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World Bible Translation Center
P.O. Box 820648
Fort Worth, Texas 76182, USA
Telephone: 1-817-595-1664
Toll-Free in US: 1-888-54-BIBLE
E-Mail: info@wbtc.com
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Genesis

THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD

The First Day—Light

1 God made the sky and earth. At first, ²the earth was completely empty; nothing was on the earth. Darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit moved over* the water. ³Then God said, "Let there be light!"* And light began to shine. ⁴God saw the light, and he knew it was good. Then God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God named the light "day," and he named the darkness "night."

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

The Second Day—Sky

⁶Then God said, "Let there be air* to separate the water into two parts!" ⁷So God made the air and separated the water. Some of the water was above the air, and some of the water was below the air. ⁸God named the air "sky." There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the second day.

The Third Day—Dry Land and Plants

⁹Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered together so the dry land will appear." And it happened. ¹⁰God named the

moved over The Hebrew word means "to fly over" or "to swoop down," like a bird flying over its nest to protect its babies.

God made ... light Or, "In the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth. While ²the earth had no special shape, and darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit hovered over the water, ³God said, 'Let there be light!'" Or, "When God began to create the sky and the earth, ²while the earth was completely empty, and darkness covered the ocean, and a powerful wind blew over the water, ³God said, 'Let there be light.'"

air The Hebrew word means "bowl," or "dome."

dry land "earth." And God named the water that was gathered together "seas." God saw this was good.

¹¹Then God said, "Let the earth grow grass, plants that make grain, and fruit trees. The fruit trees will make fruit with seeds in it. And each plant will make its own kind of seed. Let these plants grow on the earth." And it happened. ¹²The earth grew grass and plants that made grain. And it grew trees that made fruit with seeds in it. Every plant made its own kind of seeds. And God saw this was good.

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

The Fourth Day—Sun, Moon, and Stars

¹⁴Then God said, "Let there be lights in the sky. These lights will separate the days from the nights. These lights will be used for special signs and to show when special meetings* begin. And they will be used to show the days and years. ¹⁵These lights will be in the sky to shine light on the earth." And it happened.

¹⁶So God made the two large lights. God made the larger light to rule during the day. He made the smaller light to rule during the night. God also made the stars. ¹⁷God put these lights in the sky to shine on the earth. ¹⁸God put these lights in the sky to rule over the day and over the night. These lights separated the light from the darkness. And God saw this was good.

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

special meetings The Israelites used the sun and moon to decide when the months and years began. And many Jewish holidays and special meetings began at the time of the new moon or full moon.

The Fifth Day—Fish and Birds

²⁰Then God said, “Let the water be filled with many living things. And let there be birds to fly in the air over the earth.” ²¹So God made the large sea animals.* God made every living thing that moves in the sea. There are many different kinds of sea animals—and God made them all! God also made every kind of bird that flies in the sky. And God saw this was good.

²²God blessed these animals. God told them to have many babies and fill the seas. And God told the birds on land to make many more birds.

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

The Sixth Day—Land Animals and People

²⁴Then God said, “Let the earth make many kinds of living things. Let there be many different kinds of animals. Let there be large animals and small crawling animals of every kind. And let all these animals make more animals.” And all these things happened.

²⁵So God made every kind of animal. God made the wild animals, the tame animals, and all the small crawling things. And God saw this was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Now let’s make man.* We will make people as a copy of ourselves. People will be like us. They will rule over all the fish in the sea and the birds in the air. They will rule over all the large animals and all the little things that crawl on the earth.”

²⁷So God made people in his own image. God made people as a copy of himself.* God made them male and female. ²⁸God blessed them and said to them, “Have many children. Fill the earth and take control of it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the air. Rule over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

²⁹God said, “I am giving you all the grain bearing plants and all the fruit trees. Those trees make fruit with seeds in it. This grain and fruit will be your food. ³⁰And I am giving all the green plants to the animals. Those

green plants will be their food. Every animal on earth, every bird in the air, and all the little things that crawl on the earth will eat that food.” And all these things happened.

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

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

The Seventh Day—Rest

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

THE BEGINNING OF HUMANITY

⁴This is the history of the sky and the earth. This is the story about the things that happened at the time God made the earth and the sky. ⁵This was before there were plants on the earth. Nothing was growing in the fields. This was because the Lord had not yet made it rain on the earth. And there was no person to care for the plants. ⁶Water* came up from the earth and spread over the ground.

⁷Then the Lord God took dust from the ground and made a man.* The Lord breathed the breath of life into the man’s nose, and the man became a living thing. ⁸Then the Lord God planted a garden in the East,* in a place named Eden. The Lord God put the man he made in that garden. ⁹The Lord God made every beautiful tree and every tree that was good for food to grow in the garden. In the middle of the garden, the Lord God put the tree of life and also the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed from Eden and watered the garden. That river then separated and became four smaller rivers. ¹¹The name of the first river was Pishon. This river flowed around the

large sea animals Or, “sea monsters.”

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

God made people ... himself Compare Gen. 5:1,3.

Water Or, “A mist.”

East This usually means the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as far east as the Persian Gulf.

entire country of Havilah.* ¹²(There is gold in that country, and that gold is good. There are also Bdelium* and Onyx* in that country.) ¹³The name of the second river was Gihon. This river flowed around the entire country of Ethiopia.* ¹⁴The name of the third river was Tigris.* This river flowed east of Assyria. The fourth river was the Euphrates.*

¹⁵The Lord God put the man in the garden of Eden to work the soil and take care of the garden. ¹⁶The Lord God gave the man this command. The Lord God said, “You may eat from any tree in the garden. ¹⁷But you must not eat from the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil. If you eat fruit from that tree you will die!”

The First Woman

¹⁸Then the Lord God said, “I see that it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a person like him to help him.”

¹⁹The Lord God used dust from the ground and made every animal in the fields and every bird in the air. The Lord God brought all these animals to the man, and the man gave everything a name. ²⁰The man gave names to all the tame animals, to all the birds in the air, and to all the wild animals of the forest. The man saw many, many animals and birds, but the man could not find a helper that was right for him. ²¹So the Lord God caused the man to sleep very deeply. While the man was asleep, the Lord God took one of the ribs from the man’s body. Then the Lord God closed the man’s skin at the place where he took the rib. ²²The Lord God used the rib from the man to make a woman. Then the Lord God brought the woman to the man. ²³And the man said,

“Finally! [A person like me].
Her bones are from my bones.
Her body is from my body.
She was taken out of man,
so I will call her woman.”

Havilah The land along the west coast of the Arabian peninsula and, possibly, the part of Africa south of Ethiopia.

Bdelium An expensive, sweet-smelling gum.

Onyx A precious stone with many layers of blue or gray.

Ethiopia Or, “Cush,” a country in Africa by the Red Sea.

Tigris, Euphrates The two largest rivers flowing through the countries of Babylonia and Assyria.

²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife. This way, two people become one.

²⁵The man and his wife were naked, but they were not ashamed.

The Beginning of Sin

3 The snake was the most clever of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. [The snake wanted to trick the woman.] The snake spoke to the woman and said, “Woman, did God really tell you that you must not eat from any tree in the garden?”

²The woman answered the snake, “[No! God did not say that!] We can eat fruit from the trees in the garden. ³But there is one tree we must not eat from. God told us, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden. You must not even touch that tree or you will die.’”

⁴But the snake said to the woman, “You will not die. ⁵God knows that if you eat the fruit from that tree you will learn about good and evil. And then you will be the same as God!”

⁶The woman saw the tree was beautiful. She saw the fruit was good to eat. And it was exciting that the tree would make her wise. So the woman took fruit from the tree and ate it. Her husband was there with her, so she gave some of the fruit to him and he ate it.

⁷Then [both the man and the woman changed. It was like] their eyes opened, and they saw things differently. They saw that they had no clothes on—they were naked. So they got some fig leaves and sewed them together and wore the fig leaves for clothes.

⁸During the cool part of the day, the Lord God was walking in the garden. The man and the woman heard him, and they hid among the trees in the garden. ⁹The Lord God called to the man and said, “Where are you?”

¹⁰The man said, “I heard you walking in the garden, and I was afraid. I was naked, so I hid.”

¹¹The Lord God said to the man, “Who told you that you were naked? [What caused you to be ashamed?] Did you eat fruit from that special tree? I told you not to eat from that tree!”

¹²The man said, “The woman you made for me gave me fruit from that tree. So I ate it.”

GENESIS 3:13–4:4

4

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

The woman said, “The snake tricked me.
He fooled me and I ate the fruit.”

¹⁴So the Lord God said to the snake,

“You did this very bad thing,
so bad things will happen to you.
It will be worse for you
than for any other animal.
You must crawl on your belly
and eat dust all the days
of your life.

¹⁵ I will make you and the woman
enemies to each other.
Your children and her children
will be enemies.
You will bite her child’s foot,
but he will crush your head.”

¹⁶Then the Lord God said to the woman,

“I will cause you to have much trouble
when you are pregnant.
And when you give birth to children,
you will have much pain.
You will want your husband very much,
but he will rule over you.”*

¹⁷Then the Lord God said to the man,

“I commanded you
not to eat from that tree.
But you listened to your wife,
and you ate from that tree.
So I will curse* the ground
because of you.
You will have to work very hard
all the days of your life
for the food the ground gives.
¹⁸ The ground will grow thorns and weeds
for you.
And you will have to eat the plants
that grow wild in the fields.*
¹⁹ You will work hard for your food,
until your face is covered with sweat.
You will work hard until the day you die.
And then you will become dust again.

I used dust to make you.
And when you die
you will become dust again.”

²⁰Adam* named his wife Eve.* Adam gave
her this name because Eve is the mother of
every person who ever lived.

²¹The Lord God used animal skins and
made some clothes for the man and his wife.
Then he put the clothes on them.

²²The Lord God said, “Look, the man has
become like us—he knows about good and
evil. And now the man might take the fruit
from the tree of life. If the man eats that fruit,
he will live forever.”

²³So the Lord God forced the man to leave
the garden of Eden. Adam* was forced to go
and work the ground he was made from.
²⁴The Lord God forced the man to leave the
garden. Then he put Cherub angels* at the
entrance to the garden to protect it. The Lord
God also put a sword of fire there. This sword
flashed around and around guarding the way
to the tree of life.

The First Family

4 Adam and his wife Eve had sexual
relations and Eve gave birth to a baby. The
baby was named Cain.* Eve said, “With the
Lord’s help, I have made a man!”

²After that, Eve gave birth to another baby.
This baby was Cain’s brother, Abel. Abel
became a shepherd. Cain became a farmer.

The First Murder

^{3–4}At harvest time,* Cain brought a gift to
the Lord. Cain brought some of the food that
he grew from the ground. But Abel brought
some animals from his flock. Abel brought
the best parts of his best sheep.*

Adam This name means, “man” or “people.” It is like the word
meaning “earth” or “red clay.”

Eve This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “life.”

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these
angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

Cain This is like the Hebrew word meaning “make” or “get.”

At harvest time Literally, “at the end of days.”

Abel brought ... best sheep Literally, “Abel brought some of
his firstborn sheep, especially their fat.”

You ... you Or, “You will want [to rule] your husband, but he
will rule over you.” In Hebrew this is like Gen. 4:7.

curse To ask for bad things to happen to a thing or person.

The ground ... fields See Gen. 1:28–29.

The Lord accepted Abel and his gift. ⁵But the Lord did not accept Cain and his offering. Cain was sad because of this, and he became very angry. ⁶The Lord asked Cain, "Why are you angry? Why does your face look sad? ⁷If you do good things, you will be right with me. Then I will accept you. But if you do wrong things, then that sin is in your life. Your sin will want to control you, but you must control that sin."*

⁸Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." So Cain and Abel went to the field. Then Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁹Later, the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

Cain answered, "I don't know. Is it my job to watch and care for my brother?"

¹⁰Then the Lord said, "What have you done? You killed your brother! His blood is like a voice shouting to me from the ground. ¹¹You killed your brother, and the ground opened up to take his blood from your hands. So now, I will cause bad things to happen to that ground. ¹²In the past, you planted, and your plants grew well. But now you will plant, and the ground will not help your plants grow. You will not have a home on the earth. You will wander from place to place."

¹³Then Cain said, "This punishment is more than I can bear! ¹⁴Look, you are forcing me to leave my land. I won't be able to see you or be near you! I won't have a home! I will be forced to wander from place to place on the earth. And whoever finds me will kill me."

¹⁵Then the Lord said to Cain, "I will not let that happen! If anyone kills you, Cain, then I will punish that person much, much more." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain. This mark showed that no person should kill him.

Cain's Family

¹⁶Cain went away from the Lord. Cain lived in the land of Nod.*

But if you ... control that sin Or, "But if you don't do right, then sin is crouching at your door. It wants you, but you must rule over it."

Nod This name means "wandering."

¹⁷Cain had sexual relations with his wife. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son named Enoch. Cain built a city and gave the city the same name as his son Enoch.

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

¹⁹Lamech married two women. One wife was named Adah, and the other wife was named Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal. Jabal was the father* of people who live in tents and earn their living by keeping cattle. ²¹Adah also had another son Jubal. (Jubal was Jabal's brother.) Jubal was the father of people who play the harp and flute. ²²Zillah gave birth to Tubal-Cain. Tubal-Cain was the father of people who work with bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-Cain was named Naamah.

²³Lamech said to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah,
hear my voice!
You wives of Lamech,
listen to me.
A man hurt me,
so I killed him.
A child hit me,
so I killed him.

²⁴ The punishment for killing Cain
was very great!
So the punishment for killing me
will be much, much greater!"

Adam and Eve Have a New Son

²⁵Adam again had sexual relations with Eve. And Eve gave birth to another son. They named him Seth.* Eve said, "God has given me another son. Cain killed Abel, but now I have Seth." ²⁶Seth also had a son. He named him Enosh. At that time, the people began to pray to the Lord.*

father This probably means that this man invented these things, or was the first person to use them.

Seth This is like a Hebrew word meaning "to give."

people ... the Lord Literally, "people began calling on the name YAHWEH."

Adam's Family History

5 This is the book about the family of Adam.* God made people a copy of himself.* ²God made them male and female. And on the same day he made them, God blessed them and named them “Adam.”*

³After Adam was 130 years old, he had another son. This son looked just like Adam.* Adam named his son Seth. ⁴After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years. During that time, Adam had other sons and daughters. ⁵So Adam lived a total of 930 years; then he died.

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

⁹After Enosh was 90 years old, he had a son named Kenan. ¹⁰After Kenan was born, Enosh lived 815 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ¹¹So Enosh lived a total of 905 years; then he died.

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

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

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

²¹After Enoch was 65 years old, he had a son named Methuselah. ²²After Methuselah was born, Enoch walked with God for 300 years more. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ²³So Enoch lived a total of 365 years. ²⁴One day Enoch was walking

with God, and Enoch disappeared. God took him.*

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

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, he had a son. ²⁹Lamech named his son Noah.* Lamech said, “We work very hard as farmers because God cursed the ground. But Noah will bring us rest.”

³⁰After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters. ³¹So Lamech lived a total of 777 years; then he died.

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

People Become Evil

6 The number of people on earth continued to increase. There were girls born to these people. ^{2–4}The sons of God saw that these girls were beautiful. So the sons of God married any of the girls they chose.

These women gave birth to children. During that time and later, the Nephilim* people lived in the land. They were famous people. They were heroes from ancient times.*

Then the Lord said, “People are only human; I will not let my Spirit be troubled by them forever. I will let them live 120 years.”*

⁵The Lord saw that the people on the earth were very evil. The Lord saw that people thought only about evil things all the time.

One day ... God took him Or, “Enoch pleased God. Enoch disappeared. God took him.”

Noah This name means “rest.”

Nephilim This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “People who have fallen.” Later, the Nephilim were a famous family of large fighting men. See Num. 13:32–33.

These women ... times Or, “The Nephilim lived in the land in those days and also later, when the sons of God married the daughters of men, and these women had given birth to children who were famous heroes from ancient times.”

People ... 120 years Or, “My Spirit will not live with people forever, because they are flesh. They will live only 120 years.” Or, “My Spirit will not judge people forever because they will all die in 120 years.”

Adam This name means “man” or “people.” It is like the word meaning “earth” or “red clay.”

God made people ... himself Literally, “He made him in the image of God.” See Gen. 1:27; 5:3.

he had ... like Adam Or, “he fathered a son in his image and likeness.” In Hebrew this is like Gen. 1:27; 5:1.

⁶The Lord was sorry that he had made people on the earth. It made the Lord very sad in his heart. ⁷So the Lord said, “I will destroy all the people that I made on the earth. I will destroy every man and every animal and everything that crawls on the earth. And I will destroy all the birds in the air. Why? Because I am sorry that I have made all these things.”

⁸But there was one man on earth that pleased the Lord—Noah.*

Noah and the Great Flood

⁹This is the story about the family of Noah. Noah was a good man all his life. Noah always followed God. ¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

^{11–12}God looked at the earth, and he saw that people had ruined it. Violence was everywhere—people had become evil and cruel, and had ruined their life on earth.

¹³So God said to Noah, “All people have filled the earth with anger and violence. So I will destroy all living things. I will remove them from the earth. ¹⁴Use cypress wood* and build a boat for yourself. Make rooms in the boat,* and cover the boat with tar.*

¹⁵“This is the size I want you to make the boat: 300 cubits* long, 50 cubits* wide, and 30 cubits* high. ¹⁶Make a window for the boat about 18 inches* below the roof.* Put a door in the side of the boat. Make three floors

in the boat; a top deck, a middle deck, and a lower deck.

¹⁷“Understand what I am telling you. I will bring a great flood of water on the earth. I will destroy all living things that live under heaven. Everything on the earth will die. ¹⁸I will make a special agreement with you. And you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives will all go into the boat. ¹⁹Also, you must find two of every living thing on the earth. Find male and female and bring them on the boat. Keep them alive with you. ²⁰Find two of every kind of bird on the earth. And find two of every kind of animal on the earth. And find two of every kind of thing that crawls on the ground. Male and female of every kind of animal on the earth will be with you. Keep them alive on the boat. ²¹Also bring every kind of food on earth into the boat. The food will be for you and for the animals.”

²²Noah did all these things. Noah obeyed all the things that God commanded.

The Flood Begins

7 Then the Lord said to Noah, “I have seen that you are a good man, even among the evil people of this time. So gather your family and all of you go into the boat. ²Get seven pairs (seven males and seven females) of every kind of clean animal.* And get one pair (one male and one female) of every other animal on the earth. Lead all these animals into the boat with you. ³Get seven pairs (seven males and seven females) of all the birds. This will allow all these animals to continue living on the earth after the other animals are destroyed. ⁴Seven days from now I will send much rain on the earth. It will rain for 40 days and 40 nights. And I will wipe everything off the face of the earth. I will destroy everything I made.” ⁵Noah did everything the Lord told him to do.

⁶Noah was 600 years old at the time the rains came. ⁷Noah and his family went into the boat to be saved from the flood. Noah’s wife and his sons and their wives were on the boat

Noah This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “to be sorry,” “to comfort,” or “to rest.”

cypress wood Literally, “gopher-wood.” We do not know exactly what kind of wood this is. It might be a kind of tree or squared timbers.

Make rooms in the boat Or, “Make caulking for the boat.”

This could be small plants that were stuffed into the cracks and covered with tar.

tar Or, “pitch,” a thick oil that must be heated to become liquid.

300 cubits 442’ 10 15/16” (135m) if this was the short cubit or 516’ 0” (157.5m) if it was the long cubit.

50 cubits 73’ 9 3/16” (22.5m) if this was the short cubit or 86’ 1 1/2” (26.25m.) if it was the long cubit.

30 cubits 44’ 3 7/16” (13.5m) if this was the short cubit or 51’ 8 1/16” (15.75m) if it was the long cubit.

18 inches Or, “one cubit,” that is, 1’ 5 11/16” (45cm) if this was the short cubit or 1’ 8 5/8” (52.5cm) if it was the long cubit.

Make a window ... below the roof Or “Make an opening for the boat about 18 inches tall.”

clean animal(s) Birds and animals that God said could be used for sacrifices.

with him. ⁸All the clean animals,* all the other animals on the earth, the birds, and everything that crawls on the earth ⁹went into the boat with Noah. These animals went into the boat in groups of two, male and female, just like God commanded. ¹⁰Seven days later the flood started. The rain began to fall on the earth.

^{11–13}On the 17th day of the second month, when Noah was 600 years old, all the springs under the ground split open, and water began flowing from the ground. That same day the rains began falling hard on the earth. It was like windows in the sky were opened. The rain fell on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. That very same day Noah and his wife, his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives went into the boat. ¹⁴Those people and every kind of animal on the earth were in the boat. Every kind of cattle, every kind of animal that crawls on the earth, and every kind of bird were in the boat. ¹⁵All these animals went into the boat with Noah. They came in groups of two from every kind of animal that had the breath of life. ¹⁶All these animals went into the boat in groups of two, just like God had commanded Noah. Then the Lord closed the door behind him.

¹⁷Water flooded the earth for 40 days. The water began rising and lifted the boat off the ground. ¹⁸The water continued to rise, and the boat floated on the water high above the earth. ¹⁹The water rose so much that even the highest mountains were covered by the water. ²⁰The water continued to rise above the mountains. The water was more than 20 feet* above the highest mountain.

^{21–22}Every living thing on earth died—every man and woman, every bird, and every kind of animal on earth died. All the many kinds of animals and all the things that crawl on the ground died. Every living, breathing thing on dry land died. ²³In this way, God wiped the earth clean—God destroyed every living thing on the earth—every man, every animal, everything that crawls, and every bird.

clean animals Birds and animals that God said could be used for sacrifices.

20 feet Literally, “15 cubits” which would be 22’ 1 11/16” (6.75m) if this was the short cubit or 25’ 10” (7.875m) if it was the long cubit.

All these things were destroyed from the earth. The only life that was left was Noah and those people and animals that were with him in the boat. ²⁴The water continued to cover the earth for 150 days.

The Flood Ends

8 But God did not forget about Noah. God remembered Noah and all the animals that were with him in the boat. God made a wind blow over the earth. And all the water began to disappear.

²Rain stopped falling from the sky. And water stopped flowing from under the earth. ^{3–4}The water that covered the earth began to go down and down. After 150 days, the water was low enough that the boat touched land again. The boat stopped on one of the mountains of Ararat.* This was the 17th day of the seventh month. ⁵The water continued to go down, and by the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains were above the water.

⁶Forty days later, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat. ⁷Then Noah sent out a raven.* The raven flew from place to place until the ground was dry and the water was gone. ⁸Noah also sent out a dove. Noah wanted the dove to find dry ground. He wanted to know if water still covered the earth.

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

¹⁰After seven days, Noah again sent out the dove. ¹¹And that afternoon the dove came back to Noah. The dove had a fresh olive leaf in its mouth. This was a sign to show Noah that there was dry ground on the earth. ¹²Seven days later, Noah sent the dove out again. But this time the dove never came back.

¹³After that, Noah opened the door* of the boat. Noah looked and saw that the ground was dry. This was the first day of the first month of the year. Noah was 601 years old.

Ararat Or, “Urartu,” an area in Eastern Turkey.

raven A kind of bird.

opened the door Literally, “removed the covering.”

¹⁴By the 27th day of the second month the ground was completely dry.

