

Genesis

The Beginning of the World

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

The First Day—Light

³Then God said, "Let there be light!" And light began to shine.^c ⁴He saw the light, and he knew that it was good. Then he 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 a space^d to separate the water into two parts!" ⁷So God made the space and separated the water. Some of the water was above it, and some of the water was below it. ⁸God named that space "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

^a **1:1** Or "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." "God" in this first section (1:1–2:3) is the most general word for God in the Old Testament. It is a plural form. See verse 26.

^b **1:2** **God's Spirit** Or "A wind from God" or "A mighty wind."

^c **1:1–3** Or "In the beginning, God created 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,' and there was 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,' and there was light."

^d **1:6** **space** Or "firmament." The Hebrew word can refer to a piece of metal that has been hammered into the shape of a bowl.

sky be gathered together so that the dry land will appear." And it happened. ¹⁰God named the dry land "earth," and he named the water that was gathered together "seas." And God saw that 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 that this was good.

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

The Fourth Day—Sun, Moon, and Stars

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

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

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

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

The Fifth Day—Fish and Birds

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 created the large sea animals.^a He created all the many living things in the sea and every kind of bird that flies in the air. And God saw that this was good.

²²God blessed all the living things in the sea and told them to have many babies and fill the seas. And he blessed the birds on land and told them to have many more babies.

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 produce 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 produce more animals.” And all these things happened.

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

²⁶Then God said, “Now let’s make humans^b who will be like us.^c 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 created humans in his own image. He created them to be like himself.^d He created 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.

^a **1:21 large sea animals** Or “sea monsters.”

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

^c **1:26 Now let’s make ... like us** Or “Now let’s make humans in our image and in our likeness.”

^d **1:27 So God created humans ... himself** Or “So God created them in his image. In the image of God he created them.”

Compare Gen. 5:1, 3.

These 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. These 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 he saw that everything was very good.

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

The Seventh Day—Rest

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

The First Man and the Garden of Eden

⁴This is the story about the creation of the sky and the earth. This is what happened when the LORD God made the earth and the sky. ⁵This was before there were plants on the earth. Nothing was growing in the fields because the LORD God had not yet made it rain on the earth, and there was no one to care for the plants.

⁶So water^e came up from the earth and spread over the ground. ⁷Then the LORD God took dust from the ground and made a man.^f He 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,^g in a place named Eden. He put the man he made in that garden. ⁹Then the LORD God caused all the beautiful trees that were good for food to grow in the garden. In the middle of the garden, he put the tree of life and the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil.

^e **2:6 water** Or “a mist.”

^f **2:7 man** The Hebrew word means “man,” “people,” or the name “Adam.” It is like the word meaning “earth” or “red clay.”

^g **2:8 East** This usually means the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as far east as the Persian Gulf.

¹⁰A river flowed from Eden and watered the garden. The river then separated and became four smaller rivers. ¹¹The name of the first river was Pishon. This river flowed around the entire country of Havilah.^a ¹²(There is gold in that country, and that gold is pure. A kind of expensive perfume and onyx are also found there.) ¹³The name of the second river was Gihon. This river flowed around the whole land of Cush.^b 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 him this command: “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, on that day you will certainly die!”

A Companion for Adam

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “I see that it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make the companion he needs, one just right for him.”

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

“Finally! One like me,
with bones from my bones
and a body from my body.”

^a **2:11 Havilah** The land along the west coast of the Arabian peninsula and possibly, the part of Africa south of Ethiopia.

^b **2:13 Cush** Usually this means Ethiopia, but here, it probably refers to the area north and east of the Tigris River.

She was taken out of a man,
so I will call her ‘woman.’”

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

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

The Beginning of Sin

3¹The snake was the most clever of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. 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, 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 like God!”

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

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

¹¹God said to the man, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat fruit

from that special tree? I told you not to eat from that tree!”

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

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

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

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.

¹⁵I 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 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.”^a

¹⁷Then God said to the man,

“I commanded you not to eat from that tree.

But you listened to your wife and ate from it.

So I will curse the ground because of you.

You will have to work hard all your life for the food the ground produces.

¹⁸The ground will grow thorns and weeds for you.

And you will have to eat the plants that grow wild in the fields.^b

¹⁹You will work hard for your food, until your face is covered with sweat.

^a **3:16 You will ... over you** Or “You will want to rule your husband, but he will rule over you.” In Hebrew this is like the last part of Gen. 4:7.

^b **3:18** See Gen. 1:28–29.

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^c named his wife Eve.^d He gave her this name because Eve would be the mother of everyone 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 out of the Garden of Eden to work the ground he was made from. ²⁴God forced the man to leave the garden. Then he put Cherub angels and a sword of fire at the entrance to the garden to protect it. The sword flashed around and around, guarding the way to the tree of life.

The First Family

4 ¹Adam had sexual relations with his wife Eve. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Cain.^e Eve said, “With the LORD’s help, I have made a man!”

²Eve gave birth again to Cain’s brother Abel. Abel became a shepherd, and Cain became a farmer.

The First Murder

^{3–4}At harvest time,^f Cain brought a gift to the LORD. He brought some of the food that he grew from the ground, but Abel brought some animals from his flock. He chose some of his best sheep and brought the best parts from them.^g

^c **3:20 Adam** This name means “man” or “people.” It is like the word meaning “earth” or “red clay.”

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

^e **4:1 Cain** This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “make” or “get.”

^f **4:3–4 At harvest time** Literally, “at the end of days.”

^g **4:3–4 He chose ... from them** Literally, “He brought some of his firstborn sheep, especially their fat.”

The LORD accepted Abel and his gift. ⁵But he 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? ⁷You know that if you do what is right, I will accept you. But if you don’t, sin is ready to attack you. That sin will want to control you, but you must control it.”^a

⁸Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”^b So they 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 over my brother?”

