who have never had sex with a man. Let me bring them out, and you can do what you want with them. But do not harm these guests of mine.”

⁹ The men outside said, “Listen to this man! He is a foreigner who does not even belong here, and now he thinks he can tell us what to do!” Then they turned to Lot and shouted, “Come here, and we will do worse things to you than we do to your guests!” They pushed Lot aside and clearly planned to break down the door.

¹⁰ But the two men inside reached out and pulled Lot back inside and shut the

^{‡‡}19:3 *flat bread* Literally, “unleavened bread”. Thin cakes of flour, water and salt cooked on a hot stone or griddle. Without yeast, there was no waiting for the dough to rise.

^{¶¶}19:8 *I must protect them* Whoever invited travellers in as guests was also promising to protect them.

door. ¹¹ Then they made everyone outside the door blind. So none of them, young or old, could see to find the door.

The Angels Help Lot Escape From Sodom

¹² The two men said to Lot, “Do you have any relatives living in this city? Do you have any other daughters, sons, sons-in-law, or others here? If so, you should tell them to leave now, ¹³ because we are going to destroy this city. The LORD has heard enough about how evil this city is, so he has sent us to destroy it.”

¹⁴ So Lot went to warn the men who were engaged to his daughters. He said, “Hurry and leave the city! The LORD is ready to destroy it!” But they would not go with Lot because they thought he was trying to fool them.

¹⁵ Very early the next morning, the angels told Lot to hurry and leave. They said, “Get out now! Take your wife and two daughters with you. The LORD is ready to destroy this city. If you don’t leave now, you will die with everyone else.”

¹⁶ Lot was slow to leave, but the LORD showed mercy to him and his family. The two men grabbed his hand and the hands of his wife and daughters. They led Lot and his family to a place outside the city. ¹⁷ As soon as they were out of the city, one of the men said, “Run for your life! Don’t look back at the city, and don’t stop anywhere in the valley. Run to the hills, or you will die!”

¹⁸ But Lot said, “Sir, please don’t make me run that far! ¹⁹ You have been so good to me, your servant. I am grateful for your kindness in saving my life. But I cannot run all the way to the hills before the disaster catches me. I will die.

²⁰ Look! See that small town over there? It is near enough for me to get there before the disaster comes. You can see it is a very small town. If you will let me go there, I will be safe.”

²¹ The angel said to Lot, “Very well, I will let you do that. I will not destroy that town. ²² But run fast because you must be safely in that town before I can destroy Sodom.”

Lot said that town was small, so it was later named Zoar.^{§§}

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

²³ Lot entered Zoar, just as the sun was coming up. ²⁴ Then the LORD caused fire and burning sulphur to fall like rain on Sodom and Gomorrah. ²⁵ He destroyed the whole valley: all the cities, the people living in the cities and all the plant life growing in the valley. ²⁶ On the way to Zoar, Lot’s wife looked back at Sodom. When she did, she became a block of salt.

²⁷ Early the next morning, Abraham got up and went to the place where he had stood and talked with the LORD. ²⁸ Abraham looked down towards the valley and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. He saw clouds of smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace.

²⁹ So that is how God destroyed the cities in the valley where Lot lived. But he remembered what Abraham had asked, and before he destroyed those cities, he led Lot safely away from the disaster.

Lot and His Daughters

³⁰ Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar. So he took his two daughters and went to live in a cave in the hills. ³¹ One day the older daughter said to the younger, “Our father is getting old, and there are no other

§§**19:22 Zoar** This name means “small”.

men around here* to give us children. So we cannot have a family the way everyone else does. ³²Let's get our father drunk with wine. Then we can have sex with him. By having his children we will make a way for our family to continue.” ³³So that night, they gave their father enough wine to make him drunk. Then the older daughter went and had sex with him. He did not even know when she came to bed or when she got up.

³⁴The next day the older daughter said to the younger daughter, “Last night I had sex with my father. We will get him drunk again tonight. Then you can go and have sex with him. By having his children we will make a way for our family to continue.” ³⁵So that night, they gave their father enough wine to make him drunk. Then the younger daughter went and had sex with him. Again, Lot did not know when she came to bed or when she got up.

³⁶Both of Lot's daughters became pregnant, and he was the father. ³⁷The older daughter had a son. She named him Moab.† Moab is the ancestor of all the Moabites living today. ³⁸The younger daughter also had a son. She named him Ben-Ammi.‡ Ben-Ammi is the ancestor of all the Ammonites living today.

Abraham Tricks Abimelech

20 Abraham decided to move to the southern part of Canaan where he settled between Kadesh and Shur. Later, when he was living as an immigrant in the city of Gerar, ²Abraham told the people there that Sarah was his sister. That is why King Abimelech of Gerar

sent some servants to take her to live with him. ³But one night God spoke to Abimelech in a dream. God said to him, “Prepare to die, because the woman you took is married.”

⁴Now Abimelech had not yet had sex with Sarah. So he said, “Lord, I have done nothing wrong. Would you destroy innocent people? ⁵Abraham himself told me, ‘This woman is my sister.’ And she also said, ‘This man is my brother.’ So I did not know I was doing anything wrong. I am innocent.”

⁶In his dream, Abimelech heard God answer, “Yes, I know you did not think you were doing anything wrong. So I kept you from sinning against me and did not allow you to sleep with her. ⁷Give Abraham his wife back. He is a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you do not give her back to him, you can be sure that you and all your people will die.”

⁸So very early the next morning, Abimelech called together all his officials and told them about his dream. The story filled them all with fear. ⁹Then Abimelech sent for Abraham and said to him, “Look what you have done to us! Because of you, I am guilty of a terrible sin, and it has brought so much trouble on me and my people. I have never done anything wrong to you, so why did you do this? No one should ever do what you have done to me. ¹⁰What were you thinking that made you do it?”

¹¹Abraham replied, “I thought no one here had any fear of God. So I thought there was nothing to stop someone from killing me to take Sarah. ¹²She is my wife, but she is also my sister. She is

*19:31 *around here* Literally, “in the land”, which could also mean “on earth”.

†19:37 *Moab* In Hebrew this name sounds like “from father”.

‡19:38 *Ben-Ammi* In Hebrew this name sounds like “son of my father” or “son of my people”.

the daughter of my father but not of my mother. ¹³God told me to leave my father's house and travel from place to place. That is when I said to Sarah, 'Please do this favour for me: Wherever we go, tell people I am your brother.'

¹⁴Abimelech gave Abraham some sheep, cattle and men and women slaves. He also gave Sarah back to Abraham. ¹⁵Then Abimelech said, "Look all around you. This is my land. Choose any place you want to live."

¹⁶And he said to Sarah, "I am giving your brother Abraham 1000 pieces of silver. I do this to show your people that they should not think anything bad about you. I want everyone to know you have done nothing wrong."

¹⁷⁻¹⁸From the time Abimelech took Sarah to live in his house, none of the women there were able to have children. God had made this happen to punish Abimelech for taking Sarah, Abraham's wife. But then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his women slaves so that they could have children again.

God Blesses Sarah With a Child

21 The LORD did not forget what he said he would do for Sarah. He blessed her as he had promised Abraham he would. ²Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham, who was already an old man. This happened at the exact time God had said it would. ³Abraham named his son Isaac. ⁴Then he did what God commanded and circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old.

⁵Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. ⁶And Sarah said, "God

has used me to make people laugh. Everyone who hears about this will laugh at me. ⁸ ⁷No one thought I would ever be able to have Abraham's child. But now, even though Abraham is old, I have given him a son." ⁸Isaac continued to grow, and soon he was old enough to eat food instead of his mother's milk. Abraham gave a big party to celebrate this day.

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

⁹Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar the Egyptian, was there, and Sarah saw him laughing. ¹⁰Sarah said to Abraham, "Tell that slave woman and her son to go away! My son Isaac must get everything you own when you die. I don't want that slave woman's son to get any part of your wealth."

¹¹This made Abraham very unhappy because he was worried about what would happen to his son Ishmael. ¹²But God said to Abraham, "Don't worry about the boy and the slave woman. Do what Sarah wants. Your descendants will come through Isaac. ¹³But I will also bless the son of your slave woman. He is your son, so I will make sure his family also becomes a great nation."

¹⁴Early the next morning, Abraham took some food and a leather bag of water and gave them to Hagar. He helped her tie these things on her back and sent her away with the boy. From there she wandered around in the desert of Beersheba.

¹⁵Later, when all their water was gone, Hagar left her son in the shade of a bush. ¹⁶She walked away and sat down where she could not see him. She did not

^{21:3} *Isaac* This name in Hebrew sounds like "laugh". See verse 6. Also, 17:17-19 and 18:11-13.

⁸21:6 *at me* Or "with me".

want to watch him die. As she sat there, she began to cry.

¹⁷ God heard the boy crying, and God's angel called to Hagar from heaven. He said, "What's wrong, Hagar? Don't be afraid. God has heard the boy crying. ¹⁸ Go and get your boy and comfort him. I will make sure his descendants become a great nation."

¹⁹ Then God showed Hagar a well of water. So she went to the well, filled her bag with water and gave the boy a drink.

²⁰ God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an expert hunter with his bow and arrows.

²¹ He lived in the desert of Paran, and his mother found a wife for him from Egypt.

An Agreement Between Abraham and Abimelech

²² One day King Abimelech went with Phicol, his army commander, to see Abraham. Abimelech said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do. ²³ So I must know I can always trust you. Make a promise to me here before God that you will never do anything to hurt me, my children or any of my descendants. I have been loyal to you. So promise that you will be loyal to me and to this country where you have been living as a guest."

²⁴ Abraham replied, "Very well. I promise to be loyal to you." ²⁵ Then Abraham complained to Abimelech because his servants had taken over a well Abraham had dug.

²⁶ Abimelech said, "Today is the first time I have heard about this. You never

mentioned it before. I do not know who did this."

²⁷ Abraham brought some of his sheep and cattle and offered them to the king. Then the two men made an agreement to be loyal to each other. ²⁸ Then Abraham chose seven** female lambs from his flock and separated them from the other animals.

²⁹ Abimelech asked Abraham, "Why did you put these seven lambs here by yourselves?"

³⁰ Abraham answered, "I offer you these seven lambs. By accepting them, you agree I am the one who dug that well."

³¹ Abraham named that place Beersheba†† because that's where Abraham and Abimelech made a promise to each other with an oath.

³² So they made their agreement at Beersheba. Then Abimelech and Phicol, his army commander, went back to their home in the land of the Philistines.

³³ Abraham planted a special tree‡‡ at Beersheba. There he worshipped the LORD, the God who lives forever. ³⁴ And Abraham stayed a long time in the land of the Philistines.

God Tests Abraham's Faith

22 Some time later, God decided to test Abraham's faith. He called out, "Abraham!"

Abraham answered, "Here I am."

² God said, "Get your son Isaac, your only son, the one you love so much. Take him to the land of Moriah. I will show you a mountain there where I want you

****21:28 seven** The Hebrew word for "seven" is like the Hebrew word for "oath" or "promise", and it is like the last part of the name Beersheba. The seven animals were proof of this promise.

††**21:31 Beersheba** This name means "well of the oath".

‡‡**21:33 special tree** Literally, "tamarisk tree", a tall shade tree that has deep roots and requires little water.

to kill him. Offer him as a burnt offering to me.”

³So Abraham got up early the next morning. He cut some wood to build a fire for the burnt offering and loaded his donkey. He took with him two young servants and his son Isaac. Together they began the journey to the place God told him to go. ⁴On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵He told his servants, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go up there and worship. Then we will come back here.”

⁶Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on the shoulders of his son Isaac to carry. He himself carried the burning coals and the knife he would use. As they walked along together, ⁷Isaac said to Abraham, “Father?”

Abraham answered, “Yes, son?”

Isaac said, “We have the wood and the coals to start the fire, but where is the animal for the burnt offering?”

⁸Abraham answered, “God himself is providing the animal for the offering, my son.”

So the two of them kept on walking. ⁹When they came to the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar. He carefully laid the wood on the altar. Then he tied up his son Isaac and laid him on top of the wood. ¹⁰Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son.

¹¹But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!”

Abraham answered, “Here I am.”

¹²The angel said, “Do not hurt the boy or harm him in any way! Now I know that you have complete respect for me, your God. I see that you were ready to kill your son, your only son, for me.”

¹³Abraham looked up and saw a ram with its horns caught in a bush. So he got the ram and offered it in place of his son

as a burnt offering to God. ¹⁴So Abraham named that place “The LORD Provides”. Even today people say, “On the mountain of the LORD, he will provide what we need.”

¹⁵The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time. ¹⁶“The LORD says, ‘You were willing to offer your only son to me. Because you have done this, I make this promise to you: As surely as I live, ¹⁷I will bless you greatly. I will give you as many descendants as there are stars in the sky or grains of sand on the seashore. And your descendants will defeat their enemies and take control of their cities. ¹⁸It will be through your family that all the nations on earth will find blessings. I will make this happen because you have obeyed me.’”

¹⁹Then Abraham took Isaac and went back to his servants. They all travelled back to Beersheba, where Abraham continued to live.

Abraham Receives News From Home

²⁰One day, someone came with a message for Abraham. They told him that his brother Nahor now had many sons by his wife Milcah. ²¹The first son was named Uz. The second was Buz. The third was Kemuel, who later became the father of Aram. ²²Then there were Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph and Bethuel. ²³Bethuel later became the father of Rebekah. These are the eight sons that Abraham’s brother Nahor had from his wife Milcah. ²⁴Nahor also had four other sons from his slave woman Reumah. These sons were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maacah.

Sarah Dies

23 Sarah lived to be 127 years old. ²She died in the city of Kiriath Arba, also known as Hebron, in the land

of Canaan. Abraham cried loudly by her side in sorrow over her death. ³Then he got up and went to talk to the Hittites. He said, ⁴“I am not a citizen in your country. I only live here as an immigrant, and I do not own any land I can use for a grave. Please let me buy some land so I can bury my wife properly.”

⁵The Hittites answered Abraham, ⁶“Sir, listen to us. You are a great leader^f here. You should bury your dead in the best burial place we have. Just chose the place you want, and none of us will stop you from burying your wife there.”

⁷Abraham got up and bowed with respect to these Hittites. ⁸He said to them, “If you really want to help me bury my dead wife, speak to Zohar’s son Ephron for me. ⁹I would like to buy the cave at Machpelah, which belongs to Ephron. It is at the end of his field. Ask him to sell it to me as a burial place for my family. I will pay him the full price, and you can be witnesses of our agreement.”

¹⁰Now Ephron was sitting there among the other Hittites who had gathered at the city gate. He spoke up so that everyone could hear. He said to Abraham, ¹¹“Sir, please hear what I have to say. I do not want to sell you the cave by itself. I want you to have the whole field, including the cave. Here in front of my people, I am offering it to you. Take it so that you can bury your wife.”

¹²Abraham again bowed down in respect to the Hittites. ¹³He spoke to Ephron so that everyone could hear. “Please consider this. I will buy the field, and I will give you the full price for it. Accept this offer so I can bury my wife.”

¹⁴Ephron answered Abraham, ¹⁵“Sir, please hear what I say. That field is not worth more than 400 pieces of silver. But, of course, the price is not important. It means nothing to men like you and me. Take the land and bury your wife.”

¹⁶Abraham agreed to the price Ephron had mentioned in front of everyone there. He gave him 400 pieces of silver, following the standard weight used by merchants.

^{17–18}So Abraham became the owner of Ephron’s field that was at Machpelah, near Mamre. The field with all its trees and the cave there became Abraham’s legal property. All the Hittites who had gathered at the city gate were witnesses of this agreement between Ephron and Abraham. ^{19–20}Abraham buried his wife Sarah in that cave at Machpelah near Mamre (Hebron) in the land of Canaan. The cave was in the field Abraham bought from the Hittites. It became his property to use as a burial place.

A Wife for Isaac

24 Abraham lived to be a very old man. The LORD had blessed him with great success in everything he did. ²One day, Abraham called for his oldest servant, who was in charge of everything Abraham owned. Abraham said to him, “I want you to make a promise to me with an oath.^{§§} ^{3–4}Make this promise to me before the LORD, the God of heaven and earth. Promise that you will find a wife for my son, but not from among the Canaanite girls who live here. Instead, go back to my country, to my own people. Find a wife for Isaac there, and bring her here for him.”

^f23:6 *great leader* Literally, “God’s prince”.

^{§§}24:2 *I want ... an oath* Literally, “Put your hand under my thigh.” This was a sign used to show that a promise or vow was sincere. Also in verse 9.

