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GENESIS

An Introduction

The name “Genesis” comes from a Greek word meaning “beginning.” This title was taken from the Septuagint (LXX), the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament. The Hebrew title *b^areshiyth* (“in the beginning,” literally, “at the head”) was derived from the first word of the Hebrew text (Gen. 1:1). The Book of Genesis is an appropriate introduction to the entire Bible. The kernels of all truth are found in Genesis. More than half of Biblical history is covered in only 50 chapters!

Genesis answers the gnawing questions that we all have about the origins of the universe, concerning ourselves, about all life forms, and of sin and evil in the world. Also, in a detailed manner, Genesis first unfolds the early history of mankind and then the family records of God’s chosen family and the related lines of descent, from the dawn of time to their settling in Egypt.

Although Genesis is, strictly speaking, not a scientific document, only divine inspiration can account for its accuracy in a pre-scientific age before modern times. Genesis is very clear that all things were created by and had a definite beginning point in the one true God (Gen. 1:1). Everything was well designed by the Supreme Intellect and continues on the basis of His purpose, not random chance. God controls the whole world (Greek: *kosmos*) and He truly cares about the centerpiece of His creation—people. Though the human race has departed from God’s ordered plan for them and must pay the consequences, God has lovingly provided the Way (John 14:6) back home to Paradise (compare Luke 23:43).

Only Genesis fully informs us about the events which pre-dated Moses. Moses wrote it, using some ancient sources under God’s direction. Jesus referred to Moses as the writer (Matt. 8:4; 19:8; Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:3,5; 12:26; Luke 5:14; 16:29,31; 20:37; 24:27,44; John 5:45-46; 6:32; 7:12,22,23).

When God Created

1¹In the beginning, God created^a

a 1:1 The Bible assumes that God has always existed. See what Moses wrote at Ps. 90:2. Everything else had a beginning. God of His own free will and by His absolute power called the whole cosmos into being, evoking into existence what was previously nonexistent (Ps. 33:6,9; 102:5; Jer. 10:12; John 1:3; Acts 14:15; 17:24; Rom. 4:17; Heb. 3:4; Rev. 4:11). If we concede the absolute power of God, we must accept His power to create and to destroy as stated in the Scriptures. There are many problems which the finite mind cannot grasp, but we accept those things by faith (Heb. 11:3). The Hebrew noun for God is *’Elohim* (The short form is *’El*). *’Elohim* is plural, but here the associated

the universe.^{b 2}The earth was not organized, and it was without structure. Darkness covered the deep like a blanket. God’s Spirit was hovering over the surface of the water.

³Then God said, “Let there be light!” And, there was light. ⁴God could see the light, that it was good. God made a distinction between the light and the darkness. ⁵He named

Hebrew verb for “created” is singular!

b 1:1 literally, “the heavens and the earth.”

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the light “day.” And, He named the darkness “night.” The first full day^a ended here.

⁶After that, God said, “Let there be some room in the water; let it separate the water!” ⁷Then God made room. He made a separation in the water, above and below the space. And it took place. ⁸God named the space “sky.” The second full day ended here.

⁹Next, God said, “Let the water below the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear!” And, it happened. ¹⁰God named the dry part “land,” and He named the water (which was together) “ocean.” God could see that it was good.

¹¹Then God said, “Let the land start to produce all kinds of plant life! All vegetation must make seed, and every type of fruit tree on earth must yield its fruit after its species!” And, it occurred. ¹²The land did produce plant life, every kind of vegetation making its own seed after its species, and every type of fruit tree reproducing itself after its species. And, God could see that it was good.

¹³The third full day ended here.

¹⁴Then God said, “Let there

be lights^b in space (the sky) to distinguish between day and night. And, let these lights be markers for time—seasons, years, and days.

¹⁵Also, let them shine in space (the sky) upon the earth!” And so it was.

¹⁶Then God made the two great lights. The stronger light governed the daytime, and the weaker light governed the nighttime. Also, He made the stars. ¹⁷God placed them in space (the sky) to shine upon the earth, ¹⁸to govern the daytime and the nighttime, and to distinguish the light from the darkness. And, God could see that it was good. ¹⁹The fourth full day ended here.

²⁰Then God said, “Let the water abound with all kinds of living creatures. And, let birds fly above the earth across the open sky!” ²¹And God created huge creatures of the sea and every type of living, moving creature which swarms in the water. Each species reproduced itself. God also created every kind of bird, which reproduced itself. And, God could see that it was good. ²²He blessed them all. He said to the marine life, “Be fertile, increase in number, and spread throughout the ocean!” God also said, “And let the birds multiply over the earth!” ²³The fifth full day ended here.

²⁴After that, God said, “Let the

a **1:5** literally, “And it was evening and it was morning, day one.” This same pattern is true for Gen. 1:8,13,19,23,31. This was the Jewish way of keeping time.

b **1:14** referring to the sun and the moon

land produce all types of animal life—livestock, crawling things, and every kind of wild animal. Each must reproduce its own species!” And, it was done.²⁵ God made every kind of wild animal, livestock, and crawling thing—each according to its own species. And, God could see that this was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let Us now make people in Our image;^a they will be like Us! And let them have complete authority over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the wild land animals, and over everything that crawls on the earth!”

a 1:26 referring to the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. See John 1:1ff. Until Jesus came to earth to be with us for a while, the internal unity of the Godhead was not understood. God is spirit (John 4:24). Therefore, man who is similar to God possesses an immortal spirit. We resemble God in certain respects without being equal to Him (Isa. 40:25). Man’s likeness to God is what truly distinguishes mankind from the rest of creation. Man is a person with the power to think, to feel, and to decide. He has the capacity for moral choices and spiritual growth or decline. In the beginning, man loved God and hated unrighteousness. The fall reversed this. Man is still a person with the capacity for good, but his spirit has been altered by sin so much that he now generally runs away from God and loves evil more than righteousness (John 3:19-20). After Adam’s time, only those who lived uprightly before God were considered to be His offspring (Matt. 3:7-10; 13:38; John 12:36; Acts 13:10; Col. 3:6). Man is no longer in the perfect state of conscience as he once was at the time of creation. Therefore, he does not have the same spiritual, God-like attributes and qualities of that original state. Jesus, the second Adam (Rom. 5:18-19) came to undo Satan’s misdeeds (1 John 3:8), that is, to restore a spiritual likeness to God.

²⁷God created people in His own image. He created mankind in the image of God. He created them male and female.

²⁸And God blessed them. He said to them, “Have lots of children. Increase in number. Spread throughout the earth and conquer it. And, take complete authority over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every creature that crawls on the earth.”

²⁹Then God said, “Listen, I have given to you all kinds of vegetation on all the earth which makes seed and every type of fruit tree which produces seed. This will be food for you.³⁰ These things will also be food for every kind of wild animal, every bird of the air, and anything that crawls upon the earth, which has the breath of life in it. I have provided all types of green plant life for food.” That is the way it was.

³¹So, God could see everything that He had made. And, look, it was very good! The sixth full day ended here.

2¹Therefore, the universe and its whole array were completed.
²On the seventh day God finished His work that He was doing. On the seventh day He stopped doing everything that He had been doing.
³And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because, on that

day, He stopped all of His work—His creating and making.

⁴These are the records^a of the universe when it was created,^b during the time when God, the One Who Is Always Present,^c made it: ⁵Now there were no wild shrubs on the earth yet. Neither did wild plants grow, because God, the One Who Is

a 2:4 or, “This is the history”

b 2:4 The two accounts of creation (Gen. 1:1–2:4a and Gen. 2:4b-24) are compatible. These sections complement each other. The first one presents a wide-angle view of all seven days of God’s creation, and it deals with the creation of man and woman as a single act. In the second account, Moses zooms in on the sixth day, giving us details which were not possible in the structure of the foregoing overview. Instead, the separate origins of man and woman are brought into sharp focus, thus summarizing what was already mentioned in Gen. 1:24-31.

c 2:4 literally, “Yahweh” (sometimes spelled “Jehovah,” or the shortened form, “Yah” or “Jah”). This is the personal and covenant Name which God Himself chose to be known by. See Exo. 3:14-15; 6:3. The meaning is associated with the eternal existence of God. The Name seems to suggest the timelessness of God, the very Foundation of all existence. Perhaps there is a hint of this in Rev. 1:4, “... from the One who is, who was, and who will be ...” Jesus probably alluded to this in John 8:58, “Before Abraham was, I AM.” Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). Since the original Hebrew text had only consonants, this sacred Name (called “the tetragrammaton,” 4 letters) was YHWH. No one can be sure of the original pronunciation. Because ancient Jewish people thought that the Name of God was too holy to be uttered (Deut. 28:58), and because they were afraid of violating Exo. 20:7 and Lev. 24:16, they routinely substituted the Hebrew word for “Lord” (*Adonay*) for YHWH. That custom is still being practiced today. This is the reason for the traditional “LORD” (with small capital letters). This Name occurs more than 6,000 times in the Old Testament. See the full implications of the meaning of this divine Name in Exo. 33:18-20; 34:6-7; Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2.

Always Present, had not yet caused it to rain upon the earth. (There was no man to plow the ground.)⁶ However, ground water used to come up from the earth and provide moisture for all the topsoil.

⁷The Always-Present One, God, took some dirt from the ground, and from it He shaped a man. Into the man’s nose, God breathed the breath of life. And, the man became a living person.^d

⁸God, the One Who Is Always Present, then planted a garden in Eden in the east. There He placed the man whom He had formed. ⁹God, the One Who Is Always Present, made all kinds of trees grow there. Some were lovely to look at and some were good for food. The Tree of Life

d 2:7 or, “a soul.” The Hebrew word is *nephesh*, which means “that which breathes.” It corresponds with the Greek word *psyche* in the New Testament and is sometimes translated as “life.” Here *nephesh* is synonymous with the word “spirit.” Both “soul” and “spirit” usually refer to one’s emotional life and can sometimes be translated as “heart.” “Heart” is the seat of all thinking, feeling, and purpose. “Soul” and “spirit” are often used interchangeably. It is not easy to define the difference between them. Hebrew culture tended to view man as being composed of only two parts—soul (spirit) and body. On the other hand, the Greek concept of man was tripartite (see 1 Thes. 5:23), namely, body, soul, and spirit. Broadly defined, in the Greek way of thinking, the “soul” (*psyche*) stood for life, affections, the will, the consciousness, while the “spirit” (*pneuma*) represented the higher elements by which we comprehend spiritual truths. And, the body (*soma*) was the physical, material body. The author of the Book of Hebrews states that there is a very fine line of distinction between “soul” and “spirit” (Heb. 4:12).

was in the center of the garden.^a Another tree was there—the tree that caused people to know the difference between right and wrong.^b

¹⁰A river went out of Eden to provide water for the garden. The river split up after flowing from the garden and it became the beginnings of four rivers. ¹¹The name of the first one is Pishon. It winds around within the whole country of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹²The gold there is of very high quality. That land also has aromatic resin and onyx stones. ¹³The name of the second river is Gihon. It winds around within the entire country of Cush. ¹⁴The name of the third river is the Tigris River.^c It is the river which flows east of Asshur.^d And, the fourth river is the Euphrates River.

¹⁵God, the One Who Is Always Present, took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and

to take care of it. ¹⁶God, the One Who Is Always Present, gave him this command: “You are allowed to eat fruit from every tree in the garden—except one. ¹⁷But do **not** eat anything from the tree that causes people to know the difference between right and wrong. You must **never** eat the fruit of that tree. If you ever do, you will most certainly die!”^e

¹⁸After this, God, the One Who Is Always Present, said, “It’s not good for the man to be alone. I will make a matching helper^f for him.” ¹⁹God, the One Who Is Always Present, had shaped from the ground every kind of wild animal and bird of the air. And God brought them to the man to see what the man would name each one of them. Whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰So, the man gave names to all the livestock, to all the birds of the air, and to every wild animal. However, he did not find a matching partner for himself—a human being.

²¹So, God, the One Who Is Always

a 2:9 See Rev. 22:2.

b 2:9 This was a simple test of obedience. Our first parents had to choose whether they would obey God or disobey Him. When they chose to break His clear commandment, the fatal consequences of their actions became self-evident. They soon found themselves in a different relationship with God, their Creator. They were now sinners. The Tree of Life was the antidote to disease and decay. Access to that tree was dependent upon a proper relationship with God. The question which faced Adam and Eve is the same one which faces each one of us today—which path are we going to choose? Your answer depends upon what kind of relationship you want with God.

c 2:14 literally, “Hiddekel”

d 2:14 or, “of Assyria”

e 2:17 We are descendants of a sinful Adam. Therefore, we cannot rise above our origins; they invariably affect us. Though it is theoretically possible to live without sinning, we know from experience, and from Scripture, that this never happens (see Rom. 3:9-23). No one ever attains this sinless ideal (Eccl. 7:20). Some people come nearer to it than others, but, in the end, everyone needs salvation! That is why Jesus Christ came (Luke 19:10).

f 2:18 or, “a helper suitable” = a corresponding one, a counterpart

Present, caused the man to fall into a very deep sleep. While the man was sleeping, God took out one of the man's ribs. Then God closed up the man's body. ²²God, the One Who Is Always Present, used the rib, which He had taken from the man, to construct a woman. Then He brought her to the man. ²³This is what the man said:

"Now she is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. She will be called 'woman' because she was taken out of man."

²⁴Therefore, a man should leave his father and mother, and he should join^a his wife. Then the husband and the wife will become as one flesh.^b

²⁵The man and the woman were both naked, but they felt no shame.^c

Paradise Lost

3¹Now the snake^d was the most clever, wild creature that God,

a 2:24 literally, "cling to" = unite with

b 2:24 Monogamy for a lifetime was (and is) God's original, divine plan. See Matt. 19:5; 1 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 5:31-33.

c 2:25 or, "embarrassment." Before sin entered this world, there was no shame associated with sex. Only after Adam and Eve sinned did they become self-conscious about their nudity (Gen. 3:7,20,21,25). God intends for intimate, sexual joys to be fulfilled *only* within the boundaries of holy matrimony (that is, a monogamous marriage between one man and one wife for a lifetime) without shame.

d 3:1 the Devil (Matt. 13:39; 1 Pet. 5:8). Satan disguised himself (2 Cor. 11:14) as a serpent (Rev. 12:9; 20:2). He wanted to cause Eve to doubt God.

the One Who Is Always Present, had made.^e The snake asked the woman, "Did God actually say to you that you two could **not** eat from any tree in the garden!?"

²The woman answered the snake, "Yes. We are allowed to eat the fruit of any tree in the garden,³ but not from a particular tree near the center of the garden. God told us not to eat any fruit from that tree—we cannot even touch it.^f If we do, we will die!"

⁴The snake said to the woman, "That's not true! You will **not** die!^g ⁵Why? Because God knows that whenever you two do eat some of it, then your eyes will be opened.^h Then

The Devil is always trying to alienate people from God (Job 1-2; Zech. 3:1). Anything forbidden has always held a fascination for human beings. We are so vulnerable in that way.

e 3:1 God created the serpent, and it was good at that time (Gen. 1:31), but, later Satan took control of the snake. The Devil was not an animal at all, but he was more subtle (crafty) than any of God's creatures (lower life forms). Satan invaded the form of that snake so that he could seduce Eve (2 Cor. 11:3). God did not permit Satan to assume a higher form. The best that Satan can do is to appear as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14) or to look like a mighty prince (Matt. 4:8; Luke 4:5-7).

f 3:3 Note that Eve adds this phrase "—we cannot even touch it." to God's wording. She was trying to make her case stronger, but in doing so she actually weakened it. This is typical of the human race. We usually find it difficult to leave God's Word alone! We must *not* add or subtract from His words (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19).

g 3:4 Satan did not attempt to explain exactly *why* they allegedly would not die; he merely affirmed it! And, he said this so convincingly that Eve believed it immediately.

h 3:5 Here Satan proceeds to impugn God's motives, that is, "Surely God must be trying to keep back something beneficial to you!?" And, Eve was

you will become like God, knowing the difference between right and wrong!”^a

⁶The woman could see that the tree was good for food, that it was beautiful to look at, and that it could make her wise. So, she took some of its fruit^b and ate it. Then she also gave some to her husband who was with her. He ate it, too. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened; they realized that they were naked. So, they sewed together the leaves of a fig tree to make coverings for themselves.

⁸That evening,^c when the man and his wife heard the sound of God, the One Who Is Always Present, walking in the garden,^d they tried to hide

completely convinced. After this new, unproven assumption was insidiously implanted in Eve's mind, the rest was easy for Satan.

a 3:5 Sin is defined here. See 1 John 3:8. Man is so impudent that he easily disobeys his Creator. Why? Because sin is basically a selfish, rebellious desire, coupled with man's lack of confidence in God's inherent goodness. Sin is essentially a problem in the human *heart*, not just a rational misunderstanding. The external act of sin is only a symptom of man's real, underlying disease. Compare Rom. 3:23.

b 3:6 Nowhere does the Bible say that this fruit was an apple! That old tradition could have come from the Latin word for “apple” (*malum*), which is very similar to the Latin word for “evil” (*malum*). Whatever the fruit was, its use was a plain violation of divine prohibition. It was purely Adam and Eve's unwarranted desire for forbidden knowledge. The gravity of the offense consisted not so much in the act itself, but in the fact that Adam and Eve committed it consciously and deliberately against God's specific, explicit, and emphatic command.

c 3:8 literally, “during the breeze (= cool) of the day”

d 3:8 Actually, God is omnipresent (Ps.139:7-10;

themselves among the trees of the garden, away from the presence of the Always-Present God. ⁹But God, the Always-Present One, called out to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

¹⁰The man answered, “I heard You walking in the garden, but, because I was naked, I was afraid and hid myself.”

¹¹The Always-Present One asked, “Who informed you that you were naked? Did you eat some of the fruit which I commanded you not to eat?”

¹²The man answered, “It was the woman whom You put here with me—**she** gave it to me from the tree. So I ate!”

¹³The Always-Present One, God, asked the woman, “What is this you have done?”

She answered, “The snake tricked me.^e So I ate!”

God Decides

¹⁴Then the Always-Present One, God, said to the snake, “Because you have done this thing, you are

Isa. 66:1; Jer. 23:23-24; Amos 9:2-3). Nevertheless, in this passage, the presence of God is presented anthropomorphically, that is, God is being described in human terms, so that we can better understand Him. However, God is *not* a man (1 Sam. 16:7; Job 10:4; Luke 16:15; 1 Pet. 2:4; 3:4), and He does not look like a human being or think as we do (Isa. 55:8-9). And, God is always a searching God (John 4:23). Just like a loving father who searches for his erring children, God wants us back!

e 3:13 See 2 Cor. 11:3 and 1 Tim. 2:14.

banished from all livestock and all wild animals. From now on, you will crawl on your belly, and you will have to eat dirt as long as you live. ¹⁵I will put hostility between you and the woman, between your children and her child.^a Although her child will crush your head, you will bite his heel.”^b

¹⁶Then God said to the woman, “I will surely increase your problems in having children. In great pain, you will give birth to babies. Nevertheless, you will still yearn for your husband, and he will be in charge over you.”

¹⁷And God said to Adam,^c “Because you listened to your wife and you ate some of the fruit which I commanded you **not** to eat, the ground is now condemned. It’s your fault! As long as you live, you will have to work hard to make it produce enough food for you.

a 3:15 This perpetual antagonism would be between the tempter and mankind; that is, between the children of the world and the children of God (Matt. 23:33; 1 John 3:10). Ultimately, Jesus Christ is *the* Descendant (or, *the* Seed) of Abraham (Gal. 3:16,19). His purpose was to come to earth to destroy the deeds of the Devil (1 John 3:8b) by dying on behalf of every person (Heb. 2:9) in order to save us (Luke 19:10).

b 3:15 This promise was literally fulfilled in the triumph of Jesus Christ over Satan, a victory in which all true believers may share. See Rom. 16:20 and Rev. 20:2. Although Jesus of Nazareth was executed on that Roman cross by evil men, he overcame death by rising from death on the third day. That was the fatal blow to the head of the snake, where its deadly venom is stored.

c 3:17 = the man. Hebrew: ‘*adam*, a word which is like the Hebrew word for “dirt” (‘*adamah*) here in this same verse.

¹⁸Instead, it will sprout stickers and thorns for you. And, you’ll have to eat wild plants. ¹⁹The food which you do eat will only come to you through hard work until you go back to the earth from which you came, because you were taken from the ground. You are dirt, and you will return to the dirt.”

²⁰The man named his wife “Eve,”^d because she was to become the mother of every human being.

²¹Then the Always-Present One, God, made clothes out of animal skins^e for Adam and his wife. And He dressed them.

Leaving the Garden

²²After this, the Always-Present One, God, said, “Look, the man has become like one of Us; the man now knows the difference between right and wrong. He must no longer be permitted to reach out his hand and pick fruit from the Tree of Life, so that he could eat and continue to live forever!” ²³So, God, the Always-Present One, sent him away from the garden of Eden to plow the ground from which he had been taken.

²⁴And, God drove out the man and his wife. On the east side of the

d 3:20 A name which is similar to the Hebrew word for “life” in the sense of her being the well-spring of all humanity.

e 3:21 Some animals had to die (that is, give their blood) for the sake of Adam and Eve.

garden of Eden, God posted heavenly guards^a and a flaming, lashing sword to protect the pathway to the Tree of Life.^b

Cain and Abel

4¹Then the man had sex with^c Eve, his wife. And, she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the Always-Present One I have received^d a human being.”²She then continued giving birth to Abel,^e Cain’s brother.

Later, Abel became a shepherd of a flock. Cain became a farmer.³After a while, Cain brought an offering to Yahweh from his harvest.⁴Abel also brought something to God—firstborn lambs from his flock and their best parts. The Always-Present One was very pleased with Abel and his offering.⁵But God was not happy with Cain or his offering.^f

Cain became very upset; he looked so sad.^g⁶The Always-Present One said to Cain, “Why are you so angry, and why are you wearing such a frown?⁷If you were doing what is right, I would accept you.^hOtherwise, watch out! Rebellionⁱ is lurking at the door of your heart, ready to jump on you.^jIt wants to get you, but you can gain control over it!”

⁸One day, Cain said to Abel, his brother, “Let’s go out into the field.”^kWhen they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and murdered him.^l

⁹Later, the Always-Present One

“in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). When God saw that Abel was worshipping God properly, Cain became angry and jealous. That is why Cain hated his brother and murdered him (1 John 3:12).

g 4:5 or, “his face was downcast.” Cain was dejected and depressed. Cain’s sin began just as all other sins begin—with a hostile attitude toward God, which leads to outright disobedience.

h 4:7 And there would be a smile on Cain’s face.

i 4:7 or, “Sin.” See James 4:7-8.

j 4:7 Here sin is pictured as a predatory animal. However, there is always an internal sentinel (namely, our conscience) to warn us of sin’s presence. Temptation is not wrong in and of itself; it is only a test. Even Jesus Christ was tempted (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; Heb. 2:18; 4:15-16). No, our yielding to temptation is the thing that is wrong! If the warning is unheeded, then serious danger follows. All of us are accountable for our actions before God.

k 4:8 The Hebrew Masoretic Text does not have this last sentence, but it is supported in the ancient texts of the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, and the Syriac Version.

l 4:8 Abel is dead, but through faith, he still speaks to us. See Heb. 11:4.

a 3:24 literally, “the cherubs”

b 3:24 Otherwise, mankind could continue to live forever in sinful rebellion against God.

c 4:1 literally, “knew”. The Hebrew word *yada’* indicates the most intimate relationship between a man and a woman—the sexual bond. This word could be translated: “And Adam experienced Eve, his wife.”

d 4:1 This Hebrew verb is from the same root as the name of Cain.

e 4:2 This Hebrew name means “breath,” “temporary,” or “meaningless.” Compare the root word in Eccl. 1:2; 12:8. Abel’s life-span would be brief.

f 4:5 By faith, Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain did. Abel was a good man through faith. See Heb. 11:4. On the other hand, Cain was not generous, and he probably gave very little thought to his offering to God. Cain was not worshipping God

asked Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

He answered, “I don’t know! Am I my brother’s protector?”

¹⁰Then God said, “What have you done? Your brother’s blood is shouting to Me from the ground!^a

¹¹You forced the ground to receive your brother’s blood.^b You are now banished from the soil! ¹²Whenever you try to plow the soil, it will no longer grow anything for you. You will become a wanderer and have no home on earth!”

¹³Then Cain said to the Always-Present One, “My punishment is greater than what I can stand!

¹⁴Listen, today You have driven me from the topsoil. I will be hidden from Your presence. I will become a runaway and a wanderer on earth. If anyone finds me, he will kill me!”^c

¹⁵But the Always-Present One said to him, “No. If anyone kills Cain, Cain will be avenged seven times over!” Then the Always-Present One put a mark on Cain, so that whoever found him would not kill him.

¹⁶And, Cain left the presence of the

a 4:10 that is, calling for vengeance

b 4:11 See Heb. 12:24.

c 4:14 Cain was afraid that some of the kinsmen of Abel would find Cain and kill him in revenge for Abel’s murder. This was a very real threat to Cain. Therefore, it logically follows that the population of the world had already multiplied considerably since the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden.

Always-Present One and stayed in a land called “Nod,”^d which was east of Eden.

The Descendants of Cain

¹⁷Then Cain had sex with his wife.^e And she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain built a city and named it “Enoch,” after the name of his son.

¹⁸Irad was born to Enoch. And, Irad fathered Mehujael. Mehujael fathered Methushael. Methushael fathered Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech took two wives for himself. The name of the first one was Adah, and the name of the second one was Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal, who became the ancestor of those who live in tents and who raise cattle. ²¹The name of Jabal’s brother was Jubal. He became the ancestor of all those who play the harp and the flute. ²²Zillah also had children. She gave birth to Tubal-Cain who became a blacksmith. He forged every kind of sharp, bronze instrument or iron. His sister was Naamah.

d 4:16 meaning, “Wandering”

e 4:17 Cain married one of his relatives. The origin of Cain’s wife has perplexed many people over the years. But, since Adam is the father of all mankind (Rom. 5:12), Cain’s wife had to come from Adam. And, Gen. 5:4 does assert that Adam had other sons and daughters, besides the three sons named in Gen. 4. Given the longevity of people at that time, Cain could have married one of his sisters or a more distant relative who descended from Adam

²³Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zillah:

“Obey my voice, you wives of Lamech! Listen to my speech, because I have killed a man for merely hurting me, a young man for leaving a scar on me!^a

²⁴Since Cain was avenged 7 times over, then Lamech will be avenged 77 times over!”

Another Son

²⁵Adam had sex with his wife again. She gave birth to another son. She named him “Seth.” She said, “God has given me another child^b to replace^c Abel, because Cain murdered Abel.”

²⁶A son was also born to Seth. He named him Enosh. He began to worship the Always-Present One during his lifetime.^d

Adam’s Family Record

S¹This is the book of the records about Adam when God created him:

a 4:23 This particular outburst of Lamech revealed his proud and presumptuous self-confidence. This was the boast of a very bold, bad man who was elated because of his possession of the metal weapons which his son Tubal-Cain had invented. Lamech felt that he could take a human life at will.

b 4:25 literally, “seed”

c 4:25 Hebrew: *sath*

d 4:26 Worship (perhaps only a mute adoration) already existed (see Gen. 4:3-4 above). This passage may refer to the institution of regular, solemn, public worship of the one true God. During the time of Enosh, some people were beginning to address God formally in prayer and thanksgiving.

God made humankind^e to be in His own likeness.

²God created them male and female. He blessed them and named them “mankind” on the day when they were created.

³Adam lived 130 years, and then he fathered a son who was similar to him. In fact, he was just like him. Adam named him “Seth.”

⁴After Adam fathered Seth, Adam lived for 800 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters. ⁵The total lifetime of Adam was 930 years. Then he died.

⁶Seth lived 105 years, and then he fathered Enosh. ⁷After Seth fathered Enosh, he lived 807 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters. ⁸The total lifetime of Seth was 912 years. Then he died.

⁹Enosh lived 90 years, and then he fathered Kenan. ¹⁰After Enosh fathered Kenan, he lived 815 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters. ¹¹The total lifetime of Enosh was 905 years. Then he died.

¹²Kenan lived 70 years, and then fathered Mahalalel. ¹³After Kenan fathered Mahalalel, he lived 840 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters. ¹⁴The total lifetime of Kenan was 910 years. Then he died.

¹⁵Mahalalel lived 65 years and then he fathered Jared. ¹⁶After Mahalalel

e 5:1 or, “Adam”

fathered Jared, he lived 830 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters. ¹⁷The total lifetime of Mahalalel was 895 years. Then he died.

¹⁸Jared lived 162 years, and then he fathered Enoch. ¹⁹After Jared fathered Enoch, he lived 800 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters. ²⁰The total lifetime of Jared was 962 years. Then he died.

²¹Enoch lived 65 years, and then he fathered Methuselah. ²²After Enoch fathered Methuselah, Enoch lived very close to ^a the one true God ^b for 300 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters. ²³The total lifetime of Enoch was 365 years. ²⁴However, since Enoch was so close to the one true God, Enoch did not die. ^c God took him home! ^d

²⁵Methuselah lived 187 years, and then he fathered Lamech. ^e ²⁶After

a 5:22 literally, he walked with”

b 5:22 The original Hebrew text here adds the definite article (*ha-*) to the word “God”. This was an indication that widespread idolatry had already emerged. Despite this, Enoch lived his whole life in strict compliance to the will of the one true God.

c 5:24 literally, “he was not”; that is, “he was no more.”

d 5:24 See Heb. 11:5 and 2 Kings 2:11-18. This is one of the first hints of the doctrine of immortality in the Old Testament. Compare Elijah’s experience in 2 Kings 2:1-12. Also, see Ps. 49:15. The physical bodies of Enoch and Elijah were probably transformed as Paul describes the process in 1 Cor. 15:51-52. No doubt, they were changed into spiritualized bodies similar to that of the resurrected Christ. Some day we ourselves will see Christ as he is, because we will be like him (1 John 3:2).

e 5:25 This is a different “Lamech” from the one mentioned in Gen. 4:18-24.

Methuselah fathered Lamech, he lived 782 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters. ²⁷The total lifetime of Methuselah was 969 years. Then he died.

²⁸Lamech lived 182 years, and then he fathered a son. ²⁹He named his son “Noah.” ^f Lamech said, “This boy will comfort us despite our hard work and heavy manual labor which is necessary because of the ground that was condemned by the Always-Present One.” ³⁰After Lamech fathered Noah, he lived for 595 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters. ³¹The total lifetime of Lamech was 777 years. Then he died.

³²After Noah was 500 years old, he fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Evil Everywhere

6¹As people ^g began to increase in number upon the surface of the earth, ^h daughters were born to them. ²The sons of the one true God ⁱ saw that the daughters of men ^j were beautiful. ^k They married

f 5:29 The Hebrew word for “Noah” sounds similar to the Hebrew word for “comfort.”

g 6:1 Hebrew: *ha’adam* = the human race

h 6:1 Hebrew: *ha’adamah*

i 6:2 = those who called upon the Name of Yahweh (Gen. 4:26) and faithfully walked with God (Gen. 5:22,24; 6:9)

j 6:2 = materialistically-minded women (compare Isa. 3:16–4:1; 32:9-13; Amos 4:1-3)

k 6:2 “The sons of God” is an expression that also occurs in Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 where it refers to angels. But this passage in Genesis *cannot* refer to angels because, according to Jesus, angels do *not*

as many of them as they wanted.^a

³However, the Always-Present One said, “My Spirit will not always plead with^b mankind^c since^d they are indeed mortal.^e Their time of

marry (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:35-36) and they have no gender. Angels had not yet been mentioned before this time in Genesis. The angelic interpretation is based on Jewish mythology (celestial), not anthropology (terrestrial). Would bad angels ever be called “the sons of God”? If certain fallen angels were the guilty perpetrators (1 Pet. 3:18-20; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 1:6-7), why didn’t God “flood” them as well!? These three New Testament passages do *not* say anything about angelic marriages. No, this first set of human beings probably refers to the godly descendants of Seth, while the second set of “the daughters of men” denotes Cain’s descendants who were morally corrupt. Note that Gen. 6:1-4 immediately follows their respective genealogies (Gen. 4:17-5:32). Lamech, a tyrannical polygamist, was a descendant of Cain (Gen. 4:18-24). And, ungodly mothers would not train their children to be godly (Prov. 23:6). That is how brute force became the norm.

a 6:2 These unfortunate intermarriages (compare 2 Cor. 6:14-17) broke down the line of separation between the two sets of people (the Sethites and the Cainites). So, this explains how the entire human race, except for Noah’s immediate family, became totally reprobate.

b 6:3 The Greek Septuagint, the Syriac text, the Latin Vulgate, and the Targum Onkelos have “remain with” here, assuming that the Hebrew word *yadown* was originally written as *yalown*. The RSV, the NEB, the NRSV, the NCV, and the ESV have followed the second reading.

c 6:3 or, “I will not keep mankind alive with My (life-giving) breath (Gen. 2:7) indefinitely.” There is a certain point beyond which God’s patience and warnings will not go (Amos 4:6-11; Mark 3:28-30; Rom. 1:24,26,28; 1 Pet. 3:19-20; 2 Pet. 3:5-6). Though He will always encourage us to do the right thing, He never violates our right to choose to do wrong.

d 6:3 or, “who is (continually) straying.” Compare Rom. 8:5-8.

e 6:3 literally, “flesh.” At that time, mankind had become so worldly-minded as to ignore God’s will completely. The original, higher nature of man had become extinct because of the continual, downward

probation will be within 120 years.^f

⁴(When the sons of the one true God had sex with the daughters of men^g and had children by them, there were Nephilim^h on the earth, as well as later. These powerful men were famous.ⁱ Their fame has come down to us since ancient times.)