¹⁰⁻¹¹Then the Lord said, “What have you done? You killed your brother and the ground opened up to take his blood from your hands. Now his blood is shouting to me from the ground. So you will be cursed from this ground. ¹²Now when you work the soil, the ground will not help your plants grow. You will not have a home in this land. You will wander from place to place.”

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

¹⁵Then the LORD said to Cain, “No, if anyone kills you, I will punish that person much, much more.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to show that no one should kill him.

Cain’s Family

¹⁶Cain went away from the LORD and lived in the land of Nod.^c

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

^a **4:7 But if you ... control it** Or “But if you don’t do right, sin is crouching at your door. It wants you, but you must rule over it.”

^b **4:8 Let’s go ... field** This sentence is found in the ancient versions but not in the standard Hebrew text.

^c **4:16 Nod** This name means “wandering.”

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 was named Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal. Jabal was the father^d of people who live in tents and earn their living by keeping cattle. ²¹Jabal was Jubal’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.

I even killed a child for hitting me.

²⁴ The punishment for killing Cain was very bad.

But the punishment for killing me will be many times worse!”

Adam and Eve Have a New Son

²⁵Adam again had sexual relations with his wife, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth.^e 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 people began to pray to the LORD.^f

The History of Adam’s Family

5 ¹This is the history of Adam’s^g family. When God created people, he made them like himself.^h ²He created them male and female. And on the same day he made them, he blessed them and called them “humans.”ⁱ

^d **4:20 father** This probably means that this man invented these things or was the first one to use them.

^e **4:25 Seth** This is like a Hebrew word meaning “to give.”

^f **4:26 people ... the Lord** Literally, “people began calling on the name YAHWEH.”

^g **5:1 Adam** This name means “man” or “people.” It is like the word meaning “earth” or “red clay.”

^h **5:1 When God ... like himself** Literally, “He made him in the image of God.” See Gen. 1:27; 5:3.

ⁱ **5:2 humans** The Hebrew word means “Adam,” “man,” or

³After Adam was 130 years old, he had another son. This son looked just like Adam.^a Adam named his son Seth. ⁴After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and 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 and 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 and 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 and 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 and 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 and 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 and had other sons and daughters. ²³So Enoch lived a total of 365 years. ²⁴One day Enoch was walking with God, and he disappeared. God took him.^b

²⁵After Methuselah was 187 years old, he had a son named Lamech. ²⁶After Lamech was born, Methuselah lived 782 years and 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.^c

^a“people.”

^d **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.

^b **5:24** Or “Enoch pleased God. Enoch disappeared. God took him.”

^c **5:29 Noah** This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “to

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 and 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

6¹⁻⁴The number of people on earth continued to increase. When these people had daughters, the sons of God saw how beautiful they were. So they chose the women they wanted. They married them, and the women had their children.

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

During this time and also later, the Nephilim people lived in the land. They have been famous as powerful soldiers since ancient times.

⁵The LORD saw that the people on the earth were very evil. He saw that they thought only about evil things all the time. ⁶The LORD was sorry that he had made people on the earth. It made him very sad in his heart. ⁷So the LORD said, “I will destroy all the people I created on the earth. I will destroy every person and every animal and everything that crawls on the earth. And I will destroy all the birds in the air, because I am sorry that I have made them.”

⁸But Noah pleased the LORD.

Noah and the Great Flood

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

¹¹⁻¹²When God looked at the earth, he saw that people had ruined it. Violence

rest,” “to be sorry,” or “comfort.”

^d **6:1-4 People ... 120 years** Or “The spirit from me will not live in 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.”

was everywhere, and it had ruined their life on earth.

¹³So God said to Noah, “Everyone has filled the earth with anger and violence. So I will destroy all living things. I will remove them from the earth. ¹⁴Use cypress wood^a and build a boat for yourself. Make rooms in the boat and cover it with tar inside and out.

¹⁵“This is the size I want you to make the boat: 300 cubits^b long, 50 cubits^c wide, and 30 cubits^d high. ¹⁶Make a window for the boat about 1 cubit^e below the roof.^f 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. You, your wife, your sons, and their wives will all go into the boat. ¹⁹Also, you will take two of every living thing on the earth with you into the boat. Take a male and female of every kind of animal so that they might survive with you. ²⁰Two of every kind of bird, animal, and creeping thing will come to you so that you might keep them alive. ²¹Also bring every kind of food into the boat, for you and for the animals.”

²²Noah did everything God commanded him.

The Flood Begins

7 ¹Then 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. ⁷He and his family went into the boat to be saved from the flood. His wife and his sons and their wives were on the boat 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 as God commanded. ¹⁰Seven days later the flood started. The rain began to fall on the earth.

¹¹⁻¹³On the 17th day of the second month, when Noah was 600 years old, the springs under the earth broke through the ground, and water flowed out everywhere. The sky also opened like windows and rain poured down. The rain fell on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. That same day Noah went into the boat with his wife, his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives. ¹⁴They 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 as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind Noah.

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

^a **6:14 cypress wood** In Hebrew, “gopher timbers.” It is uncertain what kind of wood this is. It might be a kind of tree or squared timbers.

^b **6:15 300 cubits** 437' 1/8" (133 m) if this was the short cubit or 510' 1 13/16" (155.5 m) if it was the long cubit.

^c **6:15 50 cubits** 72' 10" (22.2 m) if this was the short cubit or 85' 5/16" (25.92 m) if it was the long cubit.

^d **6:15 30 cubits** 43' 8 7/16" (13.3 m) if this was the short cubit or 51' 3/16" (15.55 m) if it was the long cubit.

^e **6:16 1 cubit** 17 1/2" (44.4 cm) if this was the short cubit or 20 5/8" (51.83 cm) if it was the long cubit.