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Leave the boat. You, your wife, your sons, and your sons’ wives should go out now. ¹⁷Bring every living animal out of the boat with you—all the birds, animals, and everything that crawls on the earth. Those animals will make many more animals, and they will fill the earth again.”

¹⁸So Noah went out with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives. ¹⁹All the animals, everything that crawls, and every bird left the boat. All the animals came out of the boat in family groups.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar* to the Lord. Noah took some of all the clean birds and some of all the clean animals,* and Noah burned them on the altar as a gift to God.

²¹The Lord smelled these sacrifices, and it pleased him. The Lord said to himself, “I will never again curse the ground as a way to punish people. People are evil from the time that they are young. So I will never again destroy every living thing on the earth like I have just done. ²²As long as the earth continues, there will always be a time for planting and a time for harvest. There will always be cold and hot, summer and winter, day and night on earth.”

The New Beginning

9 God blessed Noah and his sons. God said to him, “Have many children. Fill the earth with your people. ²Every animal on earth, every bird in the air, every animal that crawls on the ground, and every fish in the sea will be afraid of you. All of them will be under your control. ³In the past, I gave you the green plants to eat. Now, every animal will also be food for you. I give you everything on earth—it is yours. ⁴But I give you one command. You must not eat meat that still has its life (blood) in it. ⁵I will demand your blood for your lives. That is, I will demand the life of any animal that kills a person. And

I will demand the life of any person who takes another person’s life.

⁶ “God made people as a copy of himself. So any person who kills a person must be killed by a person.

⁷“Noah, you and your sons should have many children. Fill the earth with your people.”

⁸Then God said to Noah and his sons, ⁹“I now make my promise to you and to your people who will live after you. ¹⁰I make my promise to all the birds, and to all the cattle, and to all the animals that came out of the boat with you. I make my promise to every living thing on earth. ¹¹This is my promise to you: All life on the earth was destroyed by the flood. But that will never happen again. A flood will never again destroy all the life on the earth.”

¹²And God said, “And I will give you something to prove that I made this promise to you. This proof will show that I have made an agreement with you and every living thing on earth. This agreement will continue for all times to come. This is the proof: ¹³I have made a rainbow in the clouds. That rainbow is proof of the agreement between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth, you will see the rainbow in the clouds. ¹⁵When I see this rainbow, I will remember the agreement between me and you and every living thing on the earth. That agreement says that a flood will never again destroy all life on the earth. ¹⁶When I look and see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the agreement that continues forever. I will remember the agreement between me and every living thing on the earth.”

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

Problems Begin Again

¹⁸Noah’s sons came out of the boat with him. Their names were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹Those three men were Noah’s sons. And all the people on earth came from those three sons.

²⁰Noah became a farmer. He planted a field of grapes. ²¹Noah made wine and drank it. He became drunk and lay in his tent. Noah was

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices that were offered as gifts to God.

clean birds ... animals Birds and animals that God said could be used for sacrifices.

not wearing any clothes. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, looked at his naked father. Ham told his brothers outside the tent. ²³Then Shem and Japheth got a coat. They carried the coat on their backs into the tent. They walked backwards into the tent. In this way, they did not see their father without clothes.

²⁴Later, Noah woke up. (He was sleeping because of the wine.) Then he learned what his young son, Ham, had done to him. ²⁵So Noah said,

“May there be a curse on Canaan*!
May he be a slave to his brothers.”

²⁶Noah also said,

“Bless the Lord, God of Shem!
May Canaan be Shem’s slave.
²⁷ May God give more land to Japheth.
May God live in Shem’s tents.
And may Canaan be their slave.”

²⁸After the flood Noah lived 350 years.
²⁹Noah lived a total of 950 years; then he died.

Nations Grow and Spread

10 Noah’s sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. After the flood, these three men became the fathers of many more sons. Here is a list of the sons that came from Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Japheth’s Descendants

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

³Gomer’s sons were: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁴Javan’s sons were: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.*

⁵All the people who lived in the area around the Mediterranean Sea came from these sons of Japheth. Each son had his own land. All the families grew and became different nations. Each nation had its own language.

Ham’s Descendants

⁶Ham’s sons were: Cush,* Mizraim,* Put, and Canaan.

⁷Cush’s sons were: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtecah.

Raamah’s sons were: Sheba and Dedan.

⁸Cush also had a son named Nimrod. Nimrod became a very powerful man on earth. ⁹Nimrod was a great hunter before the Lord. That is why people compare other men to Nimrod and say, “That man is like Nimrod, a great hunter before the Lord.”

¹⁰Nimrod’s kingdom spread from Babylon to Erech, Akkad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar. ¹¹Nimrod also went into Assyria. In Assyria, Nimrod built the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and ¹²Resen. (Resen is the city between Nineveh and Calah, the big city.)

¹³Mizraim (*Egypt*) was the father of the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh, ¹⁴Pathrus, Casluh, and Caphtor. (The Philistine people came from Casluh.)

¹⁵Canaan was the father of Sidon. Sidon was Canaan’s first son. Canaan was also the father of Jeth, the father of the Hittite people. ¹⁶And Canaan was the father of the Jebusite people, the Amorite people, the Girgashite people, ¹⁷the Hivite people, the Arkite people, the Sinite people, ¹⁸the Arvadite people, the Zemarite people, and the people from Hamath. The families of Canaan spread to different parts of the world.

¹⁹The land of the people of Canaan was from Sidon in the north to Gerar in the south, from Gaza in the west to Sodom and Gomorrah in the east, from Admah and Zeboiim to Lasha.

²⁰All those people were descendants* of Ham. All those families had their own languages and their own lands. They became separate nations.

Canaan Ham’s son. The people of Canaan lived along the coast of Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria. Later, God gave this land to the people of Israel.

Dodanim Or, “Rodanim,” or “the people of Rhodes.”

Cush This is also another name for Ethiopia.

Mizraim This is also another name for Egypt.

descendant(s) A person’s children and their future families.

Shem's Descendants

²¹Shem was Japheth's older brother. One of Shem's descendants was Eber, the father of all the Hebrew people.*

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

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

²⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah. Shelah was the father of Eber. ²⁵Eber was the father of two sons. One son was named Peleg.* He was given this name because the earth was divided during his life. The other son was named Joktan.

²⁶Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All those people were Joktan's sons. ³⁰Those people lived in the area between Mesha and the hill country in the East.* Mesha was toward the country of Sephar.

³¹Those are the people from the family of Shem. They are arranged by families, languages, countries, and nations.

³²That is the list of the families from Noah's sons. They are arranged according to their nations. From those families came all the people who spread across the earth after the flood.

The World Divided

11 ¹After the flood, the whole world spoke one language. All people used the same words. ²People moved from the East.* They found a plain in the country of Shinar. The people stayed there to live.

³The people said, "We should make bricks and put them in fire so that they will become very hard." So the people used bricks, not stones, to build their houses. And the people used tar,* not mortar.*

One ... Hebrew people Literally, "To Shem was born the father of Eber's sons."

Peleg This name means, "division."

East This usually means the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as far as the Persian Gulf.

tar Or, "pitch," a thick oil that must be heated to become liquid.

mortar Cement used when building with bricks.

⁴Then the people said, "We should build a city for ourselves. And we should build a tower that will reach to the sky. We will be famous. ⁵And this will keep us together. We will not be scattered all over the earth."

⁵The Lord came down to see the city and the very tall building. The Lord saw the people building these things. ⁶The Lord said, "These people all speak the same language. And I see that they are joined together to do this work. This is only the beginning of what they can do. Soon they will be able to do anything they want. ⁷So let's go down and confuse their language. Then they will not understand each other."

⁸So the Lord caused the people to spread all over the earth. So the people did not finish building the city. ⁹That is the place where the Lord confused the language of the whole world. So that place is called Babel.* So the Lord caused the people to spread out from that place to all the other places on earth.

The Story of Shem's Family

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

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

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

¹⁶After Eber was 34 years old, his son Peleg was born. ¹⁷After Peleg was born, Eber lived 430 years more. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸After Peleg was 30 years old, his son Reu was born. ¹⁹After Reu was born, Peleg lived 209 years more. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

Babel Or, "Babylon." This is like a word meaning "confuse."

²⁰After Reu was 32 years old, his son Serug was born. ²¹After Serug was born, Reu lived 207 years more. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

²²After Serug was 30 years old, his son Nahor was born. ²³After Nahor was born, Serug lived 200 years more. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

²⁴After Nahor was 29 years old, his son Terah was born. ²⁵After Terah was born, Nahor lived 119 years more. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

²⁶After Terah was 70 years old, his sons Abram, Nahor, and Haran were born.

The Story of Terah's Family

²⁷This is the story of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot. ²⁸Haran died in his home town, Ur of Babylonia,* while his father Terah was still alive. ²⁹Abram and Nahor both married. Abram's wife was named Sarai. Nahor's wife was named Milcah. Milcah was the daughter of Haran. Haran was the father of Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰Sarai did not have any children because she was not able to have children.

³¹Terah took his family and left Ur of Babylonia.* They planned to travel to Canaan. Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai (Abram's wife). They traveled to the city of Haran and decided to stay there. ³²Terah lived to be 205 years old. He died in Haran.

God Calls Abram

12 The Lord said to Abram,
 "Leave your country and your people.
 Leave your father's family
 and go to the country I will show you.
² I will build a great nation from you.
 I will bless you
 and make your name famous.
 People will use your name
 to bless other people.

Ur of Babylonia Literally, "Ur of the Chaldeans." A city in southern Babylonia.

³ I will bless people who bless you,
 and I will curse people who curse* you.
 I will use you to bless
 all the people on earth."

Abram Goes to Canaan

⁴So Abram left Haran just like the Lord said. And Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran. ⁵Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the slaves and all the other things he got in Haran. Then Abram and his group moved to the land of Canaan. ⁶Abram traveled through the land of Canaan as far as the town of Shechem and then went to the big tree at Moreh. The Canaanite people lived in that place at this time.

⁷The Lord appeared* to Abram. The Lord said, "I will give this land to your descendants."

The Lord appeared to Abram at that place. So Abram built an altar* for worshiping the Lord there. ⁸Then Abram left that place and traveled to the mountains east of Bethel. Abram set up his tent there. The city of Bethel was to the west. The city of Ai was to the east. At that place Abram built another altar to the Lord. And Abram worshiped the Lord there. ⁹After this, Abram began traveling again. He traveled toward the Negev.*

Abram in Egypt

¹⁰During this time, the land was very dry. There was no rain, and no food was able to grow. So Abram went down to Egypt to live. ¹¹Abram saw how beautiful his wife Sarai was. So just before they arrived in Egypt, Abram told Sarai, "I know that you are a very beautiful woman. ¹²The Egyptian men will see you. They will say, 'This woman is his wife.' Then they will kill me because they want you. ¹³So tell people that you are my sister. Then they will not kill me. They will think I am your brother, and they will be kind to me. In this way, you will save my life."

curse To ask for bad things to happen to a thing or person.

The Lord appeared God often used special shapes so people could see him. Sometimes he was like a man, an angel, a fire, or a bright light.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices that were offered as gifts to God.

Negev The desert area in the southern part of Judah.

¹⁴So Abram went into Egypt. The men of Egypt saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. ¹⁵Some of the Egyptian leaders saw her also. They told Pharaoh that she was a very beautiful woman. Those leaders took Sarai to Pharaoh's home. ¹⁶Pharaoh was kind to Abram because he thought Abram was Sarai's brother. Pharaoh gave Abram sheep, cattle, and donkeys. Abram also got men servants, women servants, and camels.

¹⁷Pharaoh took Abram's wife. So the Lord caused Pharaoh and all the people in his house to have very bad diseases. ¹⁸So Pharaoh called Abram. Pharaoh said, "You have done a very bad thing to me! You didn't tell me Sarai was your wife! Why?" ¹⁹You said, 'She is my sister.' Why did you say that? I took her so she could be my wife. But now I give your wife back to you. Take her and go!" ²⁰Then Pharaoh commanded his men to lead Abram out of Egypt. So Abram and his wife left that place. And they carried everything they had with them.

Abram Returns to Canaan

13 So Abram left Egypt. Abram traveled through the Negev* with his wife and everything he owned. Lot was also with them. ²At this time, Abram was very rich. He had many animals and much silver and gold.

³Abram continued traveling around. He left the Negev* and went back to Bethel. He went to the place between the city of Bethel and the city of Ai. This was the same place Abram and his family had camped before. ⁴This was the place Abram had built an altar.* So Abram worshiped the Lord at this place.

Abram and Lot Separate

⁵During this time, Lot was also traveling with Abram. Lot had many animals and tents. ⁶Abram and Lot had so many animals that the land could not support both of them together. ⁷And the Canaanite people and the Perizzite people were also living in this land at the

same time. The shepherds of Abram and Lot began to argue.

⁸So Abram said to Lot, "There should be no arguing between you and me. Your people and my people should not argue. We are all brothers. ⁹We should separate. You can choose any place you want. If you go to the left, I will go to the right. If you go to the right, I will go to the left."

¹⁰Lot looked and saw the Jordan Valley. Lot saw that there was much water there. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. At that time the Jordan Valley all the way to Zoar was like the Lord's Garden. This was good land, like the land of Egypt.) ¹¹So Lot chose to live in the Jordan Valley. The two men separated, and Lot began traveling east. ¹²Abram stayed in the land of Canaan, and Lot lived among the cities in the valley. Lot moved far south to Sodom and made his camp there. ¹³The Lord knew that the people of Sodom were very evil sinners.

¹⁴After Lot left, the Lord said to Abram, "Look around you. Look north and south and east and west. ¹⁵All this land that you see I will give to you and your people who live after you. This will be your land forever. ¹⁶I will make your people as many as the dust of the earth. If people could count all the dust on earth, then they could count your people. ¹⁷So go. Walk through your land. I now give it to you."

¹⁸So Abram moved his tents. He went to live near Mamre's big trees. This was near the city of Hebron. At that place Abram built an altar* for worshiping the Lord.

Lot Is Captured

14 Amraphel was the king of Shinar. Arioch was the king of Ellasar. Kedorlaomer was the king of Elam. And Tidal was the king of Goiim. ²All these kings fought a war against Bera the king of Sodom, Birsha the king of Gomorrah, Shinab the king of Admah, Shemeber the king of Zebaiim, and the king of Bela. (Bela is also called Zoar.)

³All these kings joined their armies in the Valley of Siddim. (The Valley of Siddim is now the Salt Sea.) ⁴These kings had served Kedorlaomer for twelve years. But in the 13th year they all rebelled against him. ⁵So in the

Negev The desert area in the southern part of Judah.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices that were offered as gifts to God.

14th year, King Kedorlaomer and the kings with him came to fight against them. Kedorlaomer and the kings with him defeated the Rephaim people in Ashteroth Karnaim. They also defeated the Zuzim people in Ham. They defeated the Emim people in Shaveh Kiriathaim. ⁶And they defeated the Horite people who lived in the area from the hill country of Seir* to El Paran.* (El Paran is near the desert.) ⁷Then King Kedorlaomer turned back and went to En Mishpat (that is Kadesh) and defeated the Amalekite people. He also defeated the Amorite people living in Hazezon Tamar.

⁸At that time, the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (Zoar) joined together and went to fight against their enemies. [They went to fight] in the Valley of Siddim.* ⁹They fought against Kedorlaomer the king of Elam, Tidal the king of Goiim, Amraphel the king of Shinar, and Arioch the king of Ellasar. So there were four kings fighting against five.

¹⁰There were very many holes filled with tar* in the Valley of Siddim. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah [and their armies] ran away. Many of the soldiers fell into those holes. But the others ran away to the mountains.

¹¹So their enemies took all the things that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah owned. They took all their food and clothing and left. ¹²Lot, the son of Abram's brother, was living in Sodom, and the enemy captured him. The enemy also took everything he owned and left. ¹³One of the men that was not captured went to Abram the Hebrew and told him what happened. Abram was camped near the trees of Mamre the Amorite. Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner had made an agreement to help each other.* And they had also signed an agreement to help Abram.

Seir Or, "Edom."

El Paran Probably the town Elath, at the southern tip of Israel near the Red Sea.

Valley of Siddim The valley or plain along the eastern or southeastern side of the Dead Sea.

tar Or, "pitch," a thick oil that must be heated to become liquid.

Mamre ... other Literally, "Mamre ... was a brother of Eshcol and a brother of Aner."

Abram Rescues Lot

¹⁴Abram learned that Lot was captured. So Abram called all of his family together. There were 318 trained soldiers. Abram led the men and chased the enemy all the way to the town of Dan. ¹⁵That night, he and his men made a surprise attack against the enemy. They defeated the enemy and chased them to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶Then Abram brought back all the things that the enemy had stolen. Abram brought back the women and servants, and also Lot and everything Lot owned.

¹⁷Then Abram went home after he defeated Kedorlaomer and the kings with Kedorlaomer. When he came home, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh. (This is now called King's Valley.)

Melchizedek

¹⁸Melchizedek, the king of Salem, also went to meet Abram. Melchizedek was a priest of God Most High. Melchizedek brought bread and wine. ¹⁹Melchizedek blessed Abram and said,

"Abram, may God Most High bless you.

God made heaven and earth.

²⁰ And we praise God Most High.

God helped you to defeat
your enemies."

Abram gave Melchizedek one tenth of everything he had taken during the battle. ²¹Then the king of Sodom told Abram, "Give me my people that the enemy took away. But you can keep all these other things."

²²But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I promise to the Lord, the God Most High, the One who made heaven and earth—²³I promise that I will not keep anything that is yours—not even a thread or a shoestring! I don't want you to say, 'I made Abram rich.' ²⁴The only thing I will accept is the food that my young men have eaten. But you should give the other men their share. Take the things we won in battle and give some to Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. These men helped me in the battle."

God's Agreement With Abram

15 After all these things happened, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision.* God said, “Abram, don’t be afraid. I will defend you. And I will give you a great reward.”

²But Abram said, “Lord God, there is nothing you can give me that will make me happy. Why? Because I have no son. So my slave Eliezer from Damascus will get all the things I own after I die.” ³Abram said, “You have given me no son. So a slave born in my house will get everything I have.”

⁴Then the Lord spoke to Abram. God said, “That slave will not be the one to get the things you have. You will have a son. And your son will get the things you have.”

⁵Then God led Abram outside. God said, “Look at the sky. See the many stars. There are so many you can’t count them. In the future, your family will be like that.”

⁶Abram believed God. And God decided Abram’s faith was the same as living right and doing a good work. ⁷God said to Abram, “I am the Lord who led you from Ur of Babylonia.* I did this so I could give you this land—you will own this land.”

⁸But Abram said, “Lord, my Master, how can I be sure that I will get this land?”

⁹God said to Abram, “¹We will make an agreement.¹ Bring me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old goat, and a three-year-old ram. Also, bring me a dove and a young pigeon.”

¹⁰Abram brought all these things to God. Abram killed these animals and cut each of them into two pieces. Then Abram laid each half across from the other half. Abram did not cut the birds into two pieces. ¹¹Later, large birds flew down to eat the animals. But Abram chased them away.

¹²Later in the day, the sun was going down. Abram became very sleepy and fell asleep. While he was asleep a very terrible darkness came. ¹³Then the Lord said to Abram, “You should know these things: Your descendants

will live in a country that is not their own. They will be strangers there. And the people there will make them slaves and do bad things to them for 400 years. ¹⁴But then I will punish the nation that made them slaves. Your people will leave that land, and they will take many good things with them.

¹⁵“You yourself will live to be very old. You will die in peace. And you will be buried with your family. ¹⁶After four generations your people will come to this land again. At that time, your people will defeat the Amorite people. I will use your people to punish the Amorites living here. This will be in the future, because the Amorite people are not yet evil enough to punish.”

¹⁷After the sun went down, it became very dark. The dead animals still lay on the ground—each animal cut in two pieces. At that time, a column of smoke and fire* passed between the halves of the dead animals.*

¹⁸So on that day, the Lord made a promise and an agreement with Abram. The Lord said, “I will give this land to your descendants. I will give them the land between the River of Egypt* and the great river Euphrates. ¹⁹This is the land of the Kenite people, the Kenizzite people, the Kadmonite people, ²⁰the Hittite people, the Perizzite people, the Rephaim people, ²¹the Amorite people, the Canaanite people, the Girgashite people, and the Jebusite people.”

Hagar the Servant Girl

16 Sarai was Abram’s wife. She and Abram had no children. Sarai had a servant from Egypt. Her name was Hagar. ²Sarai said to Abram, “The Lord has not allowed me to have children. So go with my servant Hagar. I will accept the child that is born from her like it is my own.”

column of smoke and fire A sign that God used to show that he was with his people.

passed between the halves of the dead animals This showed that God “signed” or “sealed” the agreement he made with Abraham. In those days, a person making an agreement showed he was sincere by walking between the cut animals and saying something like, “May this same thing happen to me if I don’t keep the agreement.”

River of Egypt That is, the stream called, “Wadi El-Arish.”

vision Like a dream. God gave messages to his special people by letting them see and hear things in visions.

Ur of Babylonia Literally, “Ur of the Chaldeans.” A city in southern Babylonia.

Abram obeyed his wife Sarai. ³This was after Abram lived ten years in the land of Canaan. And Sarai gave Hagar to her husband Abram. (Hagar was her servant from Egypt.)

⁴Hagar became pregnant from Abram. When Hagar saw this, she became very proud and began to feel that she was better than Sarai her master. ⁵But Sarai said to Abram, “My servant now hates me. And I blame you for this. I gave her to you. She became pregnant. And then she began to feel that she is better than I am. I want the Lord to judge which of us is right.”

⁶But Abram said to Sarai, “Hagar is your slave. You can do anything you want to her.” So Sarai was mean to her servant Hagar, and Hagar ran away.

Hagar's Son Ishmael

⁷The Angel of the Lord found Hagar near a pool of water in the desert. The pool was by the road to Shur. ⁸The Angel said, “Hagar, you are Sarai's servant. Why are you here? Where are you going?”

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

⁹The Angel of the Lord said to Hagar, “Sarai is your master. Go home to her and obey her.” ¹⁰The Angel of the Lord also said to Hagar, “From you will come many people. There will be so many people that they cannot be counted.”

¹¹The Angel of the Lord also said,

“Hagar, you are now pregnant,
and you will have a son.
You will name him Ishmael,*
because the Lord has heard
that you were treated badly,
and he will help you.”

¹² “Ishmael will be wild and free,
like a wild donkey.
He will move from place to place
and camp near his brothers.
He will be against everyone
and everyone will be against him.”

Ishmael This name means “God hears.”

¹³The Lord talked to Hagar. Hagar began to use a new name for God. She said to him, “You are ‘God Who Sees Me.’” She said this because she thought, “I see that even in this place God sees me and cares for me!” ¹⁴So that well was called Beer Lahai Roi.* That well is between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵Hagar gave birth to Abram's son. And Abram named the son Ishmael. ¹⁶Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born from Hagar.

Circumcision—Proof of the Agreement

17 When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him. The Lord said, “I am God All-Powerful.* Do these things for me: Obey me and live the right way. ²If you do this, I will prepare an agreement between us. I will promise to make your people a great nation.”

³Then Abram bowed down before God. God said to him, ⁴“This is my part of our agreement: I will make you the father of many nations. ⁵I will change your name. Your name will not be Abram*—your name will be Abraham.* I give you this name because I am making you the father of many nations. ⁶I will give you many, many descendants.* New nations and kings will come from you. ⁷And I will prepare an agreement between you and me. This agreement will also be for all your descendants. This agreement will continue forever. I will be your God and the God of all your descendants. ⁸And I will give this land to you and to all your descendants. I will give you the land you are traveling through—the land of Canaan. I will give you this land forever. And I will be your God.”