⁵The Always-Present One could see^j that people on the earth had become very evil. Every thought—

path of sin. Men had sunk so low that they could not get back to God (Eph. 4:19).

f 6:3 If mankind would not repent within the next 120 years, they would be exterminated. Except for Noah and his immediate family, the entire human race turned out to be incorrigible.

g 6:4 not called “the daughters of God”!

h 6:4 The Greek Septuagint (LXX) wrongly translated this Hebrew word as “giants” (properly, “earth-born” = sinners). (However, the critical LXX edition of Dr. Alfred Rahlfs does *not* support the angelic interpretation of Gen. 6:2.) According to Num. 13:31-33, some of the Nephilim were physical giants. This original Hebrew word connotes not so much great stature, but a reckless, autocratic ambition that would spread carnage far and wide. The Hebrew word (*nephilim*) means “fallen ones”; they had fallen away from the true faith of the saints of God (= the holy ones who were not rooted in this earth (Rom. 12:1-2). Though the locals regarded such despotic individuals as “heroes,” they were actually notorious men of violence and lawlessness. These tyrants routinely oppressed the people. Notice that the Nephilim class existed *before* the time when those widespread, bad marriages began to take place.

i 6:4 like the aristocratic and infamous Nimrod of Gen. 10:8. Such men perverted God’s authority, the state, justice, and human sexuality. These dictators seized political power and multiplied their harems. Their dynasties also masqueraded as “gods.” They thought they were accountable to no one but themselves!

j 6:5 God sees everything we do (Ps. 14:1-4; 53:2; 139:1-6,23-24; Prov. 15:3; Rom. 1:28-31; 3:9-19; Heb. 4:13).

every intention in their hearts—was only evil all day long! ⁶The Always-Present One was very sorry^a that He had ever put people on the earth. He felt highly insulted.^b ⁷He said, “Although I created people, I will now wipe them off the face of the earth! I will do the same thing to the livestock, the creatures that crawl, and the birds of the air. I am sorry that I ever made them!” ⁸But the Always-Present One was not unhappy with Noah.^c

Noah

⁹These are the records about Noah:

a 6:6 or, “regretted”. The original sense was sighing; that is, breathing deeply.

b 6:6 literally, “And He was angered to His heart” = incensed. The universal, hardened response of the human race deserved severe, divine punishment. But this verse has puzzled Bible students for many years. Since God is always consistent and does not vacillate (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Mal. 3:6; James 1:17), and He is not human (Num. 23:19; Isa. 55:8-9; Hos. 11:9; Mic. 7:18-20; Mal. 3:6; Rom. 11:28-29), why is God being portrayed here by Moses, the inspired writer, in such human terms? Answer: So that we can comprehend God at all! (We cannot conceive of God except in human terms.) So, this verse is anthropomorphic. God is not impersonal. He is deeply hurt by what we do on this earth. Our sinful deeds grieve Him. We are the irrational ones. God’s foreknowledge (Acts 15:18) never contradicts man’s free choice. Except for Messianic predictions, whatever God promises to man is *conditional*, as far as we are concerned. It always comes down to this question: How are we going to respond to His offers of mercy? He is flexible and not fatalistic. A change in our conduct brings about a change in God’s decisions. God is always free to change direction according to His sovereign, immutable purposes (1 Chr. 21:15; Amos 7:3,6; Jonah 3:10; Jer. 18:8; 26:3,19). We can only detect that change from a human perspective.

c 6:8 literally, “But Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh.”

Noah was a righteous man, the one good^d man in his generation. He lived close to the one true God. ¹⁰And Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹The earth was corrupt in the presence of the one true God. All over the world, people were violent.

¹²God looked at the world, and, look, it was corrupted, because all the people on earth were living twisted lives.

¹³God said to Noah, “I have decided to put an end to all life on land. Look, I will completely destroy them and the world, because the world is full of their violent deeds. ¹⁴Build a barge^e for yourself out of cypress wood.^f Make compartments in it, and cover

d 6:9 or, “whole”. How could Noah be “perfect” when no one is perfect (1 Kings 8:46; Ps. 14:2-3; Prov. 20:9; Eccl.7:20; Mark 10:18; Rom. 3:18,23; 1 John 1:8)? All these passages describe people in their unregenerate state. Except for Jesus Christ, no human being has ever reached the age of accountability without violating God’s moral law! Men are not good in the same sense that God is good. Men are only “good” relatively speaking, when comparing good people with bad people. Any “good” that is within us derives from God, who is inherently good and loving (Matt. 5:45; James 1:17). Noah lived by faith (Heb. 11:7) within a corrupt generation. He was a righteous man and much more “whole” than his contemporaries. Noah sincerely wanted to do God’s will in a world that teemed with wickedness and universal depravity. Noah stood alone, exercising his true faith in God. Noah condemned the sins of his entire generation by his virtuous life.

e 6:14 or, “an ark”

f 6:14 The exact meaning of the original Hebrew word is uncertain. It was probably some type of resinous lumber.

it with tar—inside and outside.

¹⁵“This is how you must make it: The length of the barge must be 450 feet.^a It must be 75 feet^b wide. And, it must be 45 feet^c high.^d ¹⁶Make a window of 18 inches^e for the barge just below the roof. And, put a door in the side of the barge. You must have a top deck, a middle deck, and a lower deck.

¹⁷“Listen, I will send a flood of water upon the earth to destroy every living being in it. Everything on the earth and under the sky that breathes will die!¹⁸ However, I will make My covenant^f with you, Noah. Go into the barge with your wife, your sons, and the wives of your sons.

¹⁹⁻²⁰Take with you into the barge a male and a female of every living thing—two of every kind of animal, all species of things that crawl on the ground, and every type of bird. That will keep them alive. ²¹Take along many kinds of food for you and for them. Store it for yourselves and for all of them.” ²²So, Noah did

a 6:15 literally, “300 cubits”

b 6:15 literally, “50 cubits”

c 6:15 literally, “30 cubits”

d 6:15 These dimensions follow the proportions of modern ships. This well-designed, barge-like ark of Noah was very stable on the high seas. It was unlike the craft of the Babylonian account of the flood in Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh Epic, which was discovered at Nineveh in the 19th century. That ark was a perfect cube (200 feet X 200 feet X 200 feet), and it would have been quite unstable.

e 6:16 literally, “one cubit”

f 6:18 or, “agreement”

everything that God commanded him to do. That’s what he did.^g

The Flood

7¹Then the Always-Present One said to Noah, “In this generation, I regard you as righteous in My presence. Therefore, you and your whole family must now enter the barge. ²You must take with you seven pairs of every kind of pure animal, males with their mates. Also, take two pairs of unclean animals,^h males with their mates. ³You must also take along seven pairs of wild birds—males and females—to keep those species alive on the face of the entire earth, as well as a pair of all unclean birds—male and female.ⁱ ⁴Why? Because, after seven more days, I will cause rain to fall upon the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. I will wipe off the face of the earth every living thing that I have made!”

⁵So, Noah did everything that the Always-Present One told him to do.

⁶Noah was 600 years old when the flood waters came upon the earth.

⁷Noah, his sons, his wife, and the

g 6:22 Trustingly, Noah acted on faith (Heb. 11:7). Compare Gen. 7:5,9,16; 8:18. Obedience is the natural fruit of righteousness.

h 7:2 This does not mean that some animals were dirty. It refers to whether they were ceremonially acceptable or not. Compare Lev. 10:10; 11:1-47; Deut. 14:1-21; Ezek. 44:23; Acts 10:11-15.

i 7:3 The Septuagint (LXX) contains this last phrase. It may have been dropped from later Hebrew manuscripts.

wives of his sons entered the barge because of the flood waters.

⁸⁻⁹All the males and females of the clean and unclean animals, of the birds, and of everything that crawls on land came in pairs to Noah and went into the barge. This all happened, just as God had commanded Noah.

¹⁰Then, after seven days, the flood waters did come over the earth. ¹¹It happened in the 600th year of Noah's life, in the 2nd month, on the 17th day^a of the month. On this day, all the fountains of the great oceans rose. The windows of the sky were also opened. ¹²It rained upon the earth for 40 days and 40 nights!

¹³At this same time, Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth (the sons of Noah), Noah's wife, and the three wives of Noah's sons entered the barge.^b

¹⁴They, and every kind of creature, and every type of animal, and every species of things that crawl on land, and every kind of bird—all sorts—

¹⁵all flesh came in pairs to Noah at the barge. Everything that had the breath of life in it was there! ¹⁶A male and a female of every thing went inside, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the Always-Present One shut the door behind Noah.^c

17-20The water soon became

a 7:11 The ancient Greek translation (LXX) has "the 27th day."

b 7:13 Compare 1 Pet. 3:20-21; 2 Pet. 2:5.

c 7:16 Compare Rev. 3:7.

deep enough for the barge to float. The water became deeper and deeper, and the barge drifted on the surface of the water. The water became so deep that it covered the highest mountains under the sky. It continued to rise until it was more than 22 feet^d above the tops of the mountains. The rain continued for 40 days. ²¹Every creature that moved on earth died—every bird, all livestock, all the animals, everything that crawls on land, and every human being. ²²Everything on earth that breathed (in whose nostrils was the breath of life) died—everything that had been on dry land—died! ²³Every living thing which had been on the face of the earth was destroyed! This included the human race, the animals, the crawling things, and the wild birds. They were wiped off the earth. The only ones that remained were Noah and those that were with him inside the barge. ²⁴For 150 days, the waters did not begin to go down over the earth.

The Flood Ends

8¹Then God remembered Noah, all the animals, and every living thing which was with Noah in the barge. God caused a wind to blow over the earth. The waters began to go down. ²The fountains of the ocean

d 7:17-20 literally, "15 cubits"

and the windows of the sky stopped. God also held back the rain from the sky.³ The water drained. It began to go down on the 150th day.⁴ The barge came to rest in the Ararat mountain range on the 17th day of the 7th month.⁵ The water continued to go down until the 10th month. The tops of the mountains could be seen on the 1st day of the 10th month.⁶ After 40 days, Noah opened the window of the barge which he had made.⁷ He sent out a raven.^a At first it was going out and coming back—until the water dried off the land.⁸ Noah also sent out a dove^b to find out if the water was low enough.⁹ But the dove could not find any place to land. She returned to Noah at the barge, because the water was still covering the earth. So, Noah reached out with his hand and took her, bringing her to him inside the barge.

¹⁰Noah waited another week. Then he sent the dove out of the barge again.¹¹ In the evening, the dove came back to him. This time, look, a leaf—freshly plucked from an olive tree^c—was in her beak. So, Noah knew that the waters had gone down from over the earth.

¹²Noah waited another week.

a 8:7 The raven is more of an all-weather bird. It is tougher than the dove.

b 8:8 The dove is a gentle bird. It does not fly very far away from its home base.

c 8:11 Olive trees do not grow high in the mountains.

Then he sent out the dove, and she never returned to him again.¹³ So, on the 601st year, on the 1st month, on the 1st day of the month, there was no longer any flood water on the earth. Noah removed the covering of the barge and looked out. Look, the surface of the ground was dry!¹⁴ On the 2nd month, on the 27th day of the month, the land was dry.¹⁵ Then God said to Noah,¹⁶ “Leave the barge—you, your wife, your sons, and the wives of your sons along with you.¹⁷ Bring out with you every living creature; all flesh—birds, animals, and everything that crawls upon the earth—so that they may spread throughout the world. Be fertile, and increase in number on earth.”

¹⁸Then Noah went outside. His sons, his wife, and the wives of his sons followed him.¹⁹ Every animal, crawling thing, and bird—anything that moved on land—came out of the barge in order.^d

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the Always-Present One. He took some of the ceremonially clean animals and birds, and he offered them as whole burnt-offerings upon the altar.²¹ The Always-Present One smelled the sweet odor^e and thought to

d 8:19 literally, “after their families.” (= by species)

e 8:21 or, “the soothing fragrance” = God approved and accepted Noah’s free-will offering.

Himself: “I will never again condemn the ground because of mankind, although the disposition of their hearts is evil from an early age. I will never again strike down every living thing as I have just done. ²²As long as the earth stands, there will be no interruption of the time for planting seed and harvesting, of cold and heat, of summer and winter, of day and night.”^a

God Makes an Agreement with Noah

9¹God blessed Noah and his sons. He said to them, “Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth. ²All the land animals, all the wild birds, everything which crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea will be afraid of you. They are all under your control. ³Now you may eat them,^b as well as the green

a 8:22 Day, night, and the seasons will continue “as long as the earth stands.” The earth was not intended by God to be eternal. Its final destruction is described in poetic imagery in Ps. 102:25-27 (which is quoted in Heb. 1:10-12). The most graphic account of the end of the world—the destruction of the entire physical universe—is found in 2 Pet. 3:7-13.

b 9:3 There is no contradiction between this passage and Deut. 14:7. This former section refers to people who did not live under the Law of Moses. The latter command was addressed only to Jews. Perhaps stricter food laws were given to the Jewish people in order to make them more distinct from other nations whose food was often closely associated with idolatry (1 Cor. 10:28). Therefore, the Israelites would be less susceptible to falling into temptation. However, Jesus Christ removed the clean/unclean distinction from food altogether

plants. I am giving them all to you as food. ⁴The one thing you must **not** eat is meat which still has the blood (its life) in it.^c I forbid this!

⁵⁻⁶If anyone takes a human life, he will certainly be punished. I will kill any animal that takes a human life. Mankind was made like God.^d So, whoever murders an individual will **himself** be killed by other people!

⁷“You must have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth. Spread out.”

⁸Then God said to Noah and his sons, ⁹“I am now making My covenant with you and with your descendants,^e ¹⁰and with all creatures—the birds, the livestock, and every single living thing on earth—everything that came out of the barge with you. ¹¹I hereby make My covenant with you: ‘I promise that no creatures will ever be destroyed again by a world-wide flood. A flood will **never** destroy the earth again!’ ”

¹²⁻¹³Then God said, “I am putting my rainbow in the clouds as a sign^f of (Mark 7:19).

c 9:4 Human beings should *not* try to preserve or increase their life-force by eating “life” which is in the blood (Lev. 17:11,14).

d 9:5-6 See Gen. 1:26.

e 9:9 God made other commitments to Abraham (Gen. 15:9-21; 17:1-27); to the Jewish people (Exo. 19-24); to Phinehas (Num. 25:10-31); to David (2 Sam. 7:5-16); and the new covenant of the Messianic age (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12).

f 9:12-13 A sign is a visible seal to remind people of their commitments to the agreement. For example, circumcision is the sign of Abraham’s

this permanent covenant which I am making with you and with all living creatures. This rainbow will be the sign of My covenant with the world.

14-16“Whenever I cover the sky with clouds, and the rainbow appears, I will remember My promise to you and to all the living animals that a flood will never again destroy all creatures. When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the permanent covenant between Me and all living beings on earth.” 17Then God said to Noah, “That will be the sign of the promise which I am making to all creatures on earth.”

The Sons of Noah

18Shem, Ham, and Japheth were the sons of Noah. They came out of the barge. (Ham became the father of Canaan.) 19People from all over the world originated from these three sons of Noah.

20Noah was a farmer. He soon planted a vineyard. 21He drank some of the wine and became drunk. He was lying inside his tent uncovered. 22Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked. He told this to his two brothers outside the tent. 23Shem and Japheth took a robe and put it over the shoulders of both of

them. Then they backed into the tent and covered up their naked father. Since they were looking away, they did **not** see the nakedness of their father.

24When Noah woke up from his hangover, he found out about what his young grandson^a had done to him.^b 25Noah said,

“May Canaan be cursed!^c He will be the lowest kind of slave^d to his brothers!”

26Then Noah said,

“Blessed be the Always-Present One, the God of Shem! Canaan will be a slave to the descendants of Shem.” 27God will increase Japheth.^e The descendants of Japheth will stay in the tents of the descendants of Shem. The descendants of Canaan will be slaves to both groups.”

a 9:24 Canaan was Ham's fourth son.

b 9:24 probably some despicable sexual sin

c 9:25 Canaan was *not* cursed for the misconduct of Ham. The Bible teaches individual responsibility (Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:4,20; Rom. 2:5-6). The Bible also clearly teaches that the consequences of the sins of ancestors affected later generations (Exo. 20:5; Josh. 7:24-26; Ezek. 18:2). In this case, Noah possessed a prophetic insight about the sins of Ham's future descendants (the Canaanites). Ham's gross disrespect for his father had already been passed on to his son Canaan.

d 9:25 literally, “a slave of slaves.” Historically, the land of Canaan was always dominated by world powers.

e 9:27 The Hebrew word for “Japheth” sounds similar to the Hebrew word for “increase.”

covenant (Gen. 17:11), and the sabbath is the sign of the covenant made at Mount Sinai (Exo. 31:16-17).

²⁸After the flood, Noah lived for 350 years.^a ²⁹The total lifetime of Noah was 950 years. Then he died.

Noah's Family Record

10¹These are the records of the sons of Noah—Shem, Ham, and Japheth. After the flood, sons were born to them.

²The sons of Japheth were: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ³The sons of Gomer were: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. ⁴The sons of Javan were: Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittimites, and the Rodanim.^b ⁵(From these people, the sea-going peoples spread out into their regions by their clans, within their nations. Each of them had their own language later.)

⁶The sons of Ham were: Cush, Mizraim,^c Put, and Canaan. ⁷The sons of Cush were: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah were: Sheba and Dedan. ⁸Cush fathered Nimrod. He became a hero in the land. ⁹He was a great hunter in the presence of the One Who Is Always Present. Therefore, “just as Nimrod, the

great hunter in the presence of the Always-Present One” is still a famous saying. ¹⁰The cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh in the area of Shinar in Babylonia were the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom. ¹¹Nimrod left Shinar for Assyria. There he built the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, ¹²and Resen. (The important city of Resen is between Nineveh and Calah.)

¹³Mizraim fathered the Ludites, the Anamites, the Lehabites, the Naphtuhites, ¹⁴the Pathrusites, the Casluhites (from whom the Philistines came), and the Caphtorites.

¹⁵And Canaan fathered Sidon (his firstborn), Heth,^d ¹⁶the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, ¹⁷the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, ¹⁸the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. (Later, the family groups of the Canaanites were completely driven out.)

¹⁹The boundary of the Canaanites went from Sidon (as one goes to Gerar) all the way to Gaza (as one goes toward Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboyim) and then to Lasha. ²⁰These were the sons of Ham, by their family groups, by their languages, in their countries, and in their nations.

²¹Sons were also born to Shem, whose older brother was Japheth.

a 9:28 For 58 years, Noah was a contemporary of Abraham! Could they have talked with each other?

b 10:4 Most Hebrew copies have “the Dodanim,” but a few Hebrew manuscripts, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and 1 Chr. 1:7 have “the Rodanim.” In later Hebrew, the letters “d” and “r” were very similar.

c 10:6 the usual Hebrew word for “Egypt.”

d 10:15 the ancestor of the Hittites

Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber.^a ²²The sons of Shem were: Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.^b ²³The sons of Aram were: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech.^c ²⁴And Arphaxad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. ²⁵There were two sons born to Eber: Peleg^d was the name of one of them, because the world was divided in his time. His brother's name was Joktan. ²⁶Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All of these were sons of Joktan. ³⁰They lived in the area from Mesha (as one goes to Sephar), a mountain of the East. ³¹These were the sons of Shem, by their family groups, by their languages, in their countries, and by their nations.

³²These were the family groups of the sons of Noah, by their generations, in their nations. After the flood, the divided nations on earth came from these sons.

God Confuses Their Language

11¹At first, the people of the whole world had only one language. They shared the same set of

a 10:21 including the Hebrews

b 10:22 This is the Hebrew word for "Syria."

c 10:23 See 1 Chr. 1:17. The Hebrew text here has "Mash."

d 10:25 meaning "division." Perhaps this refers to the scattering of the nations (Gen. 11:1-9).

words. ²As they moved around from the East, they found a valley in the Shinar area^e and they settled there. ³They said to each other, "Come on, let us make bricks and make them hard by baking them!" So, instead of natural stones, they used bricks for building, and they used tar^f to hold the bricks together.^g ⁴They said, "Come on, let us build a city for ourselves. Let's build a tower, too.^h It will reach to the sky! Then we can make ourselves famous and **not** be scattered all over the world."ⁱ

⁵Then the Always-Present One came down to take a look at the city and the tower which those people^j had built. ⁶The Always-Present One said, "Look, these people are united and they speak one language.^k This is only the beginning of what they

e 11:2 The Greek Old Testament, that is, the Septuagint (LXX), reads "Babylonia" here. See Gen. 10:10 and Zech. 5:11. Throughout the Bible, the name "Babylon" always stands for human civilization in its corporate organization as it is opposed to God with pride, arrogance, and defiance.

f 11:3 or, "bitumen"; "asphalt"

g 11:3 literally, "for mortar."

h 11:4 The Babylonians called them "ziggurats". They were huge, pyramid-like structures that rose with tiered terraces. And, they were crowned with a pagan temple, which was regarded as an "entrance to heaven". They were trying to dethrone the one true God!

i 11:4 This was a flagrant example of corporate pride. Adam and Eve wanted to be equal to God (see Gen. 3:5). And, all these people wanted a big reputation; they defiantly banded together against the one true God's plan for them.

j 11:5 literally, "the sons of Adam"

k 11:6 literally, "one lip."

will try to do. Soon they will think that they will be able to do anything they want! ⁷Come, We^a must go down there and confuse their language, so that they cannot understand one another.”

⁸So, the Always-Present One scattered them over the face of the earth. They had to stop building the city. ⁹That is why the city was named Babel,^b because there the Always-Present One confused^c the language of the whole world. From that place, the Always-Present One scattered the people everywhere—all over the earth.^d

Shem's Family Record

Genesis 10:21-31; 1 Chronicles 1:17-27

¹⁰These are the records of Shem: Shem was 100 years old when he fathered Arphaxad. This was two years after the flood. ¹¹After Shem fathered Arphaxad, he lived 500 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters.

¹²Arphaxad lived 35 years, and then he fathered Shelah.

¹³After Arphaxad fathered Shelah,

a 11:7 referring to the Godhead (see Gen. 1:26-27)

b 11:9 This word means “confusion”. This name originally comes from the Akkadian language and means “gateway to a god” (Compare Gen. 28:17).

c 11:9 The Hebrew word used here is *balal* which sounds similar to “Babel,” the Hebrew word for “Babylon”; hence, our English word for “babbling.” God made a babble here!

d 11:9 See Acts 17:26.

he lived 403 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters.

¹⁴Shelah lived 30 years, and then he fathered Eber. ¹⁵After Shelah fathered Eber, he lived 403 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters.

¹⁶Eber lived 34 years, and then he fathered Peleg. ¹⁷After Eber fathered Peleg, he lived 430 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters.

¹⁸Peleg lived 30 years, and then he fathered Reu. ¹⁹After Peleg fathered Reu, he lived 209 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters.

²⁰Reu lived 32 years, and then he fathered Serug. ²¹After Reu fathered Serug, he lived for 207 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters.

²²Serug lived 30 years, and then he fathered Nahor. ²³After Serug fathered Nahor, he lived 200 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters.

²⁴Nahor lived 29 years, and then he fathered Terah. ²⁵After Nahor fathered Terah, he lived 119 years, and he fathered more sons and daughters.

²⁶Terah lived 70 years, and then he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Terah's Family

²⁷These are the records of Terah: Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran. And, Haran fathered Lot.

²⁸Haran died in the presence of

his father, Terah, in the land where he was born, in the city of Ur of the Chaldeans.^a

²⁹Both Abram and Nahor got married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai.^b The name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, who was the daughter of Haran. Haran was the father of Milcah and Iscah.³⁰ Sarai was sterile. She had no children.

³¹Terah took his son Abram, Lot (who was his grandson, the son of Haran), and Sarai (Terah's daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife), and left the Chaldean city of Ur to go to the country of Canaan. However, they came to the town of Haran and stayed there.³² The total lifetime of Terah was 205 years. Then Terah died in the town of Haran.

God Calls Abraham

12¹Then the Always-Present One said to Abram, "Leave your land, your relatives, and your father's home, and go to a country which I am about to show you.
²I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, and you will be a blessing.
³I will bless those who bless you, but I will condemn those who despise

you. And, through you, all the nations on earth will be blessed.^c

⁴So, Abram left, just as the Always-Present One had told him to do. Lot went with him, too. When Abram left the town of Haran, he was 75 years old.

⁵Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions which they had gained, and the slaves^d whom they had acquired in Haran. They all left, heading for the land of Canaan. When they arrived there,⁶ Abram passed through^e the land to Shechem at Moreh's Oak Tree.^f (The people of Canaan

c 12:3 God's original blessing upon the entire human race (Gen. 1:28) would be carried out *through* the physical descendants of Abraham (Gen. 12:7; 15:5-21; 17:4-8; 18:18-19; 22:17-18; 26:2-4; 28:13-15; 35:11-12; 46:3; Exo. 3:6-8; 6:2-8). Abraham also has spiritual descendants (Gal. 3:8), namely, Christians. In this way, God made Abraham a blessing to the whole world. Abraham was not merely a subject of blessing but a *medium* of blessing others, too. God conferred upon Abraham the delightful prerogative of dispensing good to those around him. Carnal human beings cannot bless anybody, but God has created us for the purpose of intentionally blessing other people (compare Acts 20:35). So, we are saved in order to save others and blessed in order to bless others. This Abrahamic promise was a preliminary preaching of the gospel of Christ to all people (Acts 2:38-39; 3:25; Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:8,29; Eph. 2:12).

d 12:5 literally, "souls" = persons, dependents

e 12:6 Abram (Abraham) was the first to be called a "Hebrew" (Gen. 14:13), from the Hebrew root *'abar* used here. The verb means "to cross over." Presumably, it was used in the sense of an immigrant. The name "Hebrew" is seldom used of the Israelites in the Old Testament, except when the speaker is a foreigner or when the Israelites spoke of themselves to a person of another nation.

f 12:6 possibly a terebinth tree

a 11:28 This was probably located in what is now southern Iraq.

b 11:29 Terah was her father by a different mother. Therefore, she was the half-sister of Abraham. Compare Gen. 12:11-13,18,19; 20:2,5,6.

were in the country at that time.)

⁷Then the Always-Present One appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your offspring.” There Abram built an altar to the Always-Present One, who appeared to him.

⁸Abram moved on from there to the mountain which is east of Bethel. He pitched his tent. Bethel was to the west,^a and Ai was to the east. There he built an altar to the Always-Present One and worshiped Him.

⁹Then Abram traveled on, heading toward the south.^b

Abraham Goes to Egypt

¹⁰Then the land became very dry, and it would not rain at all. There was not enough food to eat anywhere in that country. Abram’s group began to starve. The famine was very severe in Canaan. So, Abram went down into Egypt to stay there.^c

¹¹Just as they were about to enter Egypt, Abram said to his wife Sarai, “Listen now, I know that you are a very beautiful woman. ¹²This is what’s going to happen: When the Egyptian men see you, they will think: ‘This is his **wife**.’ Then they will

kill me, but allow you to live!”^d ¹³So, please say that you are my **sister**,^e so that they’ll be kind to me, because of you. They will think that I am your brother. This is how you can save my life.”

¹⁴When Abram’s group came into Egypt, the Egyptian men **did** notice that Sarai was very beautiful.

¹⁵The princes of Pharaoh saw her and told Pharaoh about her beauty.

So, she was taken into the house of Pharaoh. ¹⁶Pharaoh was kind to Abram, because he thought Abram was Sarai’s brother.

Abram received flocks of sheep, goats, cattle, male and female donkeys, camels, and male and female slaves. ¹⁷However,

because of Sarai (Abram’s wife), the Always-Present One struck Pharaoh and his family with great diseases.

¹⁸Pharaoh called for Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me?

Why didn’t you tell me that she is your **wife**!?” ¹⁹Why did you say, ‘She is my sister.’? I took her to be my wife!

There she is, **your** wife. Take her now and get out!” ²⁰Then Pharaoh gave orders to his men about Abram, and they sent away Abram, his wife, and everything he had.

everything he had.

d 12:12 because the Egyptians wanted beautiful women very much. If Pharaoh wanted Sarai for his harem, and he knew that she was Abram’s wife, then Pharaoh would first kill Abram.

e 12:13 Sarai was indeed Abram’s half-sister. They had the same father (Terah), but they had different mothers (Gen. 20:12).

a 12:8 literally, “toward the (Mediterranean) Sea”

b 12:9 literally, “the Negev”. This dry, deserted area extends south of Beer-Sheba.

c 12:10 Usually, there was plenty of food in Egypt because the Nile River supplied enough water for crops every year.

Abraham and Lot Separate

13¹So, Abram went up north, out of Egypt into the Negev. Abram, Abram's wife, and everyone and everything that he had left Egypt. Lot was with him, too. ²Abram was very rich. He owned much livestock and a lot of silver and gold. ³He traveled on from the Negev to Bethel, to the place where he had pitched his tent at the start—between Bethel and Ai. ⁴He returned to the place of the altar which he had made there at the beginning.^a And there, Abram worshiped the Always-Present One.

⁵Lot, who traveled with Abram, also owned flocks of sheep and goats, and cattle, and tents. ⁶The pastures were not able to support life for both of them together. Their total possessions were too large. They were not able to stay together in the same place. ⁷So, there was trouble between those who watched over Abram's livestock and those who watched over Lot's livestock. (The people of Canaan and of Periz were living in the country at that time.)

⁸Abram said to Lot, "Please, let there be no trouble between me and you, or between my herdsmen and your herdsmen. We are brothers!"^b ⁹All the pastures are in front of you. Please, separate your group from

mine. If you go to the left, then I will go to the right. However, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.

¹⁰Lot looked up and saw that all around the Jordan Valley there was plenty of water. (This was before the Always-Present One destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) It was like a garden of the Always-Present One, like the land of Egypt, as one travels to the town of Zoar. ¹¹So, Lot chose the whole Jordan Valley for himself. They separated from one another, and Lot headed east. ¹²Abram's group stayed in the countryside of Canaan, but Lot's group settled near the towns of the valley. He began to live closer and closer to the town of Sodom. ¹³The men of Sodom were evil. They sinned openly against the Always-Present One—even flagrantly!

¹⁴After Lot's group separated from Abram's group, the Always-Present One said to Abram, "Look up now from the place where you are. Look in all directions—north, south, east, and west. ¹⁵I will permanently give to you and to your descendants all the land that you see! ¹⁶I will cause your descendants to be as numerous as the dust of the earth! If someone were able to count the dust particles of the earth, then he would also be able to count the total number of your descendants! ¹⁷Get up, walk

^a 13:4 See Gen. 12:8.

^b 13:8 or, "close relatives!"

throughout the country—as long as it is and as wide as it is—because I will give it to you!”

¹⁸So, Abram moved all his tents. He came to the Oaks of Mamre, which were at the town of Hebron, and he lived there. There he also built an altar to the Always-Present One.

Abraham Rescues Lot

14¹In the time of Amraphel (the king of Shinar), Arioch (the king of Ellasar), Kedorlaomer (the king of Elam), and Tidal (the king of Goyim), ²they made war with Bera (the king from the town of Sodom), Birsha (the king from the town of Gomorrah), Shinab (the king from the town of Admah), Shemeber (the king of Zeboyim), and the king of the town of Belah, which is the same as the town of Zoar. ³All these armies fought at the Siddim Valley, which is the Salt Sea.^a ⁴The five kings had served Kedorlaomer for 12 years, but they rebelled in the 13th year. ⁵In the 14th year, Kedorlaomer and the three kings who were with him came and attacked the Rephaim people in the town of Ashteroth-Karnaim, the Zuzim people in the town of Ham, the Emim people in the town of

Shaveh-Kiriathiam,⁶ and the Horites in the Seir Mountains, as far as the town of El-Paran, which is next to the desert. ⁷They turned back and came to the town of En-Mishpat (which is now Kadesh). They attacked the whole country of the people of Amalek, and also the Amorites who lived in the town of Hazezon-Tamar.

⁸So, the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboyim, and Belah (which is Zoar) went out for war. They locked in battle with the other kings in the Siddim Valley, ⁹with Kedorlaomer (the king of Elam), Tidal (the king of the Goyim), Amraphel (the king of Shinar), and Arioch (the king of Ellasar). These were the armies of the four kings against the armies of the five kings.

¹⁰The Siddim Valley was full of tar pits. The armies of the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah ran away. Some of them fell into the tar pits. Those who survived ran away to the mountains. ¹¹The victors took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food, and they moved out. ¹²Since Lot was living in Sodom, they also captured Lot (Abram's nephew) and Lot's possessions. Then they left.

¹³But one man escaped. He came and told Abram the Hebrew what had happened. Abram lived among

^a 14:3 = the Dead Sea, the densest concentration of minerals in a large body of water on earth—about 25 percent! The Dead Sea is more than 1,300 feet below sea level. It is the lowest body of water in the world.

the Oaks of Mamre. Mamre was an Amorite, a brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These men had a pact with Abram. ¹⁴When Abram heard that his nephew had been captured, Abram led 318 trained men (who were born in his household) and chased the kidnapers as far as the town of Dan. ¹⁵Abram and his slaves attacked by surprise in small groups at night.^a And, Abram's men chased them all the way to the town of Hobah, which is to the left of the city of Damascus.

Melchizedek

¹⁶Abram brought back all the possessions. He retrieved his nephew Lot and his possessions, the women, and the other people. ¹⁷The king of the town of Sodom went out to meet Abram in Shaveh Valley (the valley of the king), as Abram was returning from battling Kedorlaomer and the other kings who were with him. ¹⁸Melchizedek, the king of Salem, brought out food and wine. He was also the priest of the Most High God.^b ¹⁹And, Melchizedek blessed Abram by saying:

“May Abram be blessed by the Most High God, who possesses

^a 14:15 literally, “divided (his forces) against them at night”, that is, Abram attacked from several different directions at one time.

^b 14:18 Hebrew: *‘El-‘Elyon*. See Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:10; 6:20; 7:1-28.

the universe. ²⁰And, blessed be the Most High God who has put your enemies into your control!”

Then Abram gave Melchizedek ten percent of everything.^c

²¹Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, “You may keep all the possessions for yourself, but please give me the individuals who were captured.”

²²But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I made a vow^d to the Always-Present One, the Most High God, who possesses the universe, ²³that I would **not** keep anything of yours—not even a thread or a shoelace. You will not be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich!’ ²⁴I don’t want anything.^e The only thing that I will accept is the food which the young men have already eaten. However, let the men who went with me—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre—have their share.”