^f **6:16 Make a window ... below the roof** Or “Make an opening for the boat about 18 inches tall.”

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^a above the highest mountain.

²¹⁻²²Every living thing on earth died—every man and woman, every bird, and every kind of animal. 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—he destroyed every living thing on the earth—every human, every animal, everything that crawls, and every bird. All that was left was Noah and his family and the animals that were with him in the boat. ²⁴The water continued to cover the earth for 150 days.

The Flood Ends

8 ¹But God did not forget about Noah. God remembered him 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. ³⁻⁴The water that covered the earth began to go 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 he 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. He wanted it 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

^a **7:20 20 feet** Literally, “15 cubits” which would be 21’ 10 3/16” (6.66 m) if this was the short cubit or 25’ 6 1/16” (7.77 m) if it was the long cubit.

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 didn’t come back.

¹³After that Noah opened the door^b of the boat. He looked and saw that the ground was dry. This was the first day of the first month of the year. He was 601 years old. 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. These 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 honor the LORD. Noah took some of all the clean birds and some of all the clean animals and 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 earth as a way to punish people. People are evil from the time they are young, but I will never again destroy every living thing on the earth as I did this time. 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 ¹God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Have many children. Fill the earth with your people. ²Every

^b **8:13 opened the door** Literally, “removed the covering.”

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. ⁵Also, I will demand your blood for your lives. That is, I will demand the life of any person or animal that takes a human life.

⁶“God made humans to be like himself.

So whoever kills a person must be killed by another person.

⁷“Have many children and 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 life on the earth.”

¹²And God said, “I will give you something to prove that I made this promise to you. It will continue forever to show that I have made an agreement with you and every living thing on earth. ¹³I am putting a rainbow in the clouds as 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. This 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 God said to Noah, “This 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.)

¹⁹These three men were Noah’s sons. And all the people on earth came from these three sons.

²⁰Noah became a farmer and planted a vineyard. ²¹One day Noah made some wine. He got drunk, went into his tent, and took off all his clothes. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and told his brothers who were outside the tent. ²³Shem and Japheth took a robe, put it across their shoulders, and walked backward into the tent. Then they covered their father without looking at him.

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

“May there be a curse on Canaan^a!

May he be a slave to his brothers.”

²⁶Noah also said,

“May the LORD, the God of Shem, be praised!

May Canaan be Shem’s slave.

²⁷May 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.

²⁹He lived a total of 950 years; then he died.

Nations Grow and Spread

10 ¹This is the history of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They are Noah’s sons. These men had children after the flood.

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,

^a **9:25 Canaan** Ham’s son. The people of Canaan lived along the coast of Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria. Later, God gave this land to the Israelites.

Kittim, and Dodanim.^a

⁵All the people who lived in the area around the Mediterranean Sea came from these sons of Japheth. The people separated and went to different countries according to languages, families, and nations.

Ham's Descendants

⁶ Ham's sons were Cush,^b Mizraim,^c Put, and Canaan.

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

Raamah's sons were Sheba and Dedan.

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

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

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

¹⁵ Canaan was the father of Sidon. Sidon was Canaan's first son. Canaan was also the father of the Hittites, ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, the Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites.

The families of Canaan spread to different parts of the world. ¹⁹The land where the Canaanites lived went from Sidon down along the coast to Gerar and from Gaza as far east as Sodom and Gomorrah and from Admah and Zeboiim as far north as Laish.

^a **10:4 Dodanim** Or "Rodanim, the people of Rhodes."

^b **10:6 Cush** Another name for Ethiopia.

^c **10:6 Mizraim** Another name for Egypt. Also in verse 13.

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

²⁰All these people were descendants of Ham. They are arranged by families, languages, countries, and nations.

Shem's Descendants

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

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

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

²⁴ Arphaxad was the father of Shelah. Shelah was the father of Eber.

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

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

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

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

The Tower of Babel

11 ¹There was a time when the whole world spoke one language. Everyone used the same words. ²Then people began to move from the East. They found a plain in the land of Babylonia and stayed there to live. ³Then they said to each other, "Let's make some bricks of clay and bake them in the fire." Then they used these

^e **10:21 One ... Hebrew people** Literally, "To Shem was born the father of Eber's sons."

^f **10:25 Peleg** This name means "division."

^g **10:30 East** This usually means the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as far east as the Persian Gulf. Also in 11:2.

bricks as stones, and they used tar as mortar.

⁴Then the people said, “Let’s build ourselves a city and a tower that will reach to the sky. Then we will be famous. This will keep us together so that we will not be scattered all over the earth.”

⁵Then the LORD came down to see the city and the tower. 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. ⁷Let’s go down and confuse their language. Then they will not understand each other.”

⁸So people stopped building the city, and the LORD scattered them all over the earth. ⁹That is the place where the LORD confused the language of the whole world. That is why it is called Babel.^a And it was from there that the LORD caused the people to spread out to all the other places on earth.

The History of Shem’s Family

¹⁰This is the history 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 another 430 years. 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 another 209 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

²⁰After Reu was 32 years old, his son

Serug was born. ²¹After Serug was born, Reu lived another 207 years. 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 another 200 years. 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 another 119 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

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

The History of Terah’s Family

²⁷This is the history of Terah’s family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot. ²⁸Haran died in his hometown, Ur of Babylonia,^b 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 ¹The LORD said to Abram, “Leave your country and your people. Leave your father’s family and go to the country that 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.

³ I will bless those who bless you,

and I will curse those who curse

^a **11:9 Babel** Or “Babylon.” This is like a word meaning “confuse.”

^b **11:28 Ur of Babylonia** Literally, “Ur of the Chaldeans.” A city in southern Babylonia. Also in verse 31.