⁹And God said to Abraham, “Now, this is your part of the agreement. You and all your descendants* will obey my agreement. ¹⁰This is the agreement that you will obey. This is the agreement between you and me. This is for all your descendants: Every boy that is

Beer Lahai Roi This means “The well of the Living One who sees me.”

God All-Powerful Literally, “El Shaddai.”

Abram This means “honored father.”

Abraham This means “great father” or “father of many.”

descendant(s) A person's children and their future families.

born must be circumcised.* ¹¹You will cut the skin to show that you follow the agreement between me and you. ¹²When the baby boy is eight days old, you will circumcise him. Every boy born among your people and every boy that is a slave of your people must be circumcised. ¹³So every baby boy in your nation will be circumcised. Every boy that is born from your family or bought as a slave will be circumcised. ¹⁴Abraham, this is the agreement between you and me; Any male that is not circumcised will be cut off from his people.* Why? Because that person has broken my agreement.”

Isaac—The Promised Son

¹⁵God said to Abraham, “I will give Sarai,* your wife, a new name. Her new name will be Sarah.* ¹⁶I will bless her. I will give her a son, and you will be the father. She will be the mother of many new nations. Kings of nations will come from her.”

¹⁷Abraham bowed his face to the ground to show he respected God. But he laughed and said to himself, “I am 100 years old. I can’t have a son. And Sarah is 90 years old. She can’t have a child.”

¹⁸Then Abraham said to God, “I hope Ishmael will live and serve you.”

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

²⁰“You mentioned Ishmael, and I heard you. I will bless him. He will have many children. He will be the father of twelve great leaders. His family will become a great nation. ²¹But I will make my agreement with Isaac. Isaac will be the son that Sarah will have. This son will be born at this same time next year.”

circumcise(d) Cutting the foreskin from a man. In Israel this was proof that a man had made a special agreement to obey God’s laws and teachings.

cut off from his people This means a person must be separated from his family and lose his share of the inheritance.

Sarai A name, probably Aramaic, meaning “princess.”

Sarah A Hebrew name meaning “princess.”

Isaac This name means “he laughs.”

descendants A person’s children and their future families.

²²After God finished talking with Abraham, God went up into heaven. ²³God had told Abraham to circumcise* all the men and boys in his family. So Abraham gathered Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house together. Abraham also gathered together the slaves that were bought with money. Every man and boy in Abraham’s house was gathered together, and they were all circumcised. Abraham circumcised them that day, just like God told him.

²⁴Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised.* ²⁵And Ishmael, his son, was 13 years old when he was circumcised. ²⁶Abraham and his son were circumcised on that same day. ²⁷Also, on that day all the men in Abraham’s house were circumcised. All the slaves born in his house and all the slaves that he had bought were circumcised.

The Three Visitors

18 Later, the Lord again appeared to Abraham. Abraham was living near the oak trees of Mamre. One day, at the hottest part of the day, Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent. ²Abraham looked up and saw three men standing in front of him. When Abraham saw the men, he ran to them and bowed before them. ³Abraham said, “Sirs,* please stay awhile with me, your servant. ⁴I will bring some water to wash your feet. You can rest under the trees. ⁵I will get some food for you, and you can eat as much as you want. Then you can continue your journey.”

The three men said, “That is fine. We will do as you say.”

⁶Abraham hurried to the tent. Abraham said to Sarah, “Quickly, prepare enough wheat for three loaves of bread.” ⁷Then Abraham ran to his cattle. Abraham took his best young calf. Abraham gave the calf to the servant. Abraham told the servant to hurry, kill the calf, and prepare it for food. ⁸Abraham brought the meat and some milk and cheese and set them down in front of the three men. Then Abraham stood near the men ready to serve them while they sat under the tree and ate.

Sirs This Hebrew word can mean “sirs” or “Lord.” This might show that these were not ordinary men.

⁹Then the men said to Abraham, “Where is your wife Sarah?”

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

¹⁰Then the Lord said, “I will come again in the spring. At that time, your wife Sarah will have a son.”

Sarah was listening in the tent and heard these things. ¹¹Abraham and Sarah were very old. Sarah was past the right age for women to have children. ¹²So Sarah did not believe what she heard. She laughed to herself and said, “I am old and my husband is old. I am too old to have a baby.”

¹³Then the Lord said to Abraham, “Sarah laughed and said she was too old to have a baby. ¹⁴Is anything too hard for the Lord? No! I will come again in the spring when I said I would. And your wife Sarah will have a son.”

¹⁵But Sarah said, “I didn’t laugh!” (She said this because she was afraid.)

But the Lord said, “No. I know that is not true. You did laugh!”

¹⁶Then the men got up to leave. They looked toward Sodom and began walking in that direction. Abraham walked with them to send them on their way.

Abraham’s Bargain With God

¹⁷The Lord said to himself, “Should I tell Abraham the thing that I will now do? ¹⁸Abraham will become a great and powerful nation. And all the people on earth will be blessed because of him. ¹⁹I have made a special agreement with Abraham. I did this so he would command his children and his descendants* to live the way the Lord wants them to. I did this so they would live right and be fair. Then I, the Lord, can give him the things I promised.”

²⁰Then the Lord said, “I have heard many times that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are very evil. ²¹So I will go and see if things are as bad as I have heard. Then I will know for sure.”

²²So the men turned and started walking toward Sodom. But Abraham stood there before the Lord. ²³Then Abraham approached

the Lord and asked, “Lord, do you plan to destroy the good people while you are destroying the evil people? ²⁴What if there are 50 good people in that city? Will you still destroy the city? Surely you will save the city for the 50 good people living there. ²⁵Surely you would not destroy the city. You would not destroy 50 good people to kill the evil people. If that happened, then good people and evil people would be the same—they would both be punished. You are the judge of all the earth. I know you will do the right thing.”

²⁶Then the Lord said, “If I find 50 good people in the city of Sodom, I will save the whole city.”

²⁷Then Abraham said, “Compared to you, Lord, I am only dust and ashes. But let me bother you again and ask you this question: ²⁸What if five good people are missing? What if there are only 45 good people in the city? Will you destroy a whole city for just five people?”

The Lord said, “If I find 45 good people there, I will not destroy the city.”

²⁹Abraham spoke again. He said, “And if you find only 40 good people there, will you destroy the city?”

The Lord said, “If I find 40 good people, I will not destroy the city.”

³⁰Then Abraham said, “Lord, please don’t be angry with me. Let me ask you this: If only 30 good people are in the city, will you destroy the city?”

The Lord said, “If I find 30 good people there, I will not destroy the city.”

³¹Then Abraham said, “May I bother my Lord again and ask, what if there are 20 good people?”

The Lord answered, “If I find 20 good people, I will not destroy the city.”

³²Then Abraham said, “Lord, please don’t be angry with me, but let me bother you this one last time. If you find ten good people there, what will you do?”

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

³³The Lord was finished speaking to Abraham, so the Lord left. And Abraham went back to his home.

descendants A person’s children and their future families.

Lot's Visitors

19 That evening the two angels came to the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting near the city gates and saw the angels. [Lot thought they were men traveling through town.] Lot got up and went to them and bowed down on the ground. ²Lot said, “Sirs, please come to my house, and I will serve you. There you can wash your feet and stay the night. Then tomorrow you can continue your journey.”

The angels answered, “No, we will stay the night in the square.*”

³But Lot continued to ask them to come to his house. So the angels agreed to go to Lot's house. They went to Lot's house. Lot gave them something to drink. Lot cooked some bread for the angels, and they ate it.

⁴That evening, just before bedtime, men from every part of town came to Lot's house. The men from Sodom stood around the house and called to Lot. They said, ⁵“Where are the two men (*angels*) that came to you tonight? Bring them out to us. We want to have sex with them.”

⁶Lot went outside, and closed the door behind him. ⁷Lot said to the men, “No! Friends, I beg you, please don't do this evil thing! ⁸Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man before. I will give my daughters to you. You can do anything you want with them. But please don't do anything to these men. These men have come to my house, and I must protect them.*”

⁹The men surrounding the house answered, “Then, you come here!” The men said to themselves, “This man Lot came to our city as a visitor. Now he wants to tell us how we should live!” Then the men said to Lot, “We will do worse things to you than to them.” So the men started moving closer and closer to Lot. They were about to break down the door.

¹⁰But the two men staying with Lot opened the door, pulled Lot back inside the house,

and closed the door. ¹¹Then they did something to the men outside the door—they caused all those evil men, young and old, to become blind. So the men trying to get in the house could not find the door.

The Escape From Sodom

¹²The two men said to Lot, “Are there any other people from your family living in this city? Do you have any sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or any other people from your family here? If so, then you should tell them to leave now. ¹³We are going to destroy this city. The Lord heard how evil this city is, so he sent us to destroy it.”

¹⁴So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, the men who had married his [other] daughters. Lot said, “Hurry and leave this city! The Lord will soon destroy it!” But those men thought Lot was joking.

¹⁵The next morning at dawn, the angels were trying to make Lot hurry. They said, “This city will be punished. So take your wife and your two daughters who are still with you and leave this place. Then you will not be destroyed with the city.”

¹⁶But Lot was confused [and did not hurry to leave]. So the two men (*angels*) held the hands of Lot and his wife and his two daughters. The two men led Lot and his family out of the city safely. The Lord was kind to Lot and his family. ¹⁷So the two men brought Lot and his family out of the city. After they were out, one of the men said, “Now run to save your life! Don't look back at the city. And don't stop any place in the valley. Run until you are in the mountains. If you stop, then you will be destroyed with the city!”

¹⁸But Lot said to the two men, “Sirs, please don't force me to run so far! ¹⁹You have been very kind to me, your servant. You have been very kind to save me. But I can't run all the way to the mountains. What if I am too slow and something happens? I will be killed! ²⁰Look, there is a very small town near here. Let me run to that town. I can run to that town and be safe.”

²¹The angel said to Lot, “Fine. I'll let you do that. I won't destroy that town. ²²But run there fast. I can't destroy Sodom until you are

square An open area in a city near the city gates. Travelers often camped there when they came to town.

I must protect them If a person invited a traveler to stay with him, then he was also promising to protect the traveler. So Lot was trying to protect these men, even if it meant that he might lose his own daughters.

safely in that town.” (That town is named Zoar,* because it is a small town.)

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

²³Lot was entering Zoar just as the sun was coming up. ²⁴At the same time, the Lord began to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord caused fire and burning sulfur to fall out of the sky from the Lord. ²⁵So the Lord destroyed those cities. The Lord destroyed the whole valley—all the plants and all the people living in the cities.

²⁶While they were running away, Lot’s wife looked back at the city and became a block of salt.

²⁷Early that same morning, Abraham got up and went to the place where he stood before the Lord. ²⁸Abraham looked down toward the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham looked at all the land in the valley. Abraham saw much smoke rising from the land. It looked like smoke from a very big fire.

²⁹God destroyed the cities in the valley. But when God did this, he remembered Abraham, and did not destroy Abraham’s nephew. Lot had been living among the cities in the valley. But God sent Lot away from there before he destroyed those cities.

Lot and His Daughters

³⁰Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar. So he and his two daughters went to live in the mountains. They lived in a cave there. ³¹One day the older daughter said to the younger, “Everywhere on the earth, men and women marry and have a family. But our father is old and there are no men around here to give us children. ³²So let’s get our father drunk with wine. Then we can have sexual relations with him. That way we can use our father to keep our family alive!”

³³That night the two girls went to their father and got him drunk with wine. Then the older daughter went into her father’s bed and had sexual relations with him. Lot was so drunk that he did not even know when she came to bed or when she got up.

³⁴The next day, the older daughter said to the younger daughter, “Last night I went to bed with my father. Let’s get him drunk with wine again tonight. Then you can go into his bed and have sex with him. In this way we can use our father to have children and our family will not come to an end.” ³⁵So that night the two girls got their father drunk with wine. Then the younger daughter went into his bed and had sexual relations with him. Again, Lot was so drunk that he did not know when she came to bed or when she got up.

³⁶Both of Lot’s daughters became pregnant. Their father was the father of their babies. ³⁷The older daughter gave birth to a son. She named him Moab.* Moab is the father of all the Moabite people living today. ³⁸The younger daughter also gave birth to a son. She named him Ben-Ammi.* Ben-Ammi is the father of all the Ammonite people living today.

Abraham Goes to Gerar

20 Abraham left that place and traveled to the Negev.* Abraham settled in the city of Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur. While in Gerar, ²Abraham told people that Sarah was his sister. Abimelech, king of Gerar, heard this. Abimelech wanted Sarah, so he sent some servants to take her. ³But one night, God spoke to Abimelech in a dream. God said, “You will die. That woman you took is married.”

⁴But Abimelech had not yet slept with Sarah. So Abimelech said, “Lord, I am not guilty. Would you kill an innocent person? ⁵Abraham himself told me, ‘This woman is my sister.’ And the woman also said, ‘This man is my brother.’ I am innocent. I did not know what I was doing.”

⁶Then God said to Abimelech in a dream, “Yes, I know that you are innocent. And I know that you did not know what you were doing. I saved you. I did not allow you to sin against me. I was the One who did not allow you to sleep with her. ⁷So give Abraham his wife again. Abraham is a prophet.* He will

Moab In Hebrew, this name sounds like “From father.”

Ben-Ammi In Hebrew, this name sounds like “Son of my father” or “Son of my people.”

Negev The desert area in the southern part of Judah.

prophet A person God called to speak for him.

Zoar This name means “small.”

pray for you, and you will live. But if you do not give Sarah back to Abraham, then I promise that you will die. And all your family will die with you.”

⁸So very early the next morning, Abimelech called all his servants and told them about the dream. The servants were scared. ⁹Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “Why have you done this to us? What wrong did I do against you? Why did you lie and say that she was your sister? You brought much trouble to my kingdom. You should not have done these things to me. ¹⁰What were you afraid of? Why did you do these things to me?”

¹¹Then Abraham said, “[I was afraid.] I thought no one in this place respected God. I thought someone would kill me to get Sarah. ¹²She is my wife, but she is also my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. ¹³God led me away from my father’s house. God led me to wander to many different places. When that happened, I told Sarah, ‘Do something for me; wherever we go, tell people you are my sister.’”

¹⁴[Then Abimelech understood what had happened.] So Abimelech gave Sarah back to Abraham. Abimelech also gave Abraham some sheep, cattle, and slaves. ¹⁵And Abimelech said, “Look all around you. This is my land. You may live any place you want.”

¹⁶Abimelech said to Sarah, “I gave your brother Abraham 1,000 pieces of silver. I did this to show that I am sorry for all these things. I want everyone to see that I did the right thing.”

^{17–18}The Lord made all the women in Abimelech’s family not able to have children. God did this because Abimelech had taken Sarah, Abraham’s wife. But Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his servant girls.

Finally, a Baby for Sarah

21 The Lord kept the promise he had made to Sarah. The Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. ²Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. All these things happened exactly like God promised. ³Sarah gave birth to a son, and

Abraham named him Isaac.* ⁴Abraham circumcised* Isaac when Isaac was eight days old like God had commanded.

⁵Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born. ⁶And Sarah said, “God has made me happy. Every person who hears about this will be happy with me. ⁷No one thought that I, Sarah, would be able to have Abraham’s child. But I have given Abraham a son even though he is old.”

Trouble at Home

⁸Isaac continued to grow. Soon he was old enough to begin eating solid food. So Abraham gave a big party. ⁹Hagar was the Egyptian slave woman who had had Abraham’s first son. Sarah saw Hagar’s son playing. [Sarah became upset.] ¹⁰Sarah said to Abraham, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son. Send them away! When we die, our son Isaac will get everything we have. I don’t want that slave woman’s son sharing those things with my son Isaac!”

¹¹This upset Abraham very much. He was worried about his son [Ishmael]. ¹²But God said to Abraham, “Don’t worry about the boy and the slave woman. Do what Sarah wants. Isaac will be your only heir.* ¹³But I will also bless the son of your slave woman. He is your son, so I will make a great nation from his family also.”

¹⁴Early the next morning, Abraham got some food and some water. Abraham gave these things to Hagar. Hagar carried these things and left with her boy. Hagar left that place and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.

¹⁵After some time, all the water was gone. There was none left to drink. So Hagar put her son under a bush. ¹⁶Hagar walked a short distance away. Then she stopped and sat down. Hagar thought her son would die because there was no water. She did not want to watch him die. She sat there and began to cry.

¹⁷God heard the boy crying. And God’s angel called to Hagar from heaven. He said,

Isaac This name means “he laughs” or “he is happy.”

circumcise(d) Cutting the foreskin from a man. In Israel this was proof that a man had made a special agreement to obey God’s laws and teachings.

heir A person who receives his parents’ property when they die.

“What is wrong, Hagar? Don’t be afraid! The Lord has heard the boy crying there. ¹⁸Go help the boy. Hold his hand and lead him. I will make him the father of many, many people.”

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

²⁰God continued to be with the boy while he grew up. Ishmael lived in the desert and became a hunter. He learned to shoot a bow very well.

²¹His mother found a wife for him in Egypt. They continued living in the Paran desert.

Abraham's Bargain With Abimelech

²²Then Abimelech and Phicol spoke with Abraham. Phicol was the commander of Abimelech’s army. They said to Abraham, “God is with you in everything you do. ²³So make a promise to me here before God. Promise that you will be fair with me and with my children. Promise that you will be kind to me and the country here where you have lived. Promise you will be as kind to me as I have been to you.”

²⁴And Abraham said, “I promise to treat you the same way you have treated me.”

²⁵Then Abraham complained to Abimelech. Abraham complained because Abimelech’s servants had captured a well of water.

²⁶But Abimelech said, “I don’t know who has done this thing. You never told me about this before today!”

²⁷So Abraham and Abimelech made an agreement. Abraham gave Abimelech some sheep and cattle as proof of the agreement. ²⁸Abraham also put seven* female lambs in front of Abimelech.

²⁹Abimelech asked Abraham, “Why did you put these seven female lambs by themselves?”

³⁰Abraham answered, “When you accept these lambs from me, it will be proof that I dug this well.”

³¹So after that, the well was called Beersheba.* He gave the well this name

because it was the place where they made a promise to each other.

³²So Abraham and Abimelech made an agreement at Beersheba. Then Abimelech and his military commander went back to the country of the Philistines.

³³Abraham planted a special tree at Beersheba. At that place, Abraham prayed to the Lord, the God who lives forever. ³⁴And Abraham stayed a long time in the country of the Philistines.

Abraham, Kill Your Son!

22 After those things, God decided to test Abraham’s faith. God said to him, “Abraham!”

And Abraham said, “Yes!”

²Then God said, “Take your son to the land of Moriah. At Moriah kill your son as a sacrifice* for me. This must be Isaac, your only son—the son you love. Use him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains there. I will tell you which mountain.”

³In the morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. Abraham took Isaac and two servants with him. Abraham cut the wood for the sacrifice.* Then they went to the place God told them to go. ⁴After they traveled three days, Abraham looked up and in the distance, he saw the place they were going to. ⁵Then Abraham said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey. I will take my son and go to that place and worship. Then we will come back to you later.”

⁶Abraham took the wood for the sacrifice* and put it on his son’s [shoulder]. Abraham took the special knife and fire. Then both Abraham and his son went together to the place for worship.

⁷Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!”

Abraham answered, “Yes, son.”

Isaac said, “I see the wood and the fire. But where is the lamb we will burn as a sacrifice*?”

⁸Abraham answered, “God himself is providing the lamb for the sacrifice,* my son.”

seven The Hebrew word for “seven” is like the Hebrew word for “oath” or “promise” and it is like the last part of the name Beersheba. The seven animals were proof of this promise.

Beersheba This name means “well of the oath.”

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Isaac Is Saved

So both Abraham and his son went together to that place. ⁹They came to the place where God told them to go. There, Abraham built an altar.* Abraham laid the wood on the altar. Then Abraham tied his son Isaac. Abraham laid Isaac on the altar on the wood. ¹⁰Then Abraham took his knife and prepared to kill his son.

¹¹But then the Angel of the Lord stopped Abraham. The angel called from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!”

Abraham answered, “Yes.”

¹²The angel said, “Don’t kill your son or hurt him in any way. Now I can see that you do respect and obey God. I see that you are ready to kill your son, your only son, for me.”

¹³Then Abraham saw a ram. The ram’s horns were caught in a bush. So Abraham went and got the ram and killed it. Abraham used the ram as a sacrifice* to God. Abraham’s son was saved. ¹⁴So Abraham gave that place a name, “YAHWEH YIREH.”* Even today people say, “On this mountain, the Lord can be seen.”

¹⁵The Angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time. ¹⁶The angel said, “You were ready to kill your son for me. This was your only son. Because you did this for me, I make you this promise: I, the Lord, promise that ¹⁷I will truly bless you. I will give you many, many descendants,* as many as the stars in the sky. There will be as many people as sand on the seashore. And your people will live in cities that they take from their enemies. ¹⁸Every nation on the earth will be blessed through your descendants.* I will do this because you obeyed me.”

¹⁹Then Abraham went back to his servants. They all traveled back to Beersheba and Abraham stayed there.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices that were offered as gifts to God.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

YAHWEH YIREH Or, “Jehovah Jireh.” This means “the Lord sees” or “the Lord gives.”

descendants A person’s children and their future families.

descendants Or “Descendant.” See Paul’s discussion in Gal 3:16.

²⁰After all these things happened, a message was sent to Abraham. The message said, “Your brother Nahor and his wife Milcah have children now. ²¹The first son is Uz. The second son is Buz. The third son is Kemuel, the father of Aram. ²²Then there are Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.” ²³Bethuel was the father of Rebekah. Milcah was the mother of these eight sons, and Nahor was the father. Nahor was Abraham’s brother. ²⁴Also Nahor had four other sons from his woman servant* Reumah. The sons were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

Sarah Dies

23 Sarah lived to be 127 years old. ²She died in the city of Kiriath Arba (Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Abraham was very sad and cried for her there. ³Then Abraham left his dead wife and went to talk to the Hittite people. He said, ⁴“I am only a traveler staying in your country. I have no place to bury my wife. Please give me some land so I can bury my wife.”

⁵The Hittite people answered Abraham, ⁶“Sir, you are one of God’s great leaders among us. You can have the best place we have to bury your dead. You can have any of our burying places that you want. None of us will stop you from burying your wife there.”

⁷Abraham got up and bowed to the people. ⁸Abraham said to them, “If you truly want to help me bury my dead wife, then speak to Ephron the son of Zohar for me. ⁹I would like to buy the cave of Machpelah. Ephron owns this. It is at the end of his field. I will pay him the full price—all that it is worth. I want all of you to be witnesses that I am buying it as a burial place.”

¹⁰Ephron was sitting there among the people. Ephron answered Abraham, ¹¹“No, sir. Here, in front of all my people, I give you that land and the cave on it so you can bury your wife.”

¹²Abraham bowed before the Hittite people. ¹³Abraham said to Ephron before all

woman servant Literally, “concubine.” A slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

the people, “But I want to pay you the full price for the field. Accept my money, and I will bury my dead.”

¹⁴Ephron answered Abraham, ¹⁵“Sir, listen to me. 10 pounds* of silver means nothing to you and me! Take the land, and bury your dead wife.”