God’s Agreement with Abraham

15¹After these things, the Word of the Always-Present

^c 14:20 or, “a tithe”. Abram (Abraham) gave Melchizedek the tithe because, as high priest to the Most High God, Melchizedek represented God. This brief encounter was the foundation of a Messianic prophecy (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:10; 6:20; 7:1-26).

^d 14:22 literally, “lifted up my hand”. This was a standard practice in ancient times when taking an oath. See Deut. 32:40; Rev. 10:5-6.

^e 14:24 literally, “Nothing for me.”

One came to Abram in a vision. God said, “Don’t be afraid, Abram. I am your Shield. Your reward will get bigger and bigger!”

2-3 Abram said, “O Lord, the One Who Is Always Present,^a what can You give me? I still have no children. Listen, since You have not given me a descendant, one of my slaves will become my heir.^b He is Eliezer, from the city of Damascus. Look, when I die, he will be the one who inherits everything I own!”

4 But then, look, the Word of the Always-Present One came to Abram, saying, “Eliezer will **not** inherit your property. No, a real son, one who comes from your own body, will be your heir!”

5 Then God took Abram outside and said, “Look up at the sky now and try to count the stars. Can you count them all? Of course not. Well, you will have just as many descendants as there are stars!”^c 6 Abram believed the Always-Present One,^d and so God

a 15:2-3 Here the Hebrew words for “Lord” (*Adonay*) and the personal Name of God (YHWH) appear together. This is unusual. See the note on Gen. 2:4.

b 15:2-3 The Nuzi Tablets (15th to 14th centuries B.C.) show that the ethnic group of the Hurrians practiced the legal adoption of loyal slaves, if no son was born to the master.

c 15:5 Besides the physical descendants of Abraham (the Jewish people), all true Christians are spiritual children of Abraham (Gal. 3:29).

d 15:6 Abraham was a good man even before this time; and, Abraham was *not* justified here for the first time. The apostle Paul pointed out clearly in

declared him to be a righteous man.^e

7 Then God said to him, “I am the same Yahweh^f who caused you to leave the city of Ur in the land of Babylonia to give you **this** land to inherit.”

8 Then Abram said, “O my Lord, the One Who Is Always Present, how can I know that I will inherit it?”

9 And God said to him, “Get for Me a young 3 year-old cow, a 3 year-old female goat, a 3 year-old ram, a dove, and a young pigeon.”

10 So, Abram got all of these animals for God. Abram cut them up into

Rom. 4:3,5 that Abraham’s right relationship with God was totally apart from the Law of Moses which came more than 400 years later. Abraham was right with God long *before* Abraham was circumcised (Gen. 17:9-14,23-27).

e 15:6 God treated Abraham as a righteous person. Abraham was accepted and forgiven *as is*. Abraham possessed no inherent righteousness of his own (see Rom. 10:1-3; Philp. 3:9). Abraham is now the spiritual ancestor of all who trust in the promises of the one true God (Rom. 4:11). See also Rom. 4:3,9,22. He was a striking example of obedient faith (Heb. 11:8). God’s choice of Abraham was dependent upon Abraham’s unflinching faith which had already been proven by unquestioning obedience. It was contingent upon that type of faith (Heb. 11:17-19; James 2:20-24). How does “righteousness” come into it at all? What is the connection between “belief” and “righteousness”? See Heb. 11:6 for part of the answer. Faith is the channel of being put right with God, not the source of it. God loves us even while we are in our sins (Rom. 5:6-8; Eph. 2:3-10). God wants to deliver us from a spirit of bondage (Rom. 8:15) so that we can ask God for His forgiveness in confidence (Ps. 32:2; Rom. 8:32-39; Gal. 3:6; 1 John 3:21; 5:14). Our faith must continue to grow in love (Gal. 5:6b), that is, reveal itself in our actions (James 2:21-24). A faith which justifies is a faith which sanctifies.

f 15:7 = the Always-Present One

pieces and prepared to sacrifice them. He placed the halves in two rows, but he did not split the birds. ¹¹When the vultures swooped down to the meat, Abram drove them away.

¹²As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep.^a And, look, a terrible, awesome darkness came over him. ¹³God said to Abram, “I want you to know for sure that your descendants will live as strangers in a land which does not belong to them. Your descendants will be the slaves of those people. They will treat them harshly for about 400 years.^b

¹⁴However, I will indeed punish that nation whom your descendants will serve as slaves. After that, your descendants will come out of there with many possessions. ¹⁵But you will die^c in peace. You will be buried at a ripe old age.^d ¹⁶However, in the fourth generation,^e your descendants will return here. The sin of the people of Amor^f is not yet full enough.”^g

a 15:12 or, “a trance”

b 15:13 in round numbers = 4 generations (of patriarchs). This was literally fulfilled in Exo. 12:40-41.

c 15:15 literally, “go to your ancestors” who have already died

d 15:15 Abraham was 175 when he died (Gen. 25:7).

e 15:16 The four generations after Jacob were: Levi, Kohath, Amram, and Moses.

f 15:16 The Amorites was a generic term for the inhabitants of Canaan.

g 15:16 In this account, God was giving Abraham an inspired preview of the events to come in Abraham’s family history before they actually possessed the land of Canaan. “Four hundred years” was only a round figure. The actual number

¹⁷After the sun went down and it was dark, look, there was a fire-pot smoking, and a flaming torch which passed between those pieces! ¹⁸On that day, the Always-Present One made^h a covenant with Abram.ⁱ God said, “I have given this land to your descendants, from the Brook of Egypt^j to the Euphrates River, the big one.^k ¹⁹This includes the land of the people of Ken, Keniz, Cadmon, ²⁰Heth, Periz, the Rephaites, ²¹the people of Amor, of Canaan, of Gergash, and of Jebus.”

turned out to be 430 years (Exo. 12:40-41). The four generations of their sojourn in Egypt should be understood as four lifetimes. The events surrounding Israel’s departure from Egypt would be a divine judgment upon Egypt, just as God was judging the idolatrous Amorites.

h 15:18 literally, “cut”. This refers to the slaughtering of the animals.

i 15:18 God’s promise concerning the land both here and in Gen. 17:7 was conditional (Deut. 31:16-17; Josh. 23:16). The physical descendants of Abraham eventually proved to be unworthy, and, therefore, the land was taken away from them. However, Abraham’s spiritual seed (Gal. 3:29; 4:28; Heb. 11:16,39,40) will inherit a heavenly Canaan.

j 15:18 = the Wadi of Arish, at the border of Egypt. See Isa. 27:12; 2 Kings 14:25; Amos 6:14. It flows into the Mediterranean Sea about 50 miles south of Gaza.

k 15:18 God’s promise concerning that land here and in Gen. 17:7 was conditional (Deut. 31:16-17; Josh. 23:16). Though this prophecy in Gen. 15:18 was actually fulfilled in the time of King Solomon (1 Kings 4:21,24; 8:65), the literal descendants of Abraham eventually proved to be unworthy of God’s promise to Abraham. So, the land was taken away from the Jews. However, Abraham’s spiritual seed (Gal. 3:8,29; 4:28; Heb. 11:16,39,40) will inherit a heavenly Canaan.

Hagar and Ishmael

16¹Abram's wife, Sarai, could not have children for him. But Sarai had an Egyptian slave-girl. Her name was Hagar. ²Sarai said to Abram, "Look, since the Always-Present One has not allowed me to have a child, go to bed with my slave-girl.^a Perhaps I can have a child^b through her?" Abram took Sarai's advice. ³So, after living in the land of Canaan for 10 years, Sarai (Abram's wife) took Hagar, her Egyptian slave-girl, and gave her to Abram, her husband.^c

⁴Abram went to bed with Hagar, and she became pregnant. Later, when Hagar realized that she was pregnant, she looked down on Sarai, her owner. ⁵Sarai said to Abram, "My slave-girl now hates me. I blame **you** for this! I put her into **your** bed,^d and now that she knows she is pregnant, she looks down on me! Let the Always-Present One decide between you and me!"

⁶But Abram said to Sarai, "Look, she's **your** slave-girl. You still own her. Do

a 16:2 Sarai was becoming impatient with God. Perhaps she thought that God would *not* keep His promise. So, this 75 year-old woman took matters into her own hands by exercising an ancient Mesopotamian custom in those days to insure the birth of a male heir.

b 16:2 literally, "I may be built up" = the foundation of a household, even though it was vicariously

c 16:3 This raised Hagar's status to the level of concubine (= a secondary wife).

d 16:5 literally, "bosom"

with her what you think is best!"^e

Later, Sarai treated Hagar so badly that Hagar ran away from her.^f

⁷The Angel^g of the Always-Present One^h found Hagar beside a water well in the desert (the one beside the road that goes toward Shur).ⁱ ⁸He said, "O Hagar, Sarai's slave-girl, where have you come from? And where are you going?"

Hagar answered, "I'm running away from Sarai, the one who owns me."

⁹The Angel of the Always-Present One said to her, "Go back to Sarai, your owner, and obey her. ¹⁰There will be many, many descendants who come from you. I will increase their number so much that they will not be counted. ¹¹Look, you are pregnant. You will give birth to a son. You will name him 'Ishmael,'^k because

e 16:6 Abram was giving legal control back to Sarai.
f 16:6 Section 146 of the Code of Hammurabi stated that if the slave-girl tried to establish herself on an *equal* status with her female owner, then the female owner could make her a slave again, though she could not sell her.

g 16:7 or, "Messenger"

h 16:7 See also Gen. 22:11-12; 31:11,13; 48:15-16; Exo. 3:2-15; 23:20-23; 33:14-15. These passages indicate an inherent plurality within the essence of the one and only God (= the Godhead). Compare Gen. 1:26; 3:22.

i 16:7 She was fleeing to her native land (Gen. 20:1; 25:18; Exo. 15:22; 1 Sam. 15:7; 27:8).

j 16:11 However, he would *not* be the son that God had promised to Abram (Gen. 15:4; Gal. 4:21-5:1). It is God who miraculously opens wombs (Gen. 29:31; 30:22) or closes them (Gen. 20:18; 1 Sam. 1:5-6). Children are gifts of God to parents (Gen. 33:4-5; 48:8-9; Ps. 127:3-5).

k 16:11 This Hebrew name means "God listens." God was aware of the harsh treatment by Sarai.

the Always-Present One has listened to your troubles. ¹²He will be a wild, donkey-like person. He will be against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Instead, he will live as a separate nation.^a

¹³Then Hagar identified the One who was speaking to her as the Always-Present One. She said, "You are El-Roi,^b because," she thought, "I see that—even in this place—God sees me!" ¹⁴Therefore, that well received the name of Beer-Lahai-Roi.^c (Look, that well is between the towns of Kadesh and Bered.)

¹⁵So, Hagar gave birth to Abram's son. Abram named his son Ishmael.^d Hagar was the mother. ¹⁶Abram

was 86 years old when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael for him.

Circumcision Is the Symbol

17¹When Abram was 99 years old, the Always-Present One appeared to him and said to him, "I am God Almighty!^e Live out^f your life in My presence, and be whole! ²I will enter into My covenant between Me and you. I will cause you to reproduce; you will have many, many children." ³Then Abram bowed his face low to the ground.

God continued, ⁴"This is My side of your contract: Look, you will become an ancestor of many nations.^g ⁵So, your name will no longer be 'Abram.'^h No, your new name will be 'Abraham,'ⁱ because I have selected you to become an ancestor of many nations. ⁶I will make you very, very fertile. I will turn you into nations! Even kings will stem from you! ⁷I will confirm My covenant, not only between Me and you, but also between Myself and your descendants in future generations,

e 17:1 Hebrew: 'El Shaddai = Eternal, Absolute God, Irresistible, Unchangeable, Destructive. This ancient, complex Name refers to power combined with promise. In other words, the everlasting God has the power to fulfill His vows, and we can trust Him completely.

f 17:1 literally, "Walk"

g 17:4 The 12 tribes of Israel, many Arab tribes, the 12 princes of Ishmael, the descendants of Keturah, and the chiefs of Edom all sprang from Abraham.

h 17:5 = "high father."

i 17:5 = "father of many nations"

a 16:12 literally, "But in (the) presence of all of his brothers" = the Arabs. The Ishmaelites were the descendants of Ishmael, and they were divided into twelve tribes (Gen. 25:16). They were also called Hagarites, Hagarenes, and Arabians (1 Chr. 5:10; Ps. 83:6; Isa. 13:20). They were governed by kings. They were rich in cattle, and they lived in tents (1 Chr. 5:21; Isa. 13:20; Jer. 25:24). Though they were typically merchants of the East and they traveled around in large caravans (Gen. 37:25; Job 6:19), they were frequently lawless, and they would often waylay and plunder travelers (Jer. 3:2). After harassing Israel, they were finally overcome by Gideon (Judg. 8:10-24; 2 Chr. 5:10; 26:7). Later, it would seem that they became more peacefully inclined, since they sent presents to King Solomon and King Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 10:15; 2 Chr. 17:11).

b 16:13 which means "(the) God who sees."

c 16:14 This means "the well of the Living One who sees me" or "the well of the One who sees me and who lives." It is possible that it could mean: "the well of one who continues to live (= survive) after seeing (God)."

d 16:15 It was customary for the father to name the children (Gen. 5:3; 21:3).

as a permanent^a covenant. I will be Your God and the God of your future descendants.^b ⁸And, I will give to you and your future descendants the land where you are now living as a foreigner—all the land of Canaan—to own permanently!^c I will be their God, too.”

⁹Then God said to Abraham, “You and your future descendants must abide by My covenant in each generation. ¹⁰This is My covenant which you and your future descendants must keep. From now on, every male among you must be circumcised.^d ¹¹You also, Abraham, must be circumcised, in the flesh of your foreskin. This will be a symbol of the covenant between Me and your people. ¹²Generation after generation, each boy among you must be circumcised when he is eight days old. This includes every boy who was

a 17:7 The agreement was only as permanent as man’s obedience to God (See Gen. 17:14; Isa. 24:5; Jer. 31:32.).

b 17:7 Abraham was destined to become the father of the multitude of all faithful believers. See Gen. 12:1-3; 15:6; Rom. 4. Here God was laying the foundation of a covenant of grace with mankind.

c 17:8 The land was later lost because of the disobedience of the Jews (See Deut. 28:62,63; 30:1-10.).

d 17:10 a physical mark, cutting off the foreskin of the male sex organ, which sealed the covenant that God made with Abraham. Circumcision showed total consecration to Yahweh (Exo. 6:12; Lev. 19:23; 26:41; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 6:10; 9:25-26; Ezek. 44:7,9; Rom. 2:28-29). Though some other nations also practiced circumcision (Ezek. 32:18-19), they were *not* in a covenant relationship with Yahweh as the nation of Israel was.

born in your household or who was bought with money from a foreigner, who is not one of your descendants.

¹³You must be sure to circumcise the child of your household and those who were bought with your money. My covenant will be in each of your foreskins as a permanent covenant.

¹⁴Any uncircumcised male, one who has not been circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, will be cut off from his people. He has broken My covenant.

¹⁵Then God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai, your wife, you will not call her by the name of ‘Sarai’^e anymore. Her new name will be ‘Sarah.’^f ¹⁶I have blessed her. Not only that, I will give you a son from **her!** Yes, I have blessed her—she will become a mother of nations! Kings of different cultural groups will come from her!”

¹⁷Then Abraham bowed his face low to the ground, but, inwardly, he laughed,^g thinking in his heart, “Will a son be born to a man who is almost 100 years old? And, Sarah, will **she** give birth? She is 90 years old!”

¹⁸Then Abraham said to the one true God, “O that Ishmael might live in Your presence!”

¹⁹But God said, “No! Your wife Sarah will indeed give birth to your son, and you will name him ‘Isaac.’^h

e 17:15 = “domineering”

f 17:15 Sarah means “princess; lady”.

g 17:17 Dr. Speiser translated this as: “He smiled.”

h 17:19 In Hebrew the name “Isaac” means

And I will confirm My covenant with him as a permanent covenant for his future descendants, too.^a

²⁰“Now about Ishmael, I’ve heard you. Listen, I have blessed him. I will make him fertile, and I will cause him to have many, many descendants. He will father twelve princes. I will cause him and his descendants to become an important nation.

²¹“However, I will confirm My covenant with Isaac. Sarah will give birth to him for you at this same time next year!”

²²When God finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him. ²³So, Abraham got his son Ishmael, and all those who were born in Abraham’s household, every male who had been bought with Abraham’s money—all the males of Abraham’s household. Then, on that very same day, Abraham circumcised the flesh of their foreskins, just as God had told him. ²⁴Abraham was 99 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised. ²⁵And, Abraham’s son, Ishmael, was 13 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised. ²⁶Both Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised on that very same day. ²⁷All the males of Abraham’s household—those who

“laughter.” Both Abraham and Sarah laughed when they pondered the apparent impossibility of this birth (Gen. 21:6).

a 17:19 See Luke 1:55, Rom. 4:11.

were born in his household and those who were bought with his money from a foreigner—were circumcised, along with Abraham.

The Three Visitors

18¹Then the Always-Present One appeared to Abraham at the Oak Trees of Mamre.^b Abraham was sitting there at the door of his tent during the hottest part of the day. ²Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he noticed them, he ran from the door of his tent to meet them. He bowed down to the ground.^c ³Abraham said, “Sirs, would you like to stay with me, your servant? Please do! ⁴Let me get some water to wash your feet.^d Then you can lie down to rest under the tree. ⁵And, let me get some food to give you strength. Later, you can continue your journey. That’s why I am here, to serve you.”^e

The men said, “We accept your offer.”^f

⁶So, Abraham hurried into his tent and told Sarah, “Quick, bring three measures^g of flour, mix the dough,

b 18:1 near Hebron, Gen. 13:18

c 18:2 This was the cultural way of showing respect to these unknown visitors (Heb. 13:2). See Gen. 23:7,12.

d 18:4 Every traveler wore sandals, and the roads were very dusty.

e 18:5 literally, “you have passed by your servant.”

f 18:5 literally, “Yes, do as you have said.” Compare Heb. 13:2.

g 18:6 literally, “3 seahs”, probably equivalent to

and make three loaves of bread!”

⁷Then Abraham ran in among the herd and grabbed a calf which was good and tender. He gave it to a young man who hurried to prepare it. ⁸Then Abraham took milk, yogurt, and the calf which the young man had prepared and placed them in front of the three men. They ate under the tree, while Abraham was standing beside them.

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

Abraham answered, “Over there in the tent.”

¹⁰One of the men said, “I will definitely come back to you in the spring time.^a Listen, your wife Sarah will have a son!” (Sarah was listening at the doorway of the tent behind Abraham. ¹¹Both Abraham and Sarah were getting very old. Sarah was past the time when women can have children.)

¹²So, Sarah laughed within herself, thinking, “After I and my husband have become so old, I cannot have a baby!”

¹³Then the Always-Present One said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh at this? She thought: ‘How could I give birth when I am so old?!’

¹⁴Is anything too difficult for the

one-third of an ephah = about 1 bushel

a 18:10 literally, “at the reviving time, or, at the time of life.” Some scholars think it means: “at the end of the pregnancy phase”.

Always-Present One?^b I will come back to you at the time which has been set, the spring time, and Sarah **will** have a son!”

¹⁵But Sarah denied it, saying, “I did **not** laugh!” (She was afraid.)

The Always-Present One said, “Oh, but you **did** laugh!”

Abraham Pleads for Sodom

¹⁶Then the men got up from there and looked down, in the direction of the town of Sodom. Abraham walked with them for a while to say good-bye.

¹⁷Then the Always-Present One^c said, “Should I hide from Abraham what I’m about to do? No. ¹⁸He and his descendants will most certainly become an important, strong nation. Through him, all the nations of the earth will be blessed. ¹⁹I have a special relationship with him. He is to command his descendants and his household to obey My way, to do the right thing, and to be fair. Then

b 18:14 Nothing is impossible for God, the One who created all things. Compare Matt. 19:26; Luke 1:34-37.

c 18:17 Did Abraham see God? What about the statement in John 1:18? This theophany (an appearance of God to man) here in Genesis is believed to have been Christ in a physical pre-existent form. The New Testament teaches that Christ existed co-eternally with God the Father (John 1:1-3; 8:56-58; 17:5; Col. 1:15-17; Philp. 2:6-7; Heb. 1:3). It is not inconceivable that Christ would, at times, take on the appearance of humanity whenever He chose to do so. Jesus Christ is the personal manifestation of God to man (John 14:9).

I can bring upon Abraham what I promised him.”

²⁰Then the Always-Present One said, “The complaint against the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah is very loud! Their sins are very serious. ²¹I will now go down and find out if the complaint about their actions which I have received is true or not. If it is not true, I will know it.”

²²Then the men turned away and headed for Sodom. Abraham was still standing in the presence of the One Who Is Always Present. ²³Abraham came closer and said, “Would You destroy the good people along with the bad people!? ²⁴Maybe there are 50 good people inside the town? Would You still destroy them? Could You not spare the place because of the 50 good people who live there? ²⁵Surely You would not do such a thing!?! To kill good people along with bad people!?! If you did so, good people and bad people would be treated the same! Please don’t do it! Is not the Judge of the whole world fair?”^a Yes!

²⁶Then the Always-Present One said, “If I find 50 good people inside

the town of Sodom, then I will spare the place because of them.”

²⁷Then Abraham answered, “Even though I am only dust and ashes, listen, I have taken it upon myself to speak to my Lord. ²⁸What if there are just 5 less than 50 good people? Would You destroy the whole town for the lack of 5 people?”

The Always-Present One said, “I will not destroy Sodom if I find 45 good people there.”

²⁹Abraham continued to speak to Him. He said, “What if there are only 40 good people there?”

The Always-Present One said, “I will not destroy it because of the 40 good people.”

³⁰Then Abraham said, “Please, don’t be angry, my Lord. I want to say more to You. What if only 30 good people are found there?”

Then the Always-Present One said, “I will not destroy the town if I find 30 good people there.”

³¹Abraham answered, “Listen, I will now take it upon myself to speak to You. What if only 20 good people are found there?”

Then the Always-Present One said, “I will not destroy the town if there are 20 good people.”

³²Finally, Abraham said, “Please, don’t be angry. I want to speak to You just one more time. What if only

^a 18:25 God is a good, moral Governor of the universe (Deut. 32:4; Ps. 92:15; Ezek. 18:25; Rom. 3:3-4). If God were not benign toward us (Matt. 5:45), there would be no food or joy (Acts 14:14-17). However, sometimes God arbitrarily chooses key people to suit His special, eternal purpose (Rom. 9:11-13). He has the unquestionable right to bestow His favors as He sees fit.

10 good people can be found there?”

Then the Always-Present One said, “I will not destroy Sodom if there are 10 good people.”

³³After the Always-Present One finished speaking to Abraham, He went away. And Abraham went back home.

God Destroys Sodom and Gomorrah

19¹Then the two angels came to the town of Sodom.^a In the evening, Lot was sitting beside the gate^b of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he got up to meet them. He bowed down to the earth.^c ²He said, “Sirs, listen, please come into my house and sleep overnight. Let me wash your feet.^d Then you can get up early and continue your journey.”

They said, “No, we will spend the night in the street.”

³But Lot finally persuaded them to come with him.^e So they went into his house. After Lot baked some hard bread^f and made a meal for them,

a 19:1 normally about a 2-day journey from Abraham’s location

b 19:1 Gateways were places of business, and legal matters were often handled there. See Ruth 4:1-12.

c 19:1 This was merely the cultural way of showing respect to these unknown visitors. See Gen. 18:2; 23:7,12.

d 19:2 literally, “This was the courteous thing to do. Travelers walked with sandals on their feet, and the roads were very dusty.

e 19:3 See 2 Pet. 2:7-8.

f 19:3 literally, “bread without the yeast”. This was done so that it could be baked quickly to satisfy their

they ate it. ⁴The two angels had only begun to lie down when the men of the city—the males of Sodom—surrounded the house. They were of all ages, young and old, from all over town. ⁵They called out to Lot, “Where are the men who are staying with you tonight? Bring them out to us. We want to rape them!”^g

⁶Lot came out to them at the entrance. He shut the door behind him. ⁷Then he said, “No! Please, my friends, don’t act in this evil way! ⁸Look, I have two daughters who have no sexual experience. Please let me bring them out to you. Then you may do to them whatever you wish. But you must **not** do anything to these men, because they have already entered into the protection of my home!”^h

⁹But the men of Sodom said, “Get out of the way!” Then they said to one another, “Lot came here to live as a stranger. He’s always preaching. Now we are going to hurt **you**, Lot, more than them!” Then they pressed forward against Lot. They got closer and closer to break the door down!

hunger. Compare Gen. 18:6; Exo. 12:39.

g 19:5 Homosexuality was very common in the city of Sodom. See Jude 1:7. This perversion is even called “sodomy.” It is consistently condemned throughout the Bible (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Tim. 1:10).

h 19:8 literally, “They have come into the shadow of my roof.” As in many parts of the world today, an ancient host was obligated by his hospitality to protect his guests in every situation—at all costs!

¹⁰However, the two angels reached out and grabbed Lot, pulling him inside the house. Then they slammed the door. ¹¹And the angels struck those who were at the door of the house with blindness. Some were older, and some were younger. They tried hard to find the door.

¹²The two angels said to Lot, “Do you have any more relatives here? Bring out of this place your sons, your daughters, any sons-in-law, and anyone else you may have in the city, ¹³because we are about to destroy this place! The complaint against the city is loud in the presence of the One Who Is Always Present. The Always-Present One has sent us here to destroy it!”^a

¹⁴So, Lot went out to speak with his future sons-in-law, who were about to marry his daughters. He said, “Get up, leave this place, because the Always-Present One is about to destroy this town!” However, to his future sons-in-law, Lot seemed like one who was joking. ¹⁵At daybreak, the angels urged Lot: “Get up, take away your wife and your two daughters who are here! Otherwise, you will be burned up with the sin of this city!”

¹⁶But Lot moved slowly. So, the men grabbed the hands of Lot, his wife, and his two daughters and brought them out. They led him and his family

outside the city and released them. (The Always-Present One felt sorry for him.)

¹⁷After the angels had brought them outside, one angel said, “Run for your lives! Don’t look behind you. Stay away from the valley; run for the mountains.^b Otherwise, you will be burned up!”

¹⁸Lot said to them, “Please, sirs, no! ¹⁹Listen, you have shown great kindness to me, your servant. You have been very merciful to rescue me, but I cannot run to the mountains. And, if I’m too slow, then something terrible will happen to me, and I will die! ²⁰Look, that town over there is nearby. I could run there. It is such a small one. Please let me escape there! Isn’t it such a small one? Then my life will be preserved.”

²¹Then the angel said to him, “All right, I will allow you this too. I will not destroy the town which you’ve mentioned. ²²But, hurry to escape there, because I am not able to do anything until you arrive there.” So, that’s why the town was named “Zoar.”^c

²³By the time Lot got to Zoar, the sun had already come up over the land. ²⁴Then the Always-Present One caused it to rain fire and sulfur

b 19:17 that is, the mountains of Moab, which lay to the east and the southeast of the doomed cities

c 19:22 This Hebrew name means “small.”

a 19:13 Compare Rom. 1:24,26,28.

upon Sodom and Gomorrah. It came from the Always-Present One, from the sky.²⁵ God destroyed those towns,^a and the entire valley, and everyone who lived in the towns, and all the plants.²⁶ But Lot's wife looked back; and she became a pillar of salt!^b

²⁷Abraham had gotten up early in the morning, near the place where he had stood in the presence of the One Who Is Always Present.^c

²⁸Abraham looked down upon Sodom and Gomorrah, overlooking the entire valley.^d Look, the smoke of the countryside went up like the smoke of an oven! ²⁹When God destroyed the towns of the valley, He remembered what He had promised to Abraham. God sent Lot out of the middle of the destruction, when He destroyed the towns where Lot had lived.

Lot and His Daughters Survive

³⁰Lot climbed up from Zoar, and he lived in the mountains, along with his two daughters. (He was afraid to live in Zoar.) He and his two daughters lived in a cave.

³¹The firstborn daughter said to the younger daughter, "Our father is old.

Everyone gets married,^e but there is no male for us to marry!" ³²Come on, let's get our father drunk with wine, and let's go to bed with him, so that we may keep our father's lineage alive!" ³³So they caused their father to drink a lot of wine that night. The firstborn daughter went to bed with her father. (Lot did not know that she came or left.) ³⁴On the next day, the firstborn daughter said to the younger daughter, "Listen, I went to bed with my father last night. Let's make him drunk with wine again tonight. Then you can go to bed with him, so that we may keep the lineage of our father alive!" ³⁵Then they caused their father to drink a lot of wine that night also. The younger daughter got up and went to bed with him. (He did not know that she came or left.)

³⁶Therefore, both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father! ³⁷The firstborn daughter gave birth to a son, and she named him "Moab."^f (He is the ancestor of the people of Moab until this day.)^g

e 19:31 literally, "as (is) the way of all the earth,"

f 19:37 This Hebrew name sounds similar to the Hebrew phrase for "from a father."

g 19:37 The Moabites were the descendants of Lot, and they were neighbors of the Amorites on the opposite side of the Arnon River (Num. 12:13). The Moabites were governed by their own kings, and they had many great cities (Num. 21:28-30; 23:7; Isa. 15:1). They were prosperous, arrogant, and idolatrous. They were mighty men of war (Isa. 16:6; 1 Kings 11:7; Jer. 27:3; 48:7,11,14). The Amorites deprived the Moabites of a large part of their territory (Num. 21:26). When the Israelites

a 19:25 namely: Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboyim. See Jude 1:7; Deut. 29:23; and Hos. 11:8.

b 19:26 See Luke 17:31-32.

c 19:27 See Gen. 18:22.

d 19:28 Abraham was situated much higher in elevation; he could see everything.

³⁸The younger daughter also gave birth to a son. She named him Ben-Ammi.^a (He is the ancestor of the people of Ammon^b until this day.)^c

Abraham and Abimelech

20¹Then Abraham moved away from Mamre to the Negev.^d He lived between the towns

came out of Egypt, the Moabites refused to let them pass through their country. But the Moabites were so greatly impressed and alarmed by the sheer numbers of the Israelite army that, along with the Midianites, they sent for the prophet Balaam to curse the people of Israel (Num. 22–24). Later, the nation of Israel was enticed into the idolatry of the Moabites, and the Jews even intermarried with them. The Moabites were always hostile to the Jewish people until King Saul subdued them (1 Sam. 14:47). Later, the Moabites were forced to pay taxes to King David and succeeding Jewish kings (2 Sam. 8:2–12; 2 Kings 3:4). But the Moabites finally joined the Babylonians against Judah (2 Kings 24:2).

a 19:38 This Hebrew name means “son of my people.”

b 19:38 The Ammonites were a cruel, greedy, proud, vindictive, and idolatrous nation (Judg. 10:6; Amos 1:13; Zeph. 2:10; Jer. 27:3; Ezek. 25:3,6). Their chief city was Rabbah (2 Sam. 12:26–27), where they were governed by hereditary kings (2 Sam. 2:20–21). They had various encounters with the Jews. Along with the Philistines, the Ammonites oppressed Israel for 18 years (Judg. 10:6–9). King Saul was successful militarily against them. And, King David and Joab were victorious over them (1 Sam. 11:11; 2 Sam. 10:7–14). However, King Solomon intermarried with the Ammonites, and he introduced their idols into mainstream Israel (1 Kings 11:1–5).

c 19:38 at the time when Genesis was written. According to Deut. 2:9,19, these two sons who were born to the daughters of Lot were the ancestors of the Moabites and the Ammonites. These two nations were destined to become bitter enemies of the descendants of Abraham (1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Chr. 20:1).

d 20:1 literally, “to the land of the south.” See the note on Gen. 12:9.

of Kadesh and Shur. Then he stayed in Gerar.² (Abraham always said that his wife Sarah was his sister.)^e Abimelech,^f the king of Gerar, sent for Sarah and took her because he wanted to marry her.³ But God came to Abimelech at night in a dream and said to him, “Look, you are about to die, because the woman whom you have taken is already married!”⁴ (But Abimelech had not yet had sex with her.) Abimelech said, “O Lord, would You kill even an innocent nation?⁵ Didn’t Abraham tell me that she was his sister? And, she herself said that Abraham was her brother. I have done this in the integrity of my heart and in the innocence of my hands!”

⁶Then the one true God said to him through the dream, “Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. I stopped you from sinning against Me! That is why I did not allow you to touch Sarah sexually.^g

⁷So, return Abraham’s wife. He is a prophet.^h He will pray for you, and you will live. However, if you do not restore Sarah, then know that you and all those who belong to you will most certainly die!”

⁸Then Abimelech got up early in

e 20:2 A half-truth is not the whole truth!

f 20:2 This was the title of Philistine kings, not his personal name.

g 20:6 See Ps. 105:15.

h 20:7 This is the first time in the Bible that this word appears. A true prophet announced God’s will to human beings.

the morning and called for all of his officers. He spoke all these words to them. They listened carefully. The men were terrified.⁹ Then Abimelech called for Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us!? How have I offended you, that you would bring such great guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me which should **not** have been done!”¹⁰ Abimelech repeated, “What caused you to do this!?”

¹¹Abraham answered, “I thought that there was no fear of God here, and that they would kill me to get my wife.¹² Sarah really **is** my half-sister.^a She’s the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. We got married.^b ¹³And when God ordered me to move away from my father’s house, I told her, ‘Do this one favor for me wherever we go. Say that I am your brother.’”

¹⁴Then Abimelech got some sheep, goats, cattle, and male and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham. He also returned Abraham’s wife, Sarah, to him.

¹⁵Then Abimelech said, “Listen, my country is in front of you; live wherever you like.”

a 20:12 Josephus (*Antiquities* I. vi. 6) and Jerome believed the Jewish tradition that Sarah was identical with Ischah (Gen. 11:29), the daughter of Haran and the sister of Lot, and therefore related to Abraham (Gen. 13:8).

b 20:12 Later, this was forbidden in Lev. 18:9,11; 20:17; Deut. 27:22.