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. ⁵He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the slaves, and all the other things he had gotten in Haran. Then he and his group moved to the land of Canaan. ⁶Abram traveled through the land as far as the town of Shechem and then to the big tree at Moreh. The Canaanites were living in the land at that time.

⁷The LORD appeared ^a to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your descendants.”

Abram built an altar to honor the LORD who appeared to him there. ⁸Then he left that place and traveled to the mountains east of Bethel. He set up his tent there. Bethel was to the west, and Ai^b was to the east. Abram built another altar at that place to honor the LORD, and he worshiped the LORD there. ⁹Then he moved on toward the Negev, stopping for a time at several places on the way.

Abram in Egypt

¹⁰During this time there was not enough food in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to live. ¹¹Just before they arrived in Egypt, Abram told Sarai, “Look, I know that you are a very beautiful woman. ¹²When the Egyptian men see you, they will say, ‘This woman is his wife.’ Then they will kill me and keep you alive because they want you. ¹³So tell them that you are my sister. Then they will be good to me because of you. In this way you will save my life.”

¹⁴So when Abram went into Egypt, the Egyptian men saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. ¹⁵Even some of Pharaoh’s officials noticed her and told

^a **12:7 The LORD appeared** God often used special shapes so that people could see him. Sometimes he was like a man, an angel, a fire, or a bright light.

^b **12:8 Ai** The name of this town means “the ruins.”

Pharaoh how beautiful she was. So they took her to Pharaoh’s house. ¹⁶Pharaoh was kind to Abram because he thought Abram was Sarai’s brother. He gave Abram sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and men and women servants.

¹⁷Pharaoh took Abram’s wife, so the LORD caused Pharaoh and all the people in his house to have very bad diseases. ¹⁸Pharaoh called Abram and said to him, “You have done a very bad thing to me! Why didn’t you tell me Sarai was your wife? ¹⁹You said, ‘She is my sister.’ Why did you say that? I took her so that 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 took everything they had with them.

Abram Returns to Canaan

13 ¹So Abram left Egypt. He 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 Ai,^c where he and his family had camped before. ⁴This was where Abram had built an altar earlier. So he worshiped the LORD there.

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. ⁷(The Canaanites and the Perizzites 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 or between your people and my people. We are all brothers. ⁹We should separate. You

^c **13:3 Ai** The name of this town means “the ruins.”

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 whole Jordan Valley. He 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 as far as 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, south, east, 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 so many that they will be like the dust of the earth. If people could count all the particles of dust on earth, 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 the big trees of Mamre. This was near the city of Hebron. There he built an altar to honor the LORD.

Lot Is Captured

14 ¹Amraphel was the king of Babylonia, 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 King Bera of Sodom: King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, 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 14th year, King Kedorlaomer and the kings with him came to

fight against them. Kedorlaomer and the kings with him defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim. They also defeated the Zuzites in Ham. They defeated the Emites in Shaveh Kiriathaim. ⁶And they defeated the Horites who lived in the area from the hill country of Seir^a to El Paran.^b (El Paran is near the desert.) ⁷Then King Kedorlaomer turned back, went to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and defeated the Amalekites. He also defeated the Amorites living in Hazezon Tamar.

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

¹⁰There were many holes filled with tar in the Valley of Siddim. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their armies ran away, some of the soldiers fell into these holes, but the others ran away to the mountains.

¹¹So Kedorlaomer and his armies took everything 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 they captured him. They also took everything he owned and left. ¹³One of the men who had escaped went to Abram the Hebrew and told him what happened. Abram was camped near the trees of Mamre the Amorite. Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner^d had made an agreement to help each other, and they had also signed an agreement to help Abram.

Abram Rescues Lot

¹⁴When Abram learned that Lot was captured, he called all of his family together.

^a 14:6 Seir Or “Edom.”

^b 14:6 El Paran Probably the town Elath, at the southern tip of Israel near the Red Sea.

^c 14:8 Valley of Siddim The valley or plain along the eastern or southeastern side of the Dead Sea.

^d 14:13 Mamre ... Aner Literally, “Mamre ... was a brother of Eshcol and a brother of Aner.”

There were 318 trained soldiers. He 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 them and chased them to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶Then Abram brought back everything the enemy had stolen, as well as the women and servants, his nephew Lot, and everything Lot owned.

¹⁷Then Abram went home after he defeated Kedorlaomer and the kings with him. On his way 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 and a priest of God Most High, also went to meet Abram. He brought bread and wine.

¹⁹He blessed Abram and said,

“Abram, may you be blessed by God Most High,
the one who made heaven and earth.

²⁰ And we praise God Most High,
who helped you defeat your enemies.”

Abram gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything he had taken during the battle.

²¹Then the king of Sodom told Abram, “Give me my people who were captured. But you can keep everything else.”

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 sandal strap! 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 what 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 ¹After 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 give you a great reward.”

²But Abram said, “Lord GOD, there is nothing you can give me that will make me happy, because I have no son. My slave Eliezer from Damascus will get everything 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 and said, “That slave will not be the one to get what you have. You will have a son who will get everything you own.”

⁵Then God led Abram outside and said, “Look at the sky. See the many stars. There are so many you cannot count them. Your family will be like that.”

⁶Abram believed the LORD, and because of this faith the Lord accepted him as one who has done what is right.

⁷He said to Abram, “I am the LORD who led you from Ur of Babylonia.^a I did this so that I could give you this land. You will own this land.”

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

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

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

¹²The sun began to go down and Abram got very sleepy. While he was asleep, a very terrible darkness came over him. ¹³Then the Lord said to Abram, “You should know this: Your descendants will live in a country that is not their own. They will be strangers there. The people there will make them slaves and be cruel to them for 400 years. ¹⁴But then I will punish the nation that made them slaves.