⁵The servant said to Abraham, “What if this woman does not want to come back here with me? Should I then return to get your son and take him to live there in your homeland?”

⁶Abraham replied, “No! Whatever happens, never take my son back there. ⁷The LORD, the God of heaven, brought me here. He told me to leave my father’s family and my homeland and to come here. He made a promise to me with an oath: ‘I will give this land to your descendants.’ So I know he will send his angel to prepare the way for you. He will help you get a wife there for my son. ⁸If the woman refuses to come with you, you will be free from this promise I am asking you to make. But you must not take my son back there.”

⁹So the servant gave his promise with an oath to do what his master Abraham had asked.

¹⁰The servant got ten of Abraham’s camels ready to travel. He loaded them with all kinds of beautiful gifts. Then he made the journey to the city in northern Mesopotamia where Abraham’s brother Nahor lived. ¹¹He came to a well just outside the city. He made the camels kneel down there by the well. It was evening, the time the women always came out to get water.

¹²The servant prayed, “LORD, you are the God of my master Abraham. Please keep your promise to my master by helping me do what I came for. ¹³Here I am, standing by this well, and the young women from the city are coming out to get water. ¹⁴I will say to one of them, ‘Please let me have a drink from your jar.’ Let her answer show if she is the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac.

If she says, ‘Please, have a drink, and I will also give water to your camels,’ I will know that she is the right one and that you have kept your promise to my master.”

¹⁵Before he had finished praying, he saw a young woman coming out of the city. It was Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah and Nahor, Abraham’s brother. She was coming to the well with a water jar on her shoulder. ¹⁶She was a very pretty young woman, still a virgin. She went down to the well, filled her jar and went back up towards the city. ¹⁷The servant ran over to her and said, “Please give me a little water from your jar to drink.”

¹⁸She replied, “Yes, sir, please have a drink.” She quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder and gave him a drink.

¹⁹As soon as she finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will get enough water for your camels to have all they want.”

²⁰So she quickly poured the water from her jar into the drinking trough that was there. Then she ran to the well to get more water. She did this until she had brought enough water for all his camels.

²¹Abraham’s servant quietly watched her. He wanted to be sure the LORD had given him the answer that would make his journey a success. ²²Finally, the camels finished drinking. Then he got out some nice jewellery he had brought for her. He gave Rebekah a small gold ring* for her nose. He also gave her two large gold arm bracelets.† ²³He then asked, “Who is your father? Is there a place in your father’s house for me and my men to sleep?”

²⁴Rebekah answered, “My father is Bethuel, the son of Milcah and Nahor.”

*24:22 *a small gold ring* Literally, “a gold ring weighing 1 *beka*”, weighing about 5 grammes.

†24:22 *large gold arm bracelets* Literally, “arm bracelets weighing 10 (*shekels*)”, about 110 grammes each.

²⁵ Then she said, “And yes, we have a place for you to sleep. And we have straw and feed for your camels.”

²⁶ The servant bowed down in worship to the LORD. ²⁷ He said, “Praise the LORD, the God of my master Abraham! The LORD has always been good to him. And now he has kept his promise to my master by leading me here to his family.”

²⁸ Rebekah ran home to her mother and told everyone what had happened. ^{29–30} She had a brother named Laban. He heard his sister telling what the man at the well had said to her. Then he saw the ring and the bracelets on her arms. So he ran straight to the well to find the man. And there he was, standing by the camels at the well. ³¹ Laban said, “Welcome to our home! You are clearly someone the LORD has blessed. You must not stand out here any longer. I have a room ready for you and a place for your camels.”

³² So Abraham’s servant went into the house. Laban told his servants to unload the camels and give them straw and feed. Then they brought water for Abraham’s servant and his men to wash their feet. ³³ Laban then offered him food, but the servant did not want to eat yet. He said, “I will not eat until I have told you why I came.”

So Laban said, “Then tell us.”

³⁴ The servant said, “I am Abraham’s servant. ³⁵ The LORD has blessed my master in everything. My master is now a very wealthy man. The Lord has given him flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, camels and donkeys. He has plenty of silver and gold and many slaves, male and female. ³⁶ Sarah was my master’s wife. When she was very old, she finally had a son. And my master has given everything he owns to him. ^{37–38} My master made me make him a promise with an oath. He said, ‘You must

find a wife for my son, but not from among the Canaanite girls who live here. Instead, go back to my father’s family, to my own people. Find a wife for Isaac there, and bring her here for him.’ ³⁹ I said to my master, ‘What if this woman will not come with me?’ ⁴⁰ But my master said to me, ‘I have always obeyed the LORD. He will send his angel to be with you and make your journey a success. You will find a wife for my son there among my own people, from my father’s family. ⁴¹ But even if they refuse to let her go with you, I will not hold you responsible. You will be free from this promise I am asking you to make.’

⁴² “Today, when I came to this well, I prayed, ‘LORD, God of my master Abraham, please help me do what I came for. ⁴³ Here I am, standing by this well. I am waiting for a young woman to come and get water. I will say to her, ‘Please give me some water from your jar to drink.’ ⁴⁴ Let her say, ‘Please, have a drink, and I will get some water for your camels too.’ If she says this, I will know she is the one that you, the LORD, have chosen for my master’s son.’

⁴⁵ “Before I finished this silent prayer, there was Rebekah coming out to the well. She had her water jar on her shoulder. She went down to the well and filled her jar with water. That is when I asked her for a drink. ⁴⁶ She quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder to give me some water. She said, ‘Please, have a drink, and I will get some water for your camels too.’ So I drank, and she also gave water to my camels. ⁴⁷ Then I asked her, ‘Who is your father?’ She said, ‘My father is Bethuel, the son of Milcah and Nahor.’ Then I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms. ⁴⁸ I bowed down in worship to the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham. I thanked him for leading me straight to

my master's family, where I found a wife for his son. There she was, the daughter of one of my master's relatives.

⁴⁹ "So what do you say? Will you be so kind as to do what my master expects of you, his family? Please tell me yes or no. Then I will know what I should do."

⁵⁰ Then Laban and Bethuel answered, "We can see that this is from the LORD, so there is nothing to discuss. ⁵¹ Here is Rebekah. Take her and go. Let her marry your master's son. This is clearly what the LORD wants."

⁵² When Abraham's servant heard this, he bowed to the ground before the LORD. ⁵³ Then he gave Rebekah the gifts he brought. He gave her gold and silver jewellery and beautiful clothes. He also gave expensive gifts to her brother and her mother. ⁵⁴ Then he and his men had something to eat and drink, and they spent the night there. When they got up the next morning, Abraham's servant said, "Now let me go back to my master."

⁵⁵ Rebekah's brother and mother said, "Let Rebekah spend some time with us before she leaves, at least ten days. Then she can go."

⁵⁶ But the servant said to them, "Please, do not make me wait. The LORD has helped me do what I came for. Now let me go back to my master."

⁵⁷ Rebekah's brother and mother said, "We will call Rebekah and ask her what she wants to do." ⁵⁸ So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Do you want to go with this man now?"

Rebekah said, "Yes, I will go."

⁵⁹ So they let Rebekah and her childhood nurse leave with Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰ As Rebekah was leaving, they spoke these words of blessing over her:

"Our sister, may you have so many children

that no one will be able to count your descendants.

And may they be strong enough to defeat their enemies and capture their cities."

⁶¹ Then Rebekah and her women servants got on their camels. They followed Abraham's servant, who had come to get Rebekah. Now he was taking her away.

⁶² During this same time, Isaac had left Beer Lahai Roi and was now living in the southern part of Canaan. ⁶³ One evening he went out for a quiet walk[‡] in the countryside. He looked up and saw camels coming from far away.

⁶⁴ Rebekah looked up at the same time and saw Isaac. She jumped down from her camel. ⁶⁵ She said to Abraham's servant, "Who is that man in the field over there coming this way?"

The servant said, "That is my master." So Rebekah covered her face with her veil.

⁶⁶ The servant told Isaac everything that had happened. ⁶⁷ Then Isaac brought Rebekah into the tent that had belonged to his mother Sarah. Isaac took Rebekah as his wife that day. Isaac loved her, and this was a great comfort to him following the death of his mother.

Abraham's Death

25 Abraham took Keturah as his wife, ² and they had six sons: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah. ³ Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. The people of Asshur, Leum and Letush were descendants of Dedan. ⁴ The sons of Midian were Ephah, Ephher, Hanoah, Abida and Eldaah. All these descendants of Abra-

[‡]24:63 for a quiet walk Or "to meditate".

ham were from Keturah.⁵⁻⁶ Before Abraham died, he gave gifts to his sons who were from his slave women. Then he sent them to live in the east, away from Isaac. Abraham gave everything else he owned to Isaac.

⁷ Abraham was 175 years old ⁸ when he died. His last breath came after a long and satisfying life. He had seen many years go by, and now he joined his ancestors in death. ⁹⁻¹⁰ His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah. This is the cave he had bought from the Hittites. It is east of Mamre, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar. They buried him there with his wife Sarah. ¹¹ After Abraham died, God blessed Isaac. He was living at Beer Lahai Roi.

Ishmael's Descendants

¹² This is the record of Ishmael's family. Ishmael was the son of Abraham and Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian slave. ¹³ These are the names of Ishmael's sons, the oldest to the youngest: Nebaioth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵ Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. ¹⁶ These twelve sons of Ishmael were leaders over their own tribes, and the people of each tribe used the name of their leader for the place where they settled. ¹⁷ Ishmael was 137 years old when he took his last breath and joined his ancestors who had gone before him. ¹⁸ Ishmael's people settled in an area between Havilah and Shur, not far from the other descendants of Abraham. This is east of Egypt on the way to Asshur.

Isaac's Descendants

¹⁹ This is the record of Abraham's son Isaac. ²⁰ When Isaac was 40 years old, he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, an Aramean from northern Mesopotamia. She was also the sister of Laban. ²¹ For a long time, Rebekah was not able to have children. So Isaac prayed to the LORD for her. The LORD heard Isaac's prayer, and Rebekah became pregnant. ²² She began to feel two babies wrestling with each other inside her. So she asked the LORD, "Why is this happening to me?" ²³ The LORD said to her,

"The two sons inside you will become two nations; they will come from you but go their separate ways.

One will be stronger than the other.

The one born first will serve the younger one."

²⁴ When the time came, Rebekah had twins. ²⁵ The first baby was born with red skin. Since his skin was like a hairy robe, they named him Esau.^f ²⁶ When the second baby was born, he was holding tightly to Esau's heel. So they named him Jacob.^g Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob and Esau were born.

²⁷ When the boys grew up, Esau became a skilled hunter. He loved to be out in the open fields. But Jacob was a quiet man who stayed at home. ²⁸ Isaac loved Esau because he enjoyed the meat from the wild animals Esau hunted. But Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹ One day Esau came in from the fields tired and hungry. Jacob was boiling a pot of soup. ³⁰ Esau said to Jacob, "I'm starving! Give me some of that

^f**25:25 Esau** This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "hairy".

^g**25:26 Jacob** This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "to grab the heel", which came to mean "to take over", "to trick" or "to cheat".

red stuff right now!” That’s why people started calling him “Edom”.**

³¹ Jacob replied, “You can have some if you give me your rights as the firstborn son.”

³² Esau said, “All right! If I die of hunger, those rights will not help me anyway!”

³³ But Jacob said, “First, promise me with an oath that you will give your rights to me.” So Esau gave Jacob this promise and traded his rights as the firstborn son. ³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some of the bean soup. When Esau finished eating and drinking, he got up and left. This showed how little Esau cared about his rights as the firstborn son.

Isaac Lies to Abimelech

26 Now there was a famine in the land. The same thing had happened during Abraham’s life. But this time, Isaac went to the town of Gerar to see King Abimelech of the Philistines. ² The LORD had appeared to Isaac and said, “Do not go down to Egypt. I will show you the land where I want you to live. ³ Live in this land as a foreigner, and I will be with you and bless you. I will do what I promised to Abraham your father. I will give you and your family all these lands. ⁴ I will give you as many descendants as there are stars in the sky. And I will give them all these lands. It will be through your family that all the nations on earth will find blessings. ⁵ I will make this happen because your father Abraham listened to me and did what I told him to do. He obeyed my commands, my rules and my laws.”

⁶ So Isaac settled in Gerar. ⁷ When the men there saw Rebekah, they asked Isaac who she was. He said, “She is my

sister.” He was afraid to tell them Rebekah was his wife. She was very beautiful, and he was afraid they would kill him to get her. ⁸ After Isaac had lived there a long time, one day King Abimelech looked down from a window and saw Isaac with Rebekah. He was hugging and kissing her. ⁹ Abimelech called for Isaac and said, “I can see that this woman is your wife. Why did you tell us she was your sister?”

Isaac said to him, “Because I was afraid someone would kill me to get her.”

¹⁰ Abimelech said, “You were wrong to do this to us. What if one of our men had taken your wife to be his own? That would have made us all guilty of a great sin.”

¹¹ So Abimelech gave a warning to his people: “Anyone who harms this man or his wife will be put to death.”

Isaac’s Success Brings Trouble

¹² Isaac planted crops in that place, and in that same year, he harvested 100 times what he planted. The LORD blessed him so much that ¹³ he became rich. He continued to have success and became a very wealthy man. ¹⁴ He had flocks of sheep and goats and herds of cattle. He also had many servants. He had so much wealth that the Philistines were jealous of him. ¹⁵ So they ruined his wells by filling them with sand. These were wells that the servants of his father Abraham had dug many years before. ¹⁶ Finally, Abimelech said to Isaac, “It is time for you to move away because you have become too powerful for us.”

¹⁷ So Isaac left and set up camp in the Valley of Gerar, where he settled. ¹⁸ He cleaned out the wells dug in Abraham’s time, which the Philistines had filled

**25:30 *Edom* A name that means “red”.

with sand after Abraham died. Isaac also gave them the same names his father had given them.

¹⁹ Isaac's servants were digging another well in the valley and found a spring that flowed out of the ground. ²⁰ But the men who herded sheep in Gerar Valley began arguing with Isaac's servants. They said, "This water is ours." So Isaac named that well Esek^{††} because the men there had argued with him.

²¹ Then Isaac's servants dug another well, but there was an argument over this well too. So Isaac named this well Sitnah.^{‡‡}

²² Isaac moved from there and dug another well. No one came to argue about this well, so he named it Rehoboth.^{¶¶} He said, "Now the LORD has given us plenty of room to grow. We will have great success here."

²³ After some time, Isaac left there and moved to Beersheba. ²⁴ The night he arrived, the LORD appeared to him. The LORD said, "I am the God your father Abraham worshipped. Do not be afraid, because I am with you. I will bless you with many descendants because of the promise I made to my servant Abraham." ²⁵ Then Isaac built an altar there and worshipped the LORD. He set up camp in that place, and his servants dug a well.

²⁶ One day King Abimelech came from Gerar to see Isaac. He brought with him Ahuzzath, his adviser, and Phicol, his army commander.

²⁷ Isaac asked, "Why are you here? The last time I saw you, you spoke to me like an enemy. You told me to go away."

²⁸ They answered, "Now we know for sure that the LORD is with you. So we think we should make promises to each other with an oath. We want to make an agreement with you. ²⁹ Promise that you will not harm us. We did not mistreat you but were always kind to you. We sent you away in peace. And now we see that the LORD has blessed you."

³⁰ Then Isaac had a big dinner for them, and they all ate and drank together. ³¹ Early the next morning, they all made a promise to each other. They promised with an oath that they would not harm each other. Then Isaac told them goodbye, and they left in peace.

³² That same day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well they had dug. They said, "We have found water!" ³³ So Isaac named that well Shibah.^{§§} And people still call the town there Beersheba.*

Esau's Wives

³⁴ When Esau was 40 years old, he married two Hittite women. They were Judith, the daughter of Beeri, and Basemath, the daughter of Elon. ³⁵ These wives of Esau made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah.

Jacob Tricks Isaac

27 Isaac grew old, and his eyes became so weak he could not see clearly. One day he called his older son Esau to him and said, "My son."

Esau answered, "Here I am."

² Isaac said, "As you can see, I am an old man now. I could die any day. ³ So take your bow and arrows and go hunt-

^{††}26:20 *Esek* This means "argument" or "fight".

^{‡‡}26:21 *Sitnah* This means "hatred" or "being an enemy".

^{¶¶}26:22 *Rehoboth* This means "open place" or "crossroads".

^{§§}26:33 *Shibah* A name like the Hebrew word meaning "seven" or "oath".