¹⁶Then Abimelech said to Sarah, “Look, I have given 1,000 pieces of silver to your brother! Listen, I am apologizing to you and everyone who is with you. All these things should make it right.”¹⁷ Then Abraham prayed to the one true God, and God restored Abimelech to full health, as well as Abimelech’s wife and Abimelech’s concubines.^c Later, they gave birth to children.¹⁸ (The Always-Present One had shut every womb in the household of Abimelech because of Abraham’s wife, Sarah.)

Isaac Is Born

21¹ Then the Always-Present One took note of Sarah, just as He said He would. And, the Always-Present One did for Sarah as He had promised.² So, at the set time which God had spoken to Abraham,^d Sarah became pregnant. And she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age.³ Abraham named his son “Isaac.” Abraham and Sarah were his parents.⁴ When Isaac, Abraham’s son, was eight days old,^e Abraham circumcised him, just as God had ordered him to do.^f ⁵Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.^g

c 20:17 secondary wives

d 21:2 See Gen. 18:10,14.

e 21:4 literally, “a son of 8 days,”

f 21:4 See Gen. 17:10-12.

g 21:5 Isaac was “the child of promise” (Gal. 4:28).

⁶⁻⁷And Sarah said, “God made me laugh. I have given Abraham a son for his old age! Everyone who hears about this will laugh with me. Who could have said to Abraham, ‘Sarah will nurse a child!’?”

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

⁸The child Isaac grew and was ready to be weaned.^a Abraham gave a big party on the day of Isaac’s weaning.

⁹Sarah saw the son of Hagar making fun^b of Isaac. (This Egyptian woman had given birth to him for Abraham.)

¹⁰Then Sarah said to Abraham, “Make this slave-woman and her son go away! The son of this slave-woman will **not** share the inheritance with my son Isaac!”

¹¹This matter about Abraham’s son, Ishmael, was a very bad situation for Abraham. ¹²However, God said to Abraham, “Don’t be worried about the boy or your slave-woman. Do everything that Sarah says to you. Listen to her, because your descendants **will** be declared through Isaac. ¹³I will also make a nation from the son of this slave-woman, because he is your descendant, too!”

¹⁴Abraham rose up early in the morning and got some food and

a container^c of water. He gave them to Hagar and her boy, putting it on her shoulder. Then he sent her and the boy away. She left and wandered around in the desert of Beer-Sheba. ¹⁵When the water from the container was gone, she put the boy in the shade under one of the bushes.

¹⁶She went and sat down by herself nearby, about 100 yards away.^d She thought, “I do not want to see my child die.” She was sitting across from him, weeping loudly.

¹⁷But God heard the cry of the young boy. The Angel of God called out to Hagar from the sky, “What’s the matter, Hagar? Don’t be afraid! God has heard^e the boy crying over there. ¹⁸Get up! Take hold of him and help him up. I will make him into an important nation!” ¹⁹Then God caused her to see a well of water. She went and filled the container with water. Then she gave some to the boy.

²⁰And, God was with the boy. Ishmael grew up and lived in the desert. He became a hunter. He could shoot arrows very well. ²¹He lived in the Paran Desert. His mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

a 21:8 Weaning is training a young one to stop nursing directly from its mother’s milk.

b 21:9 or, “causing trouble”; “mocking”; see Gal. 4:29.

c 21:14 literally, “a skin (of an animal)”

d 21:16 literally, “a bow shot away.”

e 21:17 This is a play upon the name of Ishmael. See Gen. 16:11; 17:20.

At Beer-Sheba

²²At that time, Abimelech^a and Phicol (the general of Abimelech's army) said to Abraham, "The one true God is with you in everything that you do!"²³Therefore, swear to us by God here and now that you will not be false with me, with my son, or with my descendants, because of the loyalty which I have shown to you. Do the same thing for me and the country where you have lived."

²⁴Then Abraham said, "I will swear it."²⁵However, Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a particular well of water which the officers of Abimelech had taken over.

²⁶But Abimelech said, "I did not know that this had happened. And, you never told me. Today is the first time I ever heard of it!"

²⁷Then Abraham got some sheep, goats, and cattle and gave them to Abimelech. Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant with one another.^b

²⁸Abraham separated seven female lambs from the flock.²⁹Abimelech asked Abraham, "What are these seven female lambs which you have separated?"

³⁰Abraham answered, "You must

a 21:22 This was either a family name or an official title. It is used again about 60 years later (Gen. 26:26).

b 21:27 literally, "cut an agreement." These animals were to be sacrificed to seal the pact between the two parties.

receive these seven female lambs from me as evidence that I dug this well."³¹This is why that place is named Beer-Sheba.^c Both of them took a vow there.³²They reached an agreement at Beer-Sheba. Then Abimelech and Phicol (the general of Abimelech's army) got up and went back to the country of the Philistines.³³Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree^d at Beer-Sheba. There he worshiped the Always-Present One, the Eternal God.³⁴Abraham stayed in the country of the Philistines for a long time.

Abraham Is Tested

22¹Later, the one true God put Abraham to the test:^e He said to Abraham, "Abraham!"

Abraham answered, "Yes, I'm listening."

²God said, "Take Isaac, your beloved son,^f the only promised son you have, and go to the land of Moriah.^g Offer him there as a whole burnt-offering sacrifice upon one of

c 21:31 This Hebrew name can mean either "well of seven" or "well of the oath," thus, giving the name to Beer-Sheba.

d 21:33 a desert shrub with long, narrow leaves

e 22:1 Sometimes God tests us to confirm our faith (Exo. 20:20) or to prove our commitment (Deut. 8:2), but He never tempts us like Satan does (1 Cor. 7:5; James 1:13).

f 22:2 This is the first mention of "love" in the Old Testament. Compare Matt. 3:17.

g 22:2 probably a range of hills near Jerusalem where Solomon's temple would be built later. See 2 Chr. 3:1.

the mountains! I will tell you later which mountain it is.”

³So, Abraham got up early in the morning and put a saddle on his donkey. He took his son Isaac with him and also two of his servant boys. He split the wood for the burnt-offering sacrifice. Then he got up and headed for the place where the one true God had told him to go. ⁴Three days later, Abraham looked up and saw that place in the distance.

⁵Then Abraham said to his servant boys, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy Isaac and I will go over there. We will worship God and then come back to you.”^a

⁶So, Abraham took the wood for the whole burnt-offering and put it upon Isaac, his son. Then Abraham carried the fire and the knife in his hand, and they walked together, just the two of them. ⁷Isaac asked his father Abraham, “My father?”

And Abraham answered, “Yes, what is it,^b my son?”

Isaac said, “Look, here is the fire and there is the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering sacrifice!?”

⁸And Abraham answered, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for the whole burnt-offering!”^c

They continued to walk together.

⁹Finally, they came to the place that the one true God had told Abraham about. Abraham built the altar there. He arranged the wood, tied up his son Isaac, and put Isaac upon the wood on top of the altar. ¹⁰Then Abraham reached out and took the knife to cut his son’s throat, ¹¹but the Angel of the Always-Present One called out to Abraham from the sky, saying, “Abraham! Abraham!”

And Abraham answered, “Yes, I’m listening!”

¹²The Angel of the Always-Present One said, “Do not harm the boy! Don’t do anything to him! Now I **know** that you revere God—you have not held back your son from Me. And, he is the only promised son you have!”^d

¹³Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram behind him. It was caught in the thick brush by its horns. Abraham went over and got the ram, and, instead of offering his son, he offered up the ram as the whole burnt-offering sacrifice.^e ¹⁴And, Abraham named that place “Yahweh-Yireh.”^f (This expression, “It will be provided at Yahweh’s mountain!” has lasted until this day.)

d 22:12 Compare John 3:16.

e 22:13 that is, as a substitute for his beloved son, Isaac

f 22:14 a compound Hebrew proper name which means “the Always-Present One will provide.”

a 22:5 See Gen. 21:12; Heb. 11:17-19; Rom. 4:17.

b 22:7 literally, “I’m here.”

c 22:8 See John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7.

15 Again, the Angel of the Always-Present One called out to Abraham from the sky, 16 “The Always-Present One says: ‘I hereby make a vow—sworn on My own authority^a—that, because you’ve done this thing, and you have not withheld your son, your only promised son,^b 17 I will surely bless you. And I will surely make your descendants as numerous as the stars of the sky, like the sand on the ocean beaches. Your Offspring^c will take over the cities of his enemies.^d 18 All the nations of the earth will be blessed through your offspring. All this will occur because you have obeyed My voice.’ ”^e

a 22:16 Almighty God could take an oath by no higher source of authority than Himself. See Heb. 6:13.

b 22:16 About 2,000 years later God would give His one and only Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Rom. 8:32).

c 22:17 See Gal. 3:16’s reference to the coming Messiah. Also compare Gen. 3:15.

d 22:17 literally, “possess the gate of his enemies.”

e 22:18 The story of Abraham and Isaac will always be an important one. It is similar to the love that God had in sacrificing His one and only Son for us (John 3:16). Abraham did not have to give up his precious son, but he was fully prepared to plunge that knife into Isaac, when suddenly God’s Angel intervened. According to Rom. 4:20, Abraham’s faith in God’s promise to give the infant Isaac to him in his old age never wavered. When God tested (not tempted) Abraham here with taking away that very child, Abraham believed that God planned to raise Isaac from death (Heb. 11:17-19) after the killing of Isaac. Abraham showed his wonderful, absolute obedience to God. If God is all-knowing, how could He say, “Now I know that you revere God” (Gen. 22:12)? The problem of foreknowledge is an extremely difficult one, and discussion about it is usually fruitless. In this case, God speaks of the test of Abraham’s faith as a valid experiment. It

19 Then Abraham and Isaac came back to Abraham’s servant boys. They all got up and left for the town of Beer-Sheba. And, Abraham lived there for a while.

Nahor’s Family

20 Later, Abraham learned that Milcah also had given birth to several sons for Nahor, Abraham’s brother: 21 Uz (Nahor’s firstborn); Buz, his brother; Kemuel (the ancestor of Aram); 22 Chesed; Hazo; Pildash; Jidlaph; and Bethuel. 23 (Bethuel fathered Rebekah.) Milcah gave birth to these eight sons for Nahor, Abraham’s brother. 24 Nahor’s concubine, Reumah, also gave birth to these sons: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

demonstrated again the soundness of Abraham and how well-made his character was. God found him to be firm in faith and perfect in obedience. Abraham was not imitating his idolatrous neighbors. On the contrary, Abraham would not choose this type of sacrifice at all; it was God who issued this command. This incident showed that God did not want human sacrifices. That would be reserved for the sinless Lamb of God (John 1:29). There is no contradiction between Gen. 22:1 and James 1:13. The Hebrew word here is *nissah*, which means “to put to the test.” It should not be translated as “tempt” (as in the KJV). Compare David’s testing of Saul’s armor (1 Sam. 17:39) and the Queen of Sheba’s testing of Solomon’s wisdom (1 Kings 10:1). The Geneva Bible properly has: “God did prove Abraham.” God may, with good motives, allow us to be tested, but He will never plant inducements before us or lead us into temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). God’s ultimate objective is always what is good for us, not what is evil.

Sarah Dies

23¹The total lifetime of Sarah was 127 years. ²Then Sarah died at Kiriath-Arba (Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Abraham approached her body. He was very sad. He cried over her.^a ³Then Abraham left his dead wife and went to talk to the sons of Heth.^b He said, ⁴“I am a pilgrim and a visitor among you. I need a burial plot from you. Let me bury my dead wife out of my sight.”^c

⁵The sons of Heth answered Abraham, ⁶“My lord, listen to us. You are an awesome prince^d among us. Bury your dead wife in any one of our best graveyards. None of us will withhold his graveyard from you for burying your loved one.”

⁷But Abraham got up and bowed down to the people of that country,^e to the sons of Heth. ⁸He said to them, “If you would really like to help me bury my loved one, then, listen to me, please speak for me to Ephron, the son of Zohar.^f ⁹The cave of Machpelah belongs to him. It is at the

edge of his field.^g Ask him to sell it to me as a burial plot among you for the full price. I want to buy it.”

¹⁰Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth. Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth, in front of everyone who was going into his city at the gate,^h ¹¹“No, my lord! Listen to me, I will give you the field and the cave which is part of it! I will give it to you, in full view of my people. I will give it to you to bury your loved one.”

¹²But Abraham bowed down in front of those people of that region.

¹³He said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of that land, “No, please listen to me. I will pay for the property.ⁱ Take my money, and let me bury my loved one there!”

¹⁴Ephron answered Abraham, ¹⁵“Sir, listen to me. What is 400 shekels of silver’s^j worth of land between you and me? Bury your loved one.”

g 23:9 Abraham did not want to buy the whole field, only the cave. But the owner (Ephron) took advantage of Abraham’s situation by insisting that Abraham must buy the entire field too.

h 23:10 Legal transactions were usually conducted in public at the main gate of ancient cities.

i 23:13 Abraham did not want to be obligated to these pagans. He wanted to own it outright.

j 23:15 about 10 pounds of silver. Ephron was heartlessly taking advantage of Abraham in a time of great sorrow. In 1 Kings 16:24, Omri paid 6,000 shekels for all of Samaria, his future capital city. And, Jeremiah paid only 17 shekels for a piece of land that was about the same size as Machpelah (Jer. 32:9). But Ephron knew that Abraham needed to find a suitable place to bury Sarah very quickly.

a 23:2 And so did Isaac. He was about 37 years old at the time.

b 23:3 See Gen. 10:15.

c 23:4 Compare Heb. 11:9-10.

d 23:6 or, “a prince of God”

e 23:7 This was the cultural way of showing respect to them. See Gen. 18:2; 19:1; 23:7,12.

f 23:8 Abraham did not want to bargain directly with Ephron; he wanted these local witnesses to bargain with Ephron on his behalf. This was the normal way of transacting a land purchase among Orientals.

¹⁶Abraham caught Ephron's meaning and weighed out that amount of money for Ephron which he had mentioned in the hearing of the sons of Heth—400 shekels of silver, the market value that was set by Ephron.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸So, Ephron's field changed owners. This field was in Machpelah, east of Mamre.^a The field, the cave next to it, and all the trees in the field and along its boundaries now belonged to Abraham. He bought the property, and this public transaction was witnessed by the sons of Heth and others at the gate who were going into the town.

¹⁹Later, Abraham did bury his wife Sarah at the cave of the Machpelah field near Mamre (Hebron) in the land of Canaan.^b ²⁰The field and the cave (which was part of the field) was certified by the sons of Heth to belong to Abraham as a burial plot.

Isaac and Rebekah

24¹Abraham was very, very old. And, the Always-Present One had blessed Abraham with everything. ²Abraham said to his slave,^c the oldest man in his household, who was in charge of everything that Abraham had, "Please put your hand under my private

a 23:17-18 another name for Hebron

b 23:19 Abraham showed that he had a strong faith in God's promise by buying this burial plot.

c 24:2 possibly Eliezer, Gen. 15:2-3

parts.^d ³I will now make you swear by the Always-Present One, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will **not** get a wife for my son from the daughters of the people of Canaan, where I now live.^e ⁴Instead, you must go to my native country and to my relatives to get a wife for my son Isaac."

⁵The slave said to Abraham, "The woman may not be willing to follow me to Canaan. What then? Do you want me to take your son to the land which you left?"

⁶Abraham answered him, "No! Don't take my son there! ⁷The Always-Present One, the God of heaven, took me from my father's house, from the land where I was born. He swore to me. This is what He said: "I will give this land^f to your offspring." God will send His angel ahead of you. You must get a wife for my son from my homeland. ⁸If the woman is not willing to go with you, then you will be set free from this oath of mine. Just don't take my son back there!"

⁹The slave did put his hand under the private parts of his master,

d 24:2 Abraham's slave was taking an oath on the genitals of Abraham because it represented all of Abraham's future descendants. See also Gen. 47:29.

e 24:3 It was of the greatest importance that Abraham's lineage remain pure. Canaanites were idolaters. Abraham was too old to make the long, hard trip. He was 140 years old at this time.

f 24:7 = Canaan

Abraham. The slave took an oath to Abraham about this matter. ¹⁰Then the slave took ten camels, which belonged to his master, and left. He was carrying many gifts from his master.

He came to Northwest Mesopotamia,^a to the town of Nahor.^b

¹¹The slave made the camels kneel down outside the town, at the well of water, in the evening, when the women come out to draw water.

¹²He prayed, "O One Who Is Always Present, O God of my master Abraham, please give me success today. Show kindness to my master, Abraham. ¹³Look, I am standing beside the fountain of water, and the girls^c are coming out to draw water.

¹⁴Now, let it be the girl to whom I say, 'Please lower your jar, so that I may drink,' that she will say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels, too.' Select her for me,^d for Isaac. Then I can know that You have shown kindness to my master."

¹⁵Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out! She was born to Bethuel, the son of Milcah, Nahor's wife. (Nahor was the brother of Abraham.) Rebekah had her jar on

her shoulder. ¹⁶The girl was very beautiful to look at. She was a virgin. She had never had sexual relations with a man. She went down to the fountain and filled her jar with water. Then she came back up.^e

¹⁷The slave of Abraham hurried to meet her. He said, "Please let me have just a little water from your jar."

¹⁸She said, "Drink, sir."^f Then she hurried to lower her jar to her hand to give him a drink. ¹⁹After she finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will water your camels, too, until they are satisfied." ²⁰Then she hurried to empty her jar of water into the trough. Again and again, she ran to the well to draw water for all of his camels.

²¹Abraham's slave was silently wondering about Rebekah. He wanted to know if the Always-Present One had made his trip successful or not. ²²After the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a golden nose-ring, weighing about 1/5th of an ounce,^g and two gold bracelets for her wrists, weighing about 5 ounces^h each. ²³He said, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me if there is

e 24:16 The well was several feet below the surface of the ground. The girls had to go down a path of steps to get to the well.

f 24:18 or, "my lord."

g 24:22 literally, "a beka" = a half-shekel (about 5.5 grams). It took 10 gerahs to make 1 beka and 2 bekas to equal 1 shekel.

h 24:22 literally, "10 (shekels)" = more than 110 grams

a 24:10 literally, "Aram-Naharaim" which means "Syria of the two rivers", not far from the city of Haran (Gen. 11:31).

b 24:10 = Abraham's brother, Gen. 11:26; 24:15

c 24:13 literally, "the daughters of the men of the town"

d 24:14 literally, "your slave"

room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"

²⁴She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel (the son of Milcah) and the grand-daughter of Nahor."^a ²⁵Then she added, "Yes, we have plenty of straw, feed, and a place to spend the night."

²⁶Then the man bowed his head and worshiped the Always-Present One. ²⁷He said, "Praise the One Who Is Always Present, the God of my master Abraham, who did not abandon His truth or His loyalty to my master! While I was on the road, the Always-Present One led me to the very household of my master's relatives!"

²⁸Then the girl ran and told her mother's household all these things.

²⁹⁻³⁰Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. When he saw the nose-ring and the bracelets on the wrists of his sister, and when he heard his sister's words about how the man spoke to her, he ran to the man outside the town at the fountain. The man was still standing beside the camels at the fountain. ³¹Laban said, "Come! Praise the One Who Is Always Present! Why are you standing out here in the street, when I have already prepared our house for you and a place for the camels!?"

^a 24:24 Rebekah's grandfather and Abraham's brother.

³²Then the man went to the house. Laban unloaded the camels and gave them straw and feed. Laban brought water for washing the man's feet and the feet of the men who were with him. ³³Food was put before the man to eat. But he said, "I will **not** eat until I have delivered my message!"

Laban said, "Then speak."

³⁴The man said, "I am Abraham's slave. ³⁵The Always-Present One has blessed my master very much. He has become an important man. The Always-Present One has given him flocks, herds, camels, donkeys, silver, gold, and male and female slaves. ³⁶Sarah, my master's wife, has given birth to a son for my master—after she was too old to have a child naturally! Abraham has given everything he has to his son. ³⁷My master made me swear to these words: 'You must **not** get a wife for my son from the daughters of the people of Canaan, where I now live. ³⁸Instead, you must go to my father's household, to my family, and you must get a wife for my son there.' ³⁹I said to my master, 'The woman may not be willing to follow me. What then?' ⁴⁰He said to me, 'The Always-Present One, in whose presence I live, will send His angel with you and give you success on your trip in getting a wife for my son from my family,

from my father's household.

⁴¹However, if, after you arrive, they will not give her to you, then you will be set free from this oath of mine.'

⁴²"Today I came to the fountain and prayed, 'O One Who Is Always Present, O God of my master Abraham, please make my current trip a success. ⁴³Look, I am standing

beside the fountain of water. Some young woman will come out to draw water. When I say to her, "Please let me drink just a little water from your jar." ⁴⁴that she will say to me, "Yes, drink, and I will also draw water for your camels." Let **her** be the woman whom You have selected for my master's son.' ⁴⁵I had not yet finished

praying in my heart, when, look, Rebekah was coming out of the town with her jar upon her shoulder. She went down to the fountain and she drew water. I said to her, 'Please let me have a drink.' ⁴⁶She hurried to lower her jar from off her shoulder.

She said, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels!' So, I drank, and she watered the camels, too. ⁴⁷Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' She answered, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son. Milcah gave

birth to Bethuel.' Then I put the nose-ring into her nose and the bracelets upon her wrists. ⁴⁸Then I bowed my head and worshiped the Always-

Present One, praising Him, the God of my master Abraham. God led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master's brother as a wife for his son. ⁴⁹Now, if you are ready to be loyal and true to my master, tell me if you consent or not. Tell me, so that I may turn to the right or to the left!"

⁵⁰Then Bethuel^a and Laban answered, "This thing comes from the Always-Present One! We have nothing—good or bad—to say about it to you.^b ⁵¹Look, Rebekah is in front of you. Take her and go. Let her be the wife to your master's son, as the Always-Present One has spoken!"

⁵²When Abraham's slave heard their words, he bowed down low to the ground to the Always-Present One. ⁵³Then he brought out various items of silver and gold, and fine clothes. He gave them all to Rebekah. He also gave expensive presents to her brother and to her mother. ⁵⁴They all ate and drank, the man and those who were with him. After they spent the night, they got up in the morning. Then the man said, "Send me back to my master, Abraham!"

⁵⁵Rebekah's brother and mother said, "Let the girl stay 10 days or so with us. After that, she may go."

a 24:50 Perhaps this was a younger brother of Rebekah named after his father (Bethuel) who might have already died. Josephus thought so.

b 24:50 They were ready to yield to God's will.

⁵⁶But the man said to them, “Don’t make me wait! Since the Always-Present One has made my trip a success, send me back now, so that I may go to my master, Abraham.”

⁵⁷They said, “Let’s call the girl and find out what **she** says.” ⁵⁸They summoned Rebekah and asked her, “Do you want to go with this man now?”

She answered, “I want to go!”

⁵⁹Then they sent their sister Rebekah and her nurse^a to go with Abraham’s slave and his men. ⁶⁰They blessed Rebekah by saying this to her: “Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands of people! May your descendants defeat all their enemies!”

⁶¹Rebekah and her slave-girls got up and rode the camels, following the man. So, Abraham’s slave took Rebekah and left.

⁶²Later, Isaac was walking from Beer-Lahai-Roi, because he lived in the Negev. ⁶³Isaac had gone out to pray in the countryside, as the sun was going down. He looked up and saw the camels coming. ⁶⁴Rebekah looked up, and she saw Isaac. She jumped down from the camel ⁶⁵and asked Abraham’s slave, “Who is that man walking across the field to meet us?”

The slave answered, “He is Isaac,

a 24:59 Her name was Deborah (Gen. 35:8).

my master.” Rebekah took the veil and covered herself.^b ⁶⁶Then the slave told Isaac everything that had happened. ⁶⁷Isaac brought Rebekah into the tent of Sarah, his mother. He married Rebekah and came to love her. So, after the death of Isaac’s mother, he received comfort.

Abraham’s Other Family

1 Chronicles 1:32-33

25¹Abraham remarried. The woman’s name was Keturah.^c ²She gave birth to these sons for him: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. ³Jokshan fathered Sheba and Dedan. The people of Asshur, Letush, and Leum were descendants of Dedan. ⁴The sons of Midian were: Ephah, Ephher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah.

⁵Abraham gave everything that he had to Isaac.^d ⁶But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of his concubines. However, while Abraham was still alive, he sent the other sons to a land in the East,^e away from his promised son, Isaac.

b 24:65 This meant that she was not married. Compare Gen. 38:14,19.

c 25:1 She was Abraham’s concubine (secondary wife), according to 1 Chr. 1:32. Abraham was about 140 years old at this time.

d 25:5 According to ancient law, Isaac was the firstborn son of Abraham, not Ishmael. Therefore, Isaac would receive twice the share of Abraham’s property (Deut. 21:15-17).

e 25:6 a general name for Arabia

Abraham Dies

⁷Abraham lived a total of 175 years.
⁸Then he breathed his last and died at a ripe old age. He was a satisfied old man when he joined his ancestors^a in death.

⁹Both of his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar, the Hittite. It is east of Mamre. ¹⁰It was the field which Abraham bought from the sons of Heth. Abraham was buried there with Sarah, his wife.

¹¹After the death of Abraham, God blessed his son Isaac. Isaac lived next to Beer-Lahai-Roi.^b

Ishmael's Family

1 Chronicles 1:29-31

¹²These are the records of Ishmael, Abraham's son. Hagar, the Egyptian slave-girl of Sarah, gave birth to him for Abraham.^c ¹³These are the names of the sons of Ishmael in each generation: Nebaioth (Ishmael's firstborn), Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah.

¹⁶Those were the names of Ishmael's sons. Each son had his own camp which later became

a small town. The twelve sons were like princes among their own people.

¹⁷Ishmael lived 137 years. Then he breathed his last and he died. He joined his ancestors in death.

¹⁸Ishmael's descendants lived from Havilah to Shur, which is east of Egypt, as you head toward Asshur. They all fought with each other.

Isaac's Twin Boys

¹⁹These are the records of Isaac, the promised son of Abraham. Abraham fathered Isaac. ²⁰When Isaac was 40 years old, he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the Aramean from Padan-Aram, the sister of Laban, the Aramean. ²¹Because Rebekah, Isaac's wife, could not have children,^d he prayed to the Always-Present One for her. The Always-Present One answered Isaac's prayer—Rebekah became pregnant!

²²The babies inside her struggled.^e She thought, "If this is the way it is, why did I want this!?" She went to ask the Always-Present One.^f

d 25:21 Rebekah is one of several women in the Bible (Sarah, Rachel, Samson's mother, Hannah, and Elizabeth) who were not able to have children except by God's intervention.

e 25:22 The strife between Rebekah's twin sons, Jacob and Esau, began even before their birth, and it continued not only throughout their lives but even between their respective descendants. Much of the suffering of the Israelites (Jacob) came at the hands of the Edomites (Esau) and this fact is noted throughout the Old Testament (Num. 20:20-21; 2 Sam. 8:13-14; Ps. 137:7; Joel 3:19; Mal. 1:4).

f 25:22 Perhaps her inquiry was through Abraham,

a 25:8 literally, "he was gathered to his people"

b 25:11 or, "The Well of the Living One, My Seer."

c 25:12 See Gen. 16:10-15.

²³The Always-Present One answered her:

“There are two nations in your womb. Two groups of people will come out of your body. One group will be stronger than the other. The older will serve the younger!”^a

²⁴When the time came for Rebekah to give birth, look, she had twins in her womb! ²⁵The first baby that was born was completely reddish-brown,^b like a coat of fur. They named him “Esau.”^c ²⁶After that, his baby brother came out. His hand was hanging onto Esau’s heel. So, he was named “Jacob.”^d Isaac was 60 years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

²⁷When the boys grew up, Esau became a skilled hunter, the outdoors type.^e But Jacob was a quiet man who stayed indoors.^f ²⁸Isaac favored Esau, because Isaac loved to eat the

meat from Esau’s kills. But Rebekah favored Jacob.

²⁹One time, Esau came in from the field very hungry. Jacob was cooking soup. ³⁰Esau said to Jacob, “Please let me gulp down some of that red^g bean soup, because I am about to starve!” (That is why he was nicknamed “Edom.”)

³¹Jacob said, “Okay, but sell your birthright to me **right now!**”^h

³²Esau thought, “Look, I’m going to die anyway. Of what value would the birthright be to me then?”

³³Jacob said, “Swear it to me **now!**” So, Esau took an oath to Jacob; Esau sold his birthright to him. ³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some bean soup. Esau ate and drank. Then he got up and left. (Esau thought so little of his birthright!)ⁱ

the prophet.

a 25:23 Usually, with the ancient custom of primogeniture, the older son would always take precedence over the younger son. However, in this case, God had other plans. Compare Rom. 9:10-14.

b 25:25 Hebrew: *’admoniy*. See Gen. 25:29-30 regarding the red (*’adom*) stew.

c 25:25 This word was associated with being hairy.

d 25:26 This Hebrew name sounds like the word for “heel” in Hebrew, *’aqeb*. See Rom. 9:10-12; Heb. 11:20; 12:16-17.

e 25:27 literally, “a man of the field.”

f 25:27 literally, “a simple man, living in tents.”

g 25:30 The Hebrew name for “Edom” sounds very similar to this Hebrew adjective.

h 25:31 There is often some confusion about the difference between the birthright and the blessing in this narrative. The birthright is related to the *order* of birth of sons. According to Deut. 21:17, the right of the firstborn was to be a double portion of his father’s inheritance, and the father could not alter it. In this case, Esau gave in to Jacob’s extortion and sold the birthright to his brother. None of this had anything to do with Esau’s blessing. See Esau’s comment in Gen. 27:36. Apparently, a father could bless his son in any way that the father saw fit to do so. Therefore, when Jacob deceived his father and got Esau’s blessing, Jacob stole something from his brother to which he had no right.

i 25:34 See Heb. 12:15-17.

At Gerar

26¹There was a famine in the land. (This was different from the one in Abraham's time.)^a Isaac went to Abimelech,^b the king of the Philistines at Gerar.

²The Always-Present One appeared to Isaac and said, "Do **not** go down into Egypt! Live in the land where I tell you. ³Stay in this land. I will be with you and bless you, because I will give all these lands to you and your descendants. I will confirm the oath which I swore to Abraham, your father.^c ⁴I will increase your descendants to be like the stars of the skies. I will give to your descendants all these lands. The nations of the earth will be blessed through your descendants. ⁵All this will happen because Abraham listened to My voice. He obeyed My orders, My commands, My rules, and My laws."

⁶So, Isaac lived in Gerar. ⁷The men of that place asked him about Rebekah. He answered, "She is my sister." He was afraid to tell them that she was his wife. He thought, because she was very beautiful, that the men of that place would kill him to get her.

⁸However, after Isaac had been

there a long time, Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, looked down from a window and saw Isaac and Rebekah. Isaac was caressing^d Rebekah, his wife. ⁹Abimelech called out to Isaac, "It's clear that Rebekah is your **wife!** Why did you say, 'She is my sister.!'?"

Isaac answered him, "Because I thought that I might be killed because of her."

¹⁰Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us!? What if one of us had gone to bed with your wife? You would have brought tremendous guilt upon us!" ¹¹Abimelech gave this order to all the people: "Anyone who touches this man or his wife will surely be killed!"

¹²Isaac planted crops in that land, and he harvested 100 times more that year! The Always-Present One was blessing him. ¹³Isaac became rich. His wealth continued to get bigger and bigger, until he became very rich.

¹⁴He owned many flocks, herds, and slaves. The Philistines were jealous of him. ¹⁵They had filled in all of his wells with dirt, and they had put a covering over them. These were the wells which his father Abraham's slaves had dug during the lifetime of Abraham, his father. ¹⁶Abimelech said to Isaac, "Leave us, because you are much stronger than we are!"

a **26:1** about 100 years earlier. See Gen. 12:10.

b **26:1** This Abimelech was probably the son or grandson of the Philistine king mentioned in Gen. 20:2, about 80 years before. "Abimelech" was a title like "Pharaoh," not a personal name.

c **26:3** Compare Gen. 22:16-18.

d **26:8** or, "fondling." This word is related to the Hebrew word for "Isaac."

¹⁷So, Isaac left there and camped next to the Valley^a of Gerar. That is where he lived. ¹⁸Isaac re-dug the wells of water which the Philistines had covered up after Abraham died. These wells were originally dug during the lifetime of Abraham, his father. Isaac gave them the same names that his father had used.

¹⁹Isaac's slaves dug in the valley where they found a well of flowing^b water. ²⁰The shepherds of Gerar argued with Isaac's shepherds, saying, "The water belongs to us!" So, Isaac named that well "Esek,"^c because they made trouble for him.

²¹Isaac's slaves dug another well, but the shepherds of Gerar argued about that one, too. So Isaac named it "Sitnah."^d

²²Isaac moved away from there and his men dug another well. This time the shepherds of Gerar did not challenge him for it. So Isaac named it "Rehoboth."^e He said, "The Always-Present One has truly now made room for us, and we will prosper in the land."

²³Later, Isaac went up from there

a 26:17 The Hebrew word here is *nachal*. This is a wadi, that is, the bed of a stream which is dry except during the rainy season.

b 26:19 literally, "living; fresh". Compare John 4:10; 7:38.

c 26:20 This Hebrew name means "dispute."

d 26:21 This Hebrew name means "opposition." The word "Satan" is related to it.

e 26:22 This Hebrew name means "room" or "space."

to the town of Beer-Sheba. ²⁴That same night, the Always-Present One appeared to him and said, "I am the God of Abraham, your father. Don't be afraid, because I am with you. I will bless you and increase your descendants, because of Abraham, My servant."

²⁵Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the Always-Present One. He pitched his tent there too, and his slaves dug another well there.

An Agreement

²⁶Abimelech, Phicol^f (who was the general of Abimelech's army), and his adviser Ahuzzath came to Isaac from Gerar. ²⁷Isaac said to them, "Since you hate me and sent me away from you, why have you come to me?"

²⁸They answered, "We have plainly seen that Yahweh is with you. Therefore, we say, 'Let us both take an oath together. We want to make a pact with you,²⁹ so that you will not harm us, since we never bothered you and have done nothing but good to you. We sent you away in peace.^g You are now being blessed by Yahweh!'"