^a **15:7 Ur of Babylonia** Literally, “Ur of the Chaldeans.” A city in southern Babylonia.

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 will be buried with your family. ¹⁶After four generations your people will come to this land again and defeat the Amorites. That will happen in the future because the Amorites are not yet guilty enough to lose their land.”

¹⁷After the sun went down, it got very dark. The dead animals were still on the ground, each animal cut into two pieces. Then a smoking firepot^a and a flaming torch passed between the halves of the dead animals.^b

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

Hagar the Servant Girl

16 ¹Sarai was Abram’s wife, but she did not have any children. She had an Egyptian slave named Hagar. ²Sarai told Abram, “The LORD has not allowed me to have children, so sleep with my slave. Maybe she can have a son, and I will accept him as my own.” Abram did what Sarai said.

³So after living ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai gave her Egyptian slave to Abram as a second wife. ⁴Abram slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When Hagar realized this, she became very proud and began to feel that she was better than Sarai her owner. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, “My slave girl now hates me, and I blame you for this. I gave her to you, and

^a **15:17 firepot** A clay pot in which burning coals were placed to be used for starting new fires.

^b **15:17 passed between ... animals** This showed that God “signed” or “sealed” the agreement he made with Abram. People showed that they were sincere in making an agreement by walking between the parts of animals that had been cut into pieces and saying something like, “May this same thing happen to me if I don’t keep the agreement.”

^c **15:18 River of Egypt** That is, the stream called “Wadi El-Arish.”

she became pregnant. 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, “She is your slave. You can do anything you want to her.” So Sarai was cruel to Hagar, and Hagar ran away.

Hagar’s Son Ishmael

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

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

⁹The angel of the LORD said to her, “Sarai is your owner. Go home to her and obey her.” ¹⁰The angel of the LORD also said, “From you will come many people—too many people to count.”

¹¹Then the angel of the LORD said, “Hagar, you are now pregnant, and you will have a son.

You will name him Ishmael,^d

because the LORD has heard that you were treated badly.

¹² Ishmael will be wild and free like a wild donkey.

He will be against everyone, and everyone will be against him.

He will move from place to place and camp near his brothers.”

¹³The LORD talked to Hagar. She 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 the well there was called Beer Lahai Roi.^e It 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.

^d **16:11 Ishmael** This name means “God hears.”

^e **16:14 Beer Lahai Roi** This means “The well of the Living One who sees me.”

Circumcision—Proof of the Agreement

17¹When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him. He said, “I am God All-Powerful.^a Obey me and live the right way.² If 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 from Abram^b to Abraham,^c because I am making you the father of many nations. ⁶I will give you many descendants. New nations and kings will come from you. ⁷And I will prepare an agreement between me and you. This agreement will also be for all your descendants. It 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.”

⁹Then God said to Abraham, “Now, this is your part of the agreement: You and all your descendants will obey my agreement. ¹⁰This is my agreement that all of you must obey. This is the agreement between me and you and all your descendants. Every male 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 who is a slave of your people must be circumcised. ¹³So every baby boy in your nation will be circumcised. Every boy who is born from your family or bought as a slave will be circumcised. ¹⁴Abraham, this is the agreement between you and me: Any male who is not circumcised will be cut off from his people^d because he has broken my agreement.”

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

^b **17:5 Abram** This name means “honored father.”

^c **17:5 Abraham** This name means “great father” or “father of many.”

^d **17:14 cut off from his people** This means he must be separated from his family and lose his share of the inheritance.

Isaac—the Promised Son

¹⁵God said to Abraham, “I will give Sarai,^e your wife, a new name. Her new name will be Sarah.^f 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 cannot have a son, and Sarah is 90 years old. She cannot 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.^g I will make my agreement with him that will continue forever with all his descendants.

²⁰“You mentioned Ishmael, and I heard you. I will bless him, and 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, the son who Sarah will have. He will be born at this same time next year.”

²²After God finished talking with Abraham, God went up into heaven. ²³Then Abraham gathered together Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house. He also gathered all the slaves he had bought. Every man and boy in Abraham’s house was gathered together, and they were all circumcised. Abraham circumcised them that day, just as God had told him to do.

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 the 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 he had bought were circumcised.

^e **17:15 Sarai** A name, probably Aramaic, meaning “princess.”

^f **17:15 Sarah** A Hebrew name meaning “princess.”

^g **17:19 Isaac** This name means “he laughs” or “he is happy.”

The Three Visitors

18 ¹Later, the LORD again appeared to Abraham near the oak trees of Mamre. It was the hottest part of the day, and Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent. ²He looked up and saw three men standing in front of him. When he saw the men, he ran to them and bowed before them. ³Abraham said, “Sirs,^a please stay a while 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, “Do as you wish.”

⁶Abraham hurried to the tent. He said to Sarah, “Quickly, prepare enough flour for three loaves of bread.” ⁷Then Abraham ran to his cattle. He took his best young calf and gave it to the servant there. He told the servant to quickly 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 he stood near the men, ready to serve them while they sat under the tree and ate.

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

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

¹⁰Then one of them 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 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. ¹⁴But is anything too hard for the LORD? I will come again in the spring, just as I said I would, and your wife Sarah will have a son.”

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

^a 18:3 **Sirs** This Hebrew word can mean “sirs” or “Lord.” This might show that these were not ordinary men.

Then 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 what I am going to do now? ¹⁸Abraham will become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on earth will be blessed because of him. ¹⁹I have made a special agreement with him. I did this so that he would command his children and his descendants to live the way the LORD wants them to. I did this so that they would live right and be fair. Then I, the LORD, can give him what I promised.”