¹⁶Abraham understood that Ephron was telling him the price of the land.* So Abraham paid him for the land. Abraham weighed 10 pounds* of silver for Ephron and gave it to the merchant.*

^{17–18}So the field of Ephron changed owners. This field was in Machpelah, east of Mamre. Abraham became the owner of the field, the cave on the field, and all the trees that were on that field. All the people in the city saw the agreement between Ephron and Abraham. ¹⁹After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of that field near Mamre (Hebron) in the land of Canaan. ²⁰Abraham bought the field and the cave on it from the Hittite people. This became his property, and he used it as a burying place.

A Wife for Isaac

24 Abraham lived to be a very old man. The Lord blessed Abraham and everything that he did. ²Abraham’s oldest servant was in charge of everything Abraham owned. Abraham called that servant to him and said, “Put your hand under my leg.* ³Now I want you to make a promise to me. Promise to me before the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry a girl from Canaan. We live among those people but don’t let him marry a Canaanite girl. ⁴Go back to my country to my own people. There find a wife for my son Isaac and bring her here to him.”

10 pounds Literally, “400 shekels.”

Abraham understood ... the price of the land Literally, “Abraham heard.”

merchant A person who earns his living buying and selling things. Here this is probably a person who was helping Abraham and Ephron write the contract in verses 17 and 18.

Put your hand under my leg This showed that this was a very important promise and that Abraham trusted his servant to keep it.

⁵The servant said to him, “Maybe this woman will not want to come back with me to this land. If that happens, should I take your son with me to your homeland?”

⁶Abraham said to him, “No! Don’t take my son to that place. ⁷The Lord, the God of heaven, brought me from my homeland to this place. That place was the home of my father and the home of my family. But the Lord promised that this new land here would belong to my family. May the Lord send his angel before you so you can choose a wife for my son. ⁸But if the girl refuses to come with you, then you will be free from this promise. But you must not take my son back to that place.”

⁹So the servant put his hand under his master’s leg and made the promise.

The Search Begins

¹⁰The servant took ten of Abraham’s camels and left that place. The servant carried with him many different kinds of beautiful gifts. The servant went to Mesopotamia to Nahor’s city. ¹¹The servant went to the water well outside the city. It was in the evening when the women come out to get water. The servant made the camels kneel down there.

¹²The servant said, “Lord, you are the God of my master Abraham. Allow me to find a wife for his son today. Please show this kindness to my master Abraham. ¹³Here I am, standing by this well of water, and the young women from the city are coming out to get water. ¹⁴I am waiting for a special sign to know which is the right young woman for Isaac. [This is the special sign:] I will say to the girl, ‘Please put your jar down so I can drink.’ I will know if she is the right young woman if she says, ‘Drink, and I will also give water to your camels.’ If that happens, then you will have proved that she is the right young woman for Isaac. And I will know you have shown kindness to my master.”

A Wife Is Found

¹⁵Then, before the servant finished praying, a young woman named Rebekah came to the well. Rebekah was the daughter of Bethuel. Bethuel was the son of Milcah and Nahor, Abraham’s brother. Rebekah came to the well

with her water jar on her shoulder. ¹⁶She was very pretty. She was a virgin; she had never slept with a man. She went down to the well and filled her jar. ¹⁷Then the servant ran to her and said, “Please give me a little water to drink from your jar.”

¹⁸Rebekah quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder and gave him a drink. Rebekah said, “Drink this, sir.” ¹⁹As soon as she finished giving him something to drink, Rebekah said, “I will also pour some water for your camels.”

²⁰So Rebekah quickly poured all the water from her jar into the drinking trough for the camels. Then she ran to the well to get more water. And she gave water to all the camels.

²¹The servant quietly watched her. He wanted to be sure that the Lord had given him an answer and had made his trip successful. ²²After the camels finished drinking, he gave Rebekah a gold ring that weighed $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce.* He also gave her two gold arm bracelets that weighed 5 ounces* each. ²³The servant asked, “Who is your father? And is there a place in your father’s house for my group to sleep?”

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

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

²⁶The servant bowed and worshiped the Lord. ²⁷The servant said, “Blessed is the Lord, the God of my master Abraham. The Lord has been kind and loyal to my master. The Lord has led me to the right girl for my master’s son.”

²⁸Then Rebekah ran and told her family about all these things. ^{29–30}Rebekah had a brother. His name was Laban. Rebekah told about the things the man had said to her. Laban was listening to her. And when Laban saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, he ran out to the well. And there the man was—standing by the camels at the well. ³¹Laban said, “Sir, you are welcome to come in!* You don’t have to stand outside here. I

have prepared a room for you to sleep in and a place for your camels.”

³²So Abraham’s servant went into the house. Laban helped him with the camels and gave him straw for the camels to eat. Then Laban gave him water so he and the other men with him could wash their feet. ³³Then Laban gave him food to eat. But the servant refused to eat. He said, “I will not eat until I have told you why I came.”

So Laban said, “Then tell us.”

Bargaining for Rebekah

³⁴The servant said, “I am Abraham’s servant. ³⁵The Lord has greatly blessed my master in everything. My master has become a great man. The Lord has given Abraham many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. Abraham has much silver and gold and many servants. Abraham has many camels and donkeys. ³⁶Sarah was my master’s wife. When she was very old, she gave birth to a son. And my master has given everything he owns to that son. ³⁷My master forced me to make a promise to him. My master said to me, ‘You must not allow my son to marry a girl from Canaan. We live among those people, but I don’t want him to marry one of the Canaanite girls. ³⁸So you must promise to go to my father’s country. Go to my family and choose a wife for my son.’ ³⁹I said to my master, ‘Maybe the woman will not come back to this place with me.’ ⁴⁰But my master said to me, ‘I serve the Lord, and the Lord will send his angel with you and help you. You will find a wife for my son among my people there. ⁴¹But if you go to my father’s country, and they refuse to give you a wife for my son, then you will be free from this promise.’

⁴²“Today I came to this well and said, ‘Lord, God of my master Abraham, please make my trip successful. ⁴³I will stand by this well and wait for a young woman to come to get water. Then I will say, ‘Please give me water from your jar to drink.’ ⁴⁴The right young woman will answer in a special way. She will say, ‘Drink this water, and I will also get water for your camels.’ That way I will know that she is the woman the Lord has chosen for my master’s son.’

$\frac{1}{4}$ ounce Literally, “one beka.”

5 ounces Literally, “five measures.”

Sir, you are welcome to come in Literally, “Come in, blessed of the Lord!”

⁴⁵“Before I finished praying, Rebekah came out to the well to get water. She had her water jar on her shoulder as she went to get water from the well. I asked her to give me some water. ⁴⁶She quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder and poured me some water. Then she said, ‘Drink this and I’ll get some water for your camels.’ So I drank the water, and she gave water to my camels. ⁴⁷Then I asked her, ‘Who is your father?’ She answered, ‘My father is Bethuel the son of Milcah and Nahor.’ Then I gave her the ring and bracelets for her arms. ⁴⁸I bowed my head and thanked the Lord. I blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham. I thanked him for leading me straight to the granddaughter of my master’s brother. ⁴⁹Now, tell me, will you be kind and loyal to my master and give him your daughter? Or will you refuse to give him your daughter? Tell me so I will know what I should do.”

⁵⁰Then Laban and Bethuel answered, “We see this is from the Lord, so there is nothing we can say to change it. ⁵¹Here is Rebekah. Take her and go. Let her marry your master’s son. This is what the Lord wants.”

⁵²When Abraham’s servant heard this, he bowed to the ground before the Lord. ⁵³Then he gave Rebekah the gifts he brought. He gave her beautiful clothes and gold and silver jewelry. He also gave expensive gifts to her mother and brother. ⁵⁴Then he and his men had something to eat and drink and then spent the night there. Early the next morning, they got up and said, “Now we must go back to my master.”

⁵⁵Rebekah’s mother and her brother said, “Let Rebekah stay with us for a short time. Let her stay with us ten days. After that she can go.”

⁵⁶But the servant said to them, “Do not make me wait. The Lord has made my trip successful. Now let me go back to my master.”

⁵⁷Rebekah’s brother and mother said, “We will call Rebekah and ask her what she wants.” ⁵⁸They called Rebekah and asked her, “Do you want to go with this man now?”

Rebekah said, “Yes, I will go.”

⁵⁹So they allowed Rebekah to go with Abraham’s servant and his men. Rebekah’s nurse also went with them. ⁶⁰While Rebekah was leaving they said to her,

“Our sister, may you be the mother of millions of people.
And may your descendants* defeat their enemies and take their cities.”

⁶¹Then Rebekah and her nurse got on the camels and followed the servant and his men. So the servant took Rebekah and left on the trip back home.

⁶²Isaac had left Beer Lahai Roi and was now living in the Negev.* ⁶³One evening, Isaac went out to the field to think.* Isaac looked up and saw the camels coming from far away.

⁶⁴Rebekah looked and saw Isaac. Then she jumped down from the camel. ⁶⁵She said to the servant, “Who is that young man walking in the field to meet us?”

The servant said, “That is my master’s son.” So Rebekah covered her face with her veil.

⁶⁶The servant told Isaac about all the things that had happened. ⁶⁷Then Isaac brought the girl into his mother’s tent. Rebekah became Isaac’s wife that day. Isaac loved her very much. So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.

Abraham’s Family

25 Abraham married again. His new wife was named Keturah. ²Keturah gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. ³Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. The people of Asshur,* Leum, and Letush were descendants of Dedan. ⁴The sons of Midian were Ephah, Ephraim, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these sons came from the marriage of Abraham and Keturah. ^{5–6}Before Abraham died, he gave some gifts to the sons of his women servants* and sent those sons to the East.* He sent them away from Isaac. Then Abraham gave everything he owned to Isaac.

descendants A person’s children and their future families.

Negev The desert area in the southern part of Judah.

think Or, “to go for a stroll.”

Asshur Or, “Assyria.”

woman servant Or, “concubine,” a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

East This usually means the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as far east as the Persian Gulf.

⁷Abraham lived to be 175 years old. ⁸Then Abraham grew weak and died. He had lived a long and satisfying life. He died and was gathered to his people. ⁹His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah. This cave is in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar. It was east of Mamre. ¹⁰This is the same cave that Abraham bought from the Hittite people. Abraham was buried there with his wife Sarah. ¹¹After Abraham died, God blessed Isaac. And Isaac continued to live at Beer Lahai Roi.

¹²This is the list of Ishmael's family. Ishmael was Abraham and Hagar's son. (Hagar was Sarah's Egyptian maid.) ¹³These are the names of Ishmael's sons: The first son was Nebaioth, then Kedar was born, then 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 that became a small town. The twelve sons were like twelve princes with their own people. ¹⁷Ishmael lived to be 137 years old. Then he died and was gathered to his ancestors.* ¹⁸Ishmael's descendants* camped throughout the desert area. This area went from Havilah to Shur, near Egypt. And it went from Shur all the way to Assyria. Ishmael's descendants often attacked his brothers' people.*

Isaac's Family

¹⁹This is the story of Isaac. Abraham had a son named Isaac. ²⁰When Isaac was 40 years old he married Rebekah. Rebekah was from Paddan Aram. She was Bethuel's daughter and the sister of Laban the Aramean. ²¹Isaac's wife could not have children. So Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife. The Lord heard Isaac's prayer. And the Lord allowed Rebekah to become pregnant.

²²While Rebekah was pregnant, she had much trouble with the babies inside her. Rebekah prayed to the Lord and said, "Why is this happening to me?" ²³The Lord said to

her, "Two nations are in your body. The rulers of two families will be born from you. And they will be divided. One son will be stronger than the other. The older son will serve the younger." ²⁴And when the right time came, Rebekah gave birth to twins. ²⁵The first baby was red. His skin was like a hairy robe. So he was named Esau.* ²⁶When the second baby was born, he was holding tightly to Esau's heel. So that baby was named Jacob.* Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob and Esau were born.

²⁷The boys grew up. Esau became a skilled hunter. He loved to be out in the fields. But Jacob was a quiet man. He stayed in his tent. ²⁸Isaac loved Esau. He liked to eat the animals Esau killed. But Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹One time Esau came back from hunting. He was tired and weak from hunger. Jacob was boiling a pot of beans. ³⁰So Esau said to Jacob, "I am weak with hunger. Let me have some of those red beans." (That is why people call him Edom.*)

³¹But Jacob said, "You must sell me your rights as the firstborn son* today."

³²Esau said, "I am almost dead with hunger. If I die, all of my father's wealth will not help me. So I will give you my share."

³³But Jacob said, "First, promise me that you will give it to me." So Esau made a promise to Jacob. Esau sold his part of their father's wealth to Jacob. ³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau bread and food. Esau ate and drank and then left. So Esau showed that he did not care about his rights as the firstborn son.*

Isaac Lies to Abimelech

26 Once there was a famine.* This was like the famine that happened during Abraham's life. So Isaac went to the town of Gerar, to Abimelech the king of the Philistine

Esau This name is like the word meaning "hairy."

Jacob This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "heel." It also means "the one who follows" or "tricky."

Edom This name means "red."

rights as the firstborn son Usually, after the father died, the firstborn son got half of the father's property and became the new head of the family.

famine A time when there is no rain and no crops can grow. People and animals often die from lack of food and water.

gathered to his ancestors This often means a person was buried in the same tomb or grave as his ancestors.

descendants A person's children and their future families.

attacked his brothers' people See Genesis 16:12.

people. ²The Lord spoke to Isaac. The Lord said, “Don’t go down to Egypt. Live in the land that I commanded you to live in. ³Stay in that land, and I will be with you. I will bless you. I will give you and your family all these lands. I will do what I promised to Abraham your father. ⁴I will make your family as many as the stars of heaven. And I will give all these lands to your family. Through your descendants,* every nation on earth will be blessed. ⁵I will do this because your father Abraham obeyed my words and did the things I said. Abraham obeyed my commands, my laws, and my rules.”

⁶So Isaac stayed and lived in Gerar. ⁷Isaac’s wife Rebekah was very beautiful. The men of that place asked Isaac about Rebekah. Isaac said, “She is my sister.” Isaac was afraid to tell them Rebekah was his wife. Isaac was afraid the men would kill him so that they could have her.

⁸After Isaac had lived there a long time, Abimelech looked out his window and saw Isaac and his wife playing. ⁹Abimelech called for Isaac and said, “This woman is your wife. Why did you tell us that she was your sister?”

Isaac said to him, “I was afraid that you would kill me so you could have her.”

¹⁰Abimelech said, “You have done a bad thing to us. One of our men might have slept with your wife. Then he would be guilty of a great sin.”

¹¹So Abimelech gave a warning to all the people. He said, “No person must hurt this man or this woman. If any person hurts them, then that person will be killed.”

Isaac Becomes Rich

¹²Isaac planted fields in that place. And that year he gathered a great harvest. The Lord blessed him very much. ¹³Isaac became rich. He gathered more and more wealth until he became a very rich man. ¹⁴He had many flocks and herds of animals. He also had many slaves. All the Philistine people were jealous of him. ¹⁵So the Philistine people destroyed all the wells that Isaac’s father Abraham and

his servants had dug many years before. The Philistines filled those wells with dirt. ¹⁶And Abimelech said to Isaac, “Leave our country. You have become much more powerful than we are.”

¹⁷So Isaac left that place and camped near the little river of Gerar. Isaac stayed there and lived. ¹⁸Long before this time, Abraham had dug many wells. After Abraham died, the Philistines filled the wells with dirt. So Isaac went back and dug those wells again. Isaac gave them the same names his father had given them. ¹⁹Isaac’s servants also dug a well near the little river. A spring of water flowed from that well. ²⁰But the men who herded sheep in the Valley of Gerar argued with Isaac’s servants. They said, “This water is ours.” So Isaac named that well Esek.* He gave it that name because that was the place where those people argued with him.

²¹Then Isaac’s servants dug another well. The people of that place also argued because of that well. So Isaac named that well Sitnah.*

²²Isaac moved from there and dug another well. No men came to argue about that well. So Isaac named that well Rehoboth.* Isaac said, “Now the Lord has found a place for us. We will grow and be successful in this place.”

²³From that place Isaac went to Beersheba. ²⁴The Lord spoke to Isaac that night. The Lord said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Don’t be afraid. I am with you, and I will bless you. I will make your family great. I will do this because of my servant Abraham.” ²⁵So Isaac built an altar and worshiped the Lord in that place. Isaac set up camp there and his servants dug a well.

²⁶Abimelech came from Gerar to see Isaac. Abimelech brought with him Ahuzzath, his adviser, and Phicol, the commander of his army.

²⁷Isaac asked, “Why have you come to see me? You were not friendly with me before. You even forced me to leave your country.”

²⁸They answered, “Now we know that the Lord is with you. We think that we should

Esek This means “argument” or “fight.”

Sitnah This means “hatred” or “being an enemy.”

Rehoboth This means “open place” or “crossroads.”

descendants Or “Descendant.” See Gal 3:16.

make an agreement. We want you to make a promise to us. ²⁹We did not hurt you, now you should promise not to hurt us. We sent you away, but we sent you away in peace. Now it is clear that the Lord has blessed you.”

³⁰So Isaac gave a party for them. They all ate and drank. ³¹Early the next morning, each man made a promise and a vow.* Then the men left in peace.

³²On that day, Isaac’s servants came and told them about the well they had dug. The servants said, “We found water in that well.”

³³So Isaac named that well Shibah.* And that city is still called Beersheba.*

Esau’s Wives

³⁴When Esau was 40 years old, he married two Hittite women. One was Judith the daughter of Beeri. The other was Basemath the daughter of Elon. ³⁵These marriages made Isaac and Rebekah very upset.

Inheritance Problems

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

Esau answered, “Here I am.”

²Isaac said, “I am old. Maybe I will die soon! ³So take your bow and arrows and go hunting. Kill an animal for me to eat. ⁴Prepare the food that I love. Bring it to me, and I will eat it. Then I will bless you before I die.” ⁵So Esau went hunting.

Jacob Tricks Isaac

Rebekah was listening when Isaac told those things to his son Esau. ⁶Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “Listen, I heard your father talking to your brother Esau. ⁷Your father said, ‘Kill an animal for me to eat. Prepare the food for me, and I will eat. Then I will bless you before I die.’ ⁸So listen son, and do what I tell you. ⁹Go out to our goats and bring me two young goats. I will prepare them the way your father loves them. ¹⁰Then you will carry

the food to your father. And he will bless you before he dies.”

¹¹But Jacob told his mother Rebekah, “My brother Esau is a hairy man. I am not hairy like him. ¹²If my father touches me, he will know that I am not Esau. Then he will not bless me—he will curse* me! Why? Because I tried to trick him.”

¹³So Rebekah said to him, “I will accept the blame if there is trouble. Do the things I said. Go and get the goats for me.”

¹⁴So Jacob went out and got two goats and brought them to his mother. His mother cooked the goats in the special way that Isaac loved. ¹⁵Then Rebekah took the clothes that her older son Esau loved to wear. Rebekah put those clothes on the younger son Jacob. ¹⁶Rebekah took the skins of the goats and put them on Jacob’s hands and on his neck. ¹⁷Then Rebekah got the food she had cooked and gave it to Jacob.

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

His father said, “Yes, son. Who are you?”

¹⁹Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau, your first son. I have done the things you told me. Now sit up and eat the animals that I hunted for you. Then you can bless me.”

²⁰But Isaac said to his son, “How have you hunted and killed the animals so quickly?”

Jacob answered, “Because the Lord your God allowed me to find the animals quickly.”

²¹Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near to me so that I can feel you, my son. If I can feel you, then I will know if you are really my son Esau.”

²²So Jacob went to Isaac his father. Isaac felt him and said, “Your voice sounds like Jacob’s voice. But your arms are hairy like the arms of Esau.” ²³Isaac did not know it was Jacob, because his arms were hairy like Esau’s arms. So Isaac blessed Jacob.

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

Jacob answered, “Yes, I am.”

The Blessing for Jacob

²⁵Then Isaac said, “Bring me the food. I will eat it and bless you.” So Jacob gave him

vow A special promise to God.

Shibah A Hebrew word meaning “seven” or “oath.”

Beersheba This name means “well of the oath.”

curse To ask for bad things to happen to a thing or person.

the food, and he ate it. Then Jacob gave him some wine, and he drank it.

²⁶Then Isaac said to him. “Son, come near and kiss me.” ²⁷So Jacob went to his father and kissed him. Isaac smelled Esau’s clothes and blessed him. Isaac said,

“My son smells like the fields
that the Lord has blessed.
²⁸ May the Lord give you plenty of rain
so you will have good crops and wine.
²⁹ May all people serve you.
May nations bow down to you.
You will rule over your brothers.
Your mother’s sons will bow down to you
and obey you.

Whoever curses* you will be cursed.
Whoever blesses you will be blessed.”

Esau’s “Blessing”

³⁰Isaac finished blessing Jacob. Then, just as Jacob left his father Isaac, Esau came in from hunting. ³¹Esau prepared the food in the special way his father loved. Esau brought it to his father. He said to his father, “Father, I am your son. Get up and eat the meat that I killed and cooked for you. Then you can bless me.”

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

He answered, “I am your son—your first son—Esau.”

³³Then Isaac became very worried and said, “Then who was it that cooked and brought me food before you came? I ate it all and I blessed him. Now it is too late to take back my blessing.”

³⁴Esau heard his father’s words. He became very angry and bitter. He cried out. He said to his father, “Then bless me also, father!”

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

³⁶Esau said, “His name is Jacob (*Tricky*). That is the right name for him. He has tricked me twice. He took away my rights as the firstborn son.* And now he has taken away

my blessing.” Then Esau said, “Have you saved any blessing for me?”

³⁷Isaac answered, “No, it’s too late. I gave Jacob the power to rule over you. And I said all his brothers will be his servants. And I have given him the blessing for much grain and wine. There is nothing left to give you son.”

³⁸But Esau continued to beg his father. “Do you have only one blessing, father? Bless me also, father!” Esau began to cry.

³⁹Then Isaac said to him,

“You will not live on good land.
And you will not have much rain.
⁴⁰ You will have to fight to live.
And you will be a slave to your brother.
But you will fight to be free.
You will break away from his control.”

⁴¹After that Esau hated Jacob because of this blessing. Esau thought to himself, “My father will soon die, and there will be a time of sadness for him. But after that I will kill Jacob.”

⁴²Rebekah heard about Esau’s plan to kill Jacob. She sent for Jacob and said to him, “Listen, your brother Esau is planning to kill you. ⁴³So, son, do what I say. My brother Laban is living in Haran. Go to him and hide. ⁴⁴Stay with him for a short time. Stay with him until your brother stops being angry. ⁴⁵After a short time, your brother will forget what you did to him. Then I will send a servant to bring you back. I don’t want to lose both of my sons in the same day.”

⁴⁶Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “Your son Esau married Hittite women. I am very upset about these women. Why? Because they are not our people. I’ll just die if Jacob marries one of these women too!”

Jacob Searches for a Wife

28 Isaac called Jacob and blessed him. Then Isaac gave him a command. Isaac said, “You must not marry a Canaanite woman. ²So leave this place and go to Paddan Aram. Go to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father. Laban, your mother’s brother, lives there. Marry one of his daughters. ³I pray that God All-Powerful* will bless you and

curse To ask for bad things to happen to a thing or person.

rights as the firstborn son Usually, after the father died, the firstborn son got half of the father’s property and became the new head of the family.