*26:33 *Beersheba* This name means "well of the oath".

ing. Bring back a wild animal for me to eat. ⁴Cook some of that tasty food I enjoy so much. Bring it here for me to eat. Then I will bless you before I die.” ⁵So Esau left for the fields to go hunting.

Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac said this to his son Esau. ⁶So she said to her son Jacob, “Listen, I heard your father talking to your brother Esau. ⁷He said, ‘Bring me some wild animal meat. Cook some of that tasty food for me to eat. Then, with the LORD as witness, I will bless you before I die.’ ⁸So listen, son, and do what I tell you. ⁹Go out to the flock and get me two young goats. I will use them to make some of the tasty food your father enjoys. ¹⁰Then you will take it in to your father. He will eat it, and he will bless you before he dies.”

¹¹But Jacob said to his mother, “You know my brother Esau is a hairy man. But my skin is smooth. ¹²If my father touches me, he will know I am not Esau. Then he will not bless me. No, he will put a curse on me for trying to trick him.”

¹³Rebekah said to him, “If there is a curse, I ask that it be on me, not you. Just do what I said. Go and get the goats for me.”

¹⁴So Jacob went out and got two goats and brought them to his mother. His mother cooked the meat and made the tasty food that Isaac loved. ¹⁵Rebekah got some of Esau’s best clothes, which were in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. ¹⁶Then she took the skins of the goats and used them to cover Jacob’s arms and neck. ¹⁷Then she got the food she had cooked and gave it to Jacob.

¹⁸Jacob went to his father and said, “Father!”

His father answered, “Yes, my son. Which one are you?”

¹⁹Jacob replied, “I am Esau, your first son. I have done what you told me. Now sit up and eat the wild animal meat I brought for you. Then you can bless me.”

²⁰But Isaac said to his son, “How did you find an animal to kill so quickly?”

Jacob answered, “Because the LORD your God helped me.”

²¹Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come closer so I can feel you, my son. I have to be sure you are really my son Esau.”

²²So Jacob moved closer to his father. Isaac felt him and said, “Your voice sounded like Jacob’s voice, but these arms are the arms of Esau.” ²³Isaac did not recognize Jacob. He thought he was touching Esau because the arms were hairy. So Isaac was about ready to bless him.

²⁴Isaac asked him, “Are you really my son Esau?”

Jacob answered, “Yes, I am.”

²⁵Then Isaac said, “Now, my son, give me some of the wild meat you cooked. I will eat it, and then I will bless you.” Jacob gave him the meat, and he ate it. Jacob also gave him some wine, and he drank it.

²⁶Then Isaac said to him. “Son, come here and kiss my cheek.” ²⁷Jacob went over to his father and kissed him. Isaac recognized the smell of Esau’s clothes that Jacob was wearing and began to bless him. He said, “I love that smell, the smell of my son! It is like the smell of the open fields that the LORD has blessed.

²⁸I ask God to bless your land with rain from above and fertile soil. May he give you plenty of grain and wine.

²⁹May the people of the world serve you. May whole nations bow down to you. May you rule over your brothers. May your mother’s other sons bow down to you.

May God put a curse on anyone who curses you,
and may he bless anyone who blesses you.”

³⁰ Isaac finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob left. At that very same moment, Esau returned from hunting. ³¹ Esau cooked the tasty food he had brought home for his father and took it to him. He said, “Father, sit up and eat the meat your son has cooked for you. Then you can bless me.”

³² But Isaac said to him, “Which son are you?”

He answered, “I am your firstborn son, Esau.”

³³ Then Isaac became so upset that he began to shake. He said, “Then who was here just before you came in? He served me the meat he brought in from hunting. I ate it all, and then I blessed him. I cannot change that. He will always have those blessings.”

³⁴ When Esau heard his father’s words, he cried out in pain and sorrow. He begged, “Oh father, bless me too!”

³⁵ Isaac said, “Your brother tricked me! He came and took your blessing!”

³⁶ Esau said, “The name Jacob[†] is just right for him. He has tricked me twice. He took my rights as the firstborn son.[‡] And now, he has stolen the blessing that should have been mine.” Then Esau said, “Have you saved any blessing for me?”

³⁷ Isaac answered, “I have already given Jacob the power to rule over you. I said that all his brothers would be like servants to him. And I have blessed him

with plenty of grain and wine. What can I do for you, my son?”

³⁸ But Esau continued to beg his father, “Is that the only blessing you have to give? Bless me too, father!” Then Esau began to cry.

³⁹ His father said to him, “You will live far away from the best land,

far from where God waters the crops.[¶]

⁴⁰ You will live by making war,[§] but you will serve your brother.

When you decide to be free, you will break away from his control.”

Jacob Leaves the Country

⁴¹ The blessing that Jacob received from his father caused Esau to hate his brother. Esau said to himself, “My father will die soon, and we will have some days to mourn his death. After that, I will kill my brother Jacob.”

⁴² But someone told Rebekah about Esau’s plan. So she sent for Jacob and said to him, “Listen, your brother Esau is planning to kill you for what you did to him. ⁴³ So do what I tell you, son. Go to my brother Laban in Haran. ⁴⁴ Stay there with him for a while until your brother stops being angry. ⁴⁵ Someday his anger will go away, and he will forget what you did to him. Then I will send someone to bring you back home. But you must go now. I cannot let him kill you. I could lose both of you the same day!”

⁴⁶ Then Rebekah went and talked to Isaac. She said, “These Hittite women Esau married have made my life mis-

[†]27:36 **Jacob** This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “to grab the heel”, which came to mean “to take over”, “to trick” or “to cheat”.

[‡]27:36 **rights as the firstborn son** Usually, after the father died, the firstborn son got half of the father’s property and became the new head of the family.

[¶]27:39 **You ... crops** Another meaning is possible here: “You will live where the land is fertile and enjoys plenty of rain from above.”

[§]27:40 **by making war** Literally, “by your sword”. Since the word for “sword” can also mean “knife”, this may refer to Esau’s work as a hunter.

erable. If Jacob stays here, he will also marry one of them, and I will have nothing to live for!”

28 Isaac called Jacob and greeted him with words of blessing. Then Isaac gave him this command: “You must not marry any of the women who live here in Canaan. ²Go now to Mesopotamia, to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father. That is where her brother Laban lives. Marry one of his daughters. ³I pray that God All-Powerful** will bless you and give you many descendants. May you become the father of a great nation. ⁴I pray that God will give you and your family the blessings he promised to Abraham. I pray that one day you will own this land where we live now as immigrants. This is the land God gave to Abraham.”

⁵So Isaac sent Jacob away to Mesopotamia. There Jacob went to see Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean. Laban was the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

⁶Esau found out that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him away to Mesopotamia to find a wife there. He also learned that Isaac had commanded Jacob not to marry any of the women who lived in Canaan. ⁷And Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Mesopotamia. ⁸So Esau now understood that his father did not want his sons to marry Canaanite women. ⁹So he went to Abraham’s son Ishmael to find a wife from among his own people. He married Ishmael’s daughter Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth. Mahalath became Esau’s third wife.

Jacob’s Dream at Bethel

¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and went to Haran. ¹¹After the sun set, he came to

a place where he decided to spend the night. He found a stone there to put under his head and lay down to sleep. ¹²In a dream he saw some stairs that went from the ground up into heaven. He saw the angels of God going up and down the stairs. ¹³And the LORD stood beside him and said, “I am the LORD, the God worshipped by your grandfather Abraham and your father Isaac. I will give you and your descendants this land you are now sleeping on. ¹⁴I will give you as many descendants as there are specks of dust on earth. They will spread in all directions, east, west, north and south. Through you and your family, blessings will come to all the families on earth. ¹⁵I will always be with you. I will protect you everywhere you go. And one day I will bring you back to this land. I will never leave you. I will stay with you and do all I have promised.”

¹⁶Then Jacob woke up. He said, “The LORD is in this place. I did not know it earlier, but now I am sure he is here.”

¹⁷He felt afraid and said, “This place frightens me! This must be where God lives. It must be the entrance to heaven!”

¹⁸Jacob got up as soon as morning came. He took the stone he had put under his head and set it up on its edge as a sacred stone. Then he poured olive oil on the top of it to dedicate it to God. ¹⁹Jacob named that place Bethel. Before this, the town in that area was called Luz.

²⁰Then Jacob made a promise with an oath: “God, I ask you to be with me and protect me on this journey. I ask you to provide me food to eat and clothes to wear. If you do this ²¹and I return safely to my father’s house, then you, the LORD, will be my God. ²²This stone I have set up here will mark this as a special place. It will be a place for worship-

**28:3 *God All-Powerful* Literally, “El Shaddai”.

ping God. And I will give you one-tenth of all you give me.”

Jacob Meets Rachel

29 Then Jacob continued his journey until he reached the land where the eastern people live. ²There he saw a well in an open field. Three flocks of sheep were lying near the well. They had come for water from the well, which was covered with a large rock. ³The shepherds there always waited for the flocks to gather before they rolled the rock away. Then, after all the sheep finished drinking, they put the rock back over the well.

⁴Jacob asked the shepherds, “Brothers, where are you from?”

They answered, “We are from Haran.”

⁵Then Jacob said, “Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor?”

The shepherds answered, “We know him.”

⁶Jacob said, “How is he?”

They said, “He is well. And now here comes his daughter Rachel with his sheep.”

⁷Jacob said, “Look, it’s too early to gather all the animals for the night. There is still plenty of daylight left. So why don’t you go ahead and give them water and let them go back to the pasture?”

⁸But they said, “We cannot do that until all the flocks are gathered here. Then we will roll the rock away from the well and give all the sheep water.”

⁹While Jacob was still talking with the shepherds, Rachel arrived with her father’s sheep, because she had the job of caring for the sheep. ¹⁰Rachel was the daughter of Laban, the brother of Jacob’s mother Rebekah. When Jacob saw

Rachel with her father’s sheep, he went and moved the rock and gave water to the sheep. ¹¹Then Jacob kissed Rachel and cried because he was so happy. ¹²He told her that he was from her father’s family, a son of Rebekah. So Rachel ran home and told her father.

¹³When Laban heard the news about his nephew Jacob, he ran to meet him. Laban hugged him and kissed him and brought him to his house. There Jacob told Laban all about himself.

¹⁴Then Laban said, “You are welcome! I accept you as one of my own family.” So Jacob stayed with Laban for a month.

Laban Tricks Jacob

¹⁵One day Laban said to Jacob, “You are my relative, but that does not mean you should work for nothing. How much should I pay you?”

¹⁶Now Laban had two daughters. The older was Leah, and the younger was Rachel.

¹⁷Leah had lovely eyes,^{††} but Rachel was beautiful in more ways than one. ¹⁸Jacob loved Rachel, so he said to Laban, “I will work seven years for you if you will let me marry your younger daughter Rachel.”

¹⁹Laban said, “I would rather let her marry you than anyone else. So stay here and work for me.”

²⁰So Jacob worked seven years for Laban. But it seemed like a very short time because he loved Rachel so much.

²¹After seven years, Jacob said to Laban, “My time is up. Give me the wife you promised so that we can come together in marriage.”

²²So Laban invited everyone for a big wedding feast. ²³That night Laban took his daughter Leah, not Rachel, to Jacob

^{††}29:17 *had lovely eyes* This might be a polite way of saying Leah was not very pretty.

to be his wife, and Jacob had sex with her. ²⁴ Laban also gave his slave woman Zilpah to Leah to be her servant.

²⁵ In the morning Jacob saw that it was Leah he had sex with, and he said to Laban, “Why did you do this to me? I worked hard for you so that I could marry Rachel. Why did you trick me?”

²⁶ Laban said, “In our country we don’t allow the younger daughter to marry before the older daughter. ²⁷ Stay with Leah the full week of the marriage celebration, and I will let you marry Rachel too. But then you must work for me another seven years.”

²⁸ So Jacob agreed and finished the week with Leah. Then Laban let him marry his daughter Rachel. ²⁹ Laban also gave his slave woman Bilhah to Rachel to be her servant. ³⁰ So Jacob also had sex with Rachel, and he loved her more than Leah. He then worked for Laban another seven years.

Jacob’s Family Grows

³¹ When the LORD saw that Jacob did not love Leah very much, he made her able to have children. But Rachel could not get pregnant.

³² Leah had a son, and she named him Reuben.^{‡‡} She named him this because she said, “The LORD has seen my troubles. Now I feel sure my husband will love me.”

³³ Leah became pregnant again and had another son. She named this son Simeon.[¶] She said, “The LORD has heard that I am not loved, so he gave me this son.”

³⁴ Leah became pregnant again and had another son. She named this son Levi.^{§§} She said, “Now I am sure my husband will love me. I have given him three sons.”

³⁵ Then Leah had another son. She named this son Judah.^{*} Leah named him this because she said, “Now I will praise the LORD.” Then Leah stopped having children.

30 Rachel had not been able to have children for Jacob as Leah had. So Rachel became jealous of her sister and said to Jacob, “If you don’t give me children, I will die!”

² This made Jacob angry, and he said to Rachel, “I am not God. He is the one who keeps you from having children.”

³ Then Rachel said, “You can have my slave woman Bilhah. Sleep with her, and she will have a child for me. I can have my own family through her.”

⁴ So Rachel gave Bilhah as a wife to her husband Jacob. He had sex with Bilhah. ⁵ She became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Jacob.

⁶ Rachel said, “God has listened to my prayer. He decided to give me a son.” So she named this son Dan.[†]

⁷ Bilhah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son. ⁸ Rachel said, “I have fought hard to compete with my sister, and I have won.” So she named that son Naphtali.[‡]

⁹ Leah saw that she could have no more children. So she gave her slave woman Zilpah as a wife to Jacob. ¹⁰ Then Zilpah had a son. ¹¹ Leah said, “I am

^{‡‡}29:32 *Reuben* This Hebrew name means “Look, a son”, but it sounds like the Hebrew words meaning “he has seen my troubles”.

[¶]29:33 *Simeon* This is like the Hebrew word meaning “He hears.”

^{§§}29:34 *Levi* This is like the Hebrew word meaning “be joined to”.

^{*}29:35 *Judah* This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “He is praised.”

[†]30:6 *Dan* This is like the Hebrew word meaning “to decide” or “to judge”.

[‡]30:8 *Naphtali* This is like the Hebrew word meaning “my struggle”.

lucky,” so she named the son Gad.^{¶12} Zilpah had another son.¹³ Leah said, “I am very happy! Now women will call me happy!” So she named that son Asher.[§]

¹⁴ During the wheat harvest Reuben went into the fields and found some plants called mandrakes.^{**} He brought them to his mother Leah. But Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.”

¹⁵ Leah answered, “You have already taken away my husband. Don’t ask me for my son’s mandrakes too.”

But Rachel answered, “If you will give me your son’s mandrakes, you can sleep with Jacob tonight.”

¹⁶ When Jacob came in from the fields that night, Leah went out to meet him. She said, “You will sleep with me tonight. I have paid for you with my son’s mandrakes.” So Jacob had sex with Leah that night.

¹⁷ God answered Leah’s prayer, and she became pregnant again. She had a fifth son.¹⁸ She said, “God has rewarded me for giving my slave woman to my husband as a wife.” So she named her son Issachar.^{††}

¹⁹ Leah became pregnant again and had a sixth son.²⁰ She said, “God has given me a wonderful gift, and now my husband will honour me for giving him six sons.” So she named this son Zebulun.^{‡‡}

²¹ Later, Leah had a daughter, and she named her Dinah.

²² Then God also showed his care for Rachel. He heard her prayer and made her able to have children.²³ She became pregnant and had a son. She said, “God has taken away my shame.”²⁴ Rachel named the son Joseph,^{¶¶} saying, “May the LORD give me another son.”

Jacob Tricks Laban

²⁵ After the birth of Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Now let me go back to my own homeland.²⁶ Let me take my wives and my children and go. With all the work I have done for you I have earned the right to take them. You know I have served you well.”

²⁷ Laban said to him, “Please, let me say something. I know that^{§§} the LORD has blessed me because of you.²⁸ Tell me how much I owe you. I will pay whatever you ask.”

²⁹ Jacob answered, “You know that I have worked hard for you. Your flocks have grown and been well while I cared for them.³⁰ When I came, you had little. Now you have much, much more. Every time I did something for you, the LORD blessed you. Now it is time for me to work for myself and my own family.”

³¹ Laban asked, “Then what should I give you?”

Jacob answered, “I don’t want you to pay me anything! But if you will do one

[¶]30:11 *Gad* This is like the Hebrew word meaning “lucky” or “fortunate”.