³⁰Then Isaac gave a banquet in their honor. They ate and drank. ³¹Early the next morning, they got up and promised each other. Then Isaac

f 26:26 Phicol was probably an official title. Another man in Gen. 21:22 occupied this position of advisor to the king.

g 26:29 The Hebrew word here is *shalom*.

sent them away. And they left him in peace.

³²During that very day, Isaac's slaves came and told him about the well which they had been digging. They said to him, "We have found water!" ³³So, Isaac named it "Shibah." ^a Therefore, the name of the town is "Beer-Sheba" ^b until this day.

Esau's Foreign Wives

³⁴When Esau was 40 years old, he married Judith (the daughter of Beeri, the Hittite) and Basemath (the daughter of Elon, the Hittite). ³⁵These mixed marriages caused much anxiety for Isaac and Rebekah. ^c

Jacob Gets the Blessing

27¹When Isaac became old and his eyesight was failing, he called for his older son, Esau, and said to him, "My son."

Esau answered him, "I'm here!"

²Isaac said, "Listen now, I am old. There's no telling when I may die. ³So please take your bow and arrows, your gear, and go hunting. Find wild game for me. ⁴Prepare my favorite dishes. Then bring them to me, so

a 26:33 This Hebrew name can mean either "seven" or "oath."

b 26:33 meaning, "well of the oath" or "well of the seven"

c 26:35 These godly parents hated the prospect of their son marrying the pagan daughters of the Canaanites. This sort of spiritual contamination would eventually be the undoing of God's chosen people.

that I may eat them. Then I will give you my blessing before I die." ^d ⁵So, Esau went off to the fields to hunt for wild game to bring back.

However, when Isaac spoke to his son Esau, Rebekah was listening. ^e ⁶She said to her son Jacob, "Listen, I overheard your father speaking to your brother Esau. He said, ⁷'Bring me some wild game and prepare special dishes for me, so that I may eat them and give you the blessing before I die in the presence of the Always-Present One.' ⁸So, my son, listen to my advice. Do what I'm telling you to do. ⁹Go now to the flock and get two of the best little goats for me from there. From them, I will make your father's favorite dishes. ¹⁰Then you will take them to your father to eat, so that he will bless **you** before he dies!"

¹¹But Jacob said to Rebekah, his mother, "Listen, my brother Esau has skin that is hairy; my skin is **not** like that! ¹²What if my father feels me!? I would look like a liar to him. Then he would speak a **curse** upon me instead of a blessing!"

¹³Jacob's mother said to him, "Let that curse be upon me, my son. Just listen to my instruction. Go get the little goats for me!" ¹⁴So, Jacob went, got them, and brought them to his

d 27:4 Oral utterances were legally binding in the Ancient Near East. Compare Gen. 49:28-33.

e 27:5 or, "eaves-dropping"

mother. And she made his father's favorite dishes. ¹⁵Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau, her older son, which were with her in the house, and she dressed Jacob, her younger son, with them. ¹⁶Then she put the hides of the little goats on Jacob's arms and around the smooth part of his neck.^a ¹⁷After that, she gave her son Jacob bread and the favorite dishes which she had prepared.

¹⁸Then Jacob approached his father. Jacob said, "My father!"

Isaac answered, "I'm here. Who are you, my son?"

¹⁹Jacob answered his father, "I am your firstborn, Esau. I have done as you told me to do. Please get up, sit, and eat my wild game meat, so that you may give me the blessing."^b

a 27:16 This type of goat produced hair which was very similar in texture to Esau's hair.

b 27:19 Esau had previously sold his birthright to Jacob. Now Jacob is seeking by deception, with his mother's help, to have his status officially recognized by his father Isaac. God had recognized Jacob before the boys were born (Gen. 25:23), but one should not come to the conclusion that God condones lying and fraud to accomplish His will. In this act of deceit, Jacob fulfilled the true meaning of his name, "the one who supplants." God did not approve of Jacob's conduct here. In fact, it was most unjustifiable, but the Bible does not attempt to conceal the faults of good men. The text simply relates how Jacob's wrongdoing led to his banishment from home and final separation from his mother, with whom he was very close. Genesis tells how Jacob himself later suffered retribution from the trickery of Laban, his uncle. Jacob felt much anguish when he heard that his brother Esau was approaching with 400 men. Finally, Jacob fell a pathetic victim to the deceit of his own sons about the alleged death of his favorite

²⁰Isaac said to his son, "How did you find it so quickly, my son!?"

Jacob answered, "Because the Always-Present One, your God,^c made it happen for me!"

²¹Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come here, my son, so that I may feel you, to see if you really are my son Esau or not." ²²Then Jacob came near to his father Isaac. And Isaac felt him. Isaac said, "The voice sounds like Jacob's voice, but the arms are Esau's." ²³So, Isaac did not recognize Jacob, because Jacob's arms were hairy like the arms of his brother Esau. That is why Isaac blessed Jacob.

²⁴Isaac asked, "Are you really my son Esau?"

Jacob answered, "I am."

²⁵Isaac said, "Then bring me your wild meat, so that I can eat it. Then I will give you the blessing." So, Jacob brought the favorite dishes to Isaac, and he ate them. Jacob also brought him some wine, and he drank it.

²⁶Then Jacob's father, Isaac, said to him, "Come here now, my son, and kiss me!" ²⁷So Jacob came near, and Isaac kissed him. Isaac smelled the

son, Joseph. The whole story of Jacob's life shows that he was continually learning by hard experience about the evils of his early vices of duplicity and hard bargaining. Nevertheless, Jacob apparently repented of his deceptions. God confirmed the blessing upon him (Gen. 28:12-15) and later changed his name to "Israel" (Gen. 32:28).

c 27:20 Jacob did not have a personal relationship with God until Gen. 28:20-22; 33:18-20.

scent of Esau's clothes, and he began to bless him, saying:

Look, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field, which the Always-Present One has blessed. ²⁸May the one true God give you the dew of the skies, the abundance of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. ²⁹Let peoples serve you, and let nations bow down to you. Be the strong leader to your relatives. Let the sons of your mother bow down to you. Those who condemn you will be condemned, and those who bless you will be blessed."

³⁰Isaac finished blessing Jacob. Jacob had barely left the presence of his father, Isaac, when his brother Esau came in from the hunt. ³¹Esau also prepared Isaac's favorite dishes and brought them to his father. Esau said to him, "Let my father get up and eat my wild game meat,^a so that you may give me the blessing."

³²But Isaac, Esau's father, asked him, "Who are **you!**?"

Esau answered, "I am Esau, your son, your firstborn!"

³³Isaac began to shake all over. He asked, "Then who was the one who found wild game and brought it to me!? I ate all of it. I have already given

the blessing to that person before you arrived. **He** is the one who will surely stay blessed!"^b

³⁴When Esau heard the words of his father, he wept bitterly again and again. Then he said to his father, "Bless me too, my father!"^c

³⁵But Isaac said, "Your brother came in with a trick and stole your blessing!"

³⁶Esau said, "He is named well—'Jacob.'^d He has cheated me twice. He stole my birthright, and now, look, he has stolen my blessing!"^e Then Esau asked, "Isn't there even one blessing which you have kept for me?"

³⁷Isaac answered Esau, "Listen, I have made Jacob the strong leader over you. I have given him all of his relatives as servants. I have established him with grain and wine. There is nothing more I can do for you, my son!"

³⁸But Esau asked his father, "Don't you have just one more blessing, my father? Bless **me!** Bless me too, my father!" Then Esau wept loudly.

³⁹Esau's father, Isaac, answered him:

"Look, you will have to make the

b 27:33 It was too late to reverse Isaac's irrevocable blessing.

c 27:34 See Heb. 12:15-17.

d 27:36 See Gen. 25:26. The name of Jacob (meaning "heel") had the flavor (connotation) of cheating someone else. Jacob was a conniver, a schemer.

e 27:36 Esau had tried to distinguish the birthright from the blessing, but one thing led to the other.

a 27:31 literally, "the venison of his son,"

best of the land where you live, of the rain that falls from the skies.
⁴⁰You will live by violence, but you will still serve your brother Jacob. However, after you have struggled for a while, you will break loose from his yoke, which will be around your neck!”^a

Jacob Runs Away to His Uncle’s House

⁴¹Esau held a grudge toward Jacob because Jacob stole the blessing from his father. This is what Esau was thinking in his heart: “The time for mourning my father’s death is

a 27:40 This eventually came true in the Edomite rebellion in the days of Joram (2 Kings 8:20-22), or, possibly in the time of Ahaz (2 Kings 16:6). The Edomites were the descendants of Esau. They inhabited a rich, fertile country which was especially given to them (Deut. 2:5). Their country was traversed by many roads, though it was mountainous and rocky (Num. 20:17; Jer. 49:16). It was in the region of Mount Seir. The Edomites were ruled by chieftains and kings (Gen. 36:15-30; Num. 20:14). In character, they are said to have been shrewd, proud, self-confident, strong, cruel, and idolatrous (Ezra 25:12; Jer. 27:3; 49:7,16,19; 2 Chr. 25:14,20). The Edomites inhabited the cities of Avith, Pau, Bozrah, Teman, and others. Though they were implacable enemies of Israel, it was forbidden to hate them (Deut. 23:7). They could be received into the congregation of Israel in the third generation (Deut. 23:8). King Saul made war against them, and David conquered them (1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Sam. 8:14). They took refuge in Egypt and returned after David’s death (1 Kings 11:17-22), when they joined with Israel’s enemies, only again to be overthrown (2 Chr. 20:10), but they finally collaborated with the Babylonians against Judah (Ps. 137:7; Obad. 1:11). Later, during the course of the Maccabean wars, the sons of Esau lost their independent existence, and they eventually merged with the house of Israel.

near. After that, I will kill my brother Jacob!”

⁴²When Rebekah was told the words of Esau, her older son, she called for Jacob, her younger son. She said to him, “Listen, your brother Esau is going to act natural around you, just so he can kill you!”⁴³So, my son, listen to my advice: For your own sake, get up and run away to my brother Laban in the town of Haran.

⁴⁴Live with him for a few days, until your brother’s extreme anger toward you subsides.⁴⁵After that happens, he will forget what **you** have done to him. Then I will send for you to come back from there.^b Why should I lose both of you on the same day!?”^c

⁴⁶Later, Rebekah said to Isaac, “I’m sick and tired of these two daughters of Heth, the pagan wives of Esau. If Jacob takes a wife from the heathen daughters of Heth like these two women, from the daughters of this country, life will **not** be worth living!”

28¹So, Isaac called for Jacob. Isaac blessed him and told him, “Do **not** get a wife from the daughters of the people of Canaan!²Get up and go to Padan-Aram, to the household of your mother’s father, Bethuel. Get a wife for yourself

b 27:45 She probably never saw Jacob again! He did not return until 20 years later (Gen. 31:38,41).

c 27:45 If Esau succeeded in killing Jacob, then Esau would himself be killed by a designated avenger (*go’el*). Compare 2 Sam. 14:6-7.

from there, from the daughters of Laban, your uncle. ³Now, may God Almighty^a bless you. He will make you fertile, and He will increase your numbers, so that you will become a community of peoples. ⁴He will give the blessing of Abraham to you and your descendants. You are a nomad in the land of Canaan. God will give this land to you which He promised to Abraham.”

⁵Then Isaac sent Jacob away. Jacob traveled to Padan-Aram to Laban, who was the son of Bethuel, the Aramean,^b who was the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

Esau Marries Another Pagan Wife

⁶Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob again and sent him away to Padan-Aram to get a wife for himself from there. After the blessing, Isaac ordered Jacob, “Do **not** get a wife from the daughters of the people of Canaan!” ⁷Esau also found out that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had already left for Padan-Aram. ⁸When Esau realized how bad the daughters of the people of Canaan seemed to his father Isaac, ⁹Esau went to Ishmael, so that he could marry Mahalath, the sister of

Nebaioth, the daughter of Ishmael, who was the son of Abraham. Esau already had two wives!

Jacob’s Dream

¹⁰Jacob left Beer-Sheba and headed for Haran.^c ¹¹He reached a certain spot and stopped there, because the sun was going down.^d Jacob took one of the stones from the area and put it under his head. He lay down and went to sleep there. ¹²This is what he dreamed: Look, there was a ladder extending from the ground into the sky! Look, angels of God were going up and down on it.^e ¹³And, look, the Always-Present One was standing above it. He said, “I am Yahweh, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give the land which you are lying upon to you and to your descendants. ¹⁴Your descendants will be as numerous as the particles of dust of the earth. Your descendants will spread to the west, the east, the north, and the south. All groups of people on the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants. ¹⁵Listen, I am with you. I will take care of you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have surely done what I have promised to you.”

c 28:10 less than 500 miles away

d 28:11 At this point, Jacob was about 55 miles away from his home.

e 28:12 See John 1:51; 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5.

a 28:3 Hebrew: *’El Shaddai*

b 28:5 or, “the Syrian,”

¹⁶When Jacob woke up from sleeping, he thought: “The Always-Present One must certainly be at this spot! And, I didn’t know this.”

¹⁷Jacob became very reverent and thought to himself: “How awesome this spot is! It must be none other than the House of God, the very entrance to heaven!”^a

¹⁸After Jacob got up in the morning, he took the stone which he had put under his head, and he set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it.^b

¹⁹Jacob named that spot “Bethel.”^c (The former name of that town was Luz.)

²⁰Then Jacob made a solemn vow: “If God will be with me and will take care of me on this trip which I am taking, and He will give me food to eat and clothes to wear,

²¹so that I may return in peace to my father’s household, then You, Yahweh, will be my God, too!”²²And, this stone which I have set up as a pillar will be a marker for God’s House. I will give You one-tenth of everything that You give me!”^d

a 28:17 Jacob’s spiritual nature began to change slightly at Bethel. Here he realized that God was in more than one place.

b 28:18 to mark the spot and to consecrate the place. See Exo. 30:25-29. Abraham had worshiped there before (Gen. 12:8; 13:3).

c 28:19 This Hebrew word means “House of God”.

d 28:22 Jacob treated his vision at Bethel as a business deal: If God would help him, and give him bread to eat, and bring him back safely to Canaan, then Jacob would allow Yahweh to be

Jacob Arrives in Padan-Aram

29¹Jacob continued walking toward the country of the people in the East.^e ²He saw a well in the field. Look, three flocks of sheep and goats were lying down there near it, because the flocks were given water from that well. There was a large stone covering the opening of the well.^f ³When all the flocks gathered there, the shepherds would roll away the stone to uncover the well. Then they would water the sheep and goats. After that, they would always cover the well again with the stone.

⁴Jacob asked the shepherds,^g “My brothers, where do you come from?”

They answered, “We are from Haran.”

⁵Jacob said to them, “Do you know Laban, the grandson of Nahor?”

They answered, “We know him.”

⁶Then Jacob asked them, “Is he all right?”^h

his God, and Jacob would give God one-tenth of everything. Twenty years later, at the Jabbok Stream (Gen. 32:22-32), the crisis was much more far-reaching. There Jacob realized an imminent danger and his need of a blessing from God. No longer did Jacob bargain with God. Jacob knew that his own strength was futile against Esau’s soldiers, and Jacob humbly sought help from God. From that night on, Jacob (Israel) was a different man.

e 29:1 Haran was located in Northwestern Mesopotamia.

f 29:2 Its purpose was to keep out flocks and herds that had no right to use it. Compare Gen. 26:12-33.

g 29:4 They were probably only teenage boys.

h 29:6 The Hebrew word here is *shalom* = Is he prospering?

They answered, “Yes, he’s fine. Look, there’s Rachel, his daughter, coming with the sheep and the goats!”

⁷Jacob said, “Look, it’s still the middle of the day. Even though it is not time for the livestock to be gathered, to give water to the animals, and to let them graze.”

⁸But they answered, “We cannot do that until **all** the flocks have gathered and the stone has been rolled away from the opening of the well. Only then, can we water the animals.”

⁹While Jacob was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep and goats. (She was a shepherdess.) ¹⁰When Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, who was Jacob’s uncle, and Jacob saw the sheep and the goats of his uncle, Jacob went to the stone and rolled it away from the opening of the well.^a He watered the animals of his uncle Laban. ¹¹Then Jacob gave Rachel a kiss of greeting. He wept loudly. ¹²Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father, that he was the son of Rebekah. Then Rachel ran and told this to her father.

¹³When Laban heard the news about his nephew Jacob, he ran to meet Jacob. Laban hugged him, kissed him, and brought him home. Then Jacob unfolded the whole story

to Laban. ¹⁴Then Laban said to him, “You are indeed my own flesh and blood!”^b

Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel

After Jacob stayed with Laban for one month, ¹⁵Laban said to him, “Why should you work for me for nothing, just because you are a relative of mine? Tell me what you want to be paid!”

¹⁶Now Laban had two daughters: The name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger one was Rachel. ¹⁷Leah was not pretty,^c but Rachel^d was very pretty. In fact, she was beautiful to look at. ¹⁸Jacob was in love with Rachel. He said to Laban, “I will work for you for seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter.”

¹⁹So, Laban answered, “It is better that I give her to you than to another man. Stay here with me!” ²⁰So, Jacob worked for seven years to get Rachel, but, to him, they seemed like only a few days because of his love for Rachel.

²¹Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife, because my time is up. I want to get married to her.

²²So, Laban gathered all of the men from the area, and he gave a wedding banquet. ²³However, during the

b 29:14 literally, “my bone and my flesh!”

c 29:17 literally, “Leah’s eyes (were) weak”. “Leah” means “cow.”

d 29:17 “Rachel” means “a female lamb.”

a 29:10 This was a very heavy stone. It was difficult for one man to do this.

evening, Laban got his daughter Leah and secretly gave her to Jacob. And, Jacob went to bed with Leah! ²⁴(Laban also gave his slave-girl, Zilpah, to his daughter Leah to be her servant.)

²⁵When morning came, look, it was Leah! So, Jacob said to Laban, “What’s this that you have done to me? It was for **Rachel** that I worked for you, not Leah! Why did you trick me!?”

²⁶Then Laban answered, “Giving the younger daughter away in marriage before the firstborn is simply not done in our country! ²⁷Finish out this bridal week, and we will also give Rachel to you. Of course, you will have to work another seven years for her.”

²⁸So, Jacob did just that. He finished out the bridal week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. ²⁹(Laban also gave his slave-girl, Bilhah, to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.) ³⁰Jacob also went to bed with Rachel. He loved Rachel more than Leah. Jacob worked seven more years for Laban.

Jacob’s Family

³¹When the Always-Present One saw that Jacob did not love Leah,^a He made Leah fertile.^b But Rachel

could not have children.³² Leah soon became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him “Reuben,”^c because she said, “My husband will surely love me, because the Always-Present One has seen my pain.”

³³Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a son. She named him “Simeon.”^d She said, “The Always-Present One has surely given this son to me too because He heard that my husband doesn’t love me.”

³⁴Then Leah became pregnant once more and gave birth to a son. She named him “Levi.”^e She said, “This time my husband will be fond of me, because I have given birth to three sons for him!”

³⁵Finally, Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a son. She said, “This time I will praise the Always-Present One!” That is why she named this son “Judah.”^f Then Leah stopped having children.

30¹When Rachel saw that she could not give birth to children for Jacob, she became jealous of her sister, Leah. Rachel said to Jacob, “Give me some

a 29:31 or, “that Leah was slighted,”

b 29:31 literally, “He opened her womb.”

c 29:32 This Hebrew name sounds similar to the Hebrew phrase “He has seen my pain.” “Reuben” means “Look! A son!”

d 29:33 This Hebrew name probably means “one who hears.”

e 29:34 This Hebrew name sounds similar to the Hebrew word for “fond of.”

f 29:35 This Hebrew name sounds like the Hebrew word for “praise.”

children, or else I'm going to die!"

²Jacob became very angry with Rachel. He said, "God is the One who has kept you from having children!^a Am I God!?"

³Then Rachel said, "Look, there's Bilhah, my slave-girl! Go to bed with her, so that **she** can have children for me.^b I could start^c having children through Bilhah!"^d

⁴So, Rachel gave her slave-girl, Bilhah, to Jacob as a secondary wife. He went to bed with her. ⁵Then Bilhah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Jacob. ⁶Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me! He has heard my cry for help! He gave me a son!" That is why Rachel named him "Dan."^e

⁷Bilhah, Rachel's slave-girl, became pregnant again and gave birth to a second son for Jacob. ⁸Rachel said, "I have really struggled with my sister many times, but I've finally won!" So, Rachel named this son "Naphtali."^f

a 30:2 All children are gifts from God (Gen. 4:1,25; 16:2; 17:16; 18:10,14; 20:17-21:2; 25:21; 30:6; Ps. 127:3).

b 30:3 literally, "She can give birth upon my knees." Compare Gen. 50:23; Job 3:12.

c 30:3 literally, "I will be built up"

d 30:3 According to Hurrian law, any barren woman could give her maid-servant to her husband for the purpose of bearing children surrogately. The baby would be regarded as the wife's own child. Sarah did that in Gen. 16:2.

e 30:6 This Hebrew name sounds similar to the Hebrew verb "to vindicate." As Judge, God had plainly decided in her favor.

f 30:8 This Hebrew name means "my struggle." Compare the same word in Gen. 32:24-30.

⁹When Leah realized that her own body was not having any more children, she took her slave-girl Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a secondary wife. ¹⁰Zilpah, Leah's slave-girl, gave birth to a son for Jacob. ¹¹Then Leah said, "What luck!" So, she named him "Gad."^g

¹²Zilpah, Leah's slave-girl, also gave birth to a second son for Jacob. ¹³Leah said, "I am so happy! Women will say that I am happy." So, Leah named him "Asher."^h

¹⁴Later, during the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and found some mandrakes in the field. He brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes!"ⁱ

¹⁵But Leah answered her, "Isn't it enough that you have taken away my husband's love? Now, you want to take away my son's mandrakes, too!?"

Then Rachel said, "All right, in exchange for some of your son's mandrakes, I will allow Jacob to sleep with you tonight."

g 30:11 This Hebrew name can mean either "good luck" or "a troop (of men)."

h 30:13 This Hebrew name means "happy." Compare Ps. 119:1-2 or the Beatitudes of Matt. 5:3-12.

i 30:14 Mandrakes (Latin: *Mandragora Vernalis*) have fleshy, forked roots which look like the lower part of the human body. In ancient times, many people thought that eating them would help a woman to become pregnant. In some places even today, mandrakes are still used as an aphrodisiac (a substance which is believed to stimulate sexual desire).

¹⁶When Jacob came in from the field that evening, Leah went out to meet him. She said, “You will go to bed with **me** tonight, because I truly bought you with some of my son’s mandrakes!” So, Jacob slept with her that night.

¹⁷Then God listened to Leah. She became pregnant and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob. ¹⁸Then Leah said, “God has given me a reward for giving my slave-girl to my husband.” So, Leah named this son “Issachar.”^a

¹⁹Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob.

²⁰Leah said, “God has presented me with a precious gift.^b This time, my husband will honor me for giving birth to six sons for him.” So, Leah named this son “Zebulun.”^c

²¹Sometime later, Leah gave birth to a daughter. She named her “Dinah.”^d

²²Then God remembered Rachel.^e He listened to her prayers. God made it possible for her to have children. ²³She became pregnant

and gave birth to a son. Rachel said, “God has taken away my shame!”^f ²⁴So, Rachel named this son “Joseph.”^g Rachel said, “May the Always-Present One give me another son.”

Jacob’s Deal with Laban

²⁵After Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Let me leave,^h so that I can go back to my homeland. ²⁶Give me my wives and my children. I earned them from you. Then I can go on my way. You know how hard I’ve worked for you.”

²⁷Then Laban answered him, “Please, if I mean anything to you, I found outⁱ that Yahweh has blessed me because of **you!**” ²⁸Laban added, “Set your own salary, and I will pay it!”

²⁹But Jacob said to him, “You know how hard I have worked for you and how well I have taken care of your livestock. ³⁰The few animals you had before I came have become numerous. Wherever I walked, the

f 30:23 that is, the social stigma of being a childless woman. It was humiliating in that culture.

g 30:24 This Hebrew name means “May He add (= increase).”

h 30:25 Jacob’s 14-year contract to work for Laban was now completed.

i 30:27 literally, “learned by divination”. Moses, the inspired author of the Book of Genesis, is only reporting their superstitions without endorsing them. Laban was trying to discover God’s hidden knowledge without going directly to God. This was later forbidden in the Law of Moses (Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10,14), because this pagan practice taught that the world was controlled by evil forces instead of by the one true God.

a 30:18 This Hebrew name sounds like the Hebrew word for “reward.”

b 30:20 literally, “God has endowed me with a good dowry.” The related Akkadian word, *zubullu*, meant “groom’s gift.”

c 30:20 This Hebrew name probably means “honor.”

d 30:21 This Hebrew name means “justice.” It also comes from the same root as “Dan.” See the note on Gen. 30:6.

e 30:22 after God had taught her the lessons of patience, and dependence upon Him

Always-Present One has blessed you. But when will I be able to do something for my own family!?”

³¹Laban asked, “What can I give to you?”

Jacob answered, “Don’t give me anything. Just do this one thing for me: Let me continue taking care of your flock. ³²Let me search through your entire flock today to pull out all speckled or spotted sheep, all dark-colored lambs, and the spotted or speckled goats.^a That will be my pay! ³³My honesty will speak for itself. When you inspect my wages in the future, it will be clear to everyone that **only** speckled or spotted goats or dark-colored lambs belong to me; it was not stolen!”

³⁴So, Laban said, “Yes, I agree. Let it be as you say!” ³⁵On that very day, he pulled out all the male goats that were striped or spotted, and all the speckled or spotted female goats (which had some white on them), and all the dark-colored lambs. Then he put his sons in charge of them. ³⁶Then Laban traveled for three days^b away from Jacob. But Jacob continued taking care of the rest of Laban’s flock.

³⁷However, Jacob got some fresh-

cut,^c poplar branches, almond branches, and plane-tree branches. He peeled the bark off to expose the inner white wood of the branches.

This caused them to look like white stripes. ³⁸Then he placed the peeled branches at all of the watering troughs, so that they would be facing the flocks when they came to drink water. When they were drinking water and in heat,^d ³⁹the animals in the flock mated next to the striped branches. Then the flock reproduced striped, speckled, or spotted young ones. ⁴⁰Jacob separated the young ones, but he made the rest of the flock face in the direction of all the striped and dark-colored animals which belonged to Laban. That is how Jacob built up clusters for himself. He did not put them with the general flock of Laban.^e ⁴¹Whenever the best females were in heat, Jacob would regularly put the striped branches in front of the eyes of the animals at the watering troughs for them to mate near the branches. ⁴²However, if the animals were not good, Jacob would consistently not put them there. Therefore, the poor ones belonged to Laban, and the best ones belonged

^c 30:37 literally, “white”

^d 30:38 During the rutting season, their sexual desires became very excited. They were ready to conceive.

^e 30:40 This plan of selective breeding (compare Gen. 31:9) worked because of God’s action, not because of Jacob’s superstition.

^a 30:32 These were rare colors for these animals. Usually, the sheep were white, and the goats were normally black or dark brown.

^b 30:36 about 50 miles away

to Jacob. ⁴³This is how Jacob became very, very successful.^a He came to own large flocks, donkeys, camels, slave-girls, and male slaves.

Jacob Runs Away from Laban

31 ¹Jacob heard that the sons of Laban were saying: “Jacob has taken away everything which belonged to our father. He has gotten rich off of our father!” ²Jacob also noticed that Laban’s attitude was different toward him than before. It was negative. ³Then the Always-Present One said to Jacob, “Go back to the land of Abraham, Isaac, and your close relatives. I will be with you.”

⁴Jacob summoned Rachel and Leah. He wanted them to come out to where his flocks were. ⁵Jacob said to them, “I can see that your father’s attitude toward me is not the same as it was before. However, the God of my father is with me. ⁶You both know that I have worked my fingers to the bone for your father, ⁷but he has not been fair to me. He changed the way I was paid 100 times!^b However, God has not allowed him to hurt me.

⁸If Laban said: ‘Your pay will be the speckled animals,’ then the whole

a 30:43 literally, “And the man increased much.” = He had a financial breakthrough.

b 31:7 a Hebrew expression which simply means “many, many times” = “time and time again”

flock would give birth to speckled young ones. If Laban said: ‘Your pay will be the ones that are striped,’ then the whole flock would give birth to young ones that were striped. ⁹So, God has taken away your father’s livestock and has given them to me!

¹⁰“I remember a dream in the breeding season of the flock^c when I looked up and saw striped, speckled, and spotted male goats. They were the only ones mating with^d the flock.

¹¹And, an angel of the one true God said to me in a recent dream, ‘Jacob!’ I answered, ‘I’m here.’ ¹²He said, ‘Look up now and observe how that only the striped, speckled, and spotted male goats are mating with the flock! I have seen everything that Laban has been doing to you. ¹³I am the same God of Bethel where you once rubbed^e a pillar with oil, where you made a vow to Me.^f Get up, and leave this country now! Go back to the land where you were born.’”

¹⁴Then Rachel and Leah answered him, “We no longer have a share of our father’s property!^g ¹⁵He treats us like we are foreigners! He sold

c 31:10 at the beginning of the period of 6 more years of Jacob’s service to Laban

d 31:10 literally, “leaping on”

e 31:13 or, “anointed”

f 31:13 See Gen. 28:12-22.

g 31:14 Since Jacob married within Laban’s household, Laban never gave his daughters any presents (= dowry). The whole thing went to Laban himself, instead of part of it going to his daughters (see Exo. 22:17).

us! And, he even wasted the money that he received from the sale!¹⁶ The wealth which God took away from our father truly belongs to us and our children. So, do whatever God has told you to do!”

¹⁷Then Jacob got ready and put his wives and children upon camels^a ¹⁸to travel to his father Isaac, to the land of Canaan. Jacob drove all of his livestock, and he carried along everything that he had gained in Padan-Aram.

¹⁹While Laban was gone shearing his sheep, Rachel had stolen the teraphim which belonged to her father.^b ²⁰Jacob also fooled Laban^c the Aramean by not telling him that he and his whole family were running away. ²¹So, Jacob ran away with everything he had. He got up and crossed the Euphrates River^d and headed for the hill-country of Gilead.

Laban Chases Jacob

²²Three days later, Laban learned

a 31:17 Jacob's oldest son was about 13 and his youngest son was around 6 years of age. They could not travel that far on foot.

b 31:19 The teraphim were small figurines. These small, portable idols showed that Rachel was not yet free from her pagan background. (See Gen. 35:2; Josh. 24:2.) In 1930 archaeological evidence was unearthed which showed that these objects may also have been used as deeds to Laban's property.

c 31:20 literally, “stole the heart of Laban” (compare 2 Sam. 15:6), which is the seat of understanding; that is, Jacob acted entirely without the knowledge of Laban.

d 31:21 The city of Haran was about 70 miles away, while Laban's flocks were on the far side of Haran.

that Jacob and his family had run away. ²³So, Laban took some of his relatives with him and chased Jacob's family for 7 days.^e He finally caught up with them in the hill-country of Gilead. ²⁴That night, God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream and said to Laban,^f “Watch out! Speak only neutral things to Jacob!”^g

²⁵As Jacob was setting up camp in the hill-country of Gilead, Laban and his relatives found^h them. Laban and his relatives also set up camp there.

²⁶Laban said to Jacob, “Why did you fool meⁱ and carry off my daughters like people captured in battle? ²⁷Why did you fool me, running away—sneaking off—without telling me!? I could have sent you on your way with a party, singing with the music of tambourines and harps. ²⁸You did not allow me to say good-bye to^j my grandchildren or my daughters. You were very foolish to do that! ²⁹I have the power to punish you. But, the God of your father said to me last night, ‘Watch out! Say only neutral things to Jacob!’ ³⁰I understand now why you had to leave—because you

e 31:23 Laban pursued them for about 300 miles in 12 days.

f 31:24 Sometimes God revealed Himself to men who were outside His covenant with Abraham. Compare Abimelech's dream in Gen. 20:3.

g 31:24 literally, “lest you speak from good to bad.” = Don't flatter or threaten Jacob!

h 31:25 or, “overtook”

i 31:26 literally, “steal my heart” = deception

j 31:28 literally, “to kiss”

surely yearned to be closer to your father's family. But why did you steal my gods!?"

³¹Jacob answered Laban, "I was so afraid because I thought that you would take your daughters away from me by force! ³²However, the person who has your gods will **not** be allowed to live in the presence of our relatives. See for yourself. Search my camp! Take whatever is yours!" (Jacob did **not** know that Rachel had stolen them.)

³³So, Laban began searching in Jacob's tent, then in the tents of the two slave-women, and then in Leah's tent. But Laban did not find the objects. So, he came out of Leah's tent and went into Rachel's tent.

³⁴Now Rachel had taken the teraphim and put them in her camel saddle. She was sitting on top of them^a while Laban was searching all the tents and not finding anything.

³⁵Then Rachel said to her father, "My lord, please don't be angry that I cannot stand up in front of you, because I am having my period."^b Even though Laban searched and searched, he never found the teraphim.

³⁶Jacob was very angry, and he

a 31:34 This is a subtle suggestion that these small, powerless, household gods had to be protected by the uncleanness of menstruation (Lev. 15:19-20).

b 31:35 literally, "I have the way of women" = I am menstruating.

rebuked Laban.^c Jacob asked Laban, "What is my crime—my sin—that would cause you to hunt me down like this? ³⁷Now that you have searched through^d all of my property, what have you found which belongs to **you**? Put that in front of my relatives and your relatives! Let them settle the matter between the two of us!

³⁸"I have been with you for 20 years now. Your female sheep and female goats did not have miscarriages. I never ate the meat of the rams of your flock. ³⁹I never brought you any of your livestock which had been mangled by wild animals; I suffered the loss.^e But if any of them were stolen during the day or night, you expected **me** to pay you for it!^f ⁴⁰It was very hot during the day and very cold at night.^g I got very little sleep.