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

²²So the men turned and started walking toward Sodom while Abraham stood there before the LORD. ²³Then Abraham approached him and asked, “Will you destroy the good people while you are destroying those who are evil? ²⁴What if there are fifty good people in that city? Will you still destroy it? Surely you will save the city for the fifty good people living there. ²⁵Surely you would not destroy the city. You would not destroy fifty good people to kill those who are evil. If that happened, those who are good would be the same as those who are evil—both would be punished. As the judge of the whole world, surely you would do the right thing!”

²⁶Then the LORD said, “If I find fifty 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 there are five less than fifty? Will you destroy a whole city because of just five people?”

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

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

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

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

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

³¹Then Abraham said, “Lord, may I bother you again and ask, what if there are twenty good people?”

The Lord answered, “If I find twenty 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 finished speaking to Abraham and left. Then Abraham went back home.

Lot’s Visitors

19¹⁻²That evening the two angels came to the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting near the city gates and saw them. He got up and went to them. He bowed to show respect and 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 city square.”

³But Lot continued to ask them to come to his house, so they agreed and went with him. Lot gave them something to drink. He baked some bread for them, and they ate it.

⁴That evening, just before bedtime, men from every part of town came to Lot’s house. They stood around the house and called to Lot. They said, ⁵“Where are the two men who 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. ⁷He said to the men, “No, my 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. They have come to my house, and I must protect them.”^a

⁹The men surrounding the house answered, “Get out of our way!” They 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 him back inside the house, and closed the door. ¹¹Then they did something to the men outside the door—they caused all these 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, 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. He said, “Hurry and leave this city! The LORD will soon destroy it!” But they thought he 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

^a **19:8 I must protect them** Whoever invited a traveler in as a guest was also promising to protect the traveler.

with you and leave this place. Then you will not be destroyed with the city.”

¹⁶When Lot did not move fast enough, the two men grabbed his hand. They also took the hands of his wife and his two daughters. The two men led Lot and his family safely out of the city. The LORD was kind to Lot and his family. ¹⁷So after the two men brought Lot and his family out of the city, one of the men said, “Now run to save your life! Don’t look back at the city, and don’t stop anywhere in the valley. Run until you are in the mountains. If you stop, 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 cannot 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 there and be safe.”

²¹The angel said to Lot, “Very well, I’ll let you do that. I will not destroy that town. ²²But run there quickly. I cannot destroy Sodom until you are safely in that town.” (That town is named Zoar,^a because it is a small town.)

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

²³Lot was entering the town as the sun came up, ²⁴and the LORD began to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. He caused fire and burning sulfur to fall from the sky. ²⁵He destroyed the whole valley—all the cities, the people living in the cities, and all the plants in the valley.

²⁶Lot’s wife was following behind him and looked back at the city. When she did, she became a block of salt.

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

²⁹God destroyed the cities in the valley,

^a 19:22 Zoar This name means “small.”

but he remembered what Abraham had said. So God sent Lot away from those cities before destroying them.

Lot and His Daughters

³⁰Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar, so he and his two daughters went to live in the mountains in a cave. 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 sex 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 and had sexual relations with him. He did not even know when she came to bed or when she got up.

³⁴The next day the older daughter said to the younger daughter, “Last night I went to bed with my father. Let’s get him drunk with wine again tonight. Then you can go 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 and had sexual relations with him. Again, Lot 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.^b Moab is the ancestor of all the Moabites living today.

³⁸The younger daughter also gave birth to a son. She named him Ben-Ammi.^c Ben-Ammi is the ancestor of all the Ammonites living today.

Abraham Goes to Gerar

20 ¹Abraham left that place and traveled to the Negev. He settled in the city of Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur. While in Gerar, ²Abraham told people that

^b 19:37 Moab In Hebrew this name sounds like “from father.”

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

Sarah was his sister. King Abimelech 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 and said, “You will die. The woman you took is married.”

⁴But Abimelech had not yet slept with Sarah, so he said, “Lord, I am not guilty. Would you kill an innocent man? ⁵Abraham himself told me, ‘This woman is my sister,’ and she 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 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. He is a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you don’t give Sarah back to him, 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 very afraid. ⁹Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “Why have you done this to us? What wrong did I do to you? Why did you lie and say that she was your sister? You brought great trouble to my kingdom. You should not have done this to me. ¹⁰What were you afraid of? Why did you do this to me?”

¹¹Then Abraham said, “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. He 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.’”

¹⁴So 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 1000 pieces of silver. I did this to show that I am very sorry. I want everyone to see that I did the right thing.”

¹⁷⁻¹⁸The 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 ¹The LORD came back to visit Sarah as he said he would, and he kept his promise to her. ²At exactly the time God said it would happen, Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. ³Abraham named his son Isaac. ⁴Abraham did what God commanded and circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old.

⁵Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born. ⁶Sarah said, “God has made me happy, and everyone 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, and soon he was old enough to begin eating solid food. So Abraham gave a big party. ⁹Sarah saw Hagar’s son playing. (Hagar was the Egyptian slave woman who gave birth to Abraham’s first son.) 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 these 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

^a **21:3 Isaac** This name means “he laughs” or “he is happy.”

Sarah wants. Your descendants will be those who come through Isaac. 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 took some food and water and gave them to Hagar. She carried them and left with her boy. She left that place and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.

¹⁵After some time, when all their drinking water was gone, Hagar put her son under a bush. ¹⁶Then she walked a short distance away and sat down. She 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, “What is wrong, Hagar? Don’t be afraid! God has heard the boy crying there. ¹⁸Go help the boy. Hold his hand and lead him. I will make him the father of many people.”

¹⁹Then God allowed Hagar to see a well of water. So she 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 to live 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 this country where you have lived. Promise that 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 because Abimelech’s servants had captured a well of water.

²⁶But Abimelech said, “I don’t know who did this. 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^a 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.^b Abraham 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 Phicol, his military commander, went back to the country of the Philistines.