God All-Powerful Literally, “El Shaddai.”

give you many children. I pray that you will become the father of a great nation. ⁴I pray that God will bless you and your children the same way he blessed Abraham. And I pray that you will own the land where you live. This is the land God gave to Abraham.”

⁵So Isaac sent Jacob to Rebekkah’s brother in Paddan Aram. So Jacob went to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean. Laban was the brother of Rebekkah. Rebekkah was the mother of Jacob and Esau.

⁶Esau learned that his father Isaac blessed Jacob. And Esau learned that Isaac sent Jacob away to Paddan Aram to find a wife there. Esau learned that Isaac commanded Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman. ⁷And Esau learned that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and went to Paddan Aram. ⁸Esau saw from this that his father did not want his sons to marry Canaanite women. ⁹Esau already had two wives. But he went to Ishmael and married another woman. He married Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael. Ishmael was Abraham’s son. Mahalath was Nebaioth’s sister.

God’s House—Bethel

¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and went to Haran. ¹¹While Jacob was traveling, the sun set. So Jacob went to a place to stay the night. Jacob found a rock at that place and laid his head on it to sleep. ¹²Jacob had a dream. He dreamed there was a ladder that was on the ground and reached up into heaven. Jacob saw the angels of God going up and down the ladder. ¹³And then Jacob saw the Lord standing by the ladder. The Lord said, “I am the Lord, the God of your grandfather Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. I will give you the land that you are lying on now. I will give this land to you and to your children. ¹⁴You will have many, many descendants.* They will be as many as the pieces of dust on earth. They will spread east and west, north and south. All the families on earth will be blessed because of you and your descendants.

¹⁵“I am with you, and I will protect you every place you go. And I will bring you back

to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I promised.”

¹⁶Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, “I know that the Lord is in this place. But I did not know he was here until I slept.”

¹⁷Jacob was afraid. He said, “This is a very great place. This is the house of God. This is the gate to heaven.”

¹⁸Jacob got up very early in the morning. Jacob took the rock he had slept on and set it up on its edge. Then he poured oil on the rock. In this way, he made this rock a memorial to God. ¹⁹The name of that place was Luz. But Jacob named it Bethel.*

²⁰Then Jacob made a promise. He said, “If God will be with me, and if God will protect me on this trip, and if God gives me food to eat and clothes to wear, ²¹and if I return in peace to my father’s house—if God does all these things—then the Lord will be my God. ²²I am setting this stone up as a memorial stone. It will show that this is a holy place for God. And I will give God one tenth of all he gives me.”

Jacob Meets Rachel

29 Then Jacob continued his trip. He went to the country in the East. ²Jacob looked, and he saw a well in the field. There were three flocks of sheep lying near the well. This well was the place where these sheep drank water. There was a large rock covering the mouth of the well. ³When all the flocks gathered there, the shepherds rolled the rock away from the well. Then all the sheep could drink from the water. After the sheep were full, the shepherds put the rock back in its place.

⁴Jacob said to the shepherds there, “Brothers, where are you from?”

They answered, “We are from Haran.”

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

The shepherds answered, “We know him.”

⁶Then Jacob said, “How is he?”

They answered, “He is well. Everything is fine. Look, that is his daughter Rachel coming now with his sheep.”

descendant(s) A person’s children and their future families.

Bethel This name means “God’s house.”

⁷Jacob said, “Look, it is still day and long before the sun sets. It is not yet time for the animals to be gathered together for the night. So give them water and let them go back into the field.”

⁸But this shepherd said, “We can’t do that until all the flocks are gathered together. Then we will move the rock from the well, and all the sheep will drink.”

⁹While Jacob was talking with the shepherds, Rachel came with her father’s sheep. (It was Rachel’s job to take care of the sheep.) ¹⁰Rachel was Laban’s daughter. Laban was the brother of Rebekah, Jacob’s mother. When Jacob saw Rachel, he went and moved the rock and gave water to the sheep. ¹¹Then Jacob kissed Rachel and cried. ¹²Jacob told Rachel that he was from her father’s family. He told Rachel that he was the son of Rebekah. So Rachel ran home and told her father.

¹³Laban heard the news about his sister’s son Jacob. So Laban ran to meet him. Laban hugged him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban everything that had happened.

¹⁴Then Laban said, “This is wonderful! You are from my own family.” So Jacob stayed with Laban for a month.

Laban Tricks Jacob

¹⁵One day Laban said to Jacob, “It is not right for you to continue working for me without pay. You are a relative, [not a slave]. What should I pay you?”

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

¹⁷Rachel was beautiful. And Leah’s eyes were gentle.* ¹⁸Jacob loved Rachel. Jacob said to Laban, “I will work seven years for you if you will allow me to marry your daughter Rachel.”

¹⁹Laban said, “It would be better for her to marry you than someone else. So stay with me.”

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

Leah’s eyes were gentle This might be a polite way of saying Leah was not very pretty.

²¹After seven years Jacob said to Laban, “Give me Rachel so that I can marry her. My time of work for you is finished.”

²²So Laban gave a party for all the people in that place. ²³That night, Laban brought his daughter Leah to Jacob. Jacob and Leah had sexual relations together. ²⁴(Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter to be her maid.) ²⁵In the morning Jacob saw that it was Leah he had slept with. Jacob said to Laban, “You have tricked me. I worked hard for you so that I could marry Rachel. Why did you trick me?”

²⁶Laban said, “In our country we do not allow the younger daughter to marry before the older daughter. ²⁷But continue for the full week of the marriage ceremony, and I will also give you Rachel to marry. But you must serve me another seven years.”

²⁸So Jacob did this and finished the week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife. ²⁹(Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her maid.) ³⁰So Jacob had sexual relations with Rachel also. And Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Jacob worked for Laban for another seven years.

Jacob’s Family Grows

³¹The Lord saw that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. So the Lord made it possible for Leah to have children. But Rachel did not have any children.

³²Leah gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben.* Leah named him this because she said, “The Lord has seen my troubles. My husband doesn’t love me. So now maybe my husband will love me.”

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

³⁴Leah became pregnant again and had another son. She named the son Levi.* Leah said, “Now, surely my husband will love me. I have given him three sons.”

Reuben This is like the word meaning “Look, a son.”

Simeon This is like the word meaning “He hears.”

Levi This is like the word meaning “accompany,” “be joined together,” or “become close.”

³⁵Then Leah gave birth to another son. She named this son Judah.* Leah named him this because she said, “Now I will praise the Lord.” Then Leah stopped having children.

30 Rachel saw that she was not giving Jacob any children. Rachel became jealous of her sister Leah. So Rachel said to Jacob, “Give me children or I will die!”

²Jacob became angry with Rachel. He said, “I am not God. God is the One who has caused you to not have children.”

³Then Rachel said, “You can have my maid Bilhah. Sleep with her and she will have a child for me.* Then I can become a mother because of her.”

⁴So Rachel gave Bilhah to her husband Jacob. Jacob had sexual relations with Bilhah. ⁵Bilhah became pregnant and gave Jacob a son.

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

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

⁹Leah saw that she could have no more children. So she gave her slave girl Zilpah to Jacob. ¹⁰Then Zilpah had a son. ¹¹Leah said, “I am lucky.” So she named the son Gad.* ¹²Zilpah gave birth to another son. ¹³Leah said, “I am very happy! Now women will call me happy.” So she named that son Asher.*

¹⁴During the wheat harvest, Reuben went into the fields and found some special flowers.* Reuben brought these flowers to his mother Leah. But Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son’s flowers.”

¹⁵Leah answered, “You have already taken away my husband. Now you are trying to take away my son’s flowers.”

Judah This is like the word meaning “He is praised.”

she will have a child for me Literally, “She will give birth on my knees, and I too will have a son through her.”

Dan This is like the word meaning “to decide” or “to judge.”

Naphtali This is like the word meaning “my struggle.”

Gad This is like the word meaning “lucky,” or “fortunate.”

Asher This is like the word meaning “happy” or “blessed.”

special flowers Or, “mandrakes.” The Hebrew word means “love plant.” People thought these plants could help women have babies.

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

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

¹⁷Then God allowed Leah to become pregnant again. She gave birth to a fifth son.

¹⁸Leah said, “God has given me a reward because I gave my slave to my husband.” So Leah named her son Issachar.*

¹⁹Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son. ²⁰Leah said, “God has given me a fine gift. Now surely Jacob will accept me, because I have given him six sons.” So Leah named the son Zebulun.*

²¹Later Leah gave birth to a daughter. She named the daughter Dinah.

²²Then God heard Rachel’s prayer. God made it possible for Rachel to have children.

^{23–24}Rachel became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Rachel said, “God has taken away my shame and given me a son.” So Rachel named the son Joseph.*

Jacob Tricks Laban

²⁵After the birth of Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Now let me go to my own home. ²⁶Give me my wives and my children. I have earned them by working for you ¹⁴ years. You know that I served you well.”

²⁷Laban said to him, “Let me say something!* I know* that the Lord has blessed me because of you. ²⁸Tell me what I should pay you, and I will give it to you.”

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

Issachar This is like the word meaning “reward” or “salary.”

Zebulun This is like the word meaning “praise” or “honor.”

Joseph This is like the word meaning “to add,” “collect,” or “gather.”

Let me say something Literally, “If I find favor in your sight.” This is a polite way to ask permission to speak.

know Or, “guessed,” “divined,” or “concluded.”

me to work for myself—it is time to build my own house.”

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

Jacob answered, “I don’t want you to give me anything. I only want you to pay me for the work I have done. Just do this one thing: I will go back and take care of your sheep. ³²But let me go through all your flocks today and take every lamb with spots or stripes. And let me take every black young goat. And let me take every female goat with stripes or spots. That will be my pay. ³³In the future, you can easily see if I am honest. You can come to look at my flocks. If I have any goat that isn’t spotted or any sheep that isn’t black, then you will know that I stole it.”

³⁴Laban answered, “I agree to that. We will do what you ask.” ³⁵But that day Laban hid all the male goats that had spots. And Laban hid all the female goats that had spots on them. Laban also hid all the black sheep. Laban told his sons to watch these sheep. ³⁶So the sons took all the spotted animals and led them to another place. They traveled for three days. Jacob stayed and took care of all the animals that were left. But there were no animals there that were spotted or black.

³⁷So Jacob cut green branches from poplar and almond trees. Jacob stripped off some of the bark so that the branches had white stripes on them. ³⁸Jacob put the branches in front of the flocks at the watering places. When the animals came to drink, they also mated in that place. ³⁹Then when the goats mated in front of the branches, the young that were born were spotted, striped, or black.

⁴⁰Jacob separated the spotted and the black animals from the other animals in the flock. Jacob kept his animals separate from Laban’s. ⁴¹Any time the stronger animals in the flock were mating, Jacob put the branches before their eyes. The animals mated near those branches. ⁴²But when the weaker animals mated, Jacob did not put the branches there. So the young animals born from the weak parents were Laban’s. And the young animals born from the stronger parents were Jacob’s. ⁴³In this way, Jacob became very rich. He had large flocks, many servants, camels, and donkeys.

Time To Leave—Jacob Runs Away

31 One day, Jacob heard Laban’s sons talking. They said, “Jacob has taken everything that our father owned. Jacob has become rich—and he has taken all this wealth from our father.” ²Then Jacob noticed that Laban was not as friendly as he had been in the past. ³The Lord said to Jacob, “Go back to your own land where your ancestors* lived. I will be with you.”

⁴So Jacob told Rachel and Leah to meet him in the field where he kept his flocks of sheep and goats. ⁵Jacob said to Rachel and Leah, “I have seen that your father is angry with me. He was always friendly with me in the past, but now he is not. ⁶You both know that I have worked as hard as I can for your father. ⁷But your father cheated me. Your father has changed my pay ten times. But during all this time, God protected me from all of Laban’s tricks.

⁸“At one time Laban said, ‘You can keep all the goats with spots. This will be your pay.’ After he said this, all the animals gave birth to spotted babies. So they were all mine. But then Laban said, ‘I will keep the spotted goats. You can have all the striped goats. That will be your pay.’ After he said this, then all the animals gave birth to striped babies. ⁹So God has taken the animals away from your father and has given them to me.

¹⁰“I had a dream during the time when the animals were mating. I saw that the only male goats who were mating were the ones with stripes and spots. ¹¹The angel of God spoke to me in that dream. The angel said, ‘Jacob!’

“I answered, ‘Yes!’

¹²“The angel said, ‘Look, only the striped and spotted goats are mating. I am causing this to happen. I have seen all the wrong things Laban is doing to you. I am doing this so that you can have all the new baby goats. ¹³I am the God who came to you at Bethel. At that place, you made an altar. You poured olive oil on the altar. And you made a promise to me.

ancestors Literally, “fathers.” This means a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Now I want you to be ready to go back to the country where you were born.”

^{14–15}Rachel and Leah answered Jacob, “Our father has nothing to give us when he dies. He treated us like strangers. [He sold us to you, and then he spent all the money that should have been ours.] ¹⁶God took all this wealth from our father, and now it belongs to us and our children. So you should do whatever God told you to do!”

¹⁷So Jacob prepared for his trip. He put his sons and his wives on camels. ¹⁸Then they began traveling back to the land of Canaan where his father lived. All the flocks of animals that Jacob owned walked ahead of them. He carried everything that he had gotten while he lived in Paddan Aram.

¹⁹At this time, Laban was gone to cut the wool from his sheep. While he was gone, Rachel went into his house and stole the false gods that belonged to her father.

²⁰Jacob tricked Laban the Aramean. He did not tell Laban he was leaving. ²¹Jacob took his family and everything he owned and left quickly. They crossed the Euphrates River and traveled toward the hill country of Gilead.

²²Three days later, Laban learned that Jacob had run away. ²³So Laban gathered his men together and began to chase Jacob. After seven days, Laban found Jacob near the hill country in Gilead. ²⁴That night God went to Laban in a dream. God said, “Be careful! Be careful of every word you say to Jacob.”

The Search for the Stolen Gods

²⁵The next morning Laban caught Jacob. Jacob had set his camp on the mountain. So Laban and all his men set their camp in the hill country of Gilead.

²⁶Laban said to Jacob, “Why did you trick me? Why did you take my daughters like they were women you captured during war? ²⁷Why did you run away without telling me? If you had told me, I would have given you a party. There would have been singing and dancing with music. ²⁸You didn’t even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters goodbye. You were very foolish to do this! ²⁹I have the power to really hurt you. But last night your father’s God came to me in a dream. He

warned me not to hurt you in any way. ³⁰I know that you want to go back to your home. That is why you left. But why did you steal the gods from my house?”

³¹Jacob answered, “I left without telling you, because I was afraid! I thought you would take your daughters away from me. ³²But I did not steal your gods. If you find any one here with me that has taken your gods, then that person will be killed. Your men will be my witnesses. You can look for anything that belongs to you. Take anything that is yours.” (Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen Laban’s gods.)

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

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

³⁶Then Jacob became very angry. Jacob said, “What wrong have I done? What law have I broken? Why do you have the right to chase me and stop me? ³⁷You have looked through everything I own. You have found nothing that belongs to you. If you have found anything, then show it to me. Put it here where our men can see it. Let our men decide which one of us is right. ³⁸I have worked 20 years for you. During all that time, none of the baby sheep and goats died during birth. And I have not eaten any of the rams from your flocks. ³⁹Any time a sheep was killed by wild animals, I always paid for that myself. I did not take the dead animal to you and say that it was not my fault. But I was robbed day and night. ⁴⁰In the daytime, the sun took away my strength, and at night sleep was taken from my eyes by the cold. ⁴¹I worked 20 years like a slave for you. For the first 14 years I worked to win your two daughters. The last six years I worked to earn your

animals. And during that time you changed my pay ten times. ⁴²But the God of my ancestors,* the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac,* was with me. If God had not been with me, then you would have sent me away with nothing. But God saw the trouble that I had. God saw the work that I did. And last night God proved that I am right.”

Jacob and Laban's Treaty

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

⁴⁵So Jacob found a large rock and put it there to show that he had made an agreement. ⁴⁶He told his men to find some more rocks and make a pile of rocks. Then they ate beside the pile of rocks. ⁴⁷Laban named that place Yegar Sahadutha.* But Jacob named that place Galeed.*

⁴⁸Laban said to Jacob, “This pile of rocks will help us both remember our agreement.” That is why Jacob called the place Galeed.

⁴⁹Then Laban said, “Let the Lord watch over us while we are separated from each other.” So that place was also named Mizpah.*

⁵⁰Then Laban said, “If you hurt my daughters, remember that God will punish you. If you marry other women, remember that God is watching. ⁵¹Here are the rocks that I have put between us. And here is the special rock to show that we made an agreement. ⁵²This pile of rocks and this one special rock both help us remember our agreement. I will never go past these rocks to fight against you. And you must never go on my side of these rocks to fight against me. ⁵³May the God of

Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their ancestors* judge us guilty if we break this agreement.”

Jacob's father, Isaac, called God “Fear.” So Jacob used that name to make the promise. ⁵⁴Then Jacob killed an animal and offered it as a sacrifice* on the mountain. And he invited his men to come and share a meal. After they finished eating, they spent the night on the mountain. ⁵⁵Early the next morning, Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters goodbye. He blessed them and went back home.

Reunion With Esau

32 Jacob also left that place. While he was traveling, he saw God's angels. ²When Jacob saw them he said, “This is God's camp!” So Jacob named that place Mahanaim.*

³Jacob's brother Esau was living in the area called Seir. This area was the hill country of Edom.* Jacob sent messengers to Esau. ⁴Jacob told the messengers, “Tell these things to my master Esau: ‘Your servant Jacob says, I have lived with Laban all these years. ⁵I have many cows, donkeys, flocks, and men and women servants. Sir, I am sending you this message to ask you to accept us.’”

⁶The messengers came back to Jacob and said, “We went to your brother Esau. He is coming to meet you. He has 400 men with him.”

⁷That message scared Jacob. He divided the people who were with him into two groups. He divided all the flocks and the herds and the camels into two groups. ⁸Jacob thought, “If Esau comes and destroys one group, then the other group can run away and be saved.”

⁹Jacob said, “God of my father Abraham! God of my father Isaac! Lord, you told me to come back to my country and to my family. You said that you would do good to me. ¹⁰You have been very kind to me. You did many good things for me. The first time I traveled across the Jordan River, I owned nothing—only my walking stick. But now I

ancestors Literally, “fathers.” This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Fear of Isaac A name for God.

Yegar Sahadutha Aramaic words meaning “rock pile of the agreement.”

Galeed Another name for Gilead. This Hebrew name means “rock pile of the agreement.”

Mizpah This means “a place to watch from.”

sacrifice A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Mahanaim This name means “two camps.”

Edom A country east of Judah.

own enough things to have two full groups.

¹¹I ask you to please save me from my brother. Save me from Esau. I am afraid of him. I am afraid that he will come and kill all of us, even the mothers with the children.

¹²Lord, you said to me, ‘I will be good to you. I will increase your family and make your children as many as the sands of the sea. There will be too many to count.’”

¹³Jacob stayed in that place for the night. Jacob prepared some things to give to Esau as a gift. ¹⁴Jacob took 200 female goats and 20 male goats, 200 female sheep and 20 male sheep. ¹⁵Jacob took 30 camels and their colts, 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys. ¹⁶Jacob gave each flock of animals to his servants. Then Jacob said to the servants, “Separate each group of animals. Go ahead of me and keep some space between each herd.” ¹⁷Jacob gave them their orders. To the servant with the first group of animals Jacob said, “When Esau my brother comes to you and asks you, ‘Whose animals are these? Where are you going? Whose servant are you?’ ¹⁸Then you should answer, ‘These animals belong to your servant Jacob. Jacob sent them as a gift to you my master, Esau. And Jacob is also coming behind us.’”

¹⁹Jacob also ordered the second servant, the third servant, and all the other servants to do the same thing. He said, “You will do the same thing to Esau when you meet him. ²⁰You will say, ‘This is a gift to you, and your servant Jacob is behind us.’”

Jacob thought, “If I send these men ahead with gifts, then maybe Esau will forgive me and accept me.” ²¹So Jacob sent the gifts to Esau. But Jacob stayed that night in the camp.

²²Later that night, Jacob got up and left that place. Jacob took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven sons with him. Jacob crossed the Jabbok River at the crossing. ²³Jacob sent his family across the river. Then Jacob sent everything he had across the river.

The Fight With God

²⁴Jacob was the last person to cross the river. But before he could cross, while he was still alone, a man came and wrestled with him. The man fought with him until the sun

came up. ²⁵The man saw that he could not defeat Jacob. So he touched Jacob’s leg. At that time, Jacob’s leg was put out of joint.

²⁶Then the man said to Jacob, “Let me go. The sun is coming up.”

But Jacob said, “I will not let you go. You must bless me.”

²⁷And the man said to him, “What is your name?”

And Jacob said, “My name is Jacob.”

²⁸Then the man said, “Your name will not be Jacob. Your name will now be Israel.* I give you this name because you have fought with God and with men, and you have not been defeated.”

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

But the man said, “Why must you ask my name?” At that time, the man blessed Jacob.

³⁰So Jacob named that place Peniel.* Jacob said, “At this place, I saw God face to face, but my life was spared.” ³¹Then the sun came up as he passed Peniel.* Jacob was walking crippled because of his leg. ³²So even today, the people of Israel don’t eat the muscle that is on the hip joint, because this is the muscle where Jacob was hurt.

Jacob Shows His Bravery

33 Jacob looked and saw Esau coming. Esau was coming and 400 men were with him. Jacob divided his family into four groups. Leah and her children were in one group, Rachel and Joseph were in one group, and the two maids and their children were in two groups. ²Jacob put the maids with their children first. Then Jacob put Leah and her children behind them. And Jacob put Rachel and Joseph in the last place.

³Jacob himself went out toward Esau. So he was the first person Esau came to. Jacob bowed on the ground seven times while he was walking toward his brother.

⁴When Esau saw Jacob, he ran to meet him. Esau put his arms around Jacob and hugged

Israel This name might mean “he fights for God,” “he fights with God,” or “God fights.”

Peniel, Penuel Two forms of the same name which mean “the face of God.”

his neck and kissed him. Then they both cried.
⁵Esau looked up and saw the women and children. He said, “Who are all these people with you?”

Jacob answered, “These are the children that God gave me. God has been good to me.”

⁶Then the two maids and the children with them went to Esau. They bowed down before him. ⁷Then Leah and the children with her went to Esau and bowed down. And then Rachel and Joseph went to Esau and bowed down.

⁸Esau said, “Who were all those people I saw while I was coming here? And what were all those animals for?”

Jacob answered, “Those are my gifts to you so that you might accept me.”

⁹But Esau said, “You don’t have to give me gifts, brother. I have enough for myself.”

¹⁰Jacob said, “No! I beg you! If you truly accept me, then please accept the gifts I give you. I am very happy to see your face again. It is like seeing the face of God. I am very happy to see that you accept me. ¹¹So I beg that you also accept the gifts I give you. God has been very good to me. I have more than I need.” In this way Jacob begged Esau to take the gifts. So Esau accepted the gifts.

¹²Then Esau said, “Now you can continue your journey. I will go with you.”