[§]30:13 *Asher* This is like the Hebrew word meaning “happy”.

^{**}30:14 *mandrakes* A plant that was used to strengthen sexual desire. The Hebrew word is similar to the word meaning “to make love”. The roots had a human form, and people thought they could help women get pregnant.

^{††}30:18 *Issachar* This is like the Hebrew word meaning “reward” or “payment”.

^{‡‡}30:20 *Zebulun* This is like the Hebrew word meaning “praise” or “honour”.

^{¶¶}30:24 *Joseph* This is like the Hebrew word meaning “may he add”. It also sounds like the word translated “taken away” in verse 23.

^{§§}30:27 *I know that* Literally, “I have learned by divination that” or possibly, “I have become rich and”.

thing for me, I will continue to take care of your sheep. ³²I ask you to let me go through all your flocks today and take out every sheep that is spotted or speckled and every black lamb. Let me take out every spotted or speckled goat. That will be my pay. ³³In the future, when you look at the flocks I took as pay, you can easily see if I have been honest. If I have any animals that are not spotted or speckled or any lamb that is not black, you will know I stole it.”

³⁴Laban answered, “I agree to that. We will do what you ask.” ³⁵But that day Laban hid all the male goats with stripes or spots. And he hid all the female goats that had spots or specks, including any with white on them. He also hid all the black sheep. Laban told his sons to watch these sheep. ³⁶So the sons took all the spotted animals and led them to another place. They travelled for three days. Jacob stayed and took care of all the animals that were left.

³⁷Jacob cut branches from poplar, almond and plane trees. He peeled strips of the bark away from the white wood so that the branches had white stripes on them. ³⁸He put the branches in front of the flocks at the watering places. When the animals came to drink, they also mated in that place. ³⁹When the animals mated in front of the branches, the young that were born were streaked, speckled or spotted.

⁴⁰Jacob separated the young animals from the others in the flock. When these others were ready to mate, he made them face the streaked and black animals in Laban’s flock. By doing this Jacob created his own flock, keeping his animals separate from Laban’s. ⁴¹Any time the stronger animals in the flock were mating, Jacob put the branches in front of them at the drinking place. He wanted to make sure the animals mated

near those branches. ⁴²But when the weaker animals mated, Jacob did not put the branches there. So the young animals born from the weak animals were Laban’s. And the young animals born from the stronger animals were Jacob’s. ⁴³In this way Jacob became very rich. He had large flocks of sheep and goats, many camels and donkeys, and many male and female slaves.

Jacob Runs Away

31 One day Jacob heard Laban’s sons talking. They said, “Jacob has taken everything our father owned. He has become rich with all the things that belonged to our father.” ²Jacob also noticed that Laban was not as friendly as he had been before.

³Then the LORD said to Jacob, “Go back to your own land, where your ancestors lived. I will be with you.”

⁴So Jacob sent someone to tell Rachel and Leah to meet him in the field where he kept his flocks. ⁵He said to them, “I have noticed that your father is not as friendly to me as he was before. But the God my father worshipped has been with me. ⁶You both know I have worked as hard as I could for your father. ⁷But he has cheated me again and again. He has changed my pay ten times. But God has protected me from harm. ⁸When Laban agreed to give all the speckled animals for my pay, the whole flock gave birth to speckled young. Then, when he said my pay would be the striped animals, the whole flock gave birth to striped young. ⁹So that’s how God took the animals away from your father and gave them to me.

¹⁰“I had a dream during the time when the animals were mating. I saw that the only male goats that were mating were streaked, speckled or spotted. ¹¹The angel of God spoke to me in that

dream and said, ‘Jacob!’ And I said, ‘Yes!’

¹²“The angel said, ‘You can see that only the streaked, speckled or spotted male goats are mating. I am doing this because I have seen all the wrong things Laban has been doing to you, and I want to help you. ¹³I am the God who appeared to you at Bethel, where you set up that special stone, poured olive oil on it and made a promise to me. Now I want you to leave this place and go back to the land where you were born.’”

¹⁴Rachel and Leah answered, “We have no reason to stay here. Our father has nothing left, so we will not receive anything when he dies. ¹⁵He has treated us like strangers. He sold us to you for your years of service. And then he spent all the profit he received from your work. Some of that should have been ours. ¹⁶All the wealth God took from our father to give to you really belongs to us and our children. So we think you should do what God told you to do.”

¹⁷Jacob immediately prepared them for the journey. He put his children and his wives on camels ¹⁸and began the journey back to the land of Canaan, where his father lived. He took all the livestock he owned as well as all the other things he had gained during his time in Mesopotamia.

¹⁹They left while Laban was away from home cutting the wool from his sheep. Rachel stole the idols from her father’s house and took them with her. ²⁰Jacob tricked Laban the Aramean by not telling him he was leaving. ²¹Jacob ran away with his family, and they took with them everything they owned. They crossed the Euphrates River and travelled towards the hill country of Gilead.

Laban Chases Jacob

²²Three days later, Laban learned that Jacob had run away. ²³So he gathered some of his own people together and began to chase Jacob. After seven days, Laban found him in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁴But God appeared to Laban in a dream that night and warned him, “Be careful what you say to Jacob! Don’t say anything to bring him harm.”

The Search for the Stolen Idols

²⁵The next morning Laban caught up with Jacob, who had set up his camp in the hill country. Laban and all his people also set up camp there in the hill country of Gilead.

²⁶Laban said to Jacob, “Why did you trick me and take away my daughters like prisoners of war? ²⁷Why did you run away without telling me? If you had told me, I would have given you a party. We could have celebrated with singing to the music of harps and tambourines. ²⁸You did not even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters goodbye. You were very foolish to do this! ²⁹I have the power to do harm to you all. But last night the God of your father came to me in a dream. He warned me not to harm you in any way. ³⁰I know you left because you want to go back to your home. But why did you steal my idols?”

³¹Jacob answered, “I left without telling you because I was afraid. I thought you would take your daughters away from me. ³²But I did not steal your idols. If you find anyone here with me who has taken those idols, they will be killed. Your men will be my witnesses. You can look for anything that belongs to you. Take anything that is yours.” Jacob said this without knowing that Rachel had stolen Laban’s idols.

³³ So Laban went and looked through Jacob's camp. He looked in Jacob's tent and then in Leah's tent. Then he looked in the tent where the two slave women stayed, but he did not find the idols from his house. Then he went into Rachel's tent. ³⁴ Rachel had hidden the idols inside her camel's saddle, and she was sitting on them. Laban looked through the whole tent, but he did not find the idols.

³⁵ Rachel said, "Father, don't be angry with me. I am not able to stand up before you. I am having my monthly period of bleeding." So Laban looked through the camp, but he did not find the gods from his house.

³⁶ Then Jacob became very angry and said, "What wrong have I done? What law have I broken? What right do you have to chase me and stop me? ³⁷ You looked through everything I own and found nothing that belongs to you. If you found something, show it to us. Put it here in front of your people and mine. Let them decide which one of us is right. ³⁸ I have been taking care of your flocks for 20 years now. During all that time, none of your sheep or goats died during birth. And I have never eaten any of the rams from your flocks. ³⁹ Any time a sheep was killed by wild animals, I always paid for the loss myself. I did not bring the dead animal to you and say it was not my fault. You made me pay for any animal that was stolen during the day or the night. ⁴⁰ I worked hard in the scorching heat of the day, and the cold nights kept me from getting enough sleep. ⁴¹ The 20 years I was with you I worked like a slave. The first 14 years I worked to win your two daughters. And the last six years I worked to earn ani-

mals from your flocks. During that time, you changed my pay ten times. ⁴² But God was with me, the same God who was worshipped and feared by my father Isaac and my grandfather Abraham. If he had not helped me, you would have sent me away with nothing. But he saw the trouble I had and the work I did, so last night he told you how wrong you were."

Jacob and Laban's Agreement

⁴³ Laban said to Jacob, "These women are my daughters. These children belong to me, and these animals are mine. Everything you see here belongs to me, but I can do nothing to keep my daughters and their children. ⁴⁴ So I am ready to make an agreement with you. We will set up a pile of stones to show that we have an agreement."

⁴⁵ So Jacob found a large stone and set it up on its edge there to mark this as a special place. ⁴⁶ He told his people to bring some more stones. So they got more stones and piled them up. Then they all ate together there beside the pile. ⁴⁷ Laban called the place Yegar Sahadutha,* and Jacob called it Galeed.†

⁴⁸ Laban said to Jacob, "This pile of rocks will help us both remember our agreement." That is why Jacob called it Galeed.

⁴⁹ It was also called Mizpah‡ because Laban said, "Let the LORD watch to see what we do while we are separated from each other. ⁵⁰ If you hurt my daughters, or if you marry other women, remember that God is watching." ⁵¹ Then Laban said, "Here's my pile of stones and the stone marker that was set up between us. ⁵² This pile of stones and the stone marker will help us remember our agree-

***31:47 Yegar Sahadutha** Aramaic words meaning "pile that reminds".

†**31:47 Galeed** A Hebrew name meaning "pile that reminds".

‡**31:49 Mizpah** This means "a place to watch from".

ment. I will never go past these stones to fight against you, and you must never go on my side of these stones to fight against me. ⁵³May the God who was worshipped by your grandfather Abraham and my grandfather Nahor judge us guilty if we break this agreement.”

So Jacob made a promise with an oath in the name of the same God who was feared and worshipped by his father Isaac. ⁵⁴Then Jacob killed an animal and offered it as a sacrifice on the mountain. And he invited all his relatives there to share in the meal. After they finished eating, they spent the night on the mountain. ⁵⁵Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and told them goodbye. Then he left to go back home.

Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau

32 Jacob also left, and on his way back home, angels of God came to meet him. ²When he saw them, he said, “This is God’s camp!” So Jacob named that place Mahanaim.[†]

³Jacob sent messengers to his brother Esau, who was living in the area called Seir in the hill country of Edom. ⁴He ordered them to give this message to Esau: “Greetings, my master, from your servant Jacob. I have been staying in Laban’s home and have waited until now to contact you. ⁵I have done well. I now have plenty of cattle, donkeys, flocks, and male and female slaves. I send you this message, hoping that you will welcome me home.”

⁶When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, “We went to your brother Esau. He is coming to meet you and has 400 men with him.”

⁷This news frightened Jacob. He was so upset that he divided his people and

all the flocks, herds and camels into two groups. ⁸He thought, “If Esau comes and destroys one group, maybe the other group can escape.”

⁹Then Jacob said, “LORD, you are the God my grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac worshipped! You told me to return to my country and to my family. You said, ‘I will be good to you.’ ¹⁰I know I don’t deserve all the good things you have done for me. You have been very kind to me. The first time I travelled across the Jordan River, I had nothing but my walking stick. But now I have these two large groups of people and animals. ¹¹Please save me from my brother Esau. I am afraid he will come and kill us all, even the mothers with the children. ¹²Lord, you told me, ‘I will make everything go well for you. You will have so many descendants that they will be like the grains of sand on the seashore, too many to count.’”

¹³Jacob stayed there that night and prepared a gift for Esau from what he had with him: ¹⁴200 female goats and 20 male goats, 200 female sheep and 20 rams, ¹⁵30 camels and their colts, 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys. ¹⁶He put one of his servants in charge of each herd of animals. Then he said to them, “Go ahead of me and keep some space between each herd.” ¹⁷Jacob gave them their orders. To the servant with the first group of animals he said, “When my brother Esau meets you, he will ask, ‘Whose servant are you, and whose animals are these? And where are you going?’ ¹⁸You should answer, ‘These animals belong to your servant Jacob, who is coming behind us. He sent them as a gift to his master Esau.’”

[†]32:2 *Mahanaim* This name means “two camps”.

¹⁹ Jacob also ordered the servants in charge of the second, third and other herds that followed to say the same thing to Esau when they met him. ²⁰ Jacob told them to be sure and say, “Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.”

Jacob thought, “Maybe these gifts I am sending ahead will soften Esau’s anger. Then, when I see him, maybe he will welcome me.” ²¹ So Jacob sent the gifts to Esau, but he stayed in the camp that night.

²² During the night, Jacob got up and crossed the Jabbok River with his two wives, his two slave women and his eleven sons. ²³ After he sent his family across the river, he sent everything he had across.

Jacob Wrestles With God

²⁴ Jacob was left alone, and a man came and wrestled with him until almost sunrise. ²⁵ When the man saw that he could not defeat Jacob, he struck Jacob’s hip and put it out of joint.

²⁶ Then he said to Jacob, “Let me go. The sun is coming up.”[§]

But Jacob said, “I will not let you go until you give me a blessing.”

²⁷ So the man asked him, “What is your name?”

And he answered, “My name is Jacob.”

²⁸ Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob. Your name will now be Israel.** I give you this name because you have fought with God and with men, and you have won.”

²⁹ Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.”

But the man said, “Why do you ask my name?” Then he gave Jacob a blessing there.

³⁰ So Jacob named that place Peniel.†† He said, “Here I saw God face to face, but my life was spared.” ³¹ Then the sun came up as Jacob left Peniel. He was limping because of his hurt hip. ³² So even today, when the people of Israel eat meat, they don’t eat the muscle on the hip joint, because this is where Jacob was struck.

Jacob Meets Esau

33 Jacob looked and saw Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob divided his family into four groups led by Leah, Rachel and his two slave women. ² Jacob put the slave women and their children in front. Then he put Leah and her children behind them, and Rachel and Joseph behind them.

³ Jacob himself went in front of them all. As he walked towards his brother, he bowed down to the ground seven times.

⁴ But when Esau saw Jacob, he ran to meet him. He put his arms around Jacob, hugged him and kissed him. Then they both cried. ⁵ Esau looked up and saw the women and children. He said, “Who are all these people with you?”

Jacob answered, “These are the children God has given me. God has been good to me, your servant.”

⁶ The two slave women and their children came and bowed down to the ground before Esau. ⁷ Then Leah and her children came and bowed down before him. Finally, Rachel and Joseph came and bowed before him.

§32:26 *The sun ... up* Many ancient people thought that some gods avoided the sunlight to keep people from seeing them clearly.

**32:28 *Israel* This name might mean “he fights for God”, “he fights with God” or “God fights”.

††32:30 *Peniel* A name that means “the face of God”.

⁸ Esau said, “I met a group with herds of animals on my way here. What were all those animals for?”

Jacob answered, “I sent those hoping that you might welcome me.”

⁹ But Esau said, “I already have plenty, my brother. You should keep what you have.”

¹⁰ Jacob said, “No, please! If you are glad to see me, please accept these gifts. When you gave me such a friendly welcome, seeing your face was like seeing the face of God! ¹¹ So I beg you to accept these gifts. God has been very good to me. I have more than I need.” Because Jacob begged him, Esau accepted the gifts.

¹² Then Esau said, “Now let’s be on our way. I will go with you.”

¹³ But Jacob said, “My master, you know how difficult it is for young children to travel. And I have to be careful with my flocks and their young ones. If I force them to walk too far in one day, they will all die. ¹⁴ So you go on ahead, and I will come more slowly. I will let the animals and children travel at a speed that will be safe for them. I will meet you in Seir.”

¹⁵ Esau said, “Then I will leave some of my men to help you.”

But Jacob said, “You don’t have to do that, my master. All I wanted was for you to welcome me.” ¹⁶ So that day Esau started on his trip back to Seir. ¹⁷ But Jacob went to Succoth. There he built a house for himself and shelters for his cattle. That is why the place was named Succoth.^{‡‡}

¹⁸ Jacob ended his journey from Mesopotamia when he arrived safely at the town of Shechem in Canaan. He set up his camp outside the town. ¹⁹ The

land where he camped was owned by the family of Hamor, father of Shechem. He paid them 100 pieces of silver for the part where he settled. ²⁰ He built an altar there and named it “The God of Israel is God”.^{¶¶}

Dinah and Shechem

34 One day, Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob, went out to visit the women of that area. ² When a man named Shechem saw her, he took her and had sex with her, bringing shame on her. He was the son of Hamor the Hivite, who ruled that area. ³ Shechem had such deep feelings for her that he began trying to win her love with tender words. ⁴ Then he told his father, “Arrange for me to have this girl. I want to marry her.”

⁵ When Jacob learned that Shechem had disgraced his daughter, his sons were out in the fields with the cattle. So he waited for them to come home. ⁶ But then Shechem’s father Hamor came to talk with Jacob.

⁷ At the same time, Jacob’s sons heard the news about what had happened and immediately came in from the fields. They were upset and very angry because Shechem had done such a terrible thing to their sister. Shechem had done something that should never be done and had brought shame to Israel.