⁴¹I have been in your household for these 20 years. I worked 14 years to obtain your two daughters and 6 years for your flocks. Yet you have unfairly changed my salary 100 times! ⁴²If the God of my father—the God of Abraham, the Fear^h of Isaac—had

c 31:36 After 20 years of repressed resentment, Jacob told off Laban. In other words, Jacob had to get these feelings "off his chest"—for the many years of unfair treatment.

d 31:37 or, "ransacked"

e 31:39 or, "I replaced it."

f 31:39 See Exo. 22:12 and Amos 3:12.

g 31:40 Temperatures in the desert ranged from 120 degrees to 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

h 31:42 or, "the Reverence"

not been on my side, you would have sent me away empty-handed by now! However, **God** has seen my troubles and how hard I've worked. So, it was **He** who warned you last night."

Jacob and Laban

Make an Agreement

⁴³Then Laban answered Jacob, "The women are my daughters. The grandchildren are mine. The flocks belong to me. Everything that you see is mine! Nevertheless, I will not harm my daughters and their children. ⁴⁴Come on, let us — you and I — make a pact. It will be a witness between you and me."^a ⁴⁵So, Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. ⁴⁶He said to his relatives, "Gather some more stones!" So, they got some rocks and made a big pile. And, they had a meal on top of the pile of rocks. ⁴⁷Laban named it "Jegar-Sahadutha."^b Jacob named it "Galeed."^c ⁴⁸Then Laban said, "This pile is a witness between me and you today." (That is why it was named "Galeed." ⁴⁹It was also named "Mizpah"^d because Laban said, "May Yahweh watch over you and me while we are absent from one another.) ⁵⁰If you mistreat my daughters, or if you

marry more women, even though no one is present, just remember that God is our Witness."

⁵¹Then Laban said to Jacob, "Look at this pile and pillar which I have set up between us! ⁵²This pile and this pillar are witnesses to the fact that I will **not** pass by here to harm you on your side of it. And, you will **not** pass by this monument to harm me on my side of it. ⁵³May the God of Abraham and Nahor, and the God of their father Terah, be the Judge between us."

So, Jacob took an oath by the Fear of his father Isaac. ⁵⁴Jacob offered a sacrifice there in the hill-country. He invited his relatives from Padan-Aram to eat a meal with him. So, they ate there and spent another night in the hill-country.

⁵⁵Laban got up early the next morning and said good-bye to his grandchildren and his daughters. And, he blessed them. Then he left and went back home.

Jacob Gets Ready to Meet Esau

32¹Jacob also went on his way, but the angels of God met him. ²When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp!" So, Jacob named that place "Mahanaim."^e

³Then Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, to the land

e 32:2 This Hebrew name means "two camps." It was about 8 miles away from the spot where Jacob left Laban, and about 25 miles from Jabbok Stream.

a 31:44 This was a face-saving device for Laban. Otherwise, there would have been a stalemate.

b 31:47 This is an Aramaic name which means "witness pile."

c 31:47 This Hebrew name means "witness pile."

d 31:49 This Hebrew name means "watch station."

of Seir, in the Edom region. ⁴These were their orders: “This is what you are to say to my master Esau: ‘Jacob, your servant, says that he has been staying with Laban and has remained there until now. ⁵He owns cattle, donkeys, flocks of sheep and goats, and male and female slaves. He has sent us to you with this message, so that you will accept him.’”

⁶When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, “We went to your brother Esau. He is now coming to meet **you**. And, 400 men are with him!”

⁷Then Jacob was full of deep concern. He was afraid. So, Jacob divided the people who were with him—as well as the flocks, the herds, and the camels—into two groups.

⁸He reasoned, “If Esau comes and attacks one group, at least the other group might escape.”

⁹Then Jacob prayed, “O God of my grandfather Abraham, O God of my father Isaac, O One Who Is Always Present, You who said to me: ‘Go back to your homeland^a and to your close relatives, and I will make you successful.’ ¹⁰I am not worthy of any of the kindnesses or the faithfulness which You have shown to me. Years ago, when I crossed this Jordan River, all I had was my walking-cane. Now, I have become two big groups!

a 32:9 See Gen. 31:13.

¹¹Please deliver me from the control of my brother Esau! I fear him. He might come and attack me, and also the mothers and their children.

¹²But You have said, ‘I will surely cause you to be successful, and I will make your descendants as numerous as the sand of the ocean. They cannot be counted!’”

¹³So, Jacob spent that night there. He selected a gift for his brother Esau from what he had in hand:^b ¹⁴200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 female sheep and 20 male sheep; ¹⁵30 female milk camels along with their young ones; 40 cows and 10 bulls; 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys. ¹⁶Jacob put his men-slaves in charge of each of the separate herds. He said to them, “Go on ahead of me, but maintain your distance between each of the herds.”

¹⁷Jacob gave this order to the slave at the front of the line: “When my brother Esau meets you and asks you: ‘Who is your master? Where are you going? Who owns all these animals?’ ¹⁸then you will say: ‘Jacob, your servant, has sent this **gift** to you, Esau, my master! Look, he is also behind us!’”

¹⁹Jacob gave the same orders to the second slave, to the third slave, and to all those who were driving the herds. He said, “When Esau meets you, tell

b 32:13 = Jacob’s property

him the same thing. ²⁰Be sure to say this: ‘Look, Jacob, your servant, is behind us!’ ” (Jacob was thinking this: “These gifts which I am sending on ahead of me will encourage Esau to forgive me ^a when we meet face-to-face. Maybe he will accept me.”) ²¹So, the gifts went on ahead of Jacob, but he spent that night in the camp.

The Wrestling Match

²²During that same night, Jacob got up and took his two wives,^b his two slave-women,^c and his eleven sons, and they crossed Jabbok^d Stream at a shallow spot. ²³After he had taken them across the stream, he brought over what he owned. ²⁴Then Jacob was left alone.^e A Man wrestled with him all night until just before dawn. ²⁵When the Man realized that He could not break Jacob’s hold on him, the Man touched Jacob’s hip-joint, so that it was wrenched^f as he wrestled with the Man. ²⁶Then the Man said, “Let me go, because the sun is coming up!”^g

But Jacob answered, “I will **not** let you go unless You bless me!”

²⁷Then the man asked him, “What is your name?”^h

He answered, “Jacob.”ⁱ

²⁸Then the Man said, “You will no longer be named ‘Jacob.’ Instead, your new name will be ‘Israel.’^j Why? Because you have struggled with God and with men, but you have won!”^k

²⁹Then Jacob asked: “Please tell me Your Name.”^l

But the Man answered, “Why are you asking for My Name?” The Man blessed him then and there.

³⁰Therefore, Jacob named that place “Peniel.”^m He thought, “I saw God face-to-face, yet my life was spared!”ⁿ

³¹The sun got higher and higher as he was leaving Peniel. Jacob was limping because of his sprained hip.^o

John 1:18.

h 32:27 or, “character?”

i 32:27 See the note on Gen. 25:26.

j 32:28 The heel-catcher had now become the noble prince of God. Since Jacob now acknowledged God to be the Source of his blessings, God acknowledges this by giving Jacob a new name. The Hebrew name “Israel” means “He struggles with God.” God later confirmed this new name in Gen. 35:10. The descendants of Israel (Jacob) characterized themselves as overcomers.

k 32:28 He won by surrender; he let go of his own self-will. Instead of snatching the blessing from God’s hand, Jacob learned that he must accept it as a gift of God’s grace.

l 32:29 = Disclose Your nature to me.

m 32:30 The name “Peniel” in Hebrew means “face of God”.

n 32:30 Compare Gen. 16:13-14.

o 32:31 Jacob emerged from this divine combat as

a 32:20 literally, “I will cover (= pacify) his face by the present(s).”

b 32:22 Leah and Rachel

c 32:22 Bilhah and Zilpah

d 32:22 The Hebrew word means “wrestler”.

e 32:24 Jacob needed to learn the lesson of relying totally upon God instead of depending only on himself.

f 32:25 or, “twisted out of joint” = dislocated so that Jacob was out of commission.

g 32:26 This bout must cease at dawn to protect Jacob from death for seeing the face of God. See

³²(To this very day, this is why the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the tendon which is around the hip-joint. It was because the Man touched Jacob's hip-joint there.)

Jacob Meets Esau

33¹Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming. And there were 400 men with him! So, Jacob divided up the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two slave-women.^a
²He put the slave-women and their children in front, Leah and her children next in order, and Rachel and Joseph at the back.^b ³Jacob went ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times^c as his brother Esau was coming near to him. ⁴But Esau ran to meet him and hugged him. Esau threw his arms around Jacob's neck and kissed him. They cried and cried and cried.^d
⁵Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children. He asked, "Who are these with you?"
 Jacob answered, "They are the

a broken man.

a **33:1** Bilhah and Zilpah

b **33:2** Jacob kept his favorite wife and child as far away from harm as possible.

c **33:3** showing complete submission to his brother; see the evidence of the Tell el-Amarna tablets.

d **33:4** Jacob had nothing to fear, because God had already so blessed Esau that Esau no longer held a grudge against Jacob.

children whom God has freely given to me."^e

⁶Then the two slave-women and their children came near. They bowed down. ⁷Also, Leah and her children came near and bowed down. Finally, Joseph and Rachel came near and bowed down.

⁸Esau said, "What is the meaning of all the livestock which met me?"

Jacob said, "I wanted you, my master, to like me."

⁹But Esau said, "My brother, I have plenty. Keep what you have for yourself."

¹⁰However, Jacob said, "No! If you care anything at all about me, please accept this gift from me! Since you have accepted me, seeing you is like seeing the face of God!^f ¹¹You **must** accept my present^g which was brought to you, because God has been so good to me. I already have everything I need!" But Jacob insisted. So, Esau finally accepted all those things.^h

¹²Then Esau said, "Let's pack up and leave. I will travel with you."

e **33:5** literally, "to your servant."

f **33:10** Comparing Esau to God was Jacob's way of expressing great respect for Esau. See 1 Sam. 29:9; 2 Sam. 14:17,20; 19:27.

g **33:11** This is the same Hebrew word for "blessing" as in Gen. 27:35. Jacob wanted to make things right with Esau by giving him back the blessing that Jacob had stolen some 20 years before.

h **33:11** In the Orient even today, the receiving of an offered gift is understood as a pledge of friendship. His brother is now Jacob's friend indeed!

¹³But Jacob said to him, “You know^a that the children are weak, and I must take care of the female lambs, goats, and cows which are giving their milk to their young ones. If I were to drive them too hard even one day, they would all die! ¹⁴Therefore, go on ahead of me, while I move slowly,^b at the pace of the herd in front of me and the children. I will come to you sometime at Seir.”^c

¹⁵So Esau said, “Then please allow me to leave some of my men with you.”

But Jacob answered, “Why? It’s enough that you care about me.”

¹⁶So, Esau began to travel back to Seir that day. ¹⁷Jacob started for Succoth. There he built a place for himself and made shelters for his livestock. That is why he named the place “Succoth.”^d

¹⁸After Jacob came from Padan-Aram, he arrived safely at the town of Shechem,^e which is in the land of Canaan. He camped close enough to see the town. ¹⁹He bought a piece of ground for 100 qesitahs^f from the sons of Hamor, who was the father

of Shechem. And there, Jacob made camp. ²⁰It was there also that Jacob set up an altar and named it “Elohe-Israel.”^g

Dinah Is Raped

34¹Dinah was the daughter of Leah, who gave birth to her for Jacob. Dinah left the camp to visit the local girls. ²Shechem was the son of Hamor the Hivite, the ruler of that area. Shechem saw Dinah.^h He grabbed her and raped her. She was humiliated. ³His heart was drawn toⁱ Dinah, the daughter of Jacob. Since Shechem thought he was in love with the girl, he tried to win her heart. ⁴Shechem said to his father Hamor, “Get this girl; I want to marry her!”

⁵When Jacob heard that Shechem had defiled his daughter Dinah, Jacob kept quiet, because Jacob’s sons were in the field with his livestock. He waited for them to come back.

⁶⁻⁷The sons of Jacob came in from the field. When these men heard the news, they were furious at Shechem, and they felt very sorry for Dinah. By raping Jacob’s daughter, Shechem had brought much disgrace upon the whole family.^j

a 33:13 literally, “My master (= Esau) knows”

b 33:14 or, “in (gradual) stages at my ease,”

c 33:14 a mountainous region which extended along the eastern side of the Arabah from the southeastern extremity of the Dead Sea to the eastern branch of the Red Sea. It was originally occupied by the Horites (Gen. 14:6).

d 33:17 This Hebrew name means “shelters.”

e 33:18 According to John 4:5-6, Jacob dug a well there. It still exists today.

f 33:19 or, “100 pieces of silver”

g 33:20 This compound Hebrew name can mean either “God, the God of Israel” or “mighty is the God of Israel.” This was the very spot where Abraham had built his first altar 185 years before (Gen. 12:6-7).

h 34:2 She had no escort to protect her.

i 34:3 or, “was infatuated with”

j 34:6-7 literally, “against Israel.” = the patriarch’s

This thing should never have happened!

Hamor, Shechem's father, came out to talk with Jacob. ⁸Hamor said to them, "My son Shechem has his heart set on your daughter. Please give her to him to marry!^a ⁹You should all intermarry with our people. Give us your daughters for wives, and take our daughters as wives for you.

¹⁰Live among us. The land is open to you. So, live here, trade here, and accumulate property in this land!"

¹¹Then Shechem said to Jacob (Dinah's father) and her brothers, "I want you to accept me. I will give whatever dowry that you ask for!

¹²Set the price for the bride high. And, ask for any expensive gift. I will pay whatever you ask of me—just give me the girl to marry!"

¹³But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father with tricky words (because Shechem had defiled their sister Dinah). ¹⁴They said to them, "No! We cannot grant such a thing! It is forbidden for us to give our sister to a man who is **not** circumcised.^b

¹⁵The only way we would agree to that is if each one of your males would get circumcised

clan

a 34:8 They wanted to buy Dinah's virginity! And, they never admitted any wrongdoing!

b 34:14 This was a surgical procedure in which they cut off the foreskin of the male sex organ. Jacob's sons knew that circumcision was a physical sign of God's covenant with their great-grandfather Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

like we are. ¹⁶Then we would give our daughters to you people for wives, and we would take your daughters as wives for ourselves. Then we would live among all of you, and we would become one people. ¹⁷However, if you people will not agree to be circumcised, then we will take our sister Dinah and we'll leave!"

¹⁸The words of the sons of Jacob were acceptable to Hamor and his son Shechem. ¹⁹Because Shechem had fallen in love with Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, Shechem allowed himself to be circumcised in a hurry. Shechem was the most influential person in his father's household. ²⁰Then Hamor and Shechem, his son, went to the town gate. This is what they said to the men of the town: ²¹"These men of Jacob are friendly to us. Let them live in the land and trade here. Look at the land, there's plenty of space for them. We could take their daughters as wives for ourselves, and we could give our daughters to them for wives.

²²However, there is one condition: These men will not agree to live among us, to become one people, unless each one of our males becomes circumcised like they are. ²³If we do this, their livestock, their property, and all their animals would belong to us! Therefore, let's agree with them. Then they will live among us!

²⁴So, all the men who went out of the town gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem. Every male in town got himself circumcised.

²⁵Three days later, when the men of the town were feeling much pain, Simeon and Levi (full brothers of Dinah, two of the sons of Jacob) both took their swords and came into the town confidently. Then they killed every single one of the males!

²⁶They also killed Hamor and his son Shechem with their swords. Then they took Dinah from Shechem's house and left. ²⁷The sons of Jacob robbed the corpses and looted the town because those people had defiled their sister. ²⁸They seized their flocks, their herds, their donkeys, and whatever else was in the town or in the fields. ²⁹The sons of Jacob carried away all their riches, their children, and their women. They stole everything in their houses!

³⁰Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have caused a whole lot of trouble for me! I will be disgusting^a to the people of Canaan and Periz who live in this country. If they bunch up together, they outnumber us. Then they will attack us, and I and my entire household will be exterminated!"^b

³¹But they answered, "Should

Shechem have been allowed to treat our sister like a whore!?"

Jacob Returns to Bethel

35¹Then God^c said to Jacob, "Get up and go up^d to Bethel.^e Live there and build an altar there to El,^f the One who appeared to you when you were running away from your brother Esau."^g

²So, Jacob said to the members of his family and to all those who were with him, "Get rid of your foreign gods^h which you have!ⁱ Make yourselves pure and change your clothes!"³Let us get up and go up to Bethel. I will build an altar there to El, the One who answered my cry for help. He was with me when I traveled on that road."

⁴So, they surrendered to Jacob all the idols which were in their hands, and they gave up their ear-rings.^j And Jacob buried them under the oak tree at the town of Shechem.

⁵Then they started their journey. The dread of God was upon the surrounding towns. Those people did not chase the sons of Jacob.

c 35:1 Hebrew: 'Elohim

d 35:1 Bethel was more than 1,000 feet higher in elevation than the town of Shechem.

e 35:1 where Jacob had been about 35 years before

f 35:1 the short form of the word for "God." See the note on Gen. 1:1.

g 35:1 See Gen. 27:41–28:22.

h 35:2 Hebrew: 'elohim

i 35:2 Could it be that Jacob discovered the teraphim of Laban which Rachel had stolen!?

j 35:4 They were pagan amulets.

a 34:30 literally, "will stink"

b 34:30 or, "will be massacred!"

⁶Jacob and all of the people who were with him came to Luz (that is, Bethel) in the land of Canaan. ⁷Jacob built an altar there, and he named that place “El-Bethel,”^a because the one true God had shown Himself to Jacob when he was running away from his brother.

⁸Deborah (Rebekah’s nurse) died, and she was buried under an oak tree near Bethel. Jacob named it “Allon-Bacuth.”^b

⁹After Jacob came back from Padan-Aram, God appeared to him again. And, God blessed him. ¹⁰God said to him, “Your name will no longer be ‘Jacob.’ From now on, your name will be ‘Israel,’ not Jacob. So, God named him “Israel.”

¹¹Then God said to him, “I am God Almighty.^c Be fertile and increase in number. A nation—even a group of nations—will come from you. There will be kings among your children’s children.^d ¹²I will promise the land to you which I promised to Abraham and Isaac. I will give it to your descendants!” ¹³Then God went up

from the place where He was talking with Jacob.

¹⁴Jacob set up a pillar at the spot where God talked with him. It was a stone pillar. Jacob poured out a drink-offering and some olive oil upon it.^e

¹⁵Jacob named the spot where God talked with him “Bethel.”^f

Rachel Dies

¹⁶They started their journey from Bethel. When they were still a long way from Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth. She was having trouble. It got worse. ¹⁷Rachel was having a very difficult time giving birth. The woman who was helping^g said to her, “Don’t worry; you have another son!”

¹⁸But, as Rachel’s life was slipping away, as she was dying, she named the boy “Ben-Oni.”^h However, his father renamed him “Benjamin.”ⁱ

¹⁹So Rachel died. And she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). ²⁰Jacob set up a pillar over her grave. (It still marks her grave today.)^j

a 35:7 This compound Hebrew name means “the God of Bethel.”

b 35:8 This compound Hebrew name means “oak of weeping.”

c 35:11 = ‘*El Shaddai*’; the same name which God used to reveal Himself to Abraham in Gen. 17:1 and which Isaac used in prayer in Gen. 28:3

d 35:11 literally, “and kings will come forth from your loins.”

e 35:14 Compare Gen. 28:18-19. Here Jacob is showing his deep appreciation for God’s blessings upon him in the interim.

f 35:15 This Hebrew name means “House of God.”

g 35:17 or, “the midwife”

h 35:18 This Hebrew name means “son of my trouble.”

i 35:18 This Hebrew name means “son of my right hand.” The name can also mean “son of the south,” because when Hebrew people faced the east, the south was on their right. Jacob’s other sons were born in the north.

j 35:20 that is, when Moses wrote the Book of

²¹So Jacob^a moved on. He set up camp beyond Migdal-Eder.

²²While he was living in that area, Reuben had sex with Bilhah, his father's concubine.^b And Jacob learned about it.

The Twelve Patriarchs

1 Chronicles 2:1-2

These were the twelve sons of Jacob: ²³The sons of Leah were: Reuben (Jacob's firstborn), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. ²⁴The sons of Rachel were: Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁵The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's slave-woman were: Dan and Naphtali. ²⁶The sons of Zilpah, Leah's slave-woman were: Gad and Asher.

These were the sons who were born to Jacob when he was in Padan-Aram.

Isaac Dies

²⁷Jacob went to his father Isaac in Mamre near Kiriath-Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had stayed. ²⁸Isaac lived a total of 180 years. ²⁹Isaac breathed his last, and then he died. He was old and satisfied^c when he joined his

ancestors in death. Esau and Jacob, his sons, buried him.^d

Esau's Family Record

36¹These are the records of Esau (that is, Edom):^e ²Esau took wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah (the daughter of Elon the Hittite) and Oholibamah (the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite) ³and Basemath^f (the daughter of Ishmael and the sister of Nebaioth).

⁴Adah gave birth to Eliphaz for Esau, and Basemath gave birth to Reuel.^g ⁵Oholibamah gave birth to Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These were the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan. ⁶Esau gathered his wives, his sons, his daughters, all the members of his household, his livestock, all of his animals, and all the property that he had gotten in the land of Canaan. Then Esau moved them to an area which was not too close to Jacob, his brother, ⁷because their holdings were too large to stay together. The land could not support

^d 35:29 They buried him at Machpelah (Gen. 49:30), the family gravesite.

^e 36:1 Compare Gen. 25:30. There were large, reddish rock formations (mostly sandstone) all over the Edomite territory. This was located south and southeast of the Dead Sea. Later, it was called "Idumea." Much of this history is found in abbreviated form in 1 Chr. 1:35-54.

^f 36:3 previously called "Mahalath" (Gen. 28:9)

^g 36:4 This is *not* the same Reuel as the one mentioned in Exo. 2:18; 18:1. Jethro was Moses' relative.

Genesis.

^a 35:21 literally, "Israel"

^b 35:22 Reuben was arrogantly trying to get the right to inherit his father's concubine. Instead, he completely lost his legal status as the firstborn of Jacob (Gen. 49:3-4; 1 Chr. 5:1). He was never a strong leader after this sexual sin. See Gen. 37:21.

^c 35:29 literally, "full of days"

the grazing of all their livestock. ⁸So, Esau (that is, Edom) lived in the hill-country of Seir.^a

1 Chronicles 1:35-37

⁹These are the records of Esau who was the father of the people of Edom in the hill-country of Seir. ¹⁰These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz, the son of Adah, Esau's wife; Reuel, the son of Basemath, Esau's wife. ¹¹These were the sons of Eliphaz: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. ¹²Eliphaz (Esau's son) also had a concubine—Timna.^b She gave birth to Amalek for Eliphaz. These were the grandsons of Adah, Esau's wife. ¹³These were the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the grandsons of Basemath, Esau's wife. ¹⁴Jeush, Jalam, and Korah were the sons of Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the grand-daughter of Zibeon, and the wife of Esau, for whom she gave birth to them. ¹⁵These were the chiefs^c among the descendants of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz (the

a 36:8 Seir is another name for Edom. Seir is related to the Hebrew word for "hair." Compare Gen. 25:25. Esau's clan drove away the Horites, the original inhabitants of the land of Seir.

b 36:12 probably a very young sister of Lotan (Gen. 36:22), perhaps not older than her niece, Oholibamah (Gen. 36:25). Eliphaz was at least 41 years younger than Esau. Nevertheless, it is curious that Esau married the young niece, and Eliphaz married the aunt.

c 36:15 The Hebrew word here is *'aluph*. It means the ruler of 1,000 men.

firstborn of Esau): Chiefs Teman, Omar, Zepho,^d Kenaz, ¹⁶Korah, Gatam, and Amalek. These were the chiefs who descended from Eliphaz in the land of Edom; they were the grandsons of Adah. ¹⁷These were the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: Chiefs Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the chiefs who descended from Reuel in the land of Edom; they were grandsons of Basemath, Esau's wife. ¹⁸These were the sons of Oholibamah, Esau's wife: Chiefs Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These were the chiefs who descended from Oholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah. ¹⁹These were the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these were their chiefs.

1 Chronicles 1:38-42

²⁰These were the sons of Seir the Horite^e who were living in that area: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ²¹Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These sons of Seir in the land of Edom were Horite chieftains. ²²The sons of Lotan were: Hori and Homam. (Timna was Lotan's sister.) ²³These were the sons of Shobal: Alvan,^f Manahath, Ebal, Shepho,^g and Onam. ²⁴These were the sons of

d 36:15 = Zephi in 1 Chr. 1:36

e 36:20 = the Hivite. These were the descendants of those who inhabited the land of Edom *before* the Edomites took control of it (Deut. 2:12,22).

f 36:23 = Alian of 1 Chr. 1:40

g 36:23 = Shephi of 1 Chr. 1:40

Zibeon: Aiah and Anah. (This is the Anah who found the hot springs in the desert while his father Zibeon's donkeys were grazing.)²⁵ These were the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah.²⁶ These were the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, Keran.²⁷ These were the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.²⁸ These were the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.²⁹ These were the Horite chieftains: Chiefs Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,³⁰ Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These were the Horite chieftains, according to their clans, in the land of Seir.

The Rulers of Edom

1 Chronicles 1:43-54

³¹These were the kings who ruled in the land of Edom (before any king from the sons of Israel ever ruled).

³²Bela, the son of Beor, ruled over the land of Edom. The name of his capital city was Dinhabah.³³ After Bela died, Jobab became the new king. He was the son of Zerah from the town of Bozrah.³⁴ After Jobab died, Husham became the new king. He came from the land of the Teman people.³⁵ After Husham died, Hadad, the son of Bedad, became the new king. He defeated the people of Midian in the country of Moab. His capital city was Avith.³⁶ After Hadad

died, Samlah became the new king. He came from the town of Masrekah.³⁷ After Samlah died, Shaul became the new king. Shaul came from the town of Rehoboth beside the Euphrates River.³⁸ After Shaul died, Baal-Hanan, the son of Achbor, became the new king.³⁹ After Baal-Hanan, the son of Achbor, died, Hadad^a became the new king. His capital city was Pau. His wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me-Zahab.

⁴⁰These were the names of the chieftains who descended from Esau by name, clan, and area: Chiefs Timna, Alvah, Jetheth,⁴¹ Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon,⁴² Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar,⁴³ Magdiel, and Iram. These were the chieftains of Edom, according to their camps in the land which they controlled. This is the record of Esau, the ancestor of the people of Edom.

Joseph's Dreams

37¹Jacob lived in the land of Canaan, where Isaac, his father, had stayed.

²These are the records of Jacob:

When Joseph was a 17 year-old boy, he was taking care of the flock, along

a 36:39 Many manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Syriac texts have "Hadad." However, most copies of the Masoretic Text have "Hadar." The Hebrew characters for "d" and "r" are very similar. Also see 1 Chr. 1:50.

with his half-brothers, and the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, who were the secondary wives of his father. Joseph reported to Jacob, their father, that his half-brothers were doing something wrong.

³Because Joseph had been born to Jacob^a when Jacob was old, Jacob loved Joseph more than all of his other sons. So, Jacob made him a fancy, full-length coat.^b ⁴When Joseph's half-brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than he loved any of them, they hated Joseph. They could not even say a kind word to him!^c

⁵Joseph had a dream. He told his half-brothers about it. This caused them to hate Joseph even more.

⁶Joseph said to them, "Please listen to this dream that I had." ⁷Look, all of us were out in the field tying sheaves of grain. Suddenly, **my** sheaf got up and stood up straight. Then, look, all of your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to **my** sheaf!"^d

⁸Joseph's half-brothers said to him, "Indeed!?! Will **you** be a king over us? Surely **you** will not rule us, will you!?" Because of Joseph's dreams

^a 37:3 literally, "Israel"

^b 37:3 or, "an ornamented, long-sleeved tunic"; a royal one (compare 2 Sam. 13:18-19). Certainly Joseph did not do much manual labor while in this special coat.

^c 37:4 literally, "in peace" = *shalom*

^d 37:7 This was literally fulfilled in Gen. 42:6; 43:26; 44:14.

and some other things that he said, his half-brothers were hating him even more!

⁹Then Joseph had another dream. And he told it to his half-brothers. He said, "Listen, I've had another dream. Look, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to **me!**"^e

¹⁰When Joseph told this dream to his father and his brothers, His father Jacob rebuked him, saying, "What is the meaning of this dream which you had? Indeed!?! Will I, your mother, and your brothers come to bow down on the ground in front of **you!**?" ¹¹However, Joseph's father stored this dream away in his mind. But Joseph's half-brothers were jealous of him.

Joseph's Half-Brothers Sell Him to be a Slave

¹²Later, Joseph's half-brothers went away, so that the flock of their father could graze near the town of Shechem.^f ¹³Jacob said to Joseph, "Your brothers are watching over the flocks as they feed near Shechem. Come, I'm going to send you to them."

Joseph answered him, "I'm ready."

¹⁴So, Jacob said to him, "Please

^e 37:9 indicating that Joseph was superior. Also, it shows that Benjamin had been born; he may have been about 4 years old at this time.

^f 37:12 Shechem was about two days' journey from Hebron.

go and see if your brothers and the flocks are all right. Bring me some news.” So, Jacob sent Joseph from the Valley of Hebron.

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, ¹⁵a man found him wandering around in the field. The man asked him, “What are you looking for?”

¹⁶Joseph answered, “I’m looking for my brothers. Please tell me where they are tending the flocks.”

¹⁷The man answered, “They moved on from here. I heard one of them say, ‘Let’s go to Dothan.’”^a

So, Joseph followed his half-brothers, and he did find them at Dothan. ¹⁸However, when Joseph’s half-brothers saw him at a distance, before he was close to them, they made a plan to kill him. ¹⁹They said to each other, “Here comes the master^b of dreams! ²⁰Come on, let’s kill him now and throw his body into one of the pits. We could say that a wild animal has eaten him. Then we’ll see what becomes of his dreams!”

²¹When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue Joseph from them by saying, “No! There is no need for us to kill him!” ²²He continued, “Let there be no bloodshed. Throw him into this hole. It’s in the desert. Don’t hurt him. (He wanted to rescue

Joseph from them and give him back to his father later.)

²³When Joseph arrived, they stripped off his coat (his full-length, fancy coat, which he was wearing at the time). ²⁴Then they grabbed him and threw him into the hole. This pit was empty; there was no water in it.^c

²⁵Joseph’s half-brothers sat down to eat a meal. Then they looked up and saw a caravan of some of the descendants of Ishmael.^d They were coming from the land of Gilead. They were headed for Egypt. Their camels were carrying a load of spices, special oils, and perfumes.^e

²⁶Then Judah said to his brothers, “How much is a dead brother worth to us? Could we hide his blood? No. ²⁷Come on, let’s sell him to the men of Ishmael. Let us not be the ones who hurt him. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh.” And, they listened to Judah.

²⁸Later, traders from Midian passed by. They pulled up Joseph out of the hole and sold him to the men of

^c 37:24 This hole was probably a cistern that held water during the rainy season, but it became dry toward the end of the summer.

^d 37:25 The Ishmaelites were also called Midianites. They were Ishmaelites by race, having descended from Ishmael, and, they were Midianites by residence. See Judg. 8:22,24,26. The Midianites and Medanites (compare the textual note of Gen. 37:36) were inter-related tribal groups—both being descendants of Abraham (Gen. 25:2).

^e 37:25 See Gen. 16:1-16; 17:18,20-27; 21:9-21; 25:12-18.

^a 37:17 Dothan was about 15 miles farther north.

^b 37:19 The Hebrew word here is *ba’al*.

Ishmael for 20 pieces of silver. And, they carried Joseph away to Egypt.

²⁹When Reuben came back to the pit, he soon found out that Joseph was **not** there! Reuben ripped his own clothes.^a ³⁰He returned to his brothers and said, “The boy isn’t there anymore! What am I going to do!?”

³¹So, they killed a male goat. Then they took Joseph’s full-length coat and dipped it in the goat’s blood.

³²Then they brought the long, fancy coat to their father and said, “This is what we found. Look! Is this your son’s coat^b or not?”

³³Jacob recognized it. He said, “It is my son’s long coat! Some wild animal has eaten him! Joseph is surely torn to pieces!” ³⁴So, Jacob ripped his own clothes and put sackcloth around his waist.^c Jacob cried over his son for many days. ³⁵All of his sons and granddaughters went to comfort him—but he refused to be comforted. He said, “I will go down to my grave^d mourning for my son.” Jacob wept for Joseph.

a 37:29 This was a sign of great sorrow.

b 37:32 They did *not* say “our brother’s coat.” Compare Luke 15:25-30.

c 37:34 This was very rough cloth, like burlap; it irritated the skin. Its main purpose was to cause Jacob to think of sad things, that is, to grieve. Compare 2 Sam. 3:31; 2 Kings 6:30; 19:1; Isa. 37:1; Neh. 9:1; Esth. 4:1; Jer. 4:8; 6:26; 48:37; 49:3; Lam. 2:10; Ezek. 7:18; 27:31; Dan. 9:3; Joel 1:8,13; Amos 8:10; Jonah 3:5,6,8.

d 37:35 The Hebrew-based word here is “Sheol.”

³⁶In Egypt the Midianites^e sold Joseph to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s important officers. He was the captain of the guards.

Judah and Tamar

38¹About that time, Judah left his brothers and went down to stay with an Adullamite man.^f His name was Hirah. ²While there, Judah met the daughter of a man from Canaan.^g (His name was Shua.) He married her and went to bed with her.^h ³She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Judah named him “Er.” ⁴Later, she became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She named him “Onan.” ⁵She also gave birth to yet another son. She named him “Shelah.” This happened at Kezib.

⁶Years later, Judah got a wife for Er,

e 37:36 = the Ishmaelites. “Midianites” is the reading of the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Greek Septuagint (LXX), the Latin Vulgate, and the Syriac Version. The Hebrew Masoretic Text has “Medanites.” See the note above on Gen. 37:25. The Midianites and the Ishmaelites (see verse 25 and verse 28 above) were often confused with each other because of their common descent from Abraham and the similarity of their customs and mode of life. It is possible that the Ishmaelites may have been the owners of the caravan, which was mostly made up of Midianites. The desert people had long been involved in international slave trade (compare Amos 1:6,9).

f 38:1 Judah went down from the mountains southward to Adullam, about 12 miles southwest of Bethlehem.

g 38:2 Like Esau’s choice (Gen. 26:34-35; 36:2-3), this was heartbreaking to Judah’s parents.

h 38:2 literally, “went into her” = had sex with her

his firstborn. Her name was Tamar.
⁷However, the Always-Present One saw that Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil. So, the Always-Present One caused him to die.