¹³But Jacob said to him, “You know that my children are weak. And I must be careful with my flocks and their young animals. If I force them to walk too far in one day, all the animals will die. ¹⁴So you go on ahead. I will follow you slowly. I will go slow enough for the cattle and other animals to be safe. And I will go slow enough so that my children will not become too tired. I will meet you in Seir.”

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

But Jacob said, “That is very kind of you. But there is no need to do that.” ¹⁶So that day Esau started on his trip back to Seir. ¹⁷But Jacob went to Succoth. In that place he built a house for himself and small barns for his cattle. That is why the place was named Succoth.*

Succoth A town east of the Jordan River. This name means “temporary shelters.”

¹⁸Jacob safely ended his trip from Paddan Aram when he came to the town of Shechem in Canaan. Jacob made his camp in a field near the city. ¹⁹Jacob bought the field where he camped from the family of Hamor, father of Shechem. Jacob paid 100 pieces of silver. ²⁰Jacob built an altar there to worship God. Jacob named the place “El, the God of Israel.”

The Rape of Dinah

34 Dinah was the daughter of Leah and Jacob. One day, Dinah went out to see the women of that place. ²Hamor was the king of that land. His son Shechem saw Dinah. Shechem kidnapped her and raped her. ³Then Shechem fell in love with Dinah and wanted to marry her. ⁴Shechem told his father, “Please get this girl for me so that I can marry her.”

⁵Jacob learned that the boy had done this very bad thing to his daughter. But all Jacob’s sons were out in the field with the cattle. So Jacob did nothing until they came home. ⁶At that time, Shechem’s father, Hamor, went to talk with Jacob.

⁷In the fields, Jacob’s sons heard the news about what happened. They were very angry when they heard this. They were mad because Shechem had brought shame to Israel by raping Jacob’s daughter. The brothers came in from the fields as soon as they heard about the terrible thing Shechem had done.

⁸But Hamor talked to the brothers. He said, “My son Shechem wants Dinah very much. Please let him marry her. ⁹This marriage will show we have a special agreement. Then our men can marry your women, and your men can marry our women. ¹⁰You can live in the same land with us. You will be free to own the land and to trade here.”

¹¹Shechem also talked to Jacob and the brothers. Shechem said, “Please accept me. I will do anything you ask me to do. ¹²I will give you any gift* you want if you only allow me to marry Dinah. I will give you anything you ask, but let me marry Dinah.”

¹³Jacob’s sons decided to lie to Shechem and his father. The brothers were still mad

gift Or, “dowry.” Here, the money a man paid for a wife.

because Shechem had done such a bad thing to their sister Dinah. ¹⁴So the brothers said to him, “We cannot allow you to marry our sister because you are not yet circumcised.* It would be wrong for our sister to marry you. ¹⁵But we will allow you to marry her if you do this one thing: Every man in your town must become circumcised like us. ¹⁶Then your men can marry our women, and our men can marry your women. Then we will become one people. ¹⁷If you refuse to be circumcised, then we will take Dinah away.”

¹⁸This agreement made Hamor and Shechem very happy. ¹⁹Shechem was very happy to do what Dinah’s brothers asked.

Revenge

Shechem was the most honored man in his family. ²⁰Hamor and Shechem went to the meeting place of their city. They spoke to the men of the city and said, ²¹“These people of Israel want to be friends with us. We want to let them live in our land and be at peace with us. We have enough land for all of us. We are free to marry their women. And we are happy to give them our women for marriage. ²²But there is one thing that all our men must agree to do. All our men must agree to become circumcised* the same as the people of Israel. ²³If we do this, then we will become rich from all their cattle and animals. So we should make this agreement with them, and they will stay here with us.” ²⁴All the men who heard this in the meeting place agreed with Hamor and Shechem. And every man was circumcised at that time.

²⁵Three days later, the men who were circumcised* were still sore. Two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, knew that the men would be weak at this time. So they went to the city and killed all the men there. ²⁶Dinah’s brothers, Simeon and Levi, killed Hamor and his son Shechem. Then they took Dinah out of Shechem’s house and left. ²⁷Jacob’s sons went to the city and stole everything that was there. They were still angry because of what

Shechem did to their sister. ²⁸So the brothers took all their animals. They took all their donkeys and everything else in the city and in the fields. ²⁹The brothers took everything those people owned. The brothers even took the wives and children.

³⁰But Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have given me much trouble. All the people in this place will hate me. All the Canaanite people and the Perizzite people will turn against me. There are only a few of us. If the people in this place gather together to fight against us, then I will be destroyed. And all our people will be destroyed with me.”

³¹But the brothers said, “Should we let those people treat our sister like a prostitute?* No! Those people were wrong to do that to our sister!”

Jacob in Bethel

35 God said to Jacob, “Go to the town of Bethel.* Live there and make an altar* for worship. Remember El,* the God who appeared* to you there when you were running away from your brother Esau. Make your altar to worship that God there.”

²So Jacob said to his family and to all his servants, “Destroy all those foreign gods made of wood and metal that you have. Make yourselves pure. Put on clean clothes. ³We will leave here and go to Bethel. In that place, I will build an altar to the God who helped me during my time of trouble. And that God has been with me everywhere I went.”

⁴So the people gave Jacob all the foreign gods that they had. And they gave Jacob all the rings they were wearing in their ears. Jacob buried all these things under an oak tree near the town called Shechem.

⁵Jacob and his sons left that place. The people in that area wanted to follow and kill them. But they became very afraid and did not

circumcise(d) Cutting the foreskin from a man. In Israel this was proof that a man had made a special agreement to obey God’s laws and teachings.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin.

Bethel This name means “God’s house.”

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices that were offered as gifts to God.

El A Hebrew name for God.

God who appeared God often used special shapes so people could see him. Sometimes he was like a man, an angel, a fire, or a bright light.

follow Jacob. ⁶So Jacob and his people went to Luz. Luz is now called Bethel.* It is in the land of Canaan. ⁷Jacob built an altar* there. Jacob named the place “El Bethel.” Jacob chose this name because that is the place God first appeared to him when he was running from his brother.

⁸Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died there. They buried her under the oak tree at Bethel. They named that place Allon Bacuth.*

Jacob’s New Name

⁹When Jacob came back from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again. And God blessed Jacob. ¹⁰God said to Jacob, “Your name is Jacob. But I will change that name. You will not be called Jacob now. Your new name will be Israel.*” So God named him Israel.

¹¹God said to him, “I am God All-Powerful.* [And I give you this blessing:] Have many children and grow into a great nation. Other nations and other kings will come out of you. ¹²I gave Abraham and Isaac some special land. Now I give that land to you. And I also give that land to all your people who live after you.” ¹³Then God left that place. ^{14–15}Jacob set up a memorial stone* in this place. Jacob made the rock holy by pouring wine and oil on it. This was a special place because God spoke to Jacob there. And Jacob named the place Bethel.*

Rachel Dies Giving Birth

¹⁶Jacob and his group left Bethel. Just before they came to Ephrath (*Bethlehem*), Rachel began giving birth to her baby. ¹⁷But Rachel was having much trouble with this birth. She was having great pain. Rachel’s nurse saw this and said, “Don’t be afraid Rachel. You are giving birth to another son.”

Bethel A town in Israel. This name means “God’s house.”

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices that were offered as gifts to God.

Allon Bacuth This name means “the oak tree of sadness.”

Israel This name might mean “he fights for God” or “he fights with God.”

God All-Powerful Literally, “El Shaddai.”

memorial stone A stone that was set up to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel people often set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

¹⁸Rachel died while giving birth to the son. Before dying, Rachel named the boy Benoni.* But Jacob called him Benjamin.*

¹⁹Rachel was buried on the road to Ephrath. (Ephrath is Bethlehem.) ²⁰And Jacob put a special rock on her grave to honor Rachel. That special rock is still there today. ²¹Then Israel (*Jacob*) continued his journey. He camped just south of Eder tower.*

²²Israel stayed there for a short time. While he was there, Reuben slept with Israel’s woman servant* Bilhah. Israel heard about this and was very angry.

The Family of Israel

Jacob (*Israel*) had twelve sons.

²³Jacob and Leah’s sons were: Jacob’s firstborn son Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

²⁴Jacob and Rachel’s sons were Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁵Bilhah was Rachel’s maid. Jacob and Bilhah’s sons were Dan and Naphtali.

²⁶Zilpah was Leah’s maid. Jacob and Zilpah’s sons were Gad and Asher.

Those are Jacob’s (*Israel*’s) sons who were born in Paddan Aram.

²⁷Jacob went to his father Isaac at Mamre in Kiriath Arba (Hebron). This is where Abraham and Isaac had lived. ²⁸Isaac lived 180 years. ²⁹Then Isaac became weak and died. Isaac had lived a long and full life. His sons Esau and Jacob buried him in the same place as his father.

Esau’s Family

36 The family history of Esau (Edom). ²Esau married women from the land of Canaan. Esau’s wives were: Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the son of Zibeon the Hivite, and ³Basemath, Ishmael’s daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. ⁴Esau and Adah had a son named Eliphaz. Basemath had a son named Reuel.

Benoni This name means “son of my suffering.”

Benjamin This name means “right-hand (favorite) son.”

Eder tower Or, “Migdal Eder.”

woman servant Or, “concubine,” a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

⁵And Oholibamah had three sons: Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. Those were Esau's sons that were born in the land of Canaan.

^{6–8}Jacob and Esau's families became too big for the land in Canaan to support them all. So Esau moved away from his brother Jacob. Esau took his wives, sons, daughters, all his slaves, cows and other animals, and everything else that he got in Canaan and moved to the hill country of Seir.* (Esau is also named Edom—and this is another name for the country Seir.)

⁹Esau is the father of the people of Edom.* These are the names of Esau's family living in the hill country of Seir (*Edom*):

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

¹¹Eliphaz had five sons: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. ¹²Eliphaz also had a woman servant* named Timna. Timna and Eliphaz had a son named Amalek.

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

Those were Esau's grandsons from his wife Basemath.

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

¹⁵These are the family groups* that came from Esau (*Edom*):

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

All those family groups* came from Esau's wife Adah.

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

All those families came from Esau's wife Basemath.

¹⁸Esau's wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, gave birth to Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

Those three men were the fathers of their families. ¹⁹Those men were all family leaders from Esau (Edom).

²⁰Seir, a Horite man, lived in Edom* before Esau. These are the sons of Seir: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ²¹Dishon, Ezer, Dishan. Those sons were all Horite family leaders from Seir in Edom.

²²Lotan was the father of Hori and Heman.* (Timna was Lotan's sister.)

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

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

²⁵Anah was the father of Dishon and Oholibamah.

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

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

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

²⁹These are the names of the leaders of the Horite families: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ³⁰Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. Those men were the leaders of the families that lived in the country of Seir (*Edom**). ³¹At that time, there were kings in Edom. Edom had kings a long time before Israel did.

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

³³When Bela died, Jobab became king. Jobab was the son of Zerah from Bozrah. ³⁴When Jobab died, Husham ruled. Husham was from the land of the Temanite people. ³⁵When Husham died, Hadad ruled that area. Hadad was the son of Bedad. (Hadad was the man who defeated Midian in the country of Moab.) Hadad was from the city of Avith. ³⁶When Hadad died, Samlah ruled that country. Samlah was from Masrekah. ³⁷When Samlah died, Shaul ruled that area. Shaul was from Rehoboth on the Euphrates River. ³⁸When Shaul died, Baal Hanan ruled that country. Baal Hanan was the son of Acbor. ³⁹When

Seir A mountain range in Edom.

Edom A country east of Judah.

woman servant Or, "concubine," a woman who was like a wife to a man.

family groups Or, "family leaders." These families became large tribes and nations.

Heman Or "Homam."

Baal Hanan died, Hadad* ruled that country. Hadad was from the city of Pau. Hadad's wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred. (Mezahab was Matred's father.)

^{40–43}Esau was the father of the Edomite families: Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram. Each of these families lived in an area that was called by the same name as their family.

Joseph the Dreamer

37 Jacob stayed and lived in the land of Canaan. This is the same land where his father had lived. ²This is the story of Jacob's family.

Joseph was a young man, 17 years old. His job was to care for the sheep and the goats. Joseph did this work with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. (Bilhah and Zilpah were his father's wives.) Joseph told his father about the bad things that his brothers did. ³Joseph was born at a time when his father Israel (*Jacob*) was very old. So Israel (*Jacob*) loved Joseph more than he loved his other sons. Jacob gave his son a special coat. This coat was long and was very beautiful.* ⁴Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than he loved them. They hated their brother because of this. They refused to say nice things to Joseph.

⁵One time Joseph had a special dream. Later, Joseph told his brothers about this dream. After this, his brothers hated him even more.

⁶Joseph said, "I had a dream. ⁷We were all working in the field. We were tying stacks of wheat together. Then my sheaf got up. It stood there while all of your sheaves made a circle around mine. Then all of your stacks of wheat bowed down to mine."

⁸His brothers said, "Do you think this means you will be a king and rule over us?" His brothers hated Joseph more now because of the dreams he had about them.

⁹Then Joseph had another dream. Joseph told his brothers about this dream. Joseph

said, "I had another dream. I saw the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowing down to me."

¹⁰Joseph also told his father about this dream. But his father criticized him. His father said, "What kind of dream is this? Do you believe that your mother, your brothers, and I will bow down to you?" ¹¹Joseph's brothers continued to be jealous of him. But Joseph's father thought much about all these things and wondered what they could mean.

¹²One day, Joseph's brothers went to Shechem to care for their father's sheep. ¹³Jacob said to Joseph, "Go to Shechem. Your brothers are there with my sheep."

Joseph answered, "I will go."

¹⁴Joseph's father said, "Go and see if your brothers are safe. Come back and tell me if my sheep are all fine." So Joseph's father sent him from the Valley of Hebron to Shechem.

¹⁵At Shechem, Joseph became lost. A man found him wandering in the fields. The man said, "What are you looking for?"

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

¹⁷The man said, "They have already gone away. I heard them say that they were going to Dothan." So Joseph followed his brothers and found them in Dothan.

Joseph Sold into Slavery

¹⁸Joseph's brothers saw him coming from far away. They decided to make a plan to kill him. ¹⁹The brothers said to each other, "Here comes Joseph, the one who dreams. ²⁰We should kill him now while we can. We can throw his body into one of the empty wells. We can tell our father that a wild animal killed him. Then we will show him that his dreams are useless."

²¹But Reuben wanted to save Joseph. Reuben said, "Let's not kill him. ²²We can put him into a well without hurting him." Reuben planned to save Joseph and send him back to his father. ²³Joseph came to his brothers. They attacked him and tore off his long and beautiful coat. ²⁴Then they threw him into an empty well that was dry.

²⁵While Joseph was in the well, the brothers sat down to eat. Then they looked

Hadad Or, "Hadar."

beautiful The Hebrew means "striped" or possibly, "many colored."

and saw a group of traders* traveling from Gilead to Egypt. Their camels were carrying many different spices and riches. ²⁶So Judah said to his brothers, “What profit will we get if we kill our brother and hide his death? ²⁷We will profit more if we sell him to these traders. Then we will not be guilty of killing our own brother.” The other brothers agreed. ²⁸When the Midianite traders came by, the brothers took Joseph out of the well. They sold him to the traders for 20 pieces of silver. The traders took him to Egypt.

²⁹During all this time, Reuben was not there with the brothers. He did not know they had sold Joseph. When Reuben came back to the well, he saw that Joseph was not there. Reuben tore his clothes [to show his sadness]. ³⁰Reuben went to the brothers and said, “The boy is not in the well! What will I do?” ³¹The brothers killed a goat and put the goat’s blood on Joseph’s beautiful coat. ³²Then the brothers showed the coat to their father. And the brothers said, “We found this coat. Is this Joseph’s coat?”

³³The father saw the coat and knew that it was Joseph’s. The father said, “Yes, that is his! Maybe some wild animal has killed him. My son Joseph has been eaten by a wild animal!” ³⁴Jacob was so sorry about his son that he tore his clothes. Then Jacob put on special clothes to show that he was sad. Jacob continued to be sad about his son for a long time. ³⁵All of Jacob’s sons and daughters tried to comfort him. But Jacob was never comforted. Jacob said, “I will be sorry for my son until the day I die.”* So Jacob continued to be sad for his son Joseph.

³⁶The Midianite traders later sold Joseph in Egypt. They sold him to Potiphar, the captain of the Pharaoh’s guards.

Judah and Tamar

38 About that time, Judah left his brothers and went to stay with a man named Hirah. Hirah was from the town of Adullam. ²Judah met a Canaanite girl there and married her. The girl’s father was named Shua. ³The

Canaanite girl gave birth to a son. She named him Er. ⁴Later, she gave birth to another son. She named him Onan. ⁵Later she had another son named Shelah. Judah lived in Kezib when his third son was born.

⁶Judah chose a woman to be the wife of his first son Er. The woman’s name was Tamar. ⁷But Er did many bad things. The Lord was not happy with him. So the Lord killed him. ⁸Then Judah said to Er’s brother Onan, “Go and sleep with your dead brother’s wife.* Become like a husband to her. If children are born, then they will belong to your brother Er.”

⁹Onan knew that the children from this union would not belong to him. Onan had sexual relations with Tamar, but he did not allow himself to stay inside her. ¹⁰This made the Lord angry. So the Lord killed Onan also. ¹¹Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, “Go back to your father’s house. Stay there and don’t marry until my young son Shelah grows up.” Judah was afraid that Shelah would also be killed like his brothers. Tamar went back to her father’s home.

¹²Later, Judah’s wife, the daughter of Shua, died. After Judah’s time of sadness, he went to Timnah with his friend Hirah from Adullam. Judah went to Timnah to have the wool cut from his sheep. ¹³Tamar learned that Judah, her father-in-law, was going to Timnah to cut the wool from his sheep. ¹⁴Tamar always wore clothes that showed that she was a widow. So she put on some different clothes and covered her face with a veil. Then she sat down near the road going to Enaim, a town near Timnah. Tamar knew that Judah’s younger son Shelah was now grown up. But Judah would not make plans for her to marry him.

¹⁵Judah traveled on that road. He saw her but thought that she was a prostitute.* (Her face was covered with a veil like a prostitute.) ¹⁶So Judah went to her and said, “Let me have sexual relations with you” (Judah did not know that she was Tamar, his daughter-in-law.)

She said, “How much will you give me?”

traders Literally, “Ishmaelites.”

I will be sorry ... die Literally, “I will go down to my son in Sheol (the place of death) in sadness.”

Go and sleep ... wife In Israel if a man died without children, one of his brothers would take the widow. If a child was born, it would be considered the dead man’s child.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sins.

¹⁷Judah answered, “I will send you a young goat from my flock.”

She answered, “I agree to that. But first you must give me something to keep until you send me the goat.”

¹⁸Judah asked, “What do you want me to give you as proof that I will send you the goat?”

Tamar answered, “Give me your seal and its string* that you use on your letters. And give me your walking stick.” Judah gave these things to her. Then Judah and Tamar had sexual relations, and Tamar became pregnant. ¹⁹Tamar went home and took off the veil that covered her face. Then she again wore the special clothes that showed she was a widow.

²⁰Later, Judah sent his friend Hirah to Enaim to give the prostitute* the goat he promised. Also Judah told Hirah to get the special seal and the walking stick from her. But Hirah could not find her. ²¹Hirah asked some of the men at the town of Enaim, “Where is the prostitute that was here by the road?”

The men answered, “There has never been a prostitute here.”

²²So Judah’s friend went back to Judah and said, “I could not find the woman. The men that lived in that place said that there was never a prostitute there.”

²³So Judah said, “Let her keep the things. I don’t want people to laugh at us. I tried to give her the goat, but we could not find her. That is enough.”

Tamar Is Pregnant

²⁴About three months later, someone told Judah, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar sinned like a prostitute,* and now she is pregnant.”

Then Judah said, “Take her out and burn her.”

²⁵The men went to Tamar to kill her. But she sent a message to her father-in-law. Tamar said, “The man who made me pregnant is the man who owns these things. Look at these things. Whose are they? Whose special seal and string* is this? Whose walking stick is this?”

seal ... string People wrote a contract, folded it, tied it with string, put wax or clay on the string, and pressed the seal onto it to seal it. This was like signing the agreement.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sins.

²⁶Judah recognized those things and said, “She is right. I was wrong. I did not give her my son Shelah like I promised.” And Judah did not sleep with her again.

²⁷The time came for Tamar to give birth. They saw she was going to have twins. ²⁸While she was giving birth, one baby put his hand out. The nurse tied a red string on the hand and said, “This baby was born first.” ²⁹But that baby pulled his hand back in. Then the other baby was born first. So the nurse said, “So you were able to break out first!” So they named him Perez.* ³⁰After this, the other baby was born. This was the baby with the red string on his hand. They named him Zerah*

Joseph Is Sold to Potiphar in Egypt

39 The traders* who bought Joseph took him down to Egypt. They sold him to the captain of Pharaoh’s guard, Potiphar. ²But the Lord helped Joseph. Joseph became a successful man. Joseph lived in the house of his master, Potiphar the Egyptian.

³Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Joseph. Potiphar saw that the Lord helped Joseph be successful in everything he did. ⁴So Potiphar was very happy for Joseph. Potiphar allowed Joseph to work for him and help him to rule the house. Joseph was the ruler over everything Potiphar owned. ⁵After Joseph was made the ruler over the house, the Lord blessed the house and everything that Potiphar owned. The Lord did this because of Joseph. And the Lord blessed everything that grew in the fields of Potiphar. ⁶So Potiphar allowed Joseph to take responsibility for everything in the house. Potiphar worried about nothing, only the food he ate.

Joseph Refuses Potiphar’s Wife

Joseph was a very handsome, good-looking man. ⁷After some time, the wife of Joseph’s master began to like Joseph. One day she said to him, “Sleep with me.”

⁸But Joseph refused. He said, “My master trusts me with everything in his house. He has

Perez This name is like the word meaning “to break out.”

Zerah This name is like the word meaning “bright.”

traders Literally, “Ishmaelites.”

given me responsibility for everything here. ⁹My master has made me almost equal to him in his house. I must not sleep with his wife! That is wrong! It is a sin against God.”

¹⁰The woman talked with Joseph every day, but Joseph refused to sleep with her. ¹¹One day Joseph went into the house to do his work. He was the only man in the house at the time. ¹²His master’s wife grabbed his coat and said to him, “Come to bed with me.” But Joseph ran out of the house so fast that he left his coat in her hand.

¹³The woman saw Joseph had left his coat in her hands and had run out of the house. [So she decided to lie about what had happened.] ¹⁴She called to the men outside. She said, “Look! This Hebrew slave was brought here to make fun of us. He came in and tried to attack me, but I screamed. ¹⁵My scream scared him and he ran away. But he left his coat with me.” ¹⁶Then she kept his coat until her husband, Joseph’s master, came home. ¹⁷And she told her husband the same story. She said, “This Hebrew slave you brought here tried to attack me! ¹⁸But when he came near me I screamed. He ran away, but he left his coat.”

Joseph in Prison

¹⁹Joseph’s master heard what his wife said. And he became very angry. ²⁰There was a prison where the king’s enemies were put. So Potiphar put Joseph into that prison. And Joseph stayed there.

²¹But the Lord was with Joseph. The Lord continued to show his kindness to Joseph. After some time, the commander of the prison guards began to like Joseph. ²²The commander of the guards put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. Joseph was their leader, but he still did the same work they did. ²³The commander of the guards trusted Joseph with everything that was in the prison. This happened because the Lord was with Joseph. The Lord helped Joseph be successful in everything he did.