⁸ But Hamor talked to them all and said, “My son Shechem is deeply in love with Dinah. Please let him marry her. ⁹ Let this marriage be the first of many. Let’s agree that our men can marry your women, and your men can marry our women. ¹⁰ Then you can live among us. The land will be open to you. You will

^{‡‡}33:17 *Succoth* A town east of the Jordan River. This name means “shelters”.

^{¶¶}33:20 *The God of Israel is God* Literally, “El Elohe Israel”.

be free to travel around or buy land and settle down anywhere you like.”

¹¹ Shechem also said to Jacob and to Dinah’s brothers, “Please accept me. I will do anything you ask me to do. ¹² I will pay you whatever price you set for the bride. I will bring you any gift you want, if you will allow me to marry Dinah.”

¹³ Jacob’s sons were still angry that Shechem had disgraced their sister. So they answered with lies to trick him and his father Hamor. ¹⁴ They said to them, “We cannot allow our sister to marry you because you are not yet circumcised. That would be a disgrace to us. ¹⁵ But we will allow you to marry her if you do this one thing: You must circumcise all your men to make them like us. ¹⁶ Then your men can marry our women, and our men can marry your women. We will live in your land, and we will all become one people. ¹⁷ If you refuse to be circumcised, we will take Dinah and leave.”

¹⁸ Hamor and Shechem agreed to do what Jacob’s sons asked. ¹⁹ In fact, Shechem was eager to do it because of his desire for Dinah.

Shechem was the most important man in his family. ²⁰ So he went with his father Hamor to the meeting place by the city gate to speak to the men of the city. They said, ²¹ “These people want to be friends with us. We think we should let them live in our land and go anywhere they want. There is enough land for all of us. Then we can marry their women, and we will let them marry our women. ²² But before they can live among us and be one people with us, there is something we must do. All our men must be circumcised to be like their men. ²³ If we do this, their cattle, their property and all their other animals will be ours. We should make this agreement with them so that they will stay here with us.” ²⁴ All

the men in the meeting at the city gate agreed with Hamor and Shechem. And every man was circumcised.

²⁵ Three days later, all the men were still suffering from being circumcised. So two of Dinah’s brothers, Simeon and Levi, sons of Jacob, took their swords and made a surprise attack on the city, killing every man there. ²⁶ They killed Hamor and his son Shechem and took Dinah out of Shechem’s house. ²⁷ The sons of Jacob stripped the dead bodies and took everything in the city because of what Shechem had done to their sister. ²⁸ They took all their flocks, herds, donkeys and everything else in the city and in the fields. ²⁹ They took everything of value the people there owned. They even took their wives, their children and everything in their houses.

³⁰ But Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “Look at the trouble you have brought on me! Now the people in this land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, will hate me. There are only a few of us. So if they join together to fight against me, I and all my people will be destroyed.”

³¹ But the brothers said, “We could not let these people treat our sister like a prostitute!”

Jacob in Bethel

35 God said to Jacob, “Go to the town of Bethel and settle there. Make an altar to honour me, the God who appeared to you there when you were running away from your brother Esau.”

² So Jacob told his family and all the other people with him, “Throw out all the statues of foreign gods that you have. Then take a bath and put on clean clothes so God can accept you. ³ We will leave here and go to Bethel. There I will build an altar to God, who has always

helped me during times of trouble. He has been with me wherever I have gone.”

⁴ So the people gave Jacob all the images of foreign gods that they had, including the earrings they were wearing. He buried everything in the shade of the great oak tree near the town of Shechem.

⁵ When Jacob and his people left that area, God protected them by making the people in the nearby cities afraid to chase after them. ⁶ So Jacob and his people reached the town of Luz, which is now called Bethel, in the land of Canaan. ⁷ Jacob built an altar there. He named the place “El Bethel”.^{§§} Jacob chose this name because that is the place where God first appeared to him when he was running from his brother.

⁸ Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died there. They buried her in the shade of an oak tree south of Bethel. After that, people began calling that tree “Crying Oak”.

Jacob’s New Name

⁹ When Jacob came back from Mesopotamia, God appeared to him again. God blessed Jacob ¹⁰ with these words: “Your name is Jacob, but I will change that name. Your new name will be Israel* instead of Jacob.” So God named him Israel.

¹¹ God said to him, “I am God All-Powerful,[†] and I give you this blessing: You will have many children and grow into a great nation. Many nations and kings will come from you. ¹² The land

I promised Abraham and Isaac I now give to you and to all your descendants.”^{13–14} After God left him there, Jacob set up a special stone to mark this as the place where God had spoken to him. He poured wine and oil on it to honour God. ¹⁵ Jacob named this place Bethel because God spoke to him there.

Rachel Dies Giving Birth

¹⁶ Jacob and his people left Bethel and headed for Ephrath. Before they arrived, Rachel began giving birth to her baby. But she was having difficulty with this birth and was in great pain. ¹⁷ When her pain was at its worst, her nurse said, “Don’t be afraid, Rachel. You are giving birth to another son.”

¹⁸ But Rachel died while giving birth to the son. As she was dying, she named the boy Benoni.[‡] But Jacob called him Benjamin.[¶]

¹⁹ Rachel was buried on the road to Ephrath, now called Bethlehem. ²⁰ Jacob put a special stone on Rachel’s grave to honour her. That stone is still there today. ²¹ Then Jacob, now also known as Israel, continued his journey and camped just south of Eder tower.[§]

²² He stayed there for a short time. While he was there, Reuben had sex with Israel’s slave woman Bilhah. Israel heard about this, and he was very angry.^{**}

The Family of Jacob

These are the names of Jacob’s twelve sons:

^{§§}35:7 *El Bethel* A name that means “the God of Bethel”.

*35:10 *Israel* This name might mean “he fights for God”, “he fights with God” or “God fights”.

†35:11 *God All-Powerful* Literally, “El Shaddai”.

‡35:18 *Benoni* This name means “son of my suffering”.

¶35:18 *Benjamin* This name means “right-hand son” or “favourite son”.

§35:21 *Eder tower* Or “Migdal Eder”.

**35:22 *and he was very angry* These words are from the ancient Greek version. They are not in the traditional Hebrew text. See Gen. 49:4.

²³ His firstborn son was Reuben, whose mother was Leah. Jacob's other sons by Leah were Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun.

²⁴ His sons by Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁵ His sons by Bilhah, Rachel's slave woman, were Dan and Naphtali.

²⁶ His sons by Zilpah, Leah's slave woman, were Gad and Asher.

These were Jacob's sons who were born in Mesopotamia.

²⁷ Jacob went to his father Isaac at Mamre in Kiriath Arba, now known as Hebron. This is where Abraham and Isaac had lived. ²⁸ Isaac was 180 years old ²⁹ when he died. By the time he took his last breath, he had lived a long and satisfying life. And now he joined his ancestors who had gone before him. His sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Esau's Family

36 This is the record of Esau, also known as Edom. ² Esau married women from the land of Canaan. His wives were Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the son of Zibeon the Hivite, and ³ Basemath, Ishmael's daughter. She is the sister of Nebaioth. ⁴ Esau and Adah had a son named Eliphaz. Basemath had a son named Reuel. ⁵ Oholibamah had three sons: Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These were Esau's sons who were born in the land of Canaan.

⁶⁻⁸ Jacob and Esau had so much wealth, especially livestock, that the land where they were could not support them all. So Esau, who is also known as Edom, moved far away from his brother Jacob. He took his wives, sons, daughters, all his people, cattle and other animals, and everything else he had gained

in Canaan and moved to the hill country of Seir.††

⁹ This is the record of Esau's descendants, the Edomites, who live in the hill country of Seir:

¹⁰ Esau and Adah's son was Eliphaz. Esau and Basemath's son was Reuel.

¹¹ Eliphaz had five sons: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz.

¹² Eliphaz also had a slave woman named Timna. Timna and Eliphaz had a son named Amalek.

¹³ Reuel had four sons: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.

These were Esau's grandsons from his wife Basemath.

¹⁴ Esau's third wife was Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the son of Zibeon. Esau and Oholibamah's children were Jeush, Jalam and Korah.

¹⁵ These are the family leaders that came from Esau:

Esau's first son was Eliphaz. From Eliphaz came Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, ¹⁶ Korah, Gatam and Amalek.

All these family leaders in the land of Edom came from Esau's wife Adah.

¹⁷ Esau's son Reuel was the father of these family leaders: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.

All these family leaders in the land of Edom came from Esau's wife Basemath.

¹⁸ Esau's wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, gave birth to Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These three men were the leaders of their families.

¹⁹ These sons of Esau, who is also known as Edom, were leaders of the families descended from him.

Seir's Family

²⁰ Seir, a Horite man, lived in Edom before Esau. These are the sons of Seir:

†† **36:6-8** *Seir* A mountain range in Edom.

Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,²¹ Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These sons were all Horite family leaders from Seir in Edom.

²² Lotan was the father of Hori and Heman.^{‡‡} Lotan's sister was Timna.

²³ Shobal was the father of Alvan, Manathath, Ebal, Shepho and Onam.

²⁴ Zibeon had two sons, Aiah and Anah. Anah is the man who found the springs in the desert while he was caring for his father's donkeys.

²⁵ Anah was the father of Dishon and Oholibamah.

²⁶ Dishon had four sons. They were Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Keran.

²⁷ Ezer had three sons. They were Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan.

²⁸ Dishan had two sons. They were Uz and Aran.

²⁹ These are the names of the leaders of the Horite families: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,³⁰ Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These men were the leaders of the families that lived in the country of Seir.

The Kings of Edom

³¹ At that time there were kings in Edom. Edom had kings a long time before the Israelites did.

³² Bela son of Beor was a king who ruled in Edom from the city of Dinhabah.

³³ When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah became king. Zerah was from the town of Bozrah.

³⁴ When Jobab died, Husham became king. He was from the land of the Temanites.

³⁵ When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad became king and ruled from the city of Avith. He defeated the Midianites in the country of Moab.

³⁶ When Hadad died, Samlah became king. He was from Masrekah.

³⁷ When Samlah died, Shaul became king. He was from Rehoboth, a city by the Euphrates River.

³⁸ When Shaul died, Baal Hanan became king. He was the son of Acbor.

³⁹ When Baal Hanan died, Hadad^{¶¶} became king and ruled from the city of Pau. His wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, who was the daughter of Mezahab.

⁴⁰⁻⁴³ The Edomite families were descended from Esau, who was also known as Edom. These were their family leaders:

Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel and Iram. The area where each of these families lived was given the name of that family.

Joseph the Dreamer

37 Jacob lived in the land of Canaan, where his father had lived.² This is the story of his family.

When Jacob's son Joseph was 17 years old, he and his brothers took care of the sheep and the goats. He was a helper for the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. Joseph told his father that his brothers were doing some bad things.

³ Joseph was born when his father was very old, so Jacob, now also known as Israel, loved him more than his other sons. Jacob gave him a very special coat.

⁴ When the brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than he loved them, they hated their brother. They never said anything nice to him.

⁵ One night Joseph had a dream. When he told his brothers about it, they hated him even more.

^{‡‡}36:22 *Heman* Or "Homam".

^{¶¶}36:39 *Hadad* Or "Hadar".

⁶Here's what he said: "Let me tell you about this dream I had. ⁷We were all working in the field, tying stalks of wheat together into bundles. My bundle stood up, and all your bundles came together in a circle around mine and bowed down to it."

⁸His brothers said, "Do you really think this means you will be a king and rule over us?" They now hated Joseph even more because of his dream and what he said about it.

⁹Then Joseph had another dream, and he told his brothers about it. He said, "Let me tell you about another dream I had. I saw the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowing down to me."

¹⁰When Joseph told his father about this dream, his father was upset with him. He said, "What kind of dream is this? Do you think your mother, your brothers and I will all bow down to you?" ¹¹Joseph's brothers continued to be jealous of him. But his father thought about all these things and wondered what they could mean.

¹²One day Joseph's brothers went to Shechem to let their father's sheep eat the grass in the fields there. ¹³Israel said to Joseph, "Go to Shechem. Your brothers are there with my sheep."

Joseph answered, "I will go."

¹⁴His father said, "Go and see if your brothers and the flocks are all right. Then come back and tell me how they are doing." So Joseph's father sent him from the Valley of Hebron to Shechem.

¹⁵At Shechem a man saw Joseph wandering in the fields as if he was looking for something. The man said, "What are you looking for?"

¹⁶Joseph answered, "I am looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they have taken their sheep?"

¹⁷The man said, "They have already left. I heard them say they were going to Dothan." So Joseph went to Dothan and found his brothers there.

Joseph Sold Into Slavery

¹⁸Joseph's brothers saw him coming from far away and began making plans to kill him. ¹⁹They said to each other, "Here comes Joseph the dreamer. ²⁰Let's kill him and throw his body into one of the empty wells here. We can tell our father that a wild animal killed him. That should put an end to those dreams of his!"

²¹But when Reuben heard this plan, he tried to find a way to save Joseph. He said, "Let's not kill him. ²²There is no need to spill any blood. We can just put him into one of these dry wells out here in the desert. We don't have to hurt him ourselves." Reuben planned to return later so he could save Joseph and send him back to his father. ²³So when Joseph reached his brothers, they stripped off his special coat. ²⁴Then they threw him into a dry, empty well.

²⁵When the brothers sat down to eat, they looked up and saw a group of traders^{§§} on their way from Gilead to Egypt. Their camels were carrying different kinds of spices, balm and myrrh. ²⁶So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit will we get if we kill our brother and keep his death a secret? ²⁷If we sell him to these traders, we will not have to do him any harm. This would be better because he is our own brother, one of our own family." The other brothers agreed. ²⁸So when the Midianite traders

§§**37:25 traders** Literally, "Ishmaelites". Ishmaelites were famous traders, so the name here may have that meaning. In verse 28 they are called "Midianites". Also in 39:1. In Judg. 8:22-24 the two names refer to the same people.

came by, the brothers took Joseph out of the well and sold him to the traders for 20 pieces of silver. And the traders took him to Egypt.

²⁹ When Reuben came back to the well, he saw that Joseph was not there. He tore his clothes to show he was upset. ³⁰ Then he went to his brothers and said, “The boy is not in the well! What will I do now?” ³¹ The brothers killed a goat and dipped Joseph’s coat in its blood. ³² Then they took the coat to their father and said, “We found this coat. Look at it and see if it is Joseph’s.”

³³ Jacob saw that it was Joseph’s coat. He said, “Yes, this is his! It looks like a wild animal killed him. I am sure Joseph has been torn to pieces!” ³⁴ Jacob tore his clothes and put on rags to show his sorrow. He continued to mourn for his son for a long time. ³⁵ All Jacob’s sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. He said, “The sorrow I feel for my son will be with me until the day I die.” So Jacob cried for his son Joseph.

³⁶ The Midianite traders later sold Joseph in Egypt. They sold him to Potiphar, an officer of the king of Egypt and the captain of the palace guard.

Judah and Tamar

38 About that time, Judah left his brothers and went to stay with a man named Hirah from the town of Adullam. ² There Judah met a Canaanite girl, the daughter of a man named Shua, and married her. ³ She became pregnant and had a son. Judah named him Er. ⁴ Later, she had another son and named him Onan. ⁵ Then she had a third son and named him Shelah. When Shelah was born, they were living in Kezib.

⁶ Judah chose a girl named Tamar to be the wife of his first son Er. ⁷ But Er lived in a way that made the LORD very unhappy with him, so the LORD caused him to die. ⁸ Then Judah said to Er’s brother Onan, “Go and sleep with your dead brother’s wife.* Become like a husband to her. If children are born, they will belong to your brother Er.”

⁹ Onan knew that the children would not belong to him. So when he had sex with Tamar, he pulled away before he finished. By doing this, he kept Tamar from getting pregnant and having a child for his brother. ¹⁰ This made the LORD very unhappy with Onan, so he caused him to die too. ¹¹ Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, “Go back to your father’s house. Stay there and don’t marry anyone until my young son Shelah grows up.” Judah was afraid that Shelah would also be killed like his brothers. So Tamar went back to her father’s home.

¹² Years later, Judah’s wife, the daughter of Shua, died. After Judah mourned her death, he went to the town of Timnah with his friend Hirah from Adullam. He went there to have the wool cut from his sheep. ¹³ When Tamar heard that Judah, her father-in-law, was going to Timnah to cut the wool from his sheep, she made plans to meet him. ¹⁴ She knew that Judah’s younger son Shelah was a grown man by now, but Judah had not yet made plans for her to marry him. So she went and sat outside the town of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. She did not want Judah to know who she was, so she did not wear her usual clothes that showed she was a widow. And she covered her face with a veil.

¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, since her face was

***38:8 Go and sleep ... wife** In Israel, if a man died without children, one of his brothers was expected to try to have children with the widow. Any child that was born was legally the dead man’s child.

covered with a veil. ¹⁶ So he went over and asked her to have sex with him. He did not know she was Tamar, his daughter-in-law.

She said, "How much will you give me?"

¹⁷ Judah answered, "I will send you a young goat from my flock."

She answered, "I agree to that. But you must give me something to keep until you send the goat."

¹⁸ Judah asked, "What shall I give you to keep until I send you the goat?"

Tamar answered, "Give me your seal and its cord and your walking stick." Judah gave these things to her. Then he had sex with her, and she became pregnant. ¹⁹ When Tamar went home, she took off the veil that covered her face and put on the clothes that showed she was a widow.

²⁰ Later, Judah sent his friend Hirah to Enaim to give the woman the goat he promised. He told Hirah to get the things he had given her to keep until she received the goat. But Hirah could not find her. ²¹ At Enaim he asked some men who lived there, "Where is the temple prostitute who was here by the road?"

They answered, "There has never been a prostitute here."

²² So Judah's friend went back to Judah and said, "I could not find the woman. The men who live there said that no prostitute had ever been there."

²³ So Judah said, "Let her keep the things. I don't want people to laugh at us. I sent her the goat as I said I would, but you could not find her. We have done all we could do."

Tamar Is Pregnant

²⁴ About three months later, someone told Judah, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of sinning like a prostitute, and now she is pregnant."

Judah said, "Then she should be taken out and burned to death."

²⁵ The men went to get Tamar and kill her, but she sent someone to her father-in-law with the things he had given her to keep and with this message: "The man who made me pregnant is the one who owns these things. Look at this seal and cord and this walking stick. Who do these things belong to?"

²⁶ Judah recognized the things and said, "She was right to do what she did, because I was wrong. I did not give her my son Shelah as I promised." And Judah did not have sex with her again.

²⁷ When the time came for Tamar to give birth, it became clear that she was having twins. ²⁸ As she was giving birth, one baby put his hand out. The nurse tied a red string on the hand and said, "This baby was born first." ²⁹ But that baby pulled his hand back in, and the other baby was born first. So the nurse said, "You were able to break out first!" So they named him Perez.[†] ³⁰ Then the baby with the red string on his hand was born. They named him Zerah.[‡]

Joseph Is Sold to Potiphar in Egypt

39 The traders who bought Joseph took him down to Egypt. They sold him to Potiphar, an officer of the king of Egypt and the captain of the palace guard. ² The LORD helped Joseph, and he became very successful. He lived in the house of his Egyptian master.

[†]38:29 *Perez* This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "to break out".

[‡]38:30 *Zerah* This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "bright".

³His master saw that the LORD was with him and made him successful in everything he did. ⁴So Potiphar was very happy with Joseph and decided to make him his personal servant. He put Joseph in charge of his house and everything else he owned. ⁵After Joseph began to manage Potiphar's house and property, the LORD blessed everyone else in the house because of Joseph. The LORD blessed everything Potiphar had, whether it was in his house or in his fields. ⁶So Potiphar let Joseph be in charge of everything he owned. Potiphar did not have to worry about anything except deciding what to eat.

Trouble for Joseph

Joseph was a very good-looking and strong young man. ⁷Before long, the wife of Joseph's master began to pay special attention to him. One day she said to him, "Come have sex with me."

⁸But Joseph refused. He said, "My master trusts me with everything in his house. He has put me in charge of everything here. ⁹He has given me more authority than anyone else in his house. He has given me everything except you, and that's because you are his wife. I cannot do what you are asking. I will not sin against God by doing such a terrible thing!"

¹⁰The woman kept asking Joseph the same thing every day, but he refused to go to bed with her or even spend time with her. ¹¹One day he went into the house to do his work and was the only man in the house at the time. ¹²His master's wife grabbed his coat and said to him, "Come to bed with me." But Joseph pulled away and ran out of the house, leaving his coat in her hand.

¹³After she saw him run out, she realized he had left his coat there with her. ¹⁴So she called to her servants and said, "Look! My husband brought this Hebrew slave in here to shame us. He came in and tried to have sex with me, but I screamed. ¹⁵My scream scared him and he ran away, but he left his coat here with me."

¹⁶She kept Joseph's coat until her husband came home, ¹⁷and she told him the same story. She said, "This Hebrew slave you brought here tried to shame me! ¹⁸But when I screamed for help, he left his coat and ran away."

¹⁹When Joseph's master heard what his wife said, he became very angry. ²⁰So Potiphar put Joseph in the prison where the king's enemies were held. Although he remained in prison, ²¹the LORD was good to him. He continued to help Joseph and made the prison warden pleased with him. ²²Soon the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and all the work they did. ²³The warden trusted Joseph with everything and did not have to worry about anything. That's because the LORD was with Joseph and made him successful in everything he did.

Joseph Explains Two Dreams

40 Later, two officials of the king of Egypt did something he did not like. One of them was the king's assistant in charge of his wine,¹ and the other was the king's baker. ²So Pharaoh was angry with these two officials, ³and he had them locked up in the house of the captain of the palace guard. This was the same place where Joseph was being held. ⁴They were locked up there a long time. Joseph took care of them

¹40:1 *assistant ... wine* This important official was always close to the king. He prepared and tasted the king's wine to make sure it was safe to drink.

because the captain of the guard made him their personal servant. ⁵One night these two men, the king's assistant and the king's baker, each had a dream. And each dream had a different meaning. ⁶When Joseph came to them the next morning, he could see that they were upset. ⁷So he asked them, "Why do you look so worried today?"

⁸They answered, "We both had dreams last night, but we don't have anyone who can tell us what they mean."

Joseph said to them, "God is the only one who can tell us the meaning of dreams. Tell me about your dreams."

The First Dream

⁹So the king's assistant told Joseph his dream: "I dreamed I saw a vine, ¹⁰and on the vine were three branches. The branches began to produce buds, blossoms and then bunches of grapes. ¹¹I was holding Pharaoh's cup, so I took the grapes and squeezed the juice into the cup. Then I gave it to the king."

¹²Joseph said, "This is the meaning of your dream: The three branches are three days. ¹³In three days the king will release you, and you will be the king's assistant again. You will serve the king his wine, just as you did before. ¹⁴But when things are going well for you, please remember me and do me this favour: Talk to the king about me and see if you can get me out of this prison. ¹⁵I was kidnapped and taken from the land of my people, the Hebrews. And since I arrived here, I have done nothing wrong. I don't deserve to be put in prison."

The Baker's Dream

¹⁶The king's baker saw that the other servant's dream was good, so he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream. I dreamed

I was carrying three bread baskets on my head. ¹⁷In the top basket were all kinds of things baked for the king, but some birds were eating everything in the basket."

¹⁸Joseph answered, "This is the meaning of your dream: The three baskets are three days. ¹⁹In three days the king will release you. Then he will have your head cut off and your body hanged on a pole, and the birds will eat it."

Joseph Is Forgotten

²⁰Three days later, it was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a party for all his officials. When they were all there, the king ordered that his assistant and baker be released and brought to him.

²¹The king told his assistant that he could have his job back. So the assistant filled the king's cup with wine and handed it to him. ²²But Pharaoh ordered that his baker be hanged. So everything happened the way Joseph said it would. ²³But the king's assistant did not remember to say anything to the king about Joseph. He forgot all about him.

Pharaoh's Dreams

41 Two years later Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile River. ²In the dream, seven cows came out of the river and stood there eating grass. They were fat and healthy. ³Then seven more cows came out of the river and stood on the bank of the Nile beside the healthy cows. But these cows were thin and looked sick. ⁴The seven thin, sick cows ate the seven fat, healthy cows. Then the king woke up.

⁵He went back to sleep and began dreaming again. This time he saw seven heads of grain growing on one plant. They were healthy and full of grain. ⁶Then he saw seven more heads of grain

sprouting, but they were thin, burned by the hot desert wind. ⁷The thin heads of grain ate the seven healthy, full heads of grain. Then Pharaoh woke up again and realized it was only a dream.

⁸The next morning, Pharaoh was troubled about these dreams, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them the dreams, but none of them could tell him what the dreams meant.

⁹Then the king's assistant remembered Joseph and said to Pharaoh, "I remember something I forgot to do. ¹⁰One time when you were angry with your baker and me, you put us in prison. ¹¹There we each had a dream one night, and each dream had a different meaning. ¹²A young Hebrew man, a servant of the captain of the palace guard, was in prison with us. We told him our dreams, and he told us the meaning of each dream. ¹³And things happened exactly the way he said they would—I got my job back, and the baker was hanged!"

Pharaoh Asks Joseph About His Dreams

¹⁴So Pharaoh called for Joseph, and the guards quickly went and got him out of prison. After he shaved and put on some clean clothes, he went and stood before the king. ¹⁵Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can tell me what it means. I have heard that you can explain the meaning of a dream."

¹⁶Joseph answered, "My king, I cannot do this myself, but God will tell you what you need to know."

¹⁷Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream I was standing by the Nile River. ¹⁸Seven cows came up out of the river and stood there eating the grass. They were fat and healthy. ¹⁹Then I saw seven more cows come up out

of the river, but these cows were thin and looked sick. They were the worst-looking cows I had ever seen anywhere in Egypt! ²⁰And these thin, sick-looking cows ate the first seven fat cows, ²¹but they still looked thin and sick. You couldn't even tell they had eaten the healthy cows. They looked as thin and sick as they did in the beginning. Then I woke up.

²²"In my next dream I saw seven heads of grain growing on one plant. They were healthy and full of grain. ²³And then seven more heads of grain grew after them, but they were thin and dried-up, burned by the hot desert wind. ²⁴Then the thin heads of grain ate the seven good heads. I told these dreams to my magicians, but no one could tell me what they mean."

Joseph Explains the Dreams

²⁵Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Both of these dreams have the same meaning. God is telling you what he is planning to do. ²⁶The seven good cows in the first dream and the seven good heads of grain in the second dream both mean there will be seven good years. ²⁷The seven thin, sick-looking cows and the seven heads of grain burned by the hot desert wind mean that seven years of famine will follow the good years. ²⁸This will happen just as I said. God has shown you in these dreams what he is planning to do. ²⁹For seven years there will be plenty of food in Egypt. ³⁰But then there will be seven years of famine. The people will be so hungry that they will forget how much food was in Egypt before. ³¹The famine will be so bad that people will not remember what it was like to have plenty of food.

³²"My king, you had two dreams with the same message. This means God has decided for sure to make this happen,

and it will begin to happen soon! ³³ So, my king, you should choose a wise and capable man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Then you should put some other men in charge of collecting food. They should gather one-fifth of the crops grown during the seven good years. ³⁵ With your authority they can collect all this food during the seven good years and store it in the cities until it is needed. ³⁶ Then during the seven years that the land of Egypt will not produce enough grain, there will still be enough food. Then the country will not be destroyed by famine.”

³⁷ This seemed like a very good idea to Pharaoh, and all his officials agreed. ³⁸ Then Pharaoh told them, “I don’t think we can find anyone better than Joseph for this job. Clearly God’s spirit is in him!”

³⁹ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “God has shown you all these things. So I think there is no one as wise and capable as you. ⁴⁰ I will put you in charge of my country, and all my people will follow your orders. I will be the only one more powerful than you.”

⁴¹ Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I now put you in charge of all the land of Egypt.” ⁴² Then Pharaoh took off his ring with his royal seal on it, and he put it on Joseph’s finger. He also gave Joseph a fine linen robe and put a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³ The king told Joseph to ride in the second royal chariot. And the guards walking ahead of the chariot called out to the people, “Bow down!”

So the king put Joseph in charge of all the land of Egypt.

⁴⁴ Pharaoh said to him, “I am the king, but you have my full authority. No one in all the land of Egypt may lift a hand or move a foot without your permission.”

⁴⁵ Then Pharaoh gave Joseph another name, Zaphenath Paneah.[§] He also gave Joseph a wife named Asenath.^{**} She was the daughter of Potiphera, a priest in the city of On. So Joseph took control of the whole land of Egypt.

⁴⁶ Joseph was 30 years old when he began serving the king of Egypt. After the king put him in charge of the country, Joseph travelled throughout the land. ⁴⁷ During the seven good years, the crops in Egypt produced plenty of food. ⁴⁸ Joseph collected the food from these crops during those seven good years and stored it in the cities. In each city he stored the grain that grew in the fields around that city. ⁴⁹ Joseph stored huge amounts of grain, like sand on the seashore. He stored so much grain that they lost count of how much there was.

⁵⁰ Joseph’s wife, Asenath, was the daughter of Potiphera, the priest in the city of On. Before the years of famine began, Joseph and Asenath had two sons. ⁵¹ Joseph named the first son Manasseh^{††} because, as he said, “God made me forget all my troubles and all my father’s people.” ⁵² Joseph named the second son Ephraim^{‡‡} because, as he said, “God has made me successful^{¶¶} in this land where I suffered.”

[§]41:45 *Zaphenath Paneah* This Egyptian name probably means, “The god has said, ‘he will live.’”

^{**}41:45 *Asenath* This Egyptian name probably means, “She belongs to the goddess Neith.”

^{††}41:51 *Manasseh* This is like the Hebrew word meaning “to cause to forget”.

^{‡‡}41:52 *Ephraim* This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “to produce”.

^{¶¶}41:52 *made me successful* Or “given me children”.

The Famine Begins

⁵³The seven years of good crops in the land of Egypt ended. ⁵⁴Then the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. In the countries outside of Egypt the people suffered from hunger, but everywhere in Egypt there was food. ⁵⁵When the famine began, the people in Egypt cried to Pharaoh for food. And the king told them, “Go and ask Joseph what to do.”

⁵⁶There was famine everywhere, so Joseph opened the storehouses and sold the stored grain to the people of Egypt. The famine was very bad in Egypt, ⁵⁷but it was also bad everywhere else. So people came to Egypt from the surrounding countries to buy grain from Joseph.

Joseph’s Old Dreams Come True

42 Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt. So he said to his sons, “Why are you sitting here doing nothing? ²I have heard there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down there and buy some grain to keep us from starving to death!”

³So ten of Joseph’s brothers went to Egypt to buy grain. ⁴Jacob did not send Benjamin. (Benjamin was Joseph’s only full brother.^{§§}) Jacob was afraid that something bad might happen to Benjamin.

⁵The famine was very bad in Canaan, so there were many people from Canaan who went to Egypt to buy grain. Among them were the sons of Israel.

⁶Since Joseph was the governor of Egypt, he was the one in charge of selling the grain to everyone. So Joseph’s brothers came to him and bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. ⁷When Joseph saw his brothers, he knew who they were, but he acted as if he did

not know them. Speaking to them in a rude voice, he said, “Where do you come from?”

The brothers answered, “We have come from the land of Canaan to buy food.”

⁸Although Joseph knew these were his brothers, they did not know who he was. ⁹Joseph remembered his old dreams about his brothers. He said to them, “You have not come to buy food! You are spies. You came to find out where our country is weak.”

¹⁰But the brothers said, “No, master! We, your servants, have come only to buy food. ¹¹We are all brothers, sons of the same father. We are honest men, not spies.”

¹²But Joseph said, “No, you have come to spy on us!”

¹³Then they said, “We, your servants, are all brothers, sons of the same father. He had twelve sons in all, but our youngest brother is still at home with him in Canaan. And one other brother is no longer living.”

¹⁴But Joseph said, “No! I can see I was right. You are spies! ¹⁵If your story is true, you will have to prove it. In the name of the king, I swear I will not let you go until your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶One of you must go and get your brother. The rest of you will stay here in prison. We will see if you are telling the truth. If your youngest brother does not come here, then as surely as the king lives, you are spies!”

¹⁷Then Joseph put them all in prison for three days.

The Troubles Begin

¹⁸After three days, Joseph said to them, “I am a God-fearing man. Do this, and I will let you live: ¹⁹if you are honest

§§42:4 *full brother* Literally, “brother”. Joseph and Benjamin had the same mother.

men, one of your brothers can stay here in prison, and the others can go and take grain back to your people who are suffering from hunger. ²⁰ But then you must bring your youngest brother back here to me. Then I will know you are telling the truth, and you will not be put to death.”