⁸Then Judah said to Onan, "Go to bed with your brother's wife. Have children for your dead brother!"^a

⁹However, Onan knew that any children would **not** belong to him. So, every time he went to bed with his brother's wife, he would withdraw and let the semen run out^b onto the ground. Therefore, he would never produce children for his dead brother, Er. ¹⁰The Always-Present One saw that what Onan was doing was wrong, so He caused Onan to die also.

¹¹Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Live in your father's house as a widow until my son Shelah becomes sexually mature." (Judah was worrying: "Maybe Shelah will also die like his brothers!?") So, Tamar went to live in her father's house.

¹²After a long time, Judah's wife died. She was the daughter of Shua.

When Judah finally got over her death, he went up to Timnah,^c to the men who were shearing his flock. His friend Hirah, the Adullamite, went along.

¹³Tamar learned that her father-in-law^d was going up to Timnah to shear his flock. ¹⁴She changed her widow's clothes and used a veil to hide her face.^e Then she sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. (Tamar could see that, even though Shelah was now sexually mature, she was **not** being given to him as a wife!)

¹⁵When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, because she hid her face. ¹⁶(He did **not** realize that she was his daughter-in-law.) So, Judah went to her beside the road and said, "Come on, let me go to bed with you!"

She asked, "What will you give me to go to bed with you?"

¹⁷Judah answered, "I will send a young goat from the flock."

Tamar asked, "Will you give me something to hold^f until you send the young goat?"

a 38:8 This practice was known as levirate marriage (from the Latin *levir*, which means "brother-in-law"). A brother-in-law fathered children in the name of his dead brother by the dead brother's widow. In this way, the people considered that the dead brother's name could be kept alive. See Deut. 25:5-6; Ruth 4:5; Matt. 22:24. It could also be the nearest relative (Ruth 3:12).

b 38:9 or, "he ejaculated (it)"

c 38:12 about 10 miles west of Bethlehem and 4 miles northeast of Adullam

d 38:13 = Judah

e 38:14 Assyrian law mandated that only a cult prostitute was to wear the veil. Judah may not have known this and thought that Tamar was an ordinary prostitute.

f 38:17 = a pledge; a guarantee; Hebrew: *'erabon*; Greek: *arrabon*. See 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14.

¹⁸Judah answered, “What is the guarantee that I should give to you?”

She answered, “Your seal,^a your belt, and your walking-cane which is in your hand.” So, Judah gave them to her. He went to bed with her, and she became pregnant by him. ¹⁹Then she got up and left. She removed her veil from her face, and she put on her widow’s clothes.

²⁰Later, Judah did send a young goat through his Adullamite friend, so that he could get back what was being held as a guarantee by the woman. However, Hirah did not find her. ²¹Hirah asked the men of that area, “Where is the temple-prostitute^b who was beside the road at Enaim?”

But they answered, “No temple-prostitute was here!”

²²So, Hirah went back to Judah and said, “I did not find her! The men of that area also said that no temple-prostitute was there!”

²³Then Judah said, “Let her keep it! People would laugh at us. Look, I sent this young goat, but you did not find her.”

²⁴About three months later, some people told Judah, “Tamar, your daughter-in-law is a whore! Look, the whore has gotten herself pregnant!”

a 38:18 or, “signet ring”

b 38:21 Many Canaanite fertility shrines employed temple-prostitutes. That was considered normal.

So Judah said, “Bring her out and put her to death by burning!”^c

²⁵As they were bringing her outside, she sent word to her father-in-law, “I am pregnant by the man to whom these things belong!” Then she added, “Look closely at whose seal, belt, and walking-cane these are!”

²⁶Then Judah recognized these three objects. Judah said, “She is more right than I am. Why? She did this because I did **not** give my son Shelah to her to go to bed with her for Er.” Judah never had sex with her again.

²⁷When the time came for Tamar to give birth, look, there were twin boys in her body! ²⁸As she was giving birth, one baby put his hand out, and the woman who was helping took his wrist and tied a red string around it. She said, “This is the first baby to come out.”^d ²⁹However, this baby pulled his hand back, and his brother came out instead! She said, “This is the breach you have broken out with!” So Judah named him “Perez.”^e ³⁰Then his baby brother came out, the one with the red string around his wrist. Judah named him “Zerah.”^f

c 38:24 Judah was not bothered by his conscience when he had sex with a prostitute beside the road, but he was very angry when he thought his daughter-in-law had been immoral — a double-standard! David was guilty of the same kind of thinking. See 2 Sam. 12:5-6.

d 38:28 to mark the baby which would receive double the inheritance = the right of primogeniture

e 38:29 This Hebrew name means “breaking out.”

f 38:30 This Hebrew name means “scarlet” or

Joseph and the Wife of Potiphar

39¹Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an important Egyptian officer,^a was the captain of the guards. He purchased Joseph from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.^b

²However, the Always-Present One was with Joseph. And, Joseph was a successful man. He was in the household of his Egyptian master.

³His master could see that Yahweh was with Joseph in everything that he did and that Yahweh was giving him success. ⁴Potiphar liked Joseph. So, he made Joseph his personal servant. Potiphar put Joseph in charge of all his household. And, Potiphar trusted him to take care of everything that belonged to Potiphar.^c ⁵From the moment that Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his household and over everything that Potiphar owned, the Always-Present One blessed the household of the Egyptian man because of Joseph. The blessing of the Always-Present One was upon everything that Potiphar had, whether in the household or in the field. ⁶Potiphar left everything up to Joseph's judgment. Potiphar did not

concern himself with anything except the food that he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and good-looking. ⁷After a while, his master's wife noticed how handsome Joseph was.^d She said, "Go to bed with me!"

⁸But Joseph refused. He said to his master's wife, "Listen, my master does not worry about what is in the household. He trusts me to take care of everything. ⁹I am the most trusted one in this household. There is nothing which Potiphar has held back from me—except **you!** You are his **wife!** How could I do this great evil and sin against God!?" ¹⁰She continued to speak to Joseph day after day, but Joseph would not listen to her. He would not go to bed with her. In fact, he would not even be with her. ¹¹One day, Joseph went into the house to do his job. None of the males from the household were present in the house. ¹²Potiphar's wife grabbed Joseph's robe and said, "Have sex with me!" But Joseph left his robe in her hand and ran outside.^e

¹³When she saw that he had left his robe in her hand and run outside, ¹⁴she called out to the men of the household and said to them, "Look,

"brightness."

a 39:1 literally, "an officer of Pharaoh"

b 39:1 See Gen. 37:27,28,36.

c 39:4 literally, "He put everything into his hand." = Potiphar gave him total responsibility.

d 39:7 He got his good looks from his mother (compare Gen. 29:17).

e 39:12 Sometimes the only way to avoid sin is to flee (Prov. 4:14-17; 5:8; 7:7-8; 7:7,8,25; 1 Cor. 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:22).

my husband has brought a Hebrew man among us to make fun of us! Joseph tried to have sex with me, but I screamed! ¹⁵When he heard me scream, he ran outside, leaving his robe with me!”

¹⁶She kept Joseph’s robe beside her until Potiphar, his master, came home. ¹⁷These are the words which she used to tell her story to Potiphar: “Joseph—the Hebrew slave whom you brought to us—tried to have sex with me! He was making fun of me! ¹⁸But when Joseph heard me scream, he ran outside, leaving his robe beside me!”

¹⁹When Joseph’s master heard the story of his wife, he became very angry. ²⁰Joseph’s master took him and threw him in jail,^a where the prisoners of the king were kept.

However, while Joseph was being held there in prison, ²¹the Always-Present One was with him. God showed him kindness and caused the warden of the jail to like him. ²²So, the prison warden put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were there in jail and over everything that happened there. ²³It was not necessary for the warden of the jail to think about anything that Joseph was responsible for. The Always-Present One was with Joseph and gave him

a 39:20 literally, “the house of roundness”. See Ps. 105:17-18.

success in whatever Joseph did.

Two Dreams

40¹Some time later, the man who served wine to the king of Egypt and the one who baked for the king offended their master, the king of Egypt. ²Pharaoh^b was angry at both of his best officers—angry at the head of those who served wine and at the head of those who did the baking. ³So, Pharaoh ordered that they be arrested and kept in the house of the captain of the guards,^c in the same prison where Joseph was being held.^d ⁴The captain of the guards put Joseph in charge of them. Joseph was responsible for the two men.

After they had been in prison for several days, ⁵each of the two men who were being held in prison—the baker and the one who served wine to the king of Egypt—had a dream on the same night. The two dreams had different meanings.

⁶When Joseph came to them in the morning, he could clearly see that they were in a bad mood. ⁷So, Joseph asked the former officers of Pharaoh who were in prison with him, in the house of his master, “Why are your faces so sad today?”

⁸They answered him, “We had

b 40:2 = the official title of all Egyptian kings

c 40:3 = Potiphar, Gen. 37:36; 39:1

d 40:3 Special arrangements were made for these prisoners of high rank.

dreams last night, but there is no one to interpret them for us.”

Then Joseph said to them, “Interpretations belong to God, don’t they? Please tell the dreams to me.”

⁹So, the head of those who served wine to the king told his dream to Joseph. He said to him, “In my dream, I saw a vine in front of me.

¹⁰There were three branches on it. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and it ripened into bunches of grapes.

¹¹The cup of Pharaoh was in my hand. I took some of the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh’s cup. Then I put the cup into his hand.”

¹²Then Joseph said to him, “This is the meaning of the dream: The three branches are three days. ¹³Within three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your job. You will put Pharaoh’s cup into his hands, just as you used to do when you were his personal wine-server.

¹⁴After things go well for you, please remember me. Please treat me kindly. Mention me to Pharaoh. Get me out of this prison, ¹⁵because I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews,^a and I have done nothing here in Egypt for which I should be put in jail!”

¹⁶When the head baker saw that

a 40:15 The “Hebrews” inhabited the country before Kenaan took possession of it. The “Hebrews” was a general term to describe those who had migrated into Palestine from Northern Mesopotamia.

Joseph’s interpretation was positive, he said to Joseph, “I also had a dream. Listen, there were three wicker baskets of bread upon my head. ¹⁷All kinds of pastries for Pharaoh were in the top basket, but the birds were eating them from the basket on top of my head.”

¹⁸Joseph answered, “This is the meaning: The three baskets are three days. ¹⁹Within three days, Pharaoh will lift off your head^b and hang you on a tree! And, the birds will eat your flesh off of you!”^c

²⁰Three days later, it was Pharaoh’s birthday. He gave a banquet for all of his important officers. He restored the former head of those who served him wine, but Pharaoh hanged the head baker in the presence of his important officers. ²¹The head of those who served wine to the Pharaoh got his job back. Once again, he put the cup into the Pharaoh’s hand. ²²However, Pharaoh hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph interpreted to the two men.

²³Nevertheless, the chief wine-server to the king did **not** remember what Joseph had done for him. He forgot about Joseph.

b 40:19 literally, “lift up your head from you” = decapitation

c 40:19 Normally, the Egyptians placed great emphasis upon preserving the body after death by embalming (compare Gen. 50:2,26). So, this man’s end was particularly gruesome and abominable.

Pharaoh's Dreams

41¹At the end of two full years, Pharaoh^a had a dream: Look, he was standing next to the Nile River. ²And look, seven, good-looking, fat cows came up out of the Nile and grazed among papyrus plants beside the river. ³Suddenly, seven other cows came up from the Nile after them. They were thin and ugly. They stood next to the first group of cows on the bank of the Nile River. ⁴The thin, ugly cows ate up the good-looking, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up. ⁵Pharaoh went to sleep and had a second dream: Look, there were seven, good, full heads of grain growing on one stalk. ⁶And, look, there were seven thin heads of grain which were dried out by the eastern winds.^b They sprouted after them. ⁷The seven thin heads of grain swallowed up the fat, full heads of grain. Then Pharaoh woke up. It was only a dream.

⁸In the morning, Pharaoh continued to think about the dreams; they bothered him. So, he summoned all the magicians of Egypt and all the wise men. Pharaoh told them his dream, but there was no one to interpret them for Pharaoh.

a 41:1 This king of Egypt was probably one of the Hyksos rulers who was in power shortly after 1720 B.C.

b 41:6 = siroccos, which usually came from the southeast

⁹Then the head wine-server to Pharaoh said, “Today I remember when I offended you.^c ¹⁰You were angry with your important officers. You put me in prison, in the house of the captain of the guards—me and the head baker. ¹¹Both of us had a dream on the same night, but each dream had a different meaning. ¹²There was a young man there with us. He was a Hebrew slave to the captain of the guards. We told him our dreams, and he interpreted each of them for us. ¹³And, it happened exactly as he had interpreted them to us—you restored me to my job, but you hanged the chief baker!”

¹⁴So Pharaoh sent messengers and called for Joseph. They brought him out of the dungeon. He shaved^d and changed his clothes. Then he came to Pharaoh.

¹⁵Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, but there is no one who can interpret it. However, I’ve heard that **you** can hear a dream and interpret it.”

¹⁶Joseph answered Pharaoh, “I am not the one; **God** is. He will give you the solution.”

¹⁷Then Pharaoh said to Joseph,

c 41:9 that is, two years ago. Compare Gen. 40:1 with Gen. 41:1.

d 41:14 Usually, Egyptian men were smooth-shaven (both the head and the face), according to Herodotus ii.32, but Palestinians had beards (compare 2 Sam. 10:5; Jer. 41:5).

“Listen, in my dream, I was standing on the bank of the Nile River.¹⁸ And look, seven, fat, good-looking cows came up out of the Nile. They were grazing among the papyrus plants next to the river.¹⁹ Then, suddenly, seven other cows came up after them. They were scrawny, ugly, and very thin. They were the worst cows I have ever seen in all the land of Egypt!²⁰ These seven, thin, ugly cows ate up the first group of fat cows.²¹ Even after they had swallowed them, one could not tell that they had swallowed them by looking at them, because they were just as ugly as they were before. Then I woke up.

²²“Then I saw in my other dream that there were seven, good, full heads of grain growing on one stalk.²³ Then, look, seven withered, thin heads of grain, which were dried out by the eastern winds, sprouted up after them.²⁴ The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads of grain! I told this to the magicians, but none of them could explain it to me.”

²⁵Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Your dream is one.^a The one true God is telling you what He is about to do.²⁶ The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years. It is the same

dream.²⁷ The seven, thin, ugly cows which came up after them are seven years. And, the seven worthless heads of grain which were dried out by the eastern winds represent seven years when there will be nothing to eat.^b

²⁸“This will happen just as I have told you. The one true God is showing you what He is going to do.²⁹ Listen, the next seven years will be very productive throughout all the land of Egypt.³⁰ But, after that, there will be seven years when there will be **nothing** to eat! All of the former abundance in the land of Egypt will be forgotten. The famine will completely destroy the land.³¹ The former abundance in the land will not

be remembered, because the famine which follows will be very severe!³² The dream was given to you twice,

because the one true God has made up His mind, and He will do it soon!

³³“You ought to search for an intelligent, wise man to put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.³⁴ You should choose tax collectors

to take 20 percent from Egypt during the seven years of abundance.³⁵ They could collect all of the food

of these good years which are coming and store grain^c by your authority for food to be kept in the cities.

^a 41:25 The 14 items represent one (and only one) outcome.

^b 41:27 The beginning of the series of events would be immediate.

^c 41:35 = wheat

³⁶This food could be saved up for the country, for the seven years of famine which will be coming upon Egypt, so that Egypt will **not** be ruined by the famine.”

Pharaoh Puts Joseph in Charge of Egypt

³⁷Pharaoh and all of his important officers liked this advice. They thought it was a good idea. ³⁸Then Pharaoh asked his important officers, “Could we find another one like this man who has the Spirit of God? No!”

³⁹Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown all of this to you, no one is as intelligent or as wise as you are. ⁴⁰**You** will be in charge of my palace! All of my people must put themselves under your command. In matters of the throne, I will be the only one who is higher than you are.”

⁴¹So, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Now I am putting **you** in charge of the entire land of Egypt!”^a ⁴²Then Pharaoh took off the special ring^b from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. Pharaoh had his servants dress Joseph with linen robes, and he put a golden chain around Joseph’s neck.

⁴³And Pharaoh had Joseph ride along with him in his own chariot

a 41:41 Joseph was about to become Prime Minister (Grand Vizier) = the second in command of the Egyptian Empire.

b 41:42 or, “the signet ring”; that is, the royal ring used for giving an official seal to government documents

as the number two man. Men called out ahead of him, “Make way!”^c So, Pharaoh did indeed put Joseph in charge of the entire land of Egypt.

⁴⁴Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Even though I am Pharaoh, no one in all of Egypt will lift a hand or foot unless **you** say so. ⁴⁵Then Pharaoh renamed Joseph as “Zaphenath-Paneah.”^d And Pharaoh gave him Asenath to marry. She was the daughter of Poti-Phera, the priest of On.^e Joseph traveled widely in Egypt.

⁴⁶Joseph was 30 years old when he began to serve Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Joseph left the presence of Pharaoh and passed throughout the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷During the next seven years, the land did produce great amounts of abundance. ⁴⁸And Joseph collected 20 percent of all the food which was produced in Egypt during those seven years. He stored it in the cities. He put the food from the fields which surrounded them inside each city. ⁴⁹Joseph stored so much grain that it was like the sands of the sea. He had to stop recording it, because he could not count it all.

c 41:43 literally, “Abrech!” = “Bow the knee!” Even today in Egypt, this word is used as a command for camels to kneel down.

d 41:45 If this is from the Coptic language, it means “the salvation of the world”.

e 41:45 Another name for the town of On was Heliopolis. It was famous for its worship of Ra, the sun god. It was on the eastern bank of the Nile, a city which was 7 miles northeast of what is now Cairo.

⁵⁰Now two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Phera, the priest of On, before the famine years came. ⁵¹Joseph named his firstborn son “Manasseh,”^a because Joseph said, “God has caused me to forget all of my troubles and my father’s entire household!” ⁵²Joseph named his second son “Ephraim,”^b because Joseph said, “God has made me fertile in the land of my suffering!”

⁵³Then the seven years of abundance came to an end in the land of Egypt.^c ⁵⁴The seven years of famine started, exactly as Joseph had said they would. There was also famine in all the other nearby lands. Nevertheless, there was food throughout the land of Egypt. ⁵⁵When the entire land of Egypt began to run out of food, the people cried out to Pharaoh for food. Pharaoh told all of the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph! Do whatever he tells you to do!”

⁵⁶When the famine had spread all across the land, Joseph opened up the bins, and he sold grain to the Egyptians. The famine was holding Egypt tightly in its grip. ⁵⁷The whole

world was coming to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was so severe everywhere.

Joseph’s Brothers Come to Buy Food

42¹When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why do you continue to look at one another?”^d ²Then he said, “Listen, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there^e and buy some grain for us from there, so that we may survive and not die!”

³Then 10 of Joseph’s brothers went down to buy some grain from Egypt. ⁴However, Jacob did not send Benjamin (Joseph’s full brother) along with them, because Jacob thought that something bad might happen to Benjamin. ⁵So, the sons of Jacob^f were among those who went to buy grain. The famine had reached the land of Canaan, too.

⁶Joseph was the Supreme Governor^g over the land of Egypt. He was the one who sold grain to all the people of the world. Joseph’s half-brothers came and bowed down low to the ground to him. ⁷When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them,

a 41:51 This Hebrew name is similar to the Hebrew verb for “forget.”

b 41:52 This Hebrew name means “double fruit.”

c 41:53 All agriculture in Egypt depended entirely upon the status of the Nile River. The tropical rains of Central Africa which fed the Nile caused the river to rise and fall. If the river fell below a certain point, there would be a deficient crop for that year.

d 42:1 = “What are you waiting for?”

e 42:2 about 200 miles away

f 42:5 literally, “Israel”

g 42:6 This word occurs nowhere else in the Pentateuch. It is related to the word “sultan.”

but he acted like a stranger to them. He spoke harshly with them, asking them, “Where do you come from?”

They answered, “We come from the land of Canaan to buy some food.”

⁸Joseph recognized his half-brothers, but they did **not** recognize him.^a ⁹Then Joseph remembered the dreams that he once had about them.^b Joseph said to them, “You are spies! You have come to this land to see where we Egyptians are weak!”^c

¹⁰But they said to him, “No, my lord! We have only come to buy food!

¹¹All of us are the sons of one man. We are honest! We^d are **not** spies!”

¹²But Joseph said to them, “No! You have come to find out the weakness of our country!”

¹³But they answered, “There were twelve of us brothers; we are the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. Listen, the youngest one is with our father today, and another is dead.”^e

a 42:8 Why did Joseph’s half-brothers not recognize him? Because more than 20 years had passed since they last saw him. Joseph was only a teenager when they sold him as a slave two decades before. And, they never expected to see Joseph again. As an Egyptian, Joseph would have been clean-shaven and well-dressed. And, since Joseph spoke through an interpreter, these brothers would never have suspected that it could be Joseph, their brother!

b 42:9 See Gen. 37:5-11.

c 42:9 The burden of proof was always upon the defendant. They had to prove their innocence.

d 42:11 literally, “Your servants”

e 42:13 literally, “is not” or “is no more” = He’s gone. At least, that is what these 10 brothers led Jacob to believe (Gen. 37:30).

¹⁴But Joseph said to them, “It is exactly as I said to you: You are spies!

¹⁵As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will never get out of here unless your youngest brother comes here. That is how the truth of your story will be verified. ¹⁶Send one of you to get your brother. The rest of you will stay in jail until the truth of your story can be checked out. If it is not true, then, as surely as Pharaoh lives, you **are** spies!” ¹⁷Then Joseph put them all in jail for three days.

¹⁸On the third day, Joseph said to them, “Do this and live. I revere the one true God. ¹⁹If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay in jail and the rest of you can take grain back to your starving families.

²⁰However, you must bring your youngest brother to me, so your story can be proven to be true, so you will not die.” Therefore, that is what they did.

²¹Each of the brothers said to one another, “Surely we are being punished because of our brother, Joseph! We all saw him needing help, pleading to us for his life, but we did **not** listen!”^f That’s why this trouble is happening to us!”

²²Reuben answered them, “Didn’t I tell you not to sin against the boy? You didn’t listen, so, we are now being

f 42:21 See Gen. 37:18-25.

punished for what we did to him!”^a
²³(Joseph had an interpreter between them, but they did **not** realize that Joseph could understand them anyway.)

²⁴Joseph left the room and wept. Later, he came back and spoke to them. Joseph took Simeon from among them. Joseph had his slaves bind Simeon in their presence.

The Brothers Return to Canaan

²⁵Then Joseph ordered that their sacks be filled with grain, that the money from each one of them be returned to their sacks, and that they be given supplies for the trip. After Joseph did this for them,
²⁶they loaded their donkeys with grain and left there.

²⁷Later, somewhere, one of them opened his sack to get some feed for his donkey. And, look, he saw his money in the opening of his sack!²⁸He said to his brothers, “My money has been returned! Look, it’s in my sack!” Then their hearts sank. They trembled. They said to one another, “What is this that God has done to us!?”

²⁹When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him everything that had happened to them:³⁰“A man, one of the lords of

Egypt, was rough on us. He treated us as if we were spying on Egypt.³¹We said to him, ‘We are honest men, not spies!’³²We are twelve brothers, sons of the same father. One is dead, but the youngest one is with our father today in the land of Canaan.’

³³“Then the man, one of the lords of the land, said to us, ‘This is how I will **know** that you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me and take some grain to your starving families. Go!’³⁴However, you must bring your youngest brother to me, so I can be sure that you are **not** spies but honest men. Then I will give your brother back to you, and you can do business in Egypt.’”

³⁵When they emptied all their sacks, look, the money-bags of each one of them were in their sacks! When they and their father saw this, they were afraid.³⁶Their father Jacob said to them, “You are taking away my sons! Joseph is gone. Simeon is gone. And now, you want to take Benjamin away! Everything is against me!”

³⁷Then Reuben said to his father, “If I don’t bring Benjamin back to you, then you may kill two of my sons! Give Benjamin to me!^b I will bring him back to you!”

³⁸But Jacob said, “My son Benjamin will **not** go down with you to Egypt!

^a 42:22 literally, “And his blood also, behold, it is required!”

^b 42:37 literally, “Put him into my hand.” (= my charge)

Joseph, his brother, is dead, and Benjamin is the only one left from Rachel. If anything bad were to happen to him on the trip which you would be taking, then you would bring down my gray head to the grave in misery!”

The Second Trip to Egypt

43¹The famine was getting worse in the land. ²So, when the family of Jacob ate up all the grain which they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, “Go back to Egypt and buy a little more food for us.”

³But Judah said to him, “The man solemnly warned us that we would not see his face unless our little brother was with us! ⁴If you send Benjamin along with us, we will go down to Egypt and buy some food for you. ⁵However, if you will not send Benjamin, we will not go down, because the man told us that we would not see his face unless our little brother came with us!”

⁶Then Jacob^a asked, “Why did you tell the man that you had another brother and thus make more trouble for me!?”

⁷They answered, “The man asked a lot of questions about us and our family. He said, ‘Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?’

^a 43:6 literally, “Israel”

So, we answered his questions. How could we have known that he would say, ‘Bring down your little brother!?’”

⁸Then Judah said to his father Jacob, “Send the boy Benjamin with me. We’ll get up and leave, so that we—and you and our little children—can live and not die! ⁹I will be the one to guarantee^b that I will bring him back to you. If I do not, then you can hold me personally responsible. I will take the blame for the rest of my life, if I do not put him here in front of you! ¹⁰If we had not waited so long, we could have been there and back ... twice!”

¹¹Then their father Jacob said to them, “If this is the way it’s going to be, then do it! Put some of the best products of the land in your bags—a little balm, a little honey, some spices and myrrh,^c some pistachio nuts, and almonds. And take them down to Egypt as a gift to the man.

¹²Take twice as much money with you, because you **must** take back the money which was returned in your sacks. Perhaps it was a mistake!?

¹³And, take your brother Benjamin. Get up and go back to the man!

¹⁴And may God Almighty^d cause that man to be kind to you, so that he may send back Benjamin, along with

^b 43:9 Hebrew: ‘*arabon*’; see 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:12

^c 43:11 Myrrh is a transparent, yellowish-brown, aromatic, gum resin.

^d 43:14 literally, “El Shaddai”

you and your other brother, Simeon. If I lose them, then I lose them!”

¹⁵So the men took with them this gift of various products, twice as much money, and Benjamin. They got up and went down to Egypt and stood in the presence of Joseph. ¹⁶When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the one who was in charge of his household, “Take these men to my house. Butcher an animal and prepare a dinner, because these men will be eating with me at noon.”

¹⁷So the man did as Joseph said. He brought the men to Joseph’s house. ¹⁸When the brothers were taken to Joseph’s house, they were afraid. They were thinking, “It must have something to do with the money which was put back into our sacks on the first trip. We are being brought there so that he can attack us, overpower us, take our donkeys, and make us slaves!”

¹⁹So, the brothers came up to the man who was in charge of Joseph’s household and said to him at the entrance of the house, ²⁰“O my lord, the first time we came down to Egypt, we came to buy food. ²¹Later, when we came to a stopping place, we opened our sacks and the exact amount of money that we had already paid was in the openings of each of our sacks! Therefore, each of us

has brought it back. ²²We have also brought more money with us to buy more food. We don’t know who put our money back in our sacks!”

²³The servant said, “It’s all right. Don’t be afraid. Your God and the God of your father must have put those valuables in your sacks; I got your money.”

Then he brought Simeon out to them.

²⁴The servant took the men into Joseph’s house and gave them some water to wash their feet. He also provided them feed for their donkeys. ²⁵Then the brothers prepared the gift for when Joseph would arrive at noon. They heard that they would eat a meal there.

²⁶When Joseph came home, they presented the gift to him which they had carried into the house. They bowed down on the ground to him.^a

²⁷Joseph asked them how they were. Then he said, “Your father, of whom you spoke, is very old. Is he all right?^b Is he still alive?”

²⁸They answered, “He is your servant and our father. He’s fine. He is still alive.” Then they bowed their heads and bent down even lower.

²⁹Then Joseph looked up and saw his brother Benjamin, his full-

^a 43:26 This showed great respect. Compare Gen. 37:5-11.

^b 43:27 Hebrew: *Shalom?*

blooded brother, and asked, “Is this your little brother whom you told me about?” Joseph added, “My son, may God bless you!”³⁰ Then Joseph left in a hurry, because he was about to lose control of his emotions (because of his brother Benjamin). He looked for a place to weep. So he went to a private room and wept there.

³¹ Then Joseph washed his face and came out. He got control of himself. Joseph said, “Let the food be served!”

³² So, the servants served the food to Joseph alone and then to the brothers by themselves, and to the Egyptians who were eating with Joseph separately, because Egyptians were not allowed to eat directly with Hebrews. (That was forbidden for Egyptians.)

³³ The brothers were sitting in Joseph’s presence by age—from the firstborn to the youngest. Each of the brothers looked at one another with surprise.^a ³⁴ When the portions were served to them from Joseph’s table, Benjamin’s portion was five times larger than anyone else’s!^b They all had plenty to eat and drink with Joseph.

a 43:33 How would anyone know how to do that!? According to Dr. Henry Morris, the mathematical odds were about 40 million to 1. See *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 604.

b 43:34 Benjamin was Joseph’s full-blooded brother. Both here, and in Gen. 45:22, perhaps Joseph lavishly gave all this to Benjamin to test whether the other brothers still had any jealousy toward Benjamin as they once had had against Joseph. See Gen. 37:3-11.

The Silver Cup

44¹ Then Joseph gave these orders to the man who was in charge of his household: “Fill the sacks of the men with as much food as they can carry, and put each man’s money in the opening of his sack.² However, along with the money for the grain of the youngest one, put my own silver cup in the opening of his sack.” He did exactly as Joseph said.

³ At sunrise, the men and their donkeys were sent on their way.

⁴ They had not gone far from the city, when Joseph said to the servant who was in charge of his household, “Get up now, go after those men! When you catch up with them, say this to them: ‘Why did you pay back good with evil?^c You have stolen my master’s silver cup!^d ⁵ This is the cup which my master drinks from and uses to explain dreams,^e isn’t it? You have done a terrible thing!’” ⁶ When he caught up with them, he told them those words. ⁷ But they said to him, “Why do you say such things as these? We would not do such a disgraceful thing!” ⁸ Listen, from the

c 44:4 that is, “stealing” Joseph’s silver cup after Joseph had sold them a large amount of grain to help their families survive.

d 44:4 Here the RSV and NRSV follow the Septuagint’s added text: “Why have you stolen my silver cup!?”

e 44:5 literally, “uses to divine with”; Joseph wanted them to believe that he could practice divination.

land of Canaan, we even brought back to you the money that we had found in the openings of our sacks before! Why would we steal silver or gold from the house of your master? ⁹If any of us is found to have it, he will die and we will become slaves to Joseph!”^a

¹⁰Joseph’s servant said, “Fine! Then, as you say, the one who has the cup will become my slave, but the rest of you are innocent.”

¹¹Each one of them quickly lowered his sack to the ground and opened it. ¹²The servant began the search from the oldest one, and he finished with the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack! ¹³Then the brothers tore their clothes.^b Each of them loaded their donkeys and returned to the city. ¹⁴When Judah and his brothers came into the house, Joseph was still there. They fell on the ground in front of him.^c ¹⁵Joseph said to them, “What’s this deed that you have done? Didn’t you know that I have special powers?—I have ways of finding out the truth!”^d

a 44:9 literally, “my lord!” Joseph was trying to determine whether his brothers would do the same sort of thing to Benjamin that they had done to him in Gen. 37:18-28.

b 44:13 This was a sign of great sorrow, for example, Judg. 11:35; 2 Sam. 1:11; 3:31; 13:19,31; 15:32; 2 Kings 2:12; 6:30; 18:37; 19:1; Esth. 4:1; Isa. 36:22; 37:1; Jer. 41:5.

c 44:14 This was a literal fulfillment of Gen. 37:7-10. Also see Gen. 50:18.

d 44:15 At that time, there was a common practice

¹⁶Judah answered, “What can we say to you, my lord? What can we speak? How can we show that we are innocent? The one true God has found us to be guilty!^e Look at us, we and the one who was found to have the cup are slaves to you, my lord.”

¹⁷But Joseph said, “Far from it! I would not do such a thing. Only the man who was found to have the cup will become my slave, but the rest of you may go back to your father in peace!”

Judah Pleads for Benjamin

¹⁸Then Judah approached Joseph and said, “O my lord, please let me say something to you. And, don’t be angry with me, even though you are like Pharaoh. ¹⁹You once asked us: ‘Do you have a father or another brother?’ ²⁰And we answered you: ‘We have a father and he is very old. Also, there is a young son who was born in our father’s old age. His brother is dead, and he is the only one left from his mother. His father loves this boy so much!’

²¹“Then you said to us: ‘Bring him down here to me, so that I can lay

in Egypt similar to crystal-ball gazing. Joseph’s gift of foretelling the future might have been associated with that, but Joseph’s trust was in God, not in a silver cup!

e 44:16 Judah believed that, somehow, God was punishing them. However, Judah had no idea that Joseph already knew far more about Judah’s guilt than Judah realized!

eyes on him!’ ²²But we told you, my lord: ‘The boy cannot leave his father. If he ever were to leave his father, his father would die!’ ²³But you told us: ‘If your little^a brother does **not** come down with you to Egypt, then you will never see my face again!’ ²⁴When we went back to my father, your servant, we told him your words, my lord.

²⁵“Then our father said, ‘Go back to Egypt and buy a little more food for us.’ ²⁶But we said, ‘We cannot go down to Egypt unless our little brother is with us. We will not be able to see the man’s face unless our little brother is with us!’

²⁷Then my father, your servant, said to us, ‘You know that my favorite wife, Rachel, gave birth to only two sons for me. ²⁸One has gone away from me, and I said, “Surely he must have been torn to pieces!” And, I have never seen him since. ²⁹If you also take **this** son^b away from me, and something bad happens to him, then you will bring down my gray head to the grave in sorrow!’