Joseph Interprets Two Dreams

40 Later, two of Pharaoh’s servants did something wrong to Pharaoh. These servants were the baker and the man who served wine to Pharaoh. ²Pharaoh became

angry with his baker and wine server. ³So Pharaoh put them in the same prison as Joseph. Potiphar, the commander of Pharaoh’s guards, was in charge of this prison. ⁴The commander put the two prisoners under Joseph’s care. The two men continued to stay in prison for some time. ⁵One night, both of the prisoners had a dream. (The two prisoners were the servants of the king of Egypt—the baker and the wine server.) Each prisoner had his own dream. And each dream had its own meaning. ⁶Joseph went to them the next morning. Joseph saw that the two men were worried. ⁷Joseph asked them, “Why do you look so worried today?”

⁸The two men answered, “We dreamed last night, but we don’t understand what we dreamed. There is no one to interpret or explain the dreams to us.”

Joseph said to them, “God is the One who can understand and interpret dreams. So I beg you, tell me your dreams.”

The Wine Server’s Dream

⁹So the wine server told Joseph his dream. The server said, “I dreamed I saw a vine. ¹⁰On the vine there were three branches. I watched the branches grow flowers and then become grapes. ¹¹I was holding Pharaoh’s cup. So I took the grapes and squeezed the juice into the cup. Then I gave the cup to Pharaoh.”

¹²Then Joseph said, “I will explain the dream to you. The three branches mean three days. ¹³Before the end of three days, Pharaoh will forgive you and allow you to go back to your work. You will do the same work for Pharaoh as you did before. ¹⁴But when you are free, remember me. Be good to me and help me. Tell Pharaoh about me so that I can get out of this prison. ¹⁵I was taken from my own home, the land of my people, the Hebrews. I have done nothing wrong. So I should not be in prison.”

The Baker’s Dream

¹⁶The baker saw that the other servant’s dream was good. So the baker said to Joseph, “I also had a dream. I dreamed there were three bread baskets on my head. ¹⁷In the top basket there were all kinds of baked food.

This food was for the king. But birds were eating this food.”

¹⁸Joseph answered, “I will tell you what the dream means. The three baskets mean three days. ¹⁹Before the end of three days, the king will take you out of this prison. Then the king will cut your head off! He will hang your body on a pole. And birds will eat your body.”

Joseph Is Forgotten

²⁰Three days later, it was Pharaoh’s birthday. Pharaoh gave a party for all his servants. At the party, Pharaoh allowed the wine server and the baker to leave the prison. ²¹Pharaoh freed the wine server. Pharaoh gave him his job back. And the wine server put a cup of wine in Pharaoh’s hand. ²²But Pharaoh hanged the baker and everything happened the way Joseph said it would. ²³But the wine server did not remember to help Joseph. He said nothing about Joseph to Pharaoh. The wine server forgot about Joseph.

Pharaoh’s Dreams

41 Two years later, Pharaoh had a dream. He dreamed that he was standing by the Nile River. ²In the dream, seven cows come out of the river and stood there eating grass. They were healthy, good-looking cows. ³Then seven more cows came out of the river and stood on the bank of the river by the healthy cows. But these cows were thin and sick looking. ⁴The seven sick cows ate the seven healthy cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

⁵Pharaoh went back to sleep and began dreaming again. This time, he dreamed that he saw seven heads of grain growing on one plant. They were healthy and full of grain. ⁶And then he saw seven more heads of grain sprouting. But they were thin and scorched by the hot wind. ⁷The thin heads of grain ate the seven good heads of grain. Then Pharaoh woke up again and realized it was only a dream. ⁸The next morning Pharaoh was worried about these dreams. So he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told these men the dreams, but none of them could interpret the dreams.

The Servant Tells Pharaoh About Joseph

⁹Then the wine servant remembered Joseph. The servant said to Pharaoh, “I remember something that happened to me. ¹⁰You were angry with me and the baker, and you put us in prison. ¹¹Then one night he and I had a dream. Each dream had a different meaning. ¹²There was a young Hebrew man in prison with us. He was a servant of the commander of the guards. We told him our dreams, and he explained them to us. He told us the meaning of each dream. ¹³And what he said came true. He said I would be free and have my old job back. And that happened. He also said the baker would die, and that happened!”

Joseph Is Called to Interpret the Dreams

¹⁴So Pharaoh called Joseph from the prison. The guards quickly got Joseph out of prison. Joseph shaved and put on some clean clothes. Then he went to see Pharaoh. ¹⁵Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I had a dream. But no one can interpret the dream for me. I heard that you can interpret dreams when someone tells you about them.”

¹⁶Joseph answered, “I can’t! But maybe God will explain them for you, Pharaoh.”

¹⁷Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream, I was standing by the Nile River. ¹⁸Then seven cows came up out of the river and stood there eating the grass. They were healthy, good-looking cows. ¹⁹Then I saw seven more cows come out of the river after them. But these cows were thin and sick looking. They were the worst cows I had ever seen anywhere in Egypt! ²⁰Then the thin, sick cows ate the first healthy cows! ²¹But they still looked thin and sick. You couldn’t even tell they had eaten the healthy cows. They looked as thin and sick as they did in the beginning. Then I woke up.

²²“In my next dream I saw seven heads of grain growing on one plant. They were healthy and full of grain. ²³And then seven more heads of grain grew after them. But they were thin and scorched by the hot wind. ²⁴Then the thin heads of grain ate the seven good heads of grain.

“I told these dreams to my magicians. But no one could explain the dreams to me. What do they mean?”

Joseph Explains the Dream

²⁵Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “These two dreams are about the same thing. God is telling you what will happen soon. ²⁶Both dreams really mean the same thing. The seven good cows and the seven good heads of grain are seven [good] years. ²⁷And the seven thin, sick-looking cows and the seven thin heads of grain mean that there will be seven years of hunger in this area. These seven bad years will come after the seven good years. ²⁸God has shown you what will happen soon. And God will make these things happen just like I told you. ²⁹For seven years there will be plenty of food in Egypt. ³⁰But then there will be seven years of hunger. People in Egypt will forget how much food there had been in the past. This famine* will ruin the country. ³¹People will forget what it was like to have plenty of food.

³²“Pharaoh, you had two dreams about the same thing. Why? God wanted to show you that he really will make this happen. And he will make it happen soon! ³³So Pharaoh, you should choose a wise, intelligent man and put him in charge of Egypt. ³⁴Then you should choose other men to collect food from the people. During the seven good years, the people must give them one fifth of all the food they grow. ³⁵In this way, these men will collect lots of food during the seven good years and store it in the cities until it is needed. In this way, Pharaoh, this food will be under your control. ³⁶Then during the seven years of hunger, there will be food for the country of Egypt. And Egypt will not be destroyed by the famine.”

³⁷This seemed like a very good idea to Pharaoh, and all his officials agreed. ³⁸Then Pharaoh told them, “I don’t think we can find anyone better than Joseph to take this job! God’s Spirit is in him making him very wise!”

³⁹So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “God showed these things to you, so you must be the wisest man. ⁴⁰I will put you in charge of my country, and the people will obey all your commands. I will be the only person more powerful than you.”

⁴¹There was a special ceremony and parade when Pharaoh made Joseph the governor. Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I now make you governor over all of Egypt.” ⁴²Then Pharaoh gave his special ring to Joseph. The royal seal was on this ring. Pharaoh also gave Joseph a fine linen robe and put a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³Pharaoh told Joseph to ride in the second chariot [in the parade]. Special guards walked ahead of Joseph’s chariot and told the people, “Bow down to Joseph.”

So Joseph became the governor over all of Egypt. ⁴⁴Pharaoh said to him, “I am Pharaoh, the king, [so I will do what I want to do]. But no other person in Egypt can lift a hand or move a foot unless you say he can.”

⁴⁵Pharaoh gave Joseph another name, Zaphenath Paneah.* Pharaoh also gave Joseph a wife named Asenath. She was the daughter of Potiphera, a priest in the city of On. So Joseph became the governor over the whole country of Egypt.

⁴⁶Joseph was 30 years old when he began serving the king of Egypt. Joseph traveled throughout the country of Egypt. ⁴⁷During the seven good years, the crops in Egypt grew very well. ⁴⁸And Joseph saved the food in Egypt during those seven years. Joseph stored the food in the cities. In every city, Joseph stored grain that grew in the fields around the city. ⁴⁹Joseph stored very much grain. It was like the sands of the sea. He stored so much grain that it could not be measured.

⁵⁰Joseph’s wife was Asenath. She was the daughter of Potiphera, the priest in the city of On. Before the first year of hunger came, Joseph and Asenath had two sons. ⁵¹The first son was named Manasseh.* Joseph named him this because Joseph said, “God made me

famine A time when there is no rain and no crops can grow. People and animals often die from lack of food and water.

Zaphenath Paneah This Egyptian name probably means “sustainer of life,” but it is like Hebrew words meaning “a person who explains secret things.”

Manasseh This is like the Hebrew word meaning “to forget.”

forget all of the troubles I have had, and everything about my home.” ⁵²Joseph named the second son Ephraim.* Joseph gave him this name because Joseph said, “I had great troubles, but God has made me successful in everything.”

The Time of Hunger Begins

⁵³For seven years, people had all the food they needed. But then those years ended. ⁵⁴And the seven years of hunger began, just like Joseph had said. No food grew anywhere in any of the countries in that area. But in Egypt, people had plenty to eat! Why? Because Joseph had stored the grain. ⁵⁵The time of hunger began, and the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Pharaoh said to the Egyptian people, “Go ask Joseph what to do.”

⁵⁶There was famine* everywhere, so Joseph gave the people grain from the warehouses. Joseph sold the stored grain to the people of Egypt. The famine was bad in Egypt. ⁵⁷But the famine was bad everywhere! So people from the countries around Egypt had to come to Egypt to buy grain.

The Dreams Come True

42 [The famine* was also bad in Canaan.] But Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt. So Jacob said to his sons, “Why are we sitting here doing nothing? ²I heard there is grain in Egypt for sale. So let’s go there to buy grain. Then we can live instead of just letting ourselves die!”

³So ten of Joseph’s brothers went to Egypt to buy grain. ⁴Jacob did not send Benjamin. (Benjamin was Joseph’s only full brother.*) Jacob was afraid that something bad might happen to Benjamin.

⁵The famine was very bad in Canaan, so there were many people from Canaan who went to Egypt to buy grain. Among them were the sons of Israel.

Ephraim This is like the Hebrew word meaning “twice fruitful.”

famine A time when there is no rain and no crops can grow. People and animals often die from lack of food and water.

full brother Literally, “brother.” Joseph and Benjamin had the same mother.

⁶Joseph was the governor of Egypt at the time. And Joseph was the man who checked the sale of grain to people who came to Egypt. So, Joseph’s brothers came to him and bowed before him. ⁷Joseph saw his brothers. Joseph recognized them, but he acted like he didn’t know them. He was rude when he spoke to them. He said, “Where do you come from?”

The brothers answered, “We come from the land of Canaan. We have come here to buy food.”

⁸Joseph knew that these men were his brothers. But they did not know who he was. ⁹And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed about his brothers.

Joseph Calls His Brothers Spies

Joseph said to his brothers, “You have not come to buy food! You are spies. You came to learn where we are weak.”

¹⁰But the brothers said to him, “No, sir! We come as your servants. We have come only to buy food. ¹¹We are all brothers—we all have the same father. We are honest men. We have come only to buy food.”

¹²Then Joseph said to them, “No! You have come to learn where we are weak.”

¹³And the brothers said, “No! We are all brothers. There are twelve brothers in our family. We all have the same father. Our youngest brother is still at home with our father. And the other brother died a long time ago. We are like servants before you. We are from the land of Canaan.”

¹⁴But Joseph said to them, “No! I can see I am right. You are spies. ¹⁵But I will let you prove that you are telling the truth. In the name of Pharaoh, I swear that I won’t let you go until your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶I’ll let one of you go back and bring your youngest brother here to me while the others will stay here in prison. We will see if you are telling the truth. But I believe you are spies.” ¹⁷Then Joseph put them all in prison for three days.

Simeon Kept as a Hostage

¹⁸After three days, Joseph said to them, “I am a God-fearing man! Do this, and I will let you live. ¹⁹If you are really honest men, then one of your brothers can stay here in prison.

And the others can go and carry grain back to your people. ²⁰But then you must bring your youngest brother back here to me. Then I will know that you are telling the truth and you won't have to die."

The brothers agreed to this. ²¹They said to each other, "We are being punished for the bad thing we did to our younger brother Joseph. We saw the trouble he was in. He begged us to save him. But we refused to listen. So now we are in trouble."

²²Then Reuben said to them, "I told you not to do anything bad to that boy. But you refused to listen to me. So now we are being punished for his death."

²³Joseph was using an interpreter to talk to his brothers. So the brothers did not know that Joseph understood their language. But Joseph heard and understood everything they said. ²⁴[Their words made Joseph very sad.] So Joseph left them and cried. After a short time, Joseph went back to them. He took Simeon, one of the brothers, and tied him while the other brothers watched. ²⁵Joseph told some servants to fill their bags with grain. The brothers gave Joseph the money for this grain. But Joseph didn't keep the money. He put the money in their bags of grain. Then Joseph gave them things they would need for their trip back home.

²⁶So the brothers put the grain on their donkeys and left. ²⁷That night the brothers stopped at a place to spend the night. One of the brothers opened his sack to get some grain for his donkey. And there in the sack, he saw his money! ²⁸He said to the other brothers, "Look! Here is the money I paid for the grain. Someone put the money back in my sack!" The brothers were very scared. They said to one another, "What is God doing to us?"

The Brothers Report to Jacob

²⁹The brothers went back to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told Jacob about everything that had happened. ³⁰They said, "The governor of that country spoke rudely to us. He thought that we were spies! ³¹But we told him that we weren't spies, we were honest men! ³²We told him that we were twelve brothers. We told him about our father,

and we told him about our youngest brother who was still at home in Canaan.

³³"Then the governor of that country said this to us, 'Here is a way to prove that you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me. Take your grain back to your families. ³⁴Then bring your youngest brother to me. Then I will know if you are honest men, or if you were sent from an army to destroy us. If you are telling the truth, I will give your brother back to you. I will give him to you, and you will be free to buy grain in our country.'"

³⁵Then the brothers started taking the grain out of their sacks. And every brother found his bag of money in his sack of grain. The brothers and their father saw the money and they were scared.

³⁶Jacob said to them, "Do you want me to lose all of my children? Joseph is gone. Simeon is gone. And now you want to take Benjamin away too!"

³⁷But Reuben said to his father, "Father, you may kill my two sons if I don't bring Benjamin back to you. Trust me. I will bring Benjamin back to you."

³⁸But Jacob said, "I will not let Benjamin go with you. His brother is dead, and he is the only son left from my wife Rachel. It would kill me if anything happened to him during the trip to Egypt. You would send me to the grave* a very sad, old man."

Jacob Lets Benjamin go to Egypt

43 The time of hunger was very bad in that country. ²The people ate all the grain they had brought from Egypt. When that grain was gone, Jacob said to his sons, "Go to Egypt and buy some more grain for us to eat."

³But Judah said to Jacob, "But the governor of that country warned us. He said, 'If you don't bring your brother back to me, then I will refuse to talk to you.' ⁴If you will send Benjamin with us, then we can go down and buy grain. ⁵But if you refuse to send Benjamin, then we will not go. That man warned us to not come back without him."

grave Literally, "Sheol," the place for people after death.

⁶Israel (*Jacob*) said, “Why did you tell him you had another brother? Why did you do such a bad thing to me?”

⁷The brothers answered, “That man asked lots of questions. He wanted to know all about us and about our family. He asked us, ‘Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother at home?’ We only answered his questions. We didn’t know he would ask us to bring our brother to him!”

⁸Then Judah said to his father Israel, “Let Benjamin go with me. I will take care of him. We have to go to Egypt to get food. If we don’t go, then we will all die, including our children. ⁹I will make sure he is safe. I will be responsible for him. If I don’t bring him back to you, then you can blame me forever. ¹⁰If you had let us go before, we could already have made two trips for food.”

¹¹Then their father Israel said, “If it is really true, then take Benjamin with you. But take some gifts to the governor. Take some of the things we have been able to gather in our land. Take him some honey, pistachio nuts, almonds, gum, and myrrh.* ¹²Take twice as much money with you this time. Take the money that was given back to you after you paid last time. Maybe the governor made a mistake. ¹³Take Benjamin, and go back to the man. ¹⁴I pray that God All-Powerful will help you when you stand before the governor. I pray that he will let Benjamin, and also Simeon, come back safely. If not, I will again be sad from losing my son.”

¹⁵So the brothers took the gifts to give to the governor. And the brothers took twice as much money with them as they took the first time. This time, Benjamin went with the brothers to Egypt.

The Brothers At Joseph’s House

¹⁶In Egypt, Joseph saw Benjamin with them. Joseph said to his servant, “Bring those men into my house. Kill an animal and cook it. Those men will eat with me at noon today.” ¹⁷The servant did as he was told. He brought the men into Joseph’s house.

gum and myrrh The sap from certain plants. This was used to make expensive perfumes and incense.

¹⁸The brothers were scared when they were taken to Joseph’s house. They said, “We have been brought here because of the money that was put back in our sacks the last time. They will use that as proof against us. And they will steal our donkeys and make us slaves.”

¹⁹So the brothers went to the servant in charge of Joseph’s house. ²⁰They said, “Sir, I promise this is the truth: The last time we came, we came to buy food. ^{21–22}On the way home, we opened our sacks and found our money in every sack. We don’t know how it got there. But we brought that money with us to give it back to you. And we have brought more money to pay for the food that we want to buy this time.”

²³But the servant answered, “Don’t be afraid; believe me. Your God, the God of your father, must have put the money in your sack as a gift. I remember that you paid me for the grain the last time.”

Then the servant brought Simeon out of the prison. ²⁴The servant led the men into Joseph’s house. He gave them water. And they washed their feet. Then he gave their donkeys food to eat.

²⁵The brothers heard that they were going to eat with Joseph. So they worked until noon preparing their gifts for him.

²⁶Joseph came home, and the brothers gave him the gifts that they had brought with them. Then they bowed down on the ground in front of him.

²⁷Joseph asked them how they were doing. Joseph said, “How is your elderly father you told me about. Is he still alive and well?”

²⁸The brothers answered, “Yes sir, our father is still alive.” And they again bowed before Joseph.

Joseph Sees His Brother Benjamin

²⁹Then Joseph saw his brother, Benjamin. (Benjamin and Joseph had the same mother.) Joseph said, “Is this your youngest brother that you told me about?” Then Joseph said to Benjamin, “God bless you, my son!”

³⁰Then Joseph ran from the room. Joseph wanted very much to show his brother Benjamin that he loved him. He felt like crying, but he didn’t want his brothers to see

him crying. So Joseph ran to his room and cried there. ³¹Then Joseph washed his face and came out. He took control of himself and said, “Now it is time to eat.”

³²The servants seated Joseph at a table by himself. His brothers were at another table by themselves. And the Egyptians were at table by themselves. The Egyptians believed that it was wrong for them to eat with Hebrews. ³³Joseph’s brothers sat at a table in front of him. The brothers were sitting in order, from the oldest brother to the youngest. All the brothers kept looking at each other, wondering what was happening. ³⁴Servants were taking food from Joseph’s table and bringing it to them. But the servants gave Benjamin five times more than the others. The brothers continued to eat and drink there with Joseph until they were almost drunk.

Joseph Sets a Trap

44 Then Joseph gave a command to his servant. Joseph said, “Fill the men’s sacks with as much grain as they can carry. And put each man’s money into his sack with the grain. ²Put the youngest brother’s money in his sack too. But also put my special silver cup in his sack.” So the servant obeyed Joseph.

³Early the next morning, the brothers and their donkeys were sent back to their country. ⁴After they had left the city, Joseph said to his servant, “Go and follow the men. Stop them and say to them, ‘We were good to you! So why have you been bad to us? Why did you steal my master’s silver cup? ⁵My master drinks from that cup and he uses it to learn secret things. What you did was wrong!’”

⁶So the servant obeyed. He rode out to the brothers and stopped them. The servant said the things to them that Joseph told him to say.

⁷But the brothers said to the servant, “Why does the governor say these things? We wouldn’t do anything like that! ⁸We brought back the money that we found in our sacks before. So surely we wouldn’t steal silver or gold from your master’s house. ⁹If you find that silver cup in any of our sacks, then let that man die. You can kill him, and we will be your slaves.”

¹⁰The servant said, “We will do as you say. But I will not kill the man. If I find the silver cup, then that man will be my slave. The others will be free.”

The Trap Is Sprung; Benjamin Is Caught

¹¹Then every brother quickly opened his sack on the ground. ¹²The servant started looking in the sacks. He started with the oldest brother and ended with the youngest. He found the cup in Benjamin’s sack. ¹³The brothers were very sad. They tore their clothes to show their sadness. They put their sacks back on the donkeys and went back to the city.

¹⁴Judah and his brothers went back to Joseph’s house. Joseph was still there. The brothers fell to the ground and bowed down before him. ¹⁵Joseph said to them, “Why have you done this? Didn’t you know that I have a special way of learning secrets. No person can do this better than me!”

¹⁶Judah said, “Sir, there is nothing we can say! There is no way to explain. There is no way to show that we are not guilty. God has judged us guilty for something else we did. So all of us, even Benjamin, will be your slaves.”

¹⁷But Joseph said, “I will not make you all slaves! Only the man who stole the cup will be my slave. You others can go in peace to your father.”

Judah Pleads for Benjamin

¹⁸Then Judah went to Joseph and said, “Sir, please let me speak plainly with you. Please don’t be angry with me. I know that you are like Pharaoh himself. ¹⁹When we were here before, you asked us, ‘Do you have a father or a brother?’ ²⁰And we answered you, ‘We have a father—he is an old man. And we have a young brother. Our father loves that son because he was born while our father was old. And that young son’s brother is dead. So this is the only son that is left born from that mother. Our father loves him very much.’ ²¹Then you said to us, ‘Then bring that brother to me. I want to see him.’ ²²And we said to you, ‘That young boy can’t come. He can’t leave his father. If his father loses him, then his father would be so sad that he would die.’ ²³But you said to us, ‘You must bring

your youngest brother or I will not sell you grain again.’ ²⁴So we went back to our father and told him what you said.

²⁵“Later, our father said, ‘Go back and buy us some more food.’ ²⁶And we said to our father, ‘We can’t go without our youngest brother. The governor said he will not sell us grain again until he sees our youngest brother.’ ²⁷Then my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife Rachel gave me two sons. ²⁸I let one son go away, and he was killed by a wild animal. And I haven’t seen him since. ²⁹If you take my other son away from me, and something happens to him, then I will be sad enough to die.’ ³⁰Now, imagine what will happen when we go home without our youngest brother—that boy is the most important thing in our father’s life! ³¹Our father will die if he sees that the boy isn’t with us—and it will be our fault! We will send our father to his grave a very sad man!

³²“I took responsibility for the young boy. I told my father, ‘If I don’t bring him back to you, then you can blame me all my life.’ ³³So now I beg you, please let the boy go back with his brothers. And I will stay and be your slave. ³⁴I can’t go back to my father if the boy is not with me. I am very afraid of what would happen to my father.”