³³Abraham planted a special tree at Beersheba and prayed to the LORD, the God who lives forever. ³⁴And Abraham lived as a stranger for a long time in the country of the Philistines.

Abraham, Kill Your Son

22 ¹After these things God decided to test Abraham’s faith. God said to him, “Abraham!”

And he said, “Yes!”

²Then God said, “Take your son to the land of Moriah and kill your son there as a sacrifice for me. This must be Isaac, your only son, the one 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. He took Isaac and two servants with him. He cut the wood for the sacrifice. Then they went to the place where God told them to go. ⁴After they traveled three days, Abraham looked up, and in the distance he saw the place where

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

^b 21:31 Beersheba This name means “well of the oath.”

they were going. ⁵Then he said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will 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 he 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.”

So both Abraham and his son went together to that place. ⁹When they came to the place where God told them to go, Abraham built an altar. He carefully laid the wood on the altar. Then he tied up his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. ¹⁰Then Abraham reached for his knife to kill his son.

¹¹But the angel of the LORD stopped him. 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 noticed a ram whose horns were caught in a bush. So Abraham went and took the ram. He offered it, instead of his son, as a sacrifice to God. ¹⁴So Abraham gave that place a name, “The LORD Provides.”^a Even today people say, “On the mountain of the LORD, he will give us what we need.”^b

¹⁵The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time. ¹⁶The angel said, “You were ready to kill your only son for me. Since you did this for

me, I make you this promise: I, the LORD, promise that ¹⁷I will surely bless you and give you as many descendants 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 will 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.

²⁰After all these things happened, a message was sent to Abraham. It 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 slave woman Reumah. The sons were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

Sarah Dies

23 ¹Sarah 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 he left his dead wife and went to talk to the Hittites. He said, ⁴“I am only a foreigner staying in your country. I have no place to bury my wife. Please give me some land so that I can bury her.”

⁵The Hittites answered Abraham, ⁶“Sir, you are a great leader^c 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. ⁸He said to them, “If you really want to help me bury my dead wife, speak to Ephron the son of Zohar for me. ⁹I would like to buy the cave of Machpelah, which belongs to Ephron. It is at the end

^a **22:14 The LORD Provides** Hebrew, “Yahweh Yireh,” which can mean “the LORD sees” or “the LORD gives.”

^b **22:14 On the mountain ... need** Or “On this mountain the LORD can be seen.”

^c **23:6 great leader** Literally, “God’s prince.”

of his field. I will pay him the full price. I want all of you to be witnesses that I am buying it as a burial place.”

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

¹²Abraham bowed before the Hittites. ¹³He said to Ephron before all the people, “But I want to give you the full price for the field. Accept my money, and I will bury my dead.”

¹⁴Ephron answered Abraham, ¹⁵“Sir, listen to me. Ten pounds^a of silver mean nothing to you or me. Take the land and bury your dead wife.”

¹⁶Abraham understood that Ephron was telling him the price of the land.^b So Abraham paid him for the land. He weighed out ten pounds of silver for Ephron and gave it to the merchant.^c

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

A Wife for Isaac

24 ¹Abraham lived to be a very old man. The LORD blessed him and everything he did. ²Abraham’s oldest servant was in charge of everything he owned. Abraham called that servant to him and said, “Put your hand under my leg.^d ³Now I want you to make a promise

^a **23:15 Ten pounds** Literally, “400 shekels” (4.6 kg). Also in verse 16.

^b **23:16 Abraham understood ... the land** Literally, “Abraham heard.”

^c **23:16 merchant** Someone who earns their living by buying and selling things. Here, this is probably a person who was helping Abraham and Ephron write the contract in verses 17 and 18.

^d **24:2 Put your hand under my leg** This was a sign of a very important promise that Abraham trusted his servant to keep.

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 these people, but don’t let him marry a Canaanite girl. ⁴Go back to my country, to my own people, to find a wife for my son Isaac. Bring her here to him.”

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 he promised that this new land would belong to my family. May he send his angel before you so that you can choose a wife for my son. ⁸If the girl refuses to come with you, 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. He went to Mesopotamia, to Nahor’s city. ¹¹In the evening, when the women come out to get water, he went to the water well outside the city. He made the camels kneel down at the well.

¹²The servant said, “LORD, you are the God of my master Abraham. Please show your kindness to my master by helping me find a wife for his son Isaac. ¹³Here I am, standing by this well of water, and the young women from the city are coming out to get water. ¹⁴I will say to one of them, ‘Please put your jar down so that I can drink.’ Let her answer show whether she is the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. If she says, ‘Drink, and I will also give water to your camels,’ I will know that she is the right one. It will be

proof that you have shown kindness to my master.”

A Wife Is Found

¹⁵Before the servant finished praying, a young woman named Rebekah came to the well. She 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; no man had ever had sexual relations with her. 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. She 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 1/4 ounce.^a He also gave her two gold arm bracelets that weighed 2 ounces^b each. ²³The servant asked, “Who is your father? And is there a place in your father’s house for me and my men to sleep?”

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

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

²⁶The servant bowed and worshiped the LORD. ²⁷He said, “Praise be to the LORD, the God of my master Abraham. The LORD has been kind and loyal to him by leading me to his own people.”

²⁸Then Rebekah ran and told her family about all these things. ^{29–30}She had a

brother named Laban. She told him what the man had said to her. Laban was listening to her. And when he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, he ran out to the well. There the man was, standing by the camels at the well. ³¹Laban said, “Sir, you are welcome to come in!^c 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 unloaded his camels and gave them straw and feed. Then he gave Abraham’s servant water so that he and the men with him could wash their feet. ³³Laban then 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 him many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. He has much silver and gold and many servants. He 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. He said to me, ‘You must not allow my son to marry a girl from Canaan. We live among these 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 he 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, you will be free from this promise.’