³⁰“So now, if I were to go to my father, your servant, and the boy is **not** with us, and my father’s life is tied to the boy’s life, ³¹when my father sees that the boy is **not** there, then my father will die! We brothers would bring the gray head of our father, your

servant, down to the grave in misery! ³²I guaranteed this boy’s safe return to my father. I said: ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then I will take the blame in front of you, my father, for the rest of my life!’

³³“So now, let **me** please remain as a slave to you, my lord, instead of the boy! Let the boy return with his brothers! ³⁴How could I go back up to my father without the boy? No! I could not look upon the sorrow^c that would come upon my father!”

Joseph Reveals His True Identity

45¹Then Joseph could no longer control his emotions in front of all his servants. He cried out, “Make everyone leave my presence!” So, no one was there when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ²Joseph wept very loudly. The Egyptians heard it. Even Pharaoh’s household heard it.

³Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father really still alive?”^d His brothers could not answer him, because they were terrified in his presence.

⁴Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near me now.” So they approached. Joseph said, “I am Joseph, your brother. I am the one whom you sold to be a slave into

a 44:23 or, “youngest”
b 44:29 = Benjamin

c 44:34 Judah had seen it before in Gen. 37:34-35.
d 45:3 Joseph wants to make sure. Compare Gen. 43:7.

Egypt! ⁵Now, don't be upset or angry with yourselves for selling me here, because **God** sent me ahead of you to save lives! ⁶For the last two years ^a the land has been in the middle of a famine. There will be no plowing or harvesting for the next 5 years! ⁷However, God has sent me ahead of you to make sure that your family ^b continues to exist on the earth and to save your lives in an extraordinary way.

⁸"So then, it was not **you** who sent me here; the one true **God** did it! God has made me Prime Minister to Pharaoh, and a master over all of his household. And, God made me a ruler over all the land of Egypt.

⁹"Hurry, go back north to my father and tell him this: 'This is a message from Joseph, your son: "God has made me a master over all of Egypt. Come down to me. Don't delay! ¹⁰You can live in the Goshen area.^c You, your children, your grandchildren, your flock, your cattle, and everything you have will be near me. ¹¹I will take care of you there. There are still 5 more years of the famine to go. Otherwise, you may starve to death — you, your

household, and all the servants and the animals you have."'

¹²"You and my brother, Benjamin, can see with your own eyes that I did say this.^d ¹³You must tell my father about all of my wealth in Egypt and everything that you have seen. You must hurry and bring my father down here to Egypt!"

¹⁴Then Joseph grabbed the neck of his brother Benjamin and began to weep. Benjamin wept on Joseph's neck, too. ¹⁵Then Joseph kissed all of his brothers, and wept upon them. After that, his brothers talked with him.

¹⁶When the news reached the palace of Pharaoh that Joseph's brothers had come, it pleased Pharaoh and his important officers.

¹⁷Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers: 'Do this: Load your animals and go back to the land of Canaan.

¹⁸Get your father and your families, and come back to me. I will give you the choicest part of the land of Egypt. Enjoy the best of the land!'

¹⁹"You are also commanded to say this: 'Do this: Take some wagons from Egypt for your wives and little children, and get your father. Then come back here. ²⁰Don't worry

^a 45:6 By comparing Gen. 41:46,53, we learn that Joseph was 39 years old here.

^b 45:7 literally, "a remnant"

^c 45:10 Goshen was located on the eastern side of the delta of the Nile River. It was very fertile pastureland. Goshen was about 30 miles X 30 miles.

^d 45:12 literally, "that (it is) my mouth that is speaking to you." These words would come to Jacob in his native language, *not* delivered through an interpreter.

about your belongings,^a because the choicest part of the entire country of Egypt will be yours!’ ”

²¹So, the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them wagons, as Pharaoh authorized. He also gave them supplies for the trip. ²²Joseph gave each of his brothers a new suit, but he gave Benjamin 5 new suits and 300 pieces of silver.^b ²³This is what Joseph sent to his father: 10 male donkeys which were loaded with the best things of Egypt, 10 female donkeys which were loaded with grain, bread, and other supplies for his father’s trip. ²⁴Then Joseph sent his brothers away. He told them, “Don’t argue with one another on the way!”^c Then they left. ²⁵The brothers left Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan, to their father Jacob. ²⁶They told him, “Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is now the ruler of the entire country of Egypt!” Jacob was stunned.^d He did **not** believe them. ²⁷But they told him every word that Joseph had said to them. And, when Jacob saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, Jacob, their

a 45:20 Joseph wanted them to leave their old things behind.

b 45:22 Joseph lavishly gave to Benjamin perhaps to test whether the other brothers still had any jealousy toward Benjamin as they once had had against Joseph. See Gen. 37:3-11.

c 45:24 It was too late to blame each other; they had to think about *how* to confess their collective lie to their father.

d 45:26 literally, “His heart was numb.”

father, felt like living again. ²⁸And Jacob said, “That’s enough! My son Joseph is still alive! I will go and see him before I die.”

The Whole Family Moves to Egypt

46¹So Jacob^e took everything he owned with him on the trip. When Jacob came to the city of Beer-Sheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. ²There God spoke to Jacob in visions of the night, “Jacob! Jacob!”

And Jacob answered, “I’m here.”

³God said, “I am the one true God, the God of your father. Don’t be afraid to go down into Egypt!^f I will make you into a great nation there.^g

⁴I will go down with you into Egypt, but I will surely bring you back up again! Joseph will personally close your eyelids when you die.”^h

⁵So, Jacob left Beer-Sheba. The sons of Jacob transported their father, their wives, and their little ones in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry Jacob. ⁶Jacob and all

e 46:1 literally, “Israel”

f 46:3 Even though there was another famine before, God commanded Isaac *not* to go down to Egypt (Gen. 26:1-2). But now God has a different purpose for His people, and He commands Jacob to cross the border of Egypt.

g 46:3 thus fulfilling His original promise to Abraham (Gen. 15:13-14).

h 46:4 This is an idiomatic expression that Joseph, Jacob’s beloved son, would be performing the funeral for his father.

his descendants took their livestock and their belongings, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and they went to Egypt. ⁷His entire family—his sons and his grandsons; his daughters and granddaughters—he brought them all with him to Egypt.

⁸These were the names of the sons of Israel (Jacob and his descendants) who went to Egypt:

Reuben (the firstborn of Jacob).

⁹The sons of Reuben were: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. ¹⁰The sons of Simeon were: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul (the son of a woman from the people of Canaan).

¹¹The sons of Levi were: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹²The sons of Judah were: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. (However, Er and Onan had already died in the land of Canaan.)^a

The sons of Perez were: Hezron and Hamul. ¹³The sons of Issachar were:

Tola, Puah,^b Jashub, and Shimron.

¹⁴The sons of Zebulun were: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

¹⁵The preceding were the sons to whom Leah gave birth for Jacob in Padan-Aram, along with Dinah, his daughter. There was a total of

33 grandsons and granddaughters:

¹⁶The sons of Gad were: Zephon,^c Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

¹⁷The sons of Asher were: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah. Serah was their sister. The sons of Beriah were: Heber and Malkiel.

¹⁸These were the children born to Jacob by Zilpah. Laban gave her to his daughter Leah. There was a total of 16 children.

¹⁹The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife were: Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁰Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Phera, who was the priest of On, gave birth to Manasseh and Ephraim for Joseph in Egypt. ²¹The sons of Benjamin were: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

²²These were the grandchildren of Rachel who had been born to Jacob. There was a total of 14 individuals. ²³The son of Dan was Hushim. ²⁴The sons of Naphtali were: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

²⁵These were the children of Bilhah. Laban gave her to his daughter Rachel. Bilhah gave birth to a total of seven individuals for Jacob.

²⁶Not counting the wives of Jacob's

a 46:12 See Gen. 38:1-10.

b 46:13 The Masoretic Hebrew text has "Iob." However, the Samaritan Pentateuch and some copies of the Greek Septuagint have "Jashub." Compare Num. 26:24 and 1 Chr. 7:1.

c 46:16 The Masoretic Hebrew text has "Ziphion." The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Greek Septuagint have "Zephon." It is possible that an ancient scribe accidentally added this name to the list. It does not appear in the parallel lists of Num. 26:12,13,15 or 1 Chr. 4:24.

sons, there were 66 individuals^a who were direct descendants of Jacob who went with him to Egypt.²⁷ Counting the two sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt, there were 70 individuals in the family of Jacob who went to Egypt.^b

Goshen

²⁸Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to the Goshen area.^c When they arrived in Goshen, ²⁹Joseph got his chariot^d ready and went to meet his father Jacob in Goshen. When Joseph appeared, he grabbed his father's neck and wept there for a long, long time.

³⁰Jacob said to Joseph, "I can die now, since I have seen your face, now that you are still alive."

³¹Joseph said to his brothers and to

the household of his father, "I will go up and speak with Pharaoh. This is what I will say to him: 'My brothers and the household of my father, who were in the land of Canaan have come to me. ³²These men are shepherds of flocks. They take care of livestock. They have brought their flocks, their cattle, and everything they own.' ³³Pharaoh will call for you and ask you, 'What do you do for a living?' ³⁴You must answer: 'We have taken care of livestock since we were boys. Our ancestors did the same thing.' Then you will be permitted to live in the Goshen area, because all shepherds of flocks are disgusting to Egyptians."^e

a 46:26 Those who made the trip from Canaan into Egypt were: 11 sons, 1 daughter, 50 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandsons. Er and Onan had already died (Gen. 38:1-10; 46:12), and, Manasseh and Ephraim were born in Egypt, not Canaan.

b 46:27 Jacob's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren amounted to 66 people (Gen. 46:8-26). Adding Jacob himself, and Joseph with his two sons, we get a total of 70 people. If we add to the 66 the 9 wives of Jacob's sons (Judah's wives and Simeon's wives were dead; Joseph could not be said to call himself, his own wife, or his two sons into Egypt; and Jacob is specified separately by Stephen in Acts 7:14), we have 75 individuals which were reported by the Septuagint (LXX) in the Book of Acts.

c 46:28 and probably to escort Joseph to meet the whole family

d 46:29 Horses and chariots were introduced into Egypt by the Hyksos invaders (1720-1580 B.C.).

e 46:34 According to Exo. 8:26-28, the Egyptians despised the kind of shepherds who sacrificed animals which the Egyptians considered to be sacred. Pharaoh owned cattle; and, Joseph was in charge of them (Gen. 47:6). God made it very difficult for the Hebrews to intermarry with the Egyptians. There was an historical reason for the animosity toward the shepherds: The Hyksos (or, shepherd-kings), hundreds of years before Joseph's time, had invaded and conquered Lower Egypt and ruled the Delta, although they never occupied the whole country of Egypt. The Hyksos came from the East and were probably Arabians, and they are represented as having been a cruel and arrogant race, who subjected the Egyptians to great hardships. The Hyksos were finally driven out of the country by a coalition of forces under several kings. The Hebrews were probably called "shepherds" because of the simplicity of their lifestyle, which was largely pastoral. Manetho, the Egyptian historian, said that the Hyksos were the builders of Jerusalem, but he was probably referring to the Canaanites rather than to the Jews. Some writers suggest that they were the progenitors of the Bedouins, the Amalekites, the Midianites, and other hostile ethnic groups that opposed the Israelites after the exodus. The Hyksos descended from the same stock of the expelled "shepherds". It is not improbable that the Philistines may have also been a branch of the same "shepherd"

Jacob Meets Pharaoh

47¹So, Joseph went and told Pharaoh, “My father, my brothers, their flocks, their cattle, and everything that they own have come from the land of Canaan. Look, they are now in the Goshen area.”

²Joseph selected five of his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh.

³Pharaoh asked Joseph’s brothers, “What do you do for a living?”

They answered, “We^a are shepherds of flocks, just as our ancestors were.”

⁴They also said to Pharaoh, “We have come to live in Egypt for a while, because there is no pasture left for our flocks. The famine is severe in the land of Canaan. So now, please let us, your servants, live in the Goshen area.”

⁵Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Your father and brothers have come to you.^b ⁶The land of Egypt lies open in front of you. Cause your father and brothers to live in the choicest part of the land. Let them live in the Goshen area. If you know that some of them have special talents, put them in charge over my own livestock!”

⁷Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

⁸Pharaoh asked Jacob, “How long

family.

a 47:3 literally, “Your slaves”

b 47:5 This was no surprise. Pharaoh had been thoroughly briefed beforehand by Joseph.

have you lived?”

⁹Jacob answered Pharaoh, “The years of my journey are 130. My years have been few, but difficult. They do not match the long lifetimes^c of my ancestors.” ¹⁰Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh again, and he left his presence.

¹¹So, Joseph helped his father and brothers get settled. He gave them some property in the choicest part of Egypt—the Rameses region^d—as Pharaoh ordered. ¹²Joseph supplied his father, his brothers, and the entire household of Jacob with food, depending on the number of little children.

No Food

¹³However, there was no other food in that entire region, because the famine was very severe. The famine caused both Egypt and Canaan to be devastated. ¹⁴Joseph collected all the money found in Egypt and Canaan as payment for the grain that they were buying. And Joseph brought the money to Pharaoh’s palace. ¹⁵When all the money from Egypt and

c 47:9 literally, “the days of their journeys”. Abraham lived to be 175 years of age (Gen. 25:7) and Isaac lived to be 180 (Gen. 35:8).

d 47:11 This city is also mentioned in Exo. 1:11; 12:37 and Num. 33:3,5. Many Bible scholars believe that this city’s former name had already been changed by 1445 B.C. to “Rameses” after the books of Moses were copied for centuries, referring to a later, more prominent Pharaoh named Rameses II. See 1 Kings 6:1.

Canaan was gone, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, “Give us food! Why should we die right in front of you, just because our money is gone!?”

¹⁶Joseph said, “Since your money is gone, bring me your livestock. I will sell you some food in exchange for your livestock.” ¹⁷So, they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them some food in exchange for their horses, for their sheep and goats, for their cattle, and for their donkeys. He supplied them with food for the rest of that year in exchange for all their livestock.

¹⁸After that year ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, “We cannot hide from you, my lord, that the money is gone and the cattle and the other livestock belong to you. There is nothing left for you, except our bodies and our land!” ¹⁹Why should we die in front of your very eyes? If we go, the land goes. So, buy us and our land in exchange for food! We and our land will be in bondage to Pharaoh. Give us seed, so that we may live and not die, and so that the land will not be empty!”

²⁰So, Joseph purchased all of the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. Each one of the Egyptians sold himself and his field to Pharaoh. The famine was so severe for them. The land

now belonged to Pharaoh. ²¹Then Joseph took charge of the people who were now slaves. From one end of Egypt to the other end, Joseph made them all servants to Pharaoh.^a

²²However, Joseph did not buy the land which belonged to the priests, because they already received regular allotments from Pharaoh. Therefore, they had enough food from Pharaoh’s allotment, which he gave them. (That is why they never sold their land.)

²³Then Joseph said to the people, “Listen, today I bought you and your land for Pharaoh. Here is seed for you to plant in the ground. ²⁴When the harvests come, you must give Pharaoh 20 percent. You will be allowed to keep the other 80 percent as seed for the fields and as food for yourselves, your little children, and your households.”

²⁵They said, “You have saved our lives! We want to work for you. Now we will serve Pharaoh as his slaves.”

²⁶So, Joseph made a law about land which is still in force in Egypt today^b—20 percent belongs to Pharaoh. The only land which did not become Pharaoh’s was the land of the priests.

a 47:21 This is the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Greek Septuagint (LXX). See also the Latin Vulgate. The Hebrew Masoretic text has: “and he moved the people into the cities.”

b 47:26 at the time when Moses wrote

Jacob's Last Wish

²⁷The people of Israel lived in the Goshen area of Egypt. They got some property there. They were fertile, and they began to increase in number more and more.

²⁸Jacob lived in the land of Egypt for 17 years. So, the total length of Jacob's life was 147 years. ²⁹When it was time for Jacob^a to die, Jacob called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If I mean anything at all to you, put your hand under my private parts,^b and vow to me and make a pledge: Please do **not** bury me in Egypt!" ³⁰After I have died, you **must** carry me out of Egypt and bury me in the burial grounds of my ancestors."^c

Joseph answered, "I will do as you say."

³¹Jacob said, "Make a vow to me!" So, Joseph took an oath to him. And, Jacob bowed himself upon the head of the bed.^d

a 47:29 literally, "Israel"

b 47:29 This was an act of absolute loyalty. Once this was done, it could not be changed. See the note on Gen. 24:2.

c 47:30 literally, "in their tomb." = Machpelah (see Gen. 23:19; 25:9; 49:31; 50:13)

d 47:31 The Greek text of Heb. 11:21 follows a *different* reading of the original Hebrew consonants (M-T-H). Here it had probably read "staff" (MaTeH) instead of "bed" (MiTaH). Did Jacob support himself on the head of the bed, or did Jacob support himself by his staff (Heb. 11:21)? Gen. 47:31 represents Jacob as not yet terminally ill but just being very old. But Heb. 11:21 portrays Jacob as "dying." Therefore, it is quite possible that the two passages may not be referring to the same incident. Our present Hebrew vocalization (see above) is translated as "bed," while the Greek Septuagint and the Letter to the Hebrews followed a different

Jacob Blesses

Ephraim and Manasseh

48¹Some time later, Joseph was told: "Listen, your father is very sick!" So, Joseph took Manasseh and Ephraim, his two sons, along with him. ²Jacob was told that his son Joseph had come to him. Jacob^e gathered his strength and sat up in bed. ³Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty^f appeared to me in the land of Canaan at Luz.^g And He blessed me there. ⁴God said to me, 'Look, I will make you fertile. I will increase your numbers. And, I will cause you to become a group of nations. I will also give this land to your descendants as a permanent possession.'

⁵"Now then, you have two sons who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you here. Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon belong to me. ⁶Any children whom you father after Ephraim and Manasseh are yours. In the land of their inheritance, those descendants will be counted along with the names of their brothers. ⁷As

I was returning from Padan, on the

vocalization, which is translated "staff." All Hebrew vowels were inserted into the Hebrew consonantal text later. Therefore, we cannot be sure what the right reading is.

e 48:2 literally, "Israel"

f 48:3 literally, "El Shaddai"

g 48:3 This was the older name for Bethel (Gen. 28:19; 35:6).

way, Rachel died by my side in the land of Canaan. We still had some distance to go to the town of Ephrath. So, I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).^a

⁸When Jacob noticed the sons of Joseph, he asked, “Who are these?”

⁹Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons whom God has given to me here.”

Then Jacob said, “Please bring them to me, so that I may bless them.”

¹⁰Jacob’s eyesight was bad because of old age. He could not see very well. So, Joseph brought the two young men to Jacob. Jacob kissed them and hugged them.

¹¹Jacob said to Joseph, “I never expected to see your face again—but, look, God has allowed me to see your children!”

¹²Then Joseph passed the young men through Jacob’s knees.^b Joseph bowed down with his face toward the ground. ¹³After that, Joseph took both of them and brought them closer to Jacob. Ephraim was on Joseph’s right, at Jacob’s left. Manasseh was on Joseph’s left, at Jacob’s right. ¹⁴However, Jacob reached out and put his right hand upon Ephraim’s head, even though he was the younger son. And, crossing

a 48:7 See Gen. 35:16-19.

b 48:12 They were kneeling at that moment; it was the cultural sign of the adoption process. See also Gen. 50:23.

his hands, Jacob placed his left hand upon Manasseh’s head, even though he was the firstborn son.

¹⁵Then Jacob blessed Joseph^c and said, “My forefathers, Abraham and Isaac, lived their lives in the presence of the one true God. And, the one true God has shepherded me all of my life to this day. ¹⁶The Angel has rescued me from all harm. May God bless these boys. May they preserve my name and the names of my forefathers—Abraham and Isaac. May they increase more and more throughout the earth.”

¹⁷When Joseph saw that his father put his **right** hand upon Ephraim’s head, Joseph did not like this. So, he took his father’s hand to move it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. ¹⁸Joseph said to his father, “No, my father! **This** is the firstborn son! Put your right hand on **his** head!”

¹⁹But his father refused. Jacob said, “My son, I know. I know. Manasseh will also become a people. And he, too, will become important. However, his little brother will become greater than him.^d Ephraim’s descendants will become big enough to be a separate nation!” ²⁰Then,

c 48:15 with his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh

d 48:19 After Solomon’s time, when the kingdom was divided (930–722 B.C.), the tribe of Ephraim became the most powerful tribe in the north of Palestine.

on that day, Jacob blessed them^a by saying, “Jacob will pronounce this blessing on you, Joseph: ‘May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.’ ” So, Jacob put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

²¹Then Jacob said to Joseph, “Listen, I am dying, but God will be with you people, and He will take all of you back to the land of your forefathers. ²²As one who is over your brothers, I will give you, Joseph, a piece of land^b which, with my sword and my bow, I took away from the control of the Amorite people.”^c

Jacob Makes His Pronouncements on All of His Sons

Deuteronomy 33:1-29

49¹Then Jacob called for his sons. He said, “Gather around, so that I can tell you what is going to happen to you in the coming days: ²“Gather together and listen, you sons of Jacob; listen to your father, Israel.

³“Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the beginning of my strength. You excelled in honor;

a 48:20 Once this blessing of divine power was uttered from Jacob’s lips, the promise of God would certainly be carried out.

b 48:22 or, “a mountain slope”; Hebrew: *shekem*. Eventually, this region in Palestine became part of Manasseh’s territory.

c 48:22 Compare Gen. 34:30-31.

you excelled in power. ⁴But you were like turbulent waters. You will not excel anymore,^d because you climbed up into the bed of your father. Reuben climbed up onto my couch and defiled it.^e

⁵“Simeon and Levi are brothers. Their swords are weapons of violence. ⁶I^f do not want to be a part of their plot.^g I^h cannot honor their group by joining it. Why? Because, while they were angry, they killed men. They cut the legs of bulls for fun.ⁱ ⁷Let their fierce anger and their cruel fury be condemned! I will scatter them among the people of Jacob^j and I will spread them throughout Israel.^k

d 49:4 No leadership ever came from the tribe of Reuben (compare Num. 32; Josh. 22:10-34; Judg. 5:15-16).

e 49:4 referring to the incest which Reuben committed with Bilhah. See Gen. 35:22.

f 49:6 literally, “My soul”

g 49:6 See Gen. 34:25-31.

h 49:6 literally, “My spirit” = my liver

i 49:6 Sometimes soldiers, for military purposes, would disable big animals by cutting the tendons of their hind legs to weaken them (compare Josh. 11:6,9; 2 Sam. 8:5).

j 49:7 Simeon was the smallest tribe of Israel (Num. 26:14). They were passed over in Moses’ blessing (Deut. 33). The descendants of Simeon were absorbed into Judah’s territory (Josh. 19:1-9; 1 Chr. 4:27-43). According to Josh. 13:33, the Levites did not receive a big land-inheritance. Yahweh God was their inheritance. They became the priestly tribe. See the 48 Levitical cities the 6 cities of refuge.

k 49:7 The Levites received no share of the land (Josh. 14:4). Instead, they lived in 48 towns with some pasture land that surrounded each of the

8“As for you, O Judah, your brothers will praise you.^a Your hand will be upon the neck of your enemies. The sons of your father will bow down to you. ⁹Judah is like a lion’s cub,^b my son, you come back from capturing your victim. Like a male lion, Judah crouches. And like a lioness, he lies down. Who will disturb him!?” ¹⁰The scepter^c will not leave Judah, nor will the rod for ruling be removed from between his feet, until the One comes to whom it belongs^d and He has the obedience of the nations. ¹¹He will tie his donkey to the vine. He will tie his young donkey to the best branch. He will wash his clothes in wine.^e He will wash his robes in the blood of grapes.^f ¹²His eyes will be darker than wine, and his

teeth will be whiter than milk.

¹³“Zebulun will live beside the seashore. He will be a home for ships. His boundary will go as far as the city of Sidon.”^g

¹⁴“Issachar is like a strong donkey lying down between two heavy loads. ¹⁵When he sees how good his resting place is and how fine the land is, he will be glad to bend his shoulder for carrying. He will put himself under forced labor willingly.

¹⁶“Dan will give justice to his people as one of the tribes of Israel.”^h ¹⁷Dan will be like a snake beside the road,ⁱ like a poisonous snake next to the path. It bites the heels of horses, and the rider falls off backward.^j

¹⁸(I yearn for Your salvation, O One Who Is Always Present.)

¹⁹“Bandits will attack Gad,^k but he will attack their heels.”^l

towns (compare Num. 35:2,7; Josh. 21:41).

a 49:8 Since Reuben, Simeon, and Levi had forfeited their leadership rights, Jacob named Judah as the strong one. His name means “praise” (Gen. 29:35).

b 49:9 Compare Num. 24:9; Ezek. 19:1-7; Mic. 5:8; Matt. 1:2,17; Luke 3:23,33; Rev. 5:5.

c 49:10 a staff carried by a royal person as an emblem of imperial authority

d 49:10 or, “until Shiloh comes”; compare Josh. 18:1; 1 Sam. 3:3; 4:3-11; Isa. 8:6; 18:7; Ezek. 21:27; John 9:7; or, “until He comes to whom tribute belongs”. Here Jacob is predicting the coming of King David whose Descendant would be the Messiah (= Jesus of Nazareth).

e 49:11 This is figurative. It signifies abundance.

f 49:11 possibly a prediction of pain and bloodshed

g 49:13 See Deut. 33:19.

h 49:16 Dan was one of the weakest tribes. It took a long time for them to conquer their territory (Josh. 19:47; Judg. 18:27-29).

i 49:17 using guerilla tactics

j 49:17 Compare Judg. 14–16; 18:27.

k 49:19 This tribe was vulnerable to attack by the neighboring Ammonites (Judg. 10:6–11:40; 1 Sam. 11:1; Jer. 49:1) The Hebrew name “Gad” can mean “attack” or “band of raiders.” They were a brave tribe (1 Chr. 5:18-26; 12:8-15).

l 49:19 This tribe’s land was on the east side of the Jordan River (Josh. 13:24-27). The Moabites attacked them (See 2 Kings 3:4 and the Mesha Stone’s testimony).

20“Asher’s food will be rich. He will produce choice morsels fit for a king.^a

21“Naphtali is like a deer that runs free, which gives birth to beautiful fawns.^b

22“Joseph is like a vine full of grapes, like a vine full of grapes near a fountain, with branches that climb over the wall.^c

23Those who were good at shooting arrows attacked him, and gave him trouble,^d 24but his bow remained steady, and his strong arms were flexible, because of the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob,^e because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, 25because of the God of your father who helps you, and because of the Almighty One^f who blesses you with the blessings of the sky above, and the blessings of the ocean which lies below, with the blessings of the breasts, and the blessings of

the womb. 26The blessings of your father are more important than the blessings of the ancient mountains, more than the bounty of the hills of the ages. May all of these blessings rest upon the head of Joseph, upon the brow of this consecrated one who is set apart from^g his brothers.^h

27“Benjamin is like a hungry wolfⁱ who eats up his victims in the morning and shares the kill in the evening.”^j

28These are all the twelve tribes of Israel.^k And this is what their father Jacob said to them when he blessed each one of them with their own special blessing.

Jacob Dies

29Then Jacob gave them these

g 49:26 Hebrew: *nazir*

h 49:26 See Judg. 1:22-29.

i 49:27 Compare Judg. 3:12-30; 5:14; 19–21; 1 Sam. 11–15; 1 Chr. 8:40; 12:1-2; 2 Chr. 14:8; 17:17-18.

j 49:27 Wolves go back to their dens and regurgitate the contents of their stomachs in order to feed their young ones.

k 49:28 Although there would be twelve tribes of Israel later, Jacob’s sons and the heads of the tribes are *not* the same in every case. Ten of Jacob’s sons (excluding Levi and Joseph) had tribes named after them. But Levi headed up a special 13th tribe of priests and their assistants. Jacob’s favorite son was Joseph. So, Joseph was afforded the honor of having two tribes come from him through his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

a 49:20 In 1 Kings 5:11, the tribe of Asher lived in the lowlands along the Mediterranean Sea between Carmel and Tyre. It was a very fruitful area. See Deut. 33:24-25.

b 49:21 or, “He utters beautiful words.” See Judg. 4–5.

c 49:22 They were expansionists (Josh. 17:14-18).

d 49:23 probably referring to the time when Joseph’s 10 half-brothers sold him into slavery (Gen. 37:18-36)

e 49:24 = God

f 49:25 Hebrew: *Shaddai*

orders: “I am about to die.^a Bury me with my ancestors^b in the cave which is in the field of Ephron the Hittite.³⁰ This cave is in the field of Machpelah, which is near the Mamre area in the land of Canaan. Abraham purchased this field from Ephron the Hittite as a burial place.^c ³¹Abraham and Sarah, his wife, were buried there. Isaac and Rebekah, his wife, were buried there. And, I buried Leah there.^d ³²The field and the cave, which is part of it, were purchased from the sons of Heth.”^e

³³When Jacob finished giving these orders to his sons, he pulled up his feet into the bed,^f breathed his last, and died.^g

50¹Joseph fell upon his father’s face. He wept over him and kissed him. ²Then Joseph commanded the morticians to embalm his father.^h (They were his

slaves.) So, they embalmed Jacob.ⁱ ³It took 40 days for them to do it, because that was the length of time needed for embalmings. The Egyptians mourned for Jacob for 70 days.^j

⁴When the days of mourning for him had passed,^k Joseph said to Pharaoh’s court, “If I mean anything at all to you, please be sure that Pharaoh hears this: ⁵My father has made me take an oath: “Listen, I am dying. Bury me there in the grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan.”^l So, please let me go up to Canaan and bury my father. Then I will come back.’”

⁶Pharaoh answered, “Go up and bury your father, just as he made you swear.”

⁷So, Joseph did go up to bury his father. All of Pharaoh’s important officers, the senior members of his court, and all the elders of the land of Egypt went along with Joseph.⁸ The entire household of Joseph and his brothers and those who belonged to his father’s household went. They left only their little children, their flocks, and their cattle in the Goshen area.

a 49:29 literally, “I will soon be gathered with my people” = those who had died were still his people, that is, they still existed. Compare Jesus’ comment in Matt. 22:32.

b 49:29 or, “forefathers”; as Jacob instructed in Gen. 47:31.

c 49:30 See Gen. 23:1-20.

d 49:31 The absence of Leah’s name in Gen. 46:8-27 confirms that she had already died in Canaan.

e 49:32 = the Hittites

f 49:33 that is, into the fetal position

g 49:33 literally, “was gathered to his people”

h 50:2 He wanted to avoid the pagan, magical rites which were usually associated with professional embalmers.

i 50:2 literally, “Israel.”

j 50:3 This included the 40 days of the embalming process.

k 50:4 Because Joseph was in a constant state of mourning, his beard and his head were not shaved. Therefore, he could not appear in the presence of Pharaoh. So he sent a messenger.

l 50:5 See Gen. 47:29-31.

⁹Men in chariots and horsemen also went up there with Joseph. It was a very large group.

¹⁰When they came to Atad's threshing-floor, near the Jordan River, they cried there loudly and very bitterly. Joseph observed seven days of mourning for his father.

¹¹When the people of the land of Canaan who lived there saw them mourning at Atad's threshing-floor, they said, "This is a time of very serious mourning by the Egyptians." That is why its name became Abel-Mizraim.^a It is near the Jordan River.

¹²So, Jacob's sons did for him exactly as he had commanded them.

¹³His sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought for a burial ground from Ephron the Hittite. It was near the area of Mamre. ¹⁴Then Joseph, his brothers, and all those who went up to Canaan with him to bury his father returned to Egypt after burying Jacob.

Joseph Comforts His Brothers

¹⁵When Joseph's brothers thought about their father's death, they said, "What if Joseph is holding a grudge against us, and he decides to pay us back for all the wrongs that we did to

him!?"^b ¹⁶So, they sent a message to Joseph which said: "Your father gave an order before he died which said: ¹⁷"This is what you must say to Joseph: "Please forgive now the violation of your brothers and their wrong. They treated you terribly! So now, please forgive the violation of the servants of your father's God."'"

When their message was given to Joseph, he wept.

¹⁸Then Joseph's brothers also came and fell down in front of him^c and said, "Look at us; we are your servants!"

¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Do I occupy the role of **God!**? Of course not! ²⁰You intended harm against me. But God intended it for good to accomplish what is happening today — keeping many people alive. ²¹So then, don't be afraid. I will take care of your needs and those of your little children." Then Joseph reassured them, speaking to them in a kind manner.

Joseph Dies

²²Joseph continued to live in Egypt, he and his father's household. Joseph lived to be 110 years old. ²³Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Also, when the sons of Machir, Manasseh's son, were born,

b 50:15 They still had very guilty consciences (compare Gen. 42:21,28; 44:16; 45:3).

c 50:18 See Gen. 37:7-10.

a 50:11 This compound Hebrew name means "mourning of the Egyptians."

they were placed upon the knees of Joseph.^a

²⁴Joseph said to his brothers, “I am dying now, but God will surely take care of you.^b He will bring you forth from this land to the land which He promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. ²⁵Then Joseph made the descendants of Jacob take an oath.

a 50:23 signifying that these great-grandchildren belonged to Joseph. See also Gen. 48:12.

b 50:24 Like Jacob earlier (Gen. 48:4,21), Joseph assures his brothers that God would bring up their descendants out of Egypt and give them the land of Canaan.

He said, “God will surely take care of you, but you must carry up my bones from this place!”^c ²⁶Then Joseph died at the age of 110. They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin^d in Egypt.

c 50:25 Here Joseph echoes his father Jacob’s words of Gen. 48:21. They both believed strongly that God would fulfill His original promise to Abraham to give them the land of Canaan. See Gen. 12:2,3,7; 13:14; 15:1; 17:4-5. Centuries later, Moses fulfilled this request (see Exo. 13:19). Joseph’s bones were eventually buried in Shechem (Josh. 24:32).

d 50:26 This was a wooden mummy case. Then it was usually set inside a stone sarcophagus.