The brothers agreed to this. ²¹ They said to each other, “We are being punished for what we did to our brother Joseph long ago. We saw the trouble he was in. He begged us to save him, but we refused to listen. So now we are in trouble.”

²² Then Reuben said to them, “I told you not to harm the boy, but you refused to listen to me. So now we are being punished for his death.”

²³ Joseph was using an interpreter to talk to his brothers, so they did not know he understood everything they were saying. ²⁴ He walked away so they could not see him crying. Then he came back and spoke with them again. As they watched, he ordered their brother Simeon to be tied up and taken away.

²⁵ Joseph told his servants to fill his brothers’ bags with grain. The brothers had given Joseph the money for the grain, but he secretly told the servants to put the money in the bags with the grain. He also told the servants to give the brothers everything they needed for their trip back home. When all this was done, ²⁶ the brothers put the bags of grain on their donkeys and left. ²⁷ That night they stopped at a place to spend the night. One of the brothers opened his sack to get some grain for his donkey. And there in the sack, he saw his money! ²⁸ He said to the other brothers, “Look! Here’s the money I paid for the grain. Someone put it back in my sack.” Shaking with fear, they all looked at each other and said, “What is God doing to us?”

The Brothers Report to Jacob

²⁹ The brothers travelled on to the land of Canaan. When they came to their father, they told him everything that had happened. ³⁰ They said, “The governor of that land was rude when he spoke to us. He accused us of spying on his country! ³¹ We told him, ‘We are honest men, not spies. ³² We are all brothers, sons of the same father. He had twelve sons in all, but one is no longer living, and our youngest brother is still at home with our father in Canaan.’

³³ “Then the man, the governor of that land, said to us, ‘Here is a way I can see if you are really honest: leave one of your brothers here with me, while you take grain to your families suffering from hunger. ³⁴ But you must bring your youngest brother to me so I will know that you are honest men and not spies. Then I will give you back the brother you left here. And you will be free to go anywhere you like in our land.’”

³⁵ When the brothers started emptying the grain out of their sacks, each one found his bag of money in his sack of grain. Seeing these bags of money made them all afraid, including their father Jacob.

³⁶ Jacob said to them, “You have already caused me to lose some of my children. Joseph is gone. Simeon is gone. And now you want to take Benjamin away too! I am the one who has to suffer all this!”

³⁷ Then Reuben said to his father, “If you will let me take him, you can trust me to bring him back to you. If I don’t bring him back, you may kill both of my sons!”

³⁸ But Jacob said, “I will not let Benjamin go with you. His brother is dead, and he is the only son left from my wife Rachel. If anything happened to him

during the trip to Egypt, I would die. You would send me to my grave* a very sad, old man.”

Jacob's Sons Return to Egypt

43 The famine was very bad in the land of Canaan. ²The people ate all the grain they had brought from Egypt. When that grain was gone, Jacob said to his sons, “Go to Egypt and buy some more grain for us to eat.”

³But Judah said to Jacob, “The governor of that land warned us. He said, ‘If you don’t bring your brother back to me, I will refuse to talk to you.’ ⁴If you send Benjamin with us, we will go down and buy grain. ⁵But if you refuse to send Benjamin, we will not go. The man warned us to not come back without him.”

⁶Israel said, “Why did you tell him you had another brother and cause me so much trouble?”

⁷The brothers answered, “He asked lots of questions. He wanted to know all about us and about our family. He asked us, ‘Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?’ We only answered his questions. We didn’t know he would ask us to bring our other brother to him!”

⁸Then Judah said to his father, “Let Benjamin go with me, and we will leave at once for Egypt. We must get the food we need to keep us, you and all our children alive. ⁹I will make sure he is safe. I myself will be responsible for him. If I don’t bring him back to you, you can blame me the rest of my life. ¹⁰If you had let us go earlier, we could have already made two trips there and back.”

¹¹Finally, their father said, “If this is what must happen, then I want you to do this: Take some gifts to the governor. Fill your bags with some of the best things we have in our land. Take him some

balm, some honey, spices, myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. ¹²Take twice as much money with you this time. You must return the money that was put in your sacks after you paid last time. Maybe it was a mistake. ¹³Now, take Benjamin and leave right away to go see the man. ¹⁴I pray that God All-Powerful will be kind to you when you stand before the governor. I pray he will let Benjamin and Simeon come back with you. But if I must lose my children, I must face the loss.”

¹⁵So the brothers took the gifts to give to the governor. They also took twice as much money as they had taken the first time, and they took Benjamin. They hurried down to Egypt, where they again came before Joseph.

¹⁶When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he gave orders to the servant in charge of his house. He said, “Bring these men into my house. Kill an animal and prepare a meal. They will eat with me today at noon.” ¹⁷The servant did as he was told. He took the men to Joseph’s house.

¹⁸When the brothers were taken to Joseph’s house, they began to feel afraid. They thought, “We have been brought here because of the money that was put back into our sacks the last time. He will use this as a reason to arrest us, make us slaves and take our donkeys.”

¹⁹So the brothers went to the servant in charge of Joseph’s house and spoke to him outside the door. ²⁰They said, “Please, sir, let us explain something. We came here once before to buy food. ²¹On the way home, when we stopped for the night, we opened our sacks and found all the money we had paid. We have brought that money back to you. ²²We don’t know who put that money in our

*42:38 *grave* Or “Sheol”, the place of death. Also in 44:29.

sacks. And now we have brought more money to pay for the food we want to buy this time.”

²³ But the servant answered, “It’s all right. Don’t be afraid; believe me. Your God, the God of your father, must have put the money in your sacks. I remember that you paid me for the grain.”

Then the servant brought Simeon out to them. ²⁴ The servant took the men into Joseph’s house. He gave them water, and they washed their feet. Then he fed their donkeys. ²⁵ The brothers had heard they were going to eat with Joseph at noon. So they prepared their gifts to give to him when he arrived.

²⁶ When Joseph came home, the brothers gave him the gifts they had brought with them and bowed down to the ground in front of him. ²⁷ Joseph asked them how they were doing. Then he said, “How is your elderly father you told me about? Is he still alive?”

²⁸ The brothers answered, “Yes, your servant our father is still alive and well.” And they again bowed before Joseph to show their respect.

²⁹ Then Joseph saw his brother Benjamin, whose mother was the same as his. He said, “Is this your youngest brother you told me about?” Then he said to Benjamin, “God bless you, my son!” ³⁰ Suddenly, the love he felt for his brother made him feel like crying. So he hurried into his private room and cried there. ³¹ After washing his face, he came out. Keeping his feelings under control, he said, “Now it is time to eat.”

³² The servants seated Joseph at a table by himself. His brothers were at another table, and the Egyptians were at a table by themselves. The Egyp-

tians believed it was wrong for them to eat with Hebrews.† ³³ Joseph’s brothers were seated at a table facing him. The brothers were looking at each other because, to their surprise, they had been seated in order, from the oldest to the youngest. ³⁴ Servants were taking food from Joseph’s table to them. But the servants gave Benjamin five times more than the others. The brothers continued to eat and drink with Joseph until they were all happily drunk.

Joseph Sets a Trap for His Brothers

44 Then Joseph gave a command to the servant in charge of his house. He said, “Fill the men’s sacks with as much grain as they can carry. Then put each man’s money into his sack with the grain. ² Put the youngest brother’s money in his sack too. Also put my special silver cup in his sack.” The servant did what Joseph told him.

³ Early the next morning the brothers were sent on their way back home with their donkeys. ⁴ After they had left the city, Joseph said to his servant, “Go after those men. When you catch up with them, say this: ‘Why did you pay back our kindness to you by doing something bad to us? ⁵ Why did you steal my master’s silver cup?‡ My master drinks from that cup, and he uses it to learn secrets about the future. This was a terrible thing you did!’”

⁶ So the servant chased after the brothers and caught up with them. He said to them what Joseph had told him to say.

⁷ But they said, “Sir, why are you saying these things to us? We would never do anything like that! ⁸ We came all the way from Canaan to bring back the

†43:32 *The Egyptians ... Hebrews* The Egyptians would not eat with them because they were shepherds and ate meat from cattle, sheep and goats. To the Egyptians, these animals represented some of their gods. See Gen. 46:34.

‡44:5 *Why did ... silver cup* This is from the ancient Greek version.

money we found in our sacks. So surely we would not steal silver or gold from your master's house. ⁹We are your servants. You can look in our sacks. If any of us has the cup, let that man die. And the rest of us will be your slaves."

¹⁰The servant said, "I agree, but only the man who stole the cup will be my slave. The others will be free."

¹¹So each brother quickly put his sack on the ground and opened it. ¹²Joseph's servant started looking in the sacks. He started with the oldest brother and ended with the youngest. He found the cup in Benjamin's sack. ¹³The brothers were so upset they began tearing their clothes. They put their sacks back on the donkeys and went back to the city.

¹⁴When Judah and his brothers arrived at Joseph's house, Joseph was still there. The brothers threw themselves to the ground, bowing before him. ¹⁵Joseph said to them, "Why have you done this? Didn't you know that someone like me has ways of learning secrets?"

¹⁶Judah said, "Sir, there is nothing we can say. There is no way to explain. There is no way to show that we are not guilty. God has judged us guilty for something else we have done. So all of us, even Benjamin, will be your slaves."

¹⁷But Joseph said, "I will not make you all slaves! Only the man who stole the cup will be my slave. You others can go in peace to your father."

Judah Pleads for Benjamin

¹⁸Judah went to Joseph and said, "My master, I know you have as much power as the king himself. I am your servant, but I ask you to let me speak plainly to you. Please don't be angry with me. ¹⁹When we were here before, you asked us, 'Do you have a father or another brother?' ²⁰And we answered, 'Our fa-

ther is still living, but he is very old. And we have a younger brother, who was born when our father was already an old man. His mother had another son who is dead, so he is her only living son. And our father loves him very much.' ²¹Then you said to us, 'Bring that brother to me. I want to see him.' ²²And we said, 'He cannot come. If the boy leaves home, his father will die.' ²³But you said to us, 'You must bring your youngest brother, or I will not sell you any more grain.' ²⁴So we went back to our father and told him what you said.

²⁵"Later, our father said, 'Go back and buy us some more food.' ²⁶We told him, 'We cannot go without our youngest brother. If he is not with us, they will not allow us to see the governor.' ²⁷Then my father said, 'You know that my wife Rachel gave me only two sons. ²⁸When one son went away and did not return, I said he must have been torn to pieces by a wild animal. And I never saw him again. ²⁹If you take this son away from me now, and something happens to him, you would send me to my grave a very sad, old man.' ³⁰Now, imagine what will happen if we go home without our youngest brother. He is the most important thing in our father's life! ³¹If he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die. We, your servants, will be guilty of sending our father to his grave a very sad, old man.

³²"I took responsibility for the boy. I told my father, 'If I don't bring him back to you, you can blame me for the rest of my life.' ³³So now, my master, please let me stay here as your slave in place of the boy. And let him go back home with his brothers. ³⁴I cannot go back to my father if the boy is not with me. It would be too hard for me to see my father in such pain."

Joseph Tells Who He Is

45 Joseph could not control his feelings any longer in front of his servants. So he ordered them all to leave. When only the brothers were left with Joseph, he told them who he was. ²He began to cry out loud. He cried so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the news reached those in the king's house. ³Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers were so shocked to see him that they could not answer.

⁴So Joseph asked them to come closer. When they were close enough, he said again, "I am your brother Joseph. I am the one you sold as a slave to be taken to Egypt. ⁵Now don't be worried. Don't be angry with yourselves for what you did. God is the one who sent me here ahead of you. I am here to save people's lives. ⁶This terrible famine has continued for two years now, and there will be five more years without planting or harvest. ⁷So God sent me to be here when you came so that I could make sure you have descendants living on earth in the future. He sent me to save your lives in this amazing way. ⁸So it was God who sent me here, not you. God made me the one to give advice to the king. He has put me in charge of his whole palace and made me the ruler over all the land of Egypt."

Jacob Is Invited to Egypt

⁹Then Joseph said, "I want you to hurry back to my father and give him this message from me, his son: 'God has put me in charge over all Egypt. So come here to me quickly. ¹⁰You can live in the land of Goshen, where you will be near me. Bring your children, your grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. ¹¹I will take care of you during the

next five years of famine. This will keep you and your family and all your people from losing everything."

¹²Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Surely, what you have seen and what I have said has shown all of you, including Benjamin, that I am really Joseph. ¹³So tell my father about all the honour I have received here in Egypt. Tell him about everything you have seen. Now hurry, go and bring my father back to me." ¹⁴Then Joseph hugged his brother Benjamin, and they both began crying. ¹⁵Then Joseph hugged and kissed all his brothers as he continued to cry. After this, the brothers talked with him.

¹⁶When Pharaoh and his officials heard that Joseph's brothers had come, they were very happy. ¹⁷Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers to take all the food they need back to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸And tell them to bring your father and their families back here to me. I will give you the best land in Egypt, and they will eat the best food we have here. ¹⁹Also tell them to take some wagons from here so they can bring their wives and children, along with your father. ²⁰Don't worry about bringing all their things. We will give them the best of what we have in Egypt."

²¹So Jacob's sons did this. Joseph gave them wagons, as the king had ordered, as well as food for their trip. ²²He gave each brother a new set of clothes to wear. But he gave Benjamin five sets of clothes and 300 pieces of silver. ²³Joseph also sent gifts to his father. He sent ten donkeys with bags full of the best things from Egypt. He also sent ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread and other food for his father on his trip back. ²⁴Then Joseph told his brothers to go. As they were leaving, he told them, "Don't argue about any of this on the way home."

²⁵ So the brothers left Egypt and went to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. ²⁶ They told him, “Joseph is still alive! And he is the ruler over the whole land of Egypt.” Jacob was so shocked he did not believe them. ²⁷ But then they told him everything Joseph had said, and Jacob saw the wagons Joseph had sent to bring him back to Egypt. That made him feel better, ²⁸ and he said, “Now I believe you. My son Joseph is still alive! I must go and see him before I die.”

Jacob and His Family Go to Egypt

46 So Jacob^f began his trip to Egypt, taking with him everything he had. First he went to Beersheba. There he offered sacrifices to God, the God his father Isaac worshipped. ² During the night, God spoke to him in a vision and said, “Jacob, Jacob.”

Jacob answered, “Here I am.”

³ Then God said, “I am God, the God of your father. Don’t be afraid to go to Egypt because there I will make your people a great nation. ⁴ I will go to Egypt with you, and I will bring your people out of Egypt again. You will die in Egypt, but Joseph will be there to close your eyes with his own hand.”

⁵ Then Jacob left Beersheba. His sons, known as the sons of Israel, took him to Egypt with their wives and all their children. They travelled in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent. ⁶ They also had their cattle and everything they owned in the land of Canaan. So Jacob went to Egypt with all his descendants. ⁷ This included his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters. He took his whole family to Egypt with him.

The Family of Jacob

⁸ These are the names of Jacob’s sons and family, known as the Israelites, who went to Egypt with him:

Reuben was Jacob’s first son. ⁹ Reuben’s sons were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi.

¹⁰ Simeon’s sons were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin and Zohar. There was also Shaul, who was born from a Canaanite woman.

¹¹ Levi’s sons were Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

¹² Judah’s sons were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah. His oldest sons Er and Onan had died before the family left Canaan. Perez’s sons were Hezron and Hamul.

¹³ Issachar’s sons were Tola, Puah, Job and Shimron.

¹⁴ Zebulun’s sons were Sered, Elon and Jahleel.

¹⁵ Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun were Jacob’s sons from his wife Leah. Leah had these sons in Mesopotamia. She also had a daughter named Dinah. There were 33 people in this part of Jacob’s family.

¹⁶ Gad’s sons were Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi and Areli.

¹⁷ Asher’s sons were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah and their sister Serah. Also there were Beriah’s sons, Heber and Malkiel.

¹⁸ These were Jacob’s sons from Zilpah, the slave woman Laban had given to his daughter Leah. There were 16 people in this part of Jacob’s family.

¹⁹ Jacob’s wife Rachel had two sons, Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁰ Joseph, who was already in Egypt, had two sons there, Manasseh and Ephraim. Their mother was Asenath,

^f46:1 *Jacob* Literally, “Israel”. Also in verses 29 and 30.

the daughter of Potiphera, the priest in the city of On.

²¹ Benjamin's sons were Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and Ard.

²² These were the sons of Jacob by his wife Rachel. There were 14 people in this part of Jacob's family.

²³ Dan's son was Hushim.

²⁴ Naphtali's sons were Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem.