Joseph Tells Who He Is

45 Joseph could not control himself any longer. He cried in front of all the people who were there. Joseph said, “Tell everyone to leave here.” So all the people left. Only the brothers were left with Joseph. Then Joseph told them who he was. ²Joseph continued to cry, and all the Egyptian people in Pharaoh’s house heard it. ³Joseph said to his brothers, “I am your brother Joseph. Is my father doing well?” But the brothers did not answer him. They were confused and scared.

⁴So Joseph said to his brothers again, “Come here to me. I beg you, come here.” So the brothers went close to Joseph. And Joseph said to them, “I am your brother Joseph. I am the one you sold as a slave to Egypt. ⁵Now, don’t be worried. Don’t be angry with yourselves for what you did. It was God’s plan for me to come here. I am here to save

your life. ⁶This terrible time of hunger has continued for two years now. And there will be five more years without planting or harvest. ⁷So God sent me here ahead of you so that I can save your people in this country. ⁸It wasn’t your fault that I was sent here. It was God’s plan. God made me like a father to Pharaoh. I am the governor over all his house and over all of Egypt.”

Israel Invited to Egypt

⁹Joseph said, “Hurry up and go to my father. Tell him his son Joseph sent this message.”

God made me the governor of Egypt. So come here to me. Don’t wait. Come now. ¹⁰You can live near me in the land of Goshen. You, your children, your grandchildren, and all of your animals are welcome here. ¹¹I will take care of you during the next five years of hunger. So you and your family will not lose everything you own.

¹²Joseph told his brothers, “Surely you can see that I really am Joseph. Even my brother Benjamin knows it is me, your brother, talking to you. ¹³So tell my father about the honor I have received here in Egypt. Tell him about everything you have seen here. Now hurry, go bring my father back to me.” ¹⁴Then Joseph hugged his brother Benjamin, and they both began crying. ¹⁵Then Joseph kissed all his brothers and cried on them. After this, the brothers began talking with him.

¹⁶Pharaoh learned that Joseph’s brothers had come to him. This news spread all through Pharaoh’s house. Pharaoh and his servants were very excited! ¹⁷Pharaoh told Joseph, “Tell your brothers to take all the food they need and go back to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸Tell them to bring your father and their families back here to me. I will give you the best land in Egypt to live on. And your family can eat the best food we have here.” ¹⁹Then the Pharaoh said, “Also give your brothers some of our best wagons. Tell them to go to Canaan and bring your father and all the women and children back in the wagons. ²⁰Don’t worry

about bringing all of their belongings. We can give them the best of Egypt.”

²¹So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them good wagons like the Pharaoh had promised. And Joseph gave them enough food for their trip. ²²Joseph gave each brother a suit of beautiful clothes. But Joseph gave Benjamin five suits of beautiful clothes. And Joseph also gave Benjamin 300 pieces of silver. ²³Joseph also sent gifts to his father. He sent ten donkeys with bags full of many good things from Egypt. And he sent ten female donkeys full of grain, bread, and other food for his father on his trip back. ²⁴Then Joseph told his brothers to go. And while they were leaving, Joseph said to them, “Go straight home. And don’t fight on the way.”

²⁵So the brothers left Egypt and went to their father in the land of Canaan. ²⁶The brothers told him, “Father, Joseph is still alive! And he is the governor over the whole country of Egypt.”

Their father did not know what to think. At first he didn’t believe them. ²⁷But then they told him everything Joseph had said. And Jacob saw the wagons Joseph had sent for him to bring him back to Egypt. Then Jacob became excited and very, very happy. ²⁸Israel said, “Now I believe you. My son Joseph is still alive! I am going to see him before I die!”

God Assures Israel

46 So Israel began his trip to Egypt. First Israel went to Beersheba. There, Israel worshiped God, the God of his father Isaac. He offered sacrifices.* ²During the night, God spoke to Israel in a dream. God said, “Jacob, Jacob.”

And Israel answered, “Here I am.”

³Then God said, “I am God, the God of your father. Don’t be afraid to go to Egypt. In Egypt I will make you a great nation. ⁴I will go to Egypt with you. And I will bring you out of Egypt again. You will die in Egypt, but Joseph will be with you. His own hands will close your eyes when you die.”

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Israel Goes to Egypt

⁵Then Jacob left Beersheba and traveled to Egypt. His sons, the sons of Israel, brought their father, their wives, and all their children to Egypt. They traveled in the wagons the Pharaoh had sent. ⁶They also had their cattle and all the things that they owned in the land of Canaan. So Israel went to Egypt with all his children and his family. ⁷With him were his sons and his grandsons, his daughters and his granddaughters. All of his family went with him into Egypt.

Jacob’s Family

⁸Here are the names of Israel’s* sons and family that went into Egypt with him:

Reuben was Jacob’s first son. ⁹Reuben’s sons were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

¹⁰Simeon’s sons were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, and Zohar. There was also Shaul. (Shaul was born from a Canaanite woman.)

¹¹Levi’s sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹²Judah’s sons were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. (Er and Onan died while still in Canaan.) Perez’s sons were Hezron and Hamul.

¹³Issachar’s sons were Tola, Puah, Job, and Shimron.

¹⁴Zebulun’s sons were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

¹⁵Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were Jacob’s sons from his wife Leah. Leah had those sons in Paddan Aram. She also had a daughter named, Dinah. There were 33 people in this family.

¹⁶Gad’s sons were Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

¹⁷Asher’s sons were Imnah, Ishvah, Isvi, Beriah, and their sister, Serah. Also there were Beriah’s sons, Heber and Malkiel.

¹⁸All those were Jacob’s sons from his wife’s servant, Zilpah. (Zilpah was the maid that Laban had given to his daughter Leah.) There were 16 people in this family.

Israel Another name for Jacob. This name means “he fights for God” or “he fights with God.”

¹⁹Benjamin was also with Jacob. Benjamin was Jacob and Rachel's son. (Joseph was also Rachel's son, but Joseph was already in Egypt.)

²⁰In Egypt, Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. (Joseph's wife was Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the priest in the city of On.)

²¹Benjamin's sons were Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

²²Those were the sons of Jacob from his wife Rachel. There were 14 people in this family.

²³Dan's son was Hushim.

²⁴Naphtali's sons were Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

²⁵Those were the sons of Jacob and Bilhah. (Bilhah was the maid that Laban had given to his daughter Rachel.) There were seven people in this family.

²⁶The total number of Jacob's direct descendants* that went with him to Egypt was 66 people. (The wives of Jacob's sons were not counted in this number.) ²⁷Also, there were the two sons of Joseph. They had been born in Egypt. So there was a total of 70 people in Jacob's family in Egypt.

Israel Arrives in Egypt

²⁸Jacob sent Judah ahead to speak to Joseph first. Judah went to Joseph in the land of Goshen. Then Jacob and his people followed into that land. ²⁹Joseph learned that his father was coming. So Joseph prepared his chariot and went out to meet Israel, his father, in Goshen. When Joseph saw his father, he hugged his neck and cried for a long time.

³⁰Then Israel said to Joseph, "Now I can die in peace. I have seen your face and I know that you are still alive."

³¹Joseph said to his brothers and to the rest of his father's family, "I will go and tell Pharaoh that you are here. I will say to Pharaoh, 'My brothers and the rest of my father's family have left the land of Canaan and have come here to me. ³²They are a family

of shepherds. They have always kept sheep and cattle. They have brought all their animals and everything they own with them.' ³³When Pharaoh calls you, he will ask, 'What work do you do?' ³⁴You tell him, 'We are shepherds. All our lives we have been shepherds. And our ancestors* were shepherds before us.' Then Pharaoh will allow you to live in the land of Goshen. Egyptian people don't like shepherds, so it is better that you stay in Goshen."

Israel Settles in Goshen

47 Joseph went in to Pharaoh and said, "My father and my brothers and all their families are here. They have all their animals and everything they own from the land of Canaan with them. They are now in the land of Goshen." ²Joseph chose five of his brothers to be with him before the Pharaoh.

³Pharaoh said to the brothers, "What work do you do?"

The brothers said to Pharaoh, "Sir, we are shepherds. And our ancestors* were shepherds before us." ⁴They said to Pharaoh, "The time of hunger is very bad in Canaan. There are no fields left with grass for our animals. So we have come to live in this land. We ask you to please let us live in Goshen."

⁵Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. ⁶You can choose any place in Egypt for them to live. Give your father and your brothers the best land. Let them live in the land of Goshen. And if they are skilled shepherds, then they can also care for my cattle."

⁷Then Joseph called his father Jacob to come in to meet Pharaoh. Jacob blessed Pharaoh. ⁸And Pharaoh said to him, "How old are you?"

⁹Jacob said to Pharaoh, "I have had a short life with many troubles. I have lived only 130 years. My father and his ancestors* lived to be much older than I am."

¹⁰Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Then Jacob left from his meeting with Pharaoh.

¹¹Joseph did what Pharaoh said and gave his father and brothers land in Egypt. It was

descendants A person's children and their future families.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

the best land in Egypt, in the eastern part of the country, in the land of Rameses. ¹²Joseph also gave his father, his brothers, and all their people the food that they needed.

Joseph Buys Land for Pharaoh

¹³The time of hunger became worse. There was no food anywhere in the land. Egypt and Canaan became very poor because of this bad time. ¹⁴People in the land bought more and more grain. Joseph saved the money and brought it to Pharaoh's house. ¹⁵After some time, the people in Egypt and Canaan had no money left. They had spent all their money to buy grain. So the people of Egypt went to Joseph and said, "Please give us food. Our money is gone. If we don't eat, we will die while you are watching."

¹⁶But Joseph answered, "Give me your cattle, and I will give you food." ¹⁷So the people used their cattle and horses and all their other animals to buy food. And that year, Joseph gave them food and took their animals.

¹⁸But the next year, people had no animals and nothing to buy food with. So the people went to Joseph and said, "You know that we have no money left. And all our animals belong to you. So we have nothing left—only what you see—our bodies and our land. ¹⁹Surely we will die while you are watching. But if you give us food, then we will give Pharaoh our land, and we will be his slaves. Give us seed so that we can plant. Then we will live and not die. And the land will grow food for us again."

²⁰So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. All the people in Egypt sold Joseph their fields. They did this because they were very hungry. ²¹And all the people became slaves of Pharaoh. Everywhere in Egypt, people were Pharaoh's slaves. ²²The only land Joseph didn't buy was the land that the priests owned. The priests didn't need to sell their land because Pharaoh paid them for their work. So they used this money to buy food to eat.

²³Joseph said to the people, "Now I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh. So I will give you seed, and you can plant your fields. ²⁴At harvest time, you must give one fifth of your crops to Pharaoh. You can keep

four-fifths for yourselves. You can use the seed you keep for food and planting the next year. Now you can feed your families and your children."

²⁵The people said, "You have saved our lives. We are happy to be slaves to Pharaoh."

²⁶So Joseph made a law at that time in the land. And that law still continues today. The law says that one fifth of everything from the land belongs to the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh owns all the land. The only land he doesn't own is the land of the priests.

"Don't Bury Me in Egypt"

²⁷Israel (*Jacob*) stayed in Egypt. He lived in the land of Goshen. His family grew and became very large. They got that land in Egypt and did very well.

²⁸Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years. So Jacob was 147 years old. ²⁹The time came when Israel (*Jacob*) knew he would soon die, so he called his son Joseph to him. He said, "If you love me, then put your hand under my leg and make a promise.* Promise that you will do what I say and that you will be truthful with me. When I die, don't bury me in Egypt. ³⁰Bury me in the place where my ancestors* are buried. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in our family grave."

Joseph answered, "I promise that I will do what you say."

³¹Then Jacob said, "Make a vow to me." And Joseph vowed to him that he would do this. Then Israel (*Jacob*) laid his head back down on the bed.*

Blessings for Manasseh and Ephraim

48 Some time later, Joseph learned that his father was very sick. So Joseph took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim and went to his father. ²When Joseph arrived,

put your hand ... make a promise This showed that this was a very important promise and that Jacob trusted Joseph to keep his promise.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Then Israel ... on the bed Or, "Then Israel worshiped on the head of this staff." The Hebrew word for "staff" is like the word for "bed." And the word for "worship" also means to "bow down" or "lie down."

someone told Israel, “Your son Joseph has come to see you.” Israel was very weak, but he tried hard and sat up in his bed.

³Then Israel said to Joseph, “God All-Powerful appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan. God blessed me there. ⁴God said to me, ‘I will make you a great family. I will give you many children and you will be a great people. Your family will own this land forever.’ ⁵And now you have two sons. These two sons were born here in the country of Egypt before I came. Your two sons Ephraim and Manasseh will be like my own sons. They will be the same as Reuben and Simeon to me. ⁶So these two boys will be my sons. They will share in everything I own. But if you have other sons, they will be your sons. But they will also be like sons to Ephraim and Manasseh—that is, in the future, they will share in everything that Ephraim and Manasseh own. ⁷On the trip from Paddan Aram, Rachel died. This made me very sad. She died in the land of Canaan. We were still traveling toward Ephrath. I buried her there on the road to Ephrath. (Ephrath is Bethlehem.)”

⁸Then Israel saw Joseph’s sons. Israel said, “Who are these boys?”

⁹Joseph said to his father, “These are my sons. These are the boys God gave me.”

Israel said, “Bring your sons to me. I will bless them.”

¹⁰Israel was old and his eyes were not good. So Joseph brought the boys close to his father. Israel kissed and hugged the boys. ¹¹Then Israel said to Joseph, “I never thought I would see your face again. But look! God has let me see you and your children.”

¹²Then Joseph took the boys off of Israel’s lap and they bowed down in front of his father. ¹³Joseph put Ephraim on his right side and Manasseh on his left side. (So Ephraim was on Israel’s left side, and Manasseh was on Israel’s right side.) ¹⁴But Israel crossed his hands and put his right hand on the head of the younger boy Ephraim. Then Israel put his left hand on the head of the older boy Manasseh. He had his left hand on Manasseh, even though Manasseh was firstborn. ¹⁵And Israel blessed Joseph and said,

“My ancestors,* Abraham and Isaac,
worshiped our God.
And that God has led me all of my life.
¹⁶ He was the Angel who saved me
from all my troubles.
And I pray that he will bless these boys.
Now these boys will have my name
and the name of our ancestors,
Abraham and Isaac.
I pray that they will grow to become
great families and nations on earth.”

¹⁷Joseph saw that his father put his right hand on Ephraim’s head. This didn’t make Joseph happy. Joseph took his father’s hand. He wanted to move it from Ephraim’s head and put it on Manasseh’s head. ¹⁸Joseph said to his father, “You have your right hand on the wrong boy. Manasseh is the firstborn. Put your right hand on him!”

¹⁹But his father argued and said, “I know, son. I know. Manasseh is the firstborn. And he will be great. He will also be the father of many people. But the younger brother will be greater than the older brother. And the younger brother’s family will be much larger.”

²⁰So Israel blessed them that day. He said,

“The people of Israel will use your names
whenever they bless someone.
They will say,
“May God make you like
Ephraim and Manasseh.”

In this way, Israel made Ephraim greater than Manasseh.

²¹Then Israel said to Joseph, “Look, my time to die is almost here. But God will still be with you. He will lead you back to the land of your ancestors*. ²²I have given you something that I did not give your brothers. I give you the mountain that I won from the Amorite people. I used my sword and bow to fight for that mountain. And I won.”

ancestors Literally, “fathers.” This means a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Jacob Blesses His Sons

49 Then Jacob called all his sons to him.
He said, “All my sons, come here to me. I will tell you what will happen in the future.

- ² “Come together and listen, sons of Jacob.
Listen to Israel, your father.”

Reuben

- ³ “Reuben, my first son,
you are my first child,
the first proof of my power as a man.
You were the most honored and powerful
of all my sons.
⁴ But your passion was like a flood
you couldn’t control.
So you will not remain
my most honored son.
You climbed into your father’s bed
and slept with one of his wives.
You brought shame to my bed,
to the bed you lay on.”

Simeon and Levi

- ⁵ “Simeon and Levi are brothers.
They love to fight with their swords.
⁶ They planned evil things in secret.
My soul wants no part in their plans.
I will not accept their secret meetings.
They killed men when they were angry.
And they hurt animals only for fun.
⁷ Their anger is a curse.
It is too strong.
They are too cruel when they are mad.
They will not get their own land
in the land of Jacob.
They will be spread throughout Israel.”

Judah

- ⁸ “Judah, your brothers will praise you.
You will defeat your enemies.
Your brothers will bow down to you.
⁹ Judah is like a lion.
My son, you are like a lion
standing over the animal it killed.
Judah is like a lion.
He lies down to rest,
and no one is brave enough
to disturb him.

- ¹⁰ Men from Judah’s family will be kings.
The sign that his family rules
will not leave his family,
before the real king comes.*
Then many people will obey
and serve him.
¹¹ He ties his donkey to a grapevine.
He ties his young donkey to the best
grapevines.
He uses the best wine to wash his clothes.
¹² His eyes are red from drinking wine.
His teeth are white from drinking milk.*”

Zebulun

- ¹³ “Zebulun will live near the sea.
His seacoast will be a safe place
for ships.
His land will continue as far as
the city of Sidon.”

Issachar

- ¹⁴ “Issachar is like a donkey who
has worked too hard.
He will lie down after carrying
a heavy load.
¹⁵ He will see his resting place is good.
He will see his land is pleasant.
Then he will agree to carry heavy loads.
He will agree to work as a slave.”

Dan

- ¹⁶ “Dan* will judge his own people,
like the other families of Israel.
¹⁷ Dan will be like a snake
at the side of the road.
He will be like a dangerous snake
lying near the path.
That snake bites a horse’s foot,
and the rider falls to the ground.
¹⁸ “Lord, I am waiting for your salvation.”

before the real king comes Or, “until Shiloh comes” or “until the man it belongs to comes” or “until his tribute comes.”

Men from Judah ... milk Or, “¹⁰The ruler’s sceptre will not pass from between Judah’s feet before he gets what is his, that is, the peoples’ obedience. ¹¹His young donkey will be tied to the very best grapevines. He will wash his finest clothes in wine, the blood of grapes. ¹²His eyes will be redder than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.”

Dan This is like the Hebrew word meaning “judge.”

Gad

- 19 “A group of robbers will attack* Gad.
But Gad will chase them away.”

Asher

- 20 “Asher’s land will grow much good food.
He will have food fit for a king!”

Naphtali

- 21 “Naphtali is like a deer running free,
and his words like their beautiful babies.”

Joseph

- 22 “Joseph is very successful.
Joseph is like a vine covered with fruit,
like a vine growing by a spring,
like a vine growing along a fence.
23 Many people turned
and fought against him.
People with arrows became his enemies.
24 But he won the fight
with his mighty bow
and his skillful arms.
He gets power
from the Mighty One of Jacob,
from the Shepherd,
the Rock of Israel,
25 from the God of your father.
God blesses you.
“May God All-Powerful bless you
and give you blessings from the sky
above,
and blessings from the deep below.
May he give you blessings
from breast and womb.
26 My parents had many good things happen
to them.
And I, your father,
was blessed even more.
Your brothers left you with nothing.
But now I pile all my blessings on you,
as high as a mountain.”

Benjamin

- 27 “Benjamin is like a hungry wolf.
In the morning he kills and eats.
In the evening he shares what is left.”

²⁸Those are the twelve families of Israel. And those are the things their father said to them. He gave each son a blessing that was right for him. ²⁹Then Israel gave them a command. He said, “When I die, I want to be with my people. I want to be buried with my ancestors* in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite. ³⁰That cave is in the field of Machpelah near Mamre. It is in the land of Canaan. Abraham bought that field from Ephron so that he could have a burying place. ³¹Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried in that cave. Isaac and his wife Rebekah are buried in that cave. I buried my wife Leah in that cave. ³²That cave is in the field that was bought from the Hittite people.” ³³After Jacob finished talking to his sons, he lay down, put his feet back on the bed and died.

Jacob’s Funeral

50 When Israel died, Joseph was very sad. He hugged his father and cried on him and kissed him. ²Joseph commanded his servants to prepare his father’s body. (These servants were doctors.) The doctors prepared Jacob’s body to be buried. They prepared the body in the special way of the Egyptians. ³When the Egyptians prepared the body in this special way, they waited 40 days before they buried the body. Then the Egyptians had a special time of sadness for Jacob. This time was 70 days.

⁴After 70 days, the time of sadness was finished. So Joseph spoke to the Pharaoh’s officers. Joseph said, “Please tell this to Pharaoh: ⁵‘When my father was near death, I made a promise to him. I promised that I would bury him in a cave in the land of Canaan. This is the cave that he prepared for himself. So please let me go and bury my father. Then I will come back here to you.’”

⁶Pharaoh answered, “Keep your promise. Go and bury your father.”

⁷So Joseph went to bury his father. All of Pharaoh’s officials, Pharaoh’s elders (*leaders*) and all the elders of Egypt went with Joseph. ⁸All the people in Joseph’s family, his brothers,

A group of robbers will attack The Hebrew words for “group of robbers” and “attack” sound like the name Gad.

ancestors Literally, “fathers.” This means a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

and all the people in his father's family went with him. Only the children and the animals stayed in the land of Goshen. ⁹It was a very large group of people. There was even a group of soldiers riding chariots and horses.

¹⁰They went to Goren Atad,* east of the Jordan River. At this place they had a long funeral service for Israel. This funeral service continued for seven days. ¹¹The people who lived in Canaan saw the funeral service at Goren Atad. They said, "Those Egyptians are having a very sad service!" So now that place across the Jordan River is named Abel Mizraim.*

¹²So Jacob's sons did what their father told them. ¹³They carried his body to Canaan and buried it in the cave at Machpelah. This was the cave near Mamre in the field that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite. Abraham bought that cave to use as a burial place. ¹⁴After Joseph buried his father, he and everyone in the group with him went back to Egypt.

The Brothers Are Still Afraid of Joseph

¹⁵After Jacob died, Joseph's brothers became worried. They were afraid that Joseph would still be mad at them for what they had done years before. They said, "Maybe Joseph still hates us for what we did." ¹⁶So the brothers sent this message to Joseph:

Before your father died, he told us to give you a message. ¹⁷He said, 'Tell Joseph that I beg him to please forgive his brothers for the bad things they did to him.' So now Joseph, we beg you, please forgive us for the bad things we did to you. We are the servants of God, the God of your father.

That message made Joseph very sad, and he cried. ¹⁸His brothers went to him and bowed down in front of him. They said, "We will be your servants."

¹⁹Then Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. I am not God! I have no right to punish you." ²⁰It is true that you planned to do something bad to me. But really, God was planning good things. God's plan was to use me to save the lives of many people. And that is what happened! ²¹So don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your children." In this way, Joseph said nice things to his brothers. This made his brothers feel good.

²²Joseph continued to live in Egypt with his father's family. Joseph died when he was 110 years old. ²³During Joseph's life, Ephraim had children and grandchildren. And his son Manasseh had a son named Makir. Joseph lived to see Makir's children.

The Death of Joseph

²⁴When Joseph was near death, he said to his brothers, "My time to die is almost here. But I know that God will take care of you and lead you out of this country. God will lead you to the land he promised to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

²⁵Then Joseph asked his people to make a promise. Joseph said, "Promise me that you will carry my bones with you when God leads you to that new land."

²⁶Joseph died in Egypt when he was 110 years old. Doctors prepared his body for burial and put the body in a coffin in Egypt.

Goren Atad Or, "Atad's threshing floor."

Abel Mizraim This means "Egyptian time of sadness."