²⁵ Dan and Naphtali were the sons of Jacob and Bilhah, the slave woman Laban had given to his daughter Rachel. There were seven people in this part of Jacob's family.

²⁶ The total number of Jacob's direct descendants who went with him to Egypt was 66 people, not including the wives of Jacob's sons. ²⁷ Also, Joseph had two sons born in Egypt. So Jacob's family in Egypt numbered 70^s people in all.

Jacob Arrives in Egypt

²⁸ Jacob sent Judah ahead to ask Joseph to come to Goshen, where they would meet. When Jacob and his people arrived there, ²⁹ Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to meet his father in Goshen. When they met, Joseph hugged his father and cried for a long time.

³⁰ Then Jacob said to Joseph, "Now I can die in peace because I have seen your face and know you are still alive."

³¹ Joseph said to his brothers and to the rest of his father's family, "I will go and tell Pharaoh you are here. I will say, 'My brothers and the rest of my father's family have left the land of Canaan and have come here to me. ³² They are all shepherds and take care of livestock.

They have brought their flocks and herds and everything they own with them.'

³³ When Pharaoh calls for you to come meet with him, he will ask, 'What work do you do?' ³⁴ This is what you should say: 'We, your servants, have taken care of livestock all our lives, the same as our ancestors did.' Then the king will allow you to live in the land of Goshen, where you will not be near the Egyptians, who think shepherds are disgusting."

Jacob Settles in Goshen

47 Joseph went in to Pharaoh and said, "My father and my brothers have come from Canaan with their flocks and herds and everything they own. They are now in the land of Goshen." ² Joseph chose five of his brothers to go with him to meet the king.

³ Pharaoh said to the brothers, "What work do you do?"

They said to the king, "We, your servants, are shepherds, the same as our ancestors were. ⁴ We have come to live here for a while because the famine is very bad in Canaan. There are no fields left with grass for our animals. So please let us, your servants, live in the land of Goshen."

⁵ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. ⁶ You can choose anywhere in Egypt for them to live. Give your father and your brothers the best land. Let them live in the land of Goshen. And if you know which ones are the most skilled, put them in charge of my own livestock."

⁷ Then Joseph called his father Jacob to come in to meet Pharaoh. Jacob greeted the king with words of blessing.

⁸ Then Pharaoh asked him, "How old are you?"

^s46:27 70 This is the number in the traditional Hebrew text. The ancient Greek version has "75". See Exo. 1:5 and Acts 7:14.

⁹ Jacob said, “I am only 130 years old, but all those years have been difficult. I have lived in different places as a foreigner, like my ancestors did. But they lived to be much older than I am.”

¹⁰ Then Jacob again said words of blessing to the king and left.

¹¹ Joseph did what Pharaoh said and found a place for his father and brothers to settle. It was the best land in Egypt, in the eastern part of the country, near the city of Rameses. ¹² Joseph also gave his father, his brothers and all their people the food they needed.

Joseph Buys Land for Pharaoh

¹³ The famine got worse and there was no food anywhere in the land. Everywhere in Egypt and Canaan the people were suffering from hunger. ¹⁴ Joseph sold the people more and more grain until he had collected all their money. He took the money and stored it in Pharaoh’s palace. ¹⁵ When the people in Egypt and Canaan had no money left, they all came to Joseph and said, “Please give us food. Our money is gone. If we don’t eat, we will die here in front of you.”

¹⁶ But Joseph answered, “If you have no money, give me your livestock, and I will give you food.” ¹⁷ So the people brought their livestock to Joseph, and he traded them food for their horses, sheep, goats, cattle and donkeys. So all that year Joseph provided the people food in exchange for their livestock.

¹⁸ But the next year the people came to Joseph and said, “Master, surely you know we have no money left, and all our livestock belongs to you. So we have nothing left for you except ourselves and our land. ¹⁹ It will not help you to watch

us die and our land be ruined. But give us food in exchange for our land, and we will be slaves to Pharaoh. Give us seed to plant. Then we will live and not die, and the land will not become a desert.”

²⁰ So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. The famine was so bad in Egypt that everyone who owned land sold it for food. Finally, all the land belonged to the king. ²¹ And everywhere in Egypt the people became Pharaoh’s slaves. ²² The only land Joseph did not buy was the land the priests owned. They did not need to sell their land because Pharaoh paid them for their work. So they had money to buy food.

²³ Then Joseph said to the people, “Now you and your land belong to Pharaoh. So I will give you seed, and you can plant your fields. ²⁴ At harvest time, you must give one-fifth of your crops to Pharaoh. You can keep the rest of the grain to use as seed for planting and as food for you and your families.”

²⁵ The people said, “Master, you have saved our lives! We will gladly be slaves of Pharaoh.”

²⁶ So Joseph made a law for Egypt that continues today: one-fifth of everything the land produces belongs to Pharaoh. The only land he does not own is the land of the priests.

Don’t Bury Me in Egypt

²⁷ The Israelites continued to live in Egypt in the land of Goshen, where they again became wealthy. They had many children, and their families grew to be very large.

²⁸ Jacob was in Egypt 17 years, and he lived to be 147 years old. ²⁹ When the time came for him to die, he called his son Joseph to him and said, “If you love

me, promise me with an oath** that you will show me your faithful love by doing what I ask: Don't bury me in Egypt.³⁰ When I die and go to join my ancestors, bury my body in the place where my ancestors are buried. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in our family grave."

Joseph answered, "I will do what you have asked."

³¹ Then Jacob said, "Make a vow to me." And Joseph made a vow that he would do this. Then Israel bowed in thanks at the head of his bed.^{††}

Blessings for Manasseh and Ephraim

48 Some time later, Joseph learned that his father was very sick. So he went to see him and took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him.² When Joseph arrived, someone told Jacob, "Your son Joseph has come to see you." Jacob was very weak, but he tried hard and sat up in his bed.

³ Then Jacob said to Joseph, "God All-Powerful appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan. God blessed me there.

⁴ He said to me, 'I will make you a great family. I will give you many children and you will be a great people. Your family will own this land forever.'⁵ Now you have two sons. These two sons were born here in the land of Egypt before I came. Your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, will be like my own sons. They will be like Reuben and Simeon to me.

⁶ So these two boys will be my sons. They will share in everything I own. But if you have other sons, they will be your sons. They will also be like sons to Ephraim and Manasseh. That is, in the future, they will share in everything that Ephraim and Manasseh own.⁷ On

the journey from Mesopotamia, Rachel died in the land of Canaan. This made me very sad. We were still travelling towards Ephrath. I buried her there on the road to Ephrath," which is now called Bethlehem.

⁸ Then Jacob saw Joseph's sons and said, "Who are these boys?"

⁹ Joseph said, "These are the sons God has given me here in Egypt."

His father said, "Bring them here. I want to bless them."

¹⁰ Jacob was old and could not see very well. So Joseph brought the boys close to him, and Jacob hugged and kissed them.¹¹ Then Jacob said to Joseph, "I thought I would never see your face again. But look! God has let me see you and your children."

¹² Then Joseph took the boys off his father's lap and bowed down with his face to the ground before him.¹³ Then he stood up, took Ephraim with his right hand and Manasseh with his left hand, and faced his father. So both the boys were standing in front of Jacob, Ephraim on his left and Manasseh on his right.

¹⁴ But Jacob crossed his hands and put his right hand on the head of Ephraim, who was younger. Then he put his left hand on Manasseh, who was the first-born.¹⁵ And he blessed Joseph and said, "I pray to the God my ancestors Abraham and Isaac served, the God who has led me like a shepherd all my life.

¹⁶ He was the Angel who saved me from all my troubles.

I pray that he will bless these boys.

May they cause people to remember my name

**47:29 *If you love ... an oath* Literally, "Put your hand under my thigh." This was a sign used to show that a promise or vow was sincere.

††47:31 *Israel ... bed* The ancient Greek version has "Israel bowed in worship on the head of his staff."

and the names of our ancestors Abraham and Isaac.

I pray that the earth will be filled with their descendants.”

¹⁷ Joseph saw that his father put his right hand on Ephraim’s head, and this upset him. He took his father’s hand and tried to move it from Ephraim’s head and put it on Manasseh’s head. ¹⁸ He said, “Father, that’s the wrong boy! Put your right hand here on Manasseh’s head. He is the firstborn.”

¹⁹ But his father refused and said, “I know that, son. I know. Manasseh is the firstborn, and he will also become a great nation. But his younger brother will be even greater, and his descendants will become many great nations.”

²⁰ So Jacob blessed them that day. He said, “The Israelites will use your names whenever they bless someone. They will say, ‘May God be as good to you as he was to Ephraim and Manasseh.’”

By putting Ephraim’s name first, he meant he would be greater than Manasseh.

²¹ Then Jacob said to Joseph, “You can see that it is almost time for me to die. But God will still be with you and will lead you back to the land of your ancestors. ²² I am giving you something more than I gave your brothers. I give you the land on the mountainside that I took from the Amorites with my sword and bow.”

Jacob Blesses His Sons

49 Then Jacob called all his sons to him. He said, “Gather around me so I can tell you what will happen in the future.

² “Come together and listen, sons of Jacob.

Listen to your father Israel.

³ “Reuben, my first son, you showed my strength.

You were the first proof of my manhood. You were the most important and most powerful of my sons.

⁴ But like a flood, you are out of control. So you will no longer be first.

You had sex with your father’s wife. You brought shame to my bed.

⁵ “Simeon and Levi are brothers, who use their weapons to destroy things.

⁶ I will not join their secret meetings. I will not take part in their evil plans.

They have killed people out of anger and crippled animals for fun.

⁷ I put a curse on them for having too much anger,

so much anger that it makes them cruel. So they will not get any part of the land of Jacob.

I will scatter them among the tribes of Israel.

⁸ “Judah, you will defeat your enemies, and your brothers will praise you; they will bow down to you.

⁹ Judah, my son, you are like a young lion

that returns to its den after eating the animal it killed.

Like a lion, Judah lies down to rest,

and no one is brave enough to disturb him.

¹⁰ No one will take away Judah’s authority.

His descendants will hold the power to rule

until the real king comes^{‡‡}

and all nations honour and obey him.

¹¹ Judah will have so many vineyards

^{‡‡}49:10 *until the real king comes* Or “until Shiloh comes” or “until the man it belongs to comes” or “until the nations bring him gifts”.

that he could let his animals feed on his best vines.

He will have so much wine that he could use it for washing clothes.

¹² He will have so much wine to drink that his eyes will be red.

He will drink so much milk that his teeth will be white.

¹³ “Zebulun will live near the sea.

His seacoast will be a safe place for ships. His land will reach as far as Sidon.

¹⁴ “Issachar is like a strong donkey that lies down to rest with its load on both sides.

¹⁵ He sees that this is a nice place to rest, a very pleasant place to stay.

So he is willing to carry the heavy load and agrees to work as a slave.

¹⁶ “Dan^f will rule his own people the same as the larger tribes of Israel.

¹⁷ His small tribe will be like a snake on the roadside,

like a dangerous snake beside the path. It will strike a horse’s heel

and make the rider fall.

¹⁸ “LORD, I wait for you to save me!

¹⁹ “Gad will be attacked by robbers,^{§§} but he will return the attack and chase them away.

²⁰ “Asher will have plenty of fine food.

His land will produce food fit for a king!

²¹ “Naphtali is like a deer running free, a doe with beautiful young fawns.*

²² “Joseph is like a grapevine loaded with fruit,

a healthy vine watered by a spring, spreading its branches out over a wall.†

²³ The enemy attacked him, shooting their arrows and chasing him.

²⁴ But he aimed his bow well, and his arms were strong.

His power came from the Mighty God of Jacob,

from the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel.

²⁵ Your help comes from the God your father worshipped,

from God All-Powerful, who blesses you. He will bless you with rain from the sky

above

and with springs from the earth below.

He will bless your wives with many babies to nurse

and your animals with many young ones.

²⁶ I, your father, have enjoyed greater blessings

than any of the blessings that come from the eternal mountains

or the good things that come from the ancient hills.

Joseph was made to be the leader of his brothers,

so I place my hand on his head

and pray that all my blessings will be his.

²⁷ “Benjamin is like a hungry wolf.

In the morning he eats what he has killed.

In the evening he shares what is left.”

²⁸ These are the sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel. And these were their father’s last words to them. He had a message for each son that was right for him.

^f**49:16 Dan** This name means “judgement”, “rule” or “justice” and is a wordplay with “rule”.

^{§§}**49:19 attacked by robbers** The Hebrew words for “attacked” and “robbers” sound like the name Gad.

* **49:21 a doe ... fawns** Or “a terebinth tree that has spread out and gives excellent fruit”. The Hebrew text is not clear.

† **49:22** Or “Joseph is successful, like a wild donkey, like a young donkey by a spring.”

Jacob's Death and Burial

²⁹Then Jacob told his sons what he wanted. He said, "It is time for me to die and join my ancestors. I want to be buried with them in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite." ³⁰That cave is in the field of Machpelah near Mamre in the land of Canaan. Abraham bought that field from Ephron to be a burial place. ³¹Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried in that cave. Isaac and his wife Rebekah are also buried there. And I buried my wife Leah there. ³²Abraham bought that field and the cave in it from the Hittites." ³³After Jacob finished talking to his sons, he lay back down on the bed. Then he took his last breath and joined his ancestors in death.

50 Joseph leaned over and hugged his father, crying for him and kissing him.

Jacob's Burial

²Joseph commanded some servants who were doctors to prepare his father for burial. So these servants began preparing Jacob's body in their special way. ³This took 40 days, the usual amount of time needed. The Egyptians mourned for Jacob 70 days.

⁴After these days of mourning, Joseph spoke to Pharaoh's officers and said, "Please tell this to Pharaoh: ⁵'When my father was near death, I made a promise to him. I promised I would bury him in the tomb he prepared for himself in the land of Canaan. So please let me go and bury my father. Then I will come back here.'"

⁶Pharaoh answered, "Keep your promise. Go and bury your father."

⁷So Joseph went to bury his father. All the king's officials, personal advisers and

all the older leaders of Egypt went with him. ⁸All the people in Joseph's family, his brothers and all the people in his father's family went with him. They left only their children and livestock in the land of Goshen. ⁹So a large crowd of people went with him. There were even soldiers in chariots pulled by teams of horses.

¹⁰When they reached the threshing place at Atad near the Jordan River, they mourned Jacob's death, crying loudly for a long time. Joseph continued the funeral ceremony for seven days. ¹¹When the people who lived in Canaan saw the funeral ceremony at the threshing place of Atad, they said, "This is a time of great sorrow for those Egyptians." So now that place by the Jordan River is named Abel Mizraim.[‡]

¹²So Jacob's sons did what their father told them. ¹³They carried his body to Canaan and buried it in the cave in the field of Machpelah. This was the field near Mamre that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite to use as a burial place. ¹⁴After his father's burial, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all the people who had made the trip with them.

Joseph's Brothers Ask for His Forgiveness

¹⁵After Jacob's death, Joseph's brothers said to each other, "What if Joseph is still angry with us for all the bad things we did to him years ago? What if he wants to do something bad to us to pay us back for what we did?" ¹⁶So the brothers sent this message to Joseph: "Before your father died, he ordered us to tell you this: ¹⁷'Your brothers were wrong to do such terrible things to you. Please forgive them for the evil things

[‡]50:11 *Abel Mizraim* This means "Egyptian time of sorrow".

they did.' So now Joseph, we beg you to forgive us for the wrong things we did to you. We are servants of the same God your father worshipped."

This message made Joseph very sad, and he cried. ¹⁸ His brothers went to him and bowed down with their faces to the ground in front of him. They said, "We will be your servants."

¹⁹ Then Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. I am not God! He is the only one who can do such things. ²⁰ It is true that you wanted to harm me. But God planned to use it for good, to save the lives of many people. And that is what is happening now. ²¹ So don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your children." And so with these kind words Joseph made his brothers feel better.

The Death of Joseph

²² Joseph continued to live in Egypt with his father's family. He was 110

years old when he died. ²³ Before he died, his son Ephraim had children and grandchildren. And his son Manasseh had a son named Makir. Joseph accepted Makir's children as his own.

²⁴ When Joseph was near death, he said to his brothers, "I will soon be gone, but I know God will take care of you. He will lead you out of this land of Egypt to the land he promised to give Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

²⁵ Then Joseph asked his brothers, the sons of Israel, to make a promise. Joseph said, "Promise me with an oath that you will carry my bones with you when God comes and leads you to that land."

²⁶ Joseph died when he was 110 years old. There in Egypt they prepared his body for burial and put it in a coffin.