^a 24:22 1/4 ounce Literally, “1 beka” (5.75 g).

^b 24:22 2 ounces Literally, “5 measures” (57.5 g).

^c 24:31 Sir, you are welcome to come in Literally, “Come in, blessed of the LORD!”

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 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 one the LORD has chosen for my master’s son.’

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 worshiped the LORD. I praised 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 her to him? Tell me so that I will know what I should do.”

⁵⁰Then Laban and Bethuel answered, “We see that 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 they spent the night there. Early the next morning they got up and the servant 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, “Don’t 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 to do.” ⁵⁸They called her 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. Her 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.

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

⁶⁴Rebekah also 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 everything that had happened. ⁶⁷Then Isaac brought the girl into his mother’s tent. Rebekah became his wife that day. Isaac loved her very much. So he was comforted after his mother’s death.

Abraham’s Family

25 ¹Abraham married again. His new wife was named Keturah. ²She gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan,

^a 24:63 think Or “to go for a walk.”

Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. ³Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. The people of Asshur,^a Leum, and Letush were descendants of Dedan. ⁴The sons of Midian were Ephah, Ephher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah. All these sons came from the marriage of Abraham and Keturah. ⁵⁻⁶Before Abraham died, he gave some gifts to his sons who were from his slave women. He sent them to the East,^b away from Isaac. Then Abraham gave everything he owned to Isaac.

⁷Abraham lived to be 175 years old. ⁸Then he grew weak and died. He had lived a long and satisfying life. He died and went to be with 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 Hittites. He was buried there with his wife Sarah. ¹¹After Abraham died, God blessed Isaac. Isaac was living 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. ¹⁶These were the names of Ishmael's sons. Each son had his own camp that became a small town. The twelve sons were leaders over their own people. ¹⁷Ishmael lived to be 137 years old. Then he died and went to be with his people. ¹⁸His descendants settled throughout the desert area from Havilah to Shur. This area begins near Egypt and goes toward Assyria. Ishmael's people were often at war with^c the other descendants of Abraham.

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 her. The LORD heard Isaac's prayer, and he allowed Rebekah to become pregnant.

²²While Rebekah was pregnant, the babies inside her struggled with one another. She prayed to the LORD and said, "What is happening to me?" ²³The LORD said to her,

"The leaders of two nations are in your body.

Two nations will come from you, and they will be divided.

One of them will be stronger, and the older will serve the younger."

²⁴When 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.^d ²⁶When the second baby was born, he was holding tightly to Esau's heel. So that baby was named Jacob.^e Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob and Esau were born.

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

²⁹One day 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 that red soup." (That is why people call him "Red.")^f

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

³²Esau said, "I am almost dead with hunger, so what good are these rights to me now?"

³³But Jacob said, "First, promise me that you will give them to me." So Esau made an oath to him and sold his rights as the firstborn son to Jacob. ³⁴Then Jacob

^a 25:3 Asshur Or "Assyria."

^b 25:5 East This usually means the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as far east as the Persian Gulf.

^c 25:18 were often at war with Or "lived away from."

^d 25:25 Esau This name is like the word meaning "hairy."

^e 25:26 Jacob This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "heel." It also means "the one who follows" or "tricky."

^f 25:30 Red Literally, "Edom," a name that means "red."

gave Esau bread and lentil^a soup. Esau ate the food, had something to drink, and then left. So Esau showed that he did not care about his rights as the firstborn son.

Isaac Lies to Abimelech

26 ¹Now there was a famine. This was like the famine that happened during Abraham's life. So Isaac went to the town of Gerar, to King Abimelech of the Philistines. ²The LORD spoke to Isaac and said, "Don't go down to Egypt. Live in the land that I commanded you to live in. ³Stay in this 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^b every nation on earth will be blessed. ⁵I will do this because your father Abraham obeyed my words and did what I said. He obeyed my commands, my laws, and my rules."

⁶So Isaac settled in Gerar. ⁷His wife Rebekah was very beautiful. The men of that place asked Isaac about Rebekah. He said, "She is my sister." He was afraid to tell them Rebekah was his wife. He was afraid the men would kill him so that they could have her.

⁸After Isaac had lived there a long time, Abimelech looked out of his window and saw Isaac and his wife enjoying one another. 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 that you could have her."

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

¹¹So Abimelech gave a warning to all the people. He said, "No one must hurt this man or this woman. If anyone hurts them, they 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 Philistines were jealous of him. ¹⁵So they destroyed all the wells that Isaac's father Abraham and his servants had dug many years before. They filled them with sand. ¹⁶Abimelech 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. He stayed there and lived. ¹⁸Long before this time, Abraham had dug many wells. After he died, the Philistines filled the wells with sand. So Isaac went back and dug those wells again. He gave them the same names his father had given them. ¹⁹Isaac's servants also dug a well near the little river and found fresh water.^c 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.^d He gave it that name because it was the place where they had argued with him.

²¹Then Isaac's servants dug another well. But there was an argument over this well too. So Isaac named that well Sitnah.^e

²²Isaac moved from there and dug another well. No one came to argue about this well. So Isaac named it Rehoboth.^f He said, "Now the LORD has found a place for us. We will grow and be successful in this place."

²³From there Isaac went to Beersheba. ²⁴The LORD spoke to him that night and 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

^c **26:19 fresh water** Or "an underground stream." Literally, "living water."

^d **26:20 Esek** This means "argument" or "fight."

^e **26:21 Sitnah** This means "hated" or "being an enemy."

^f **26:22 Rehoboth** This means "open place" or "crossroads."

^a **25:34 lentil** A type of bean.

^b **26:4 descendants** Or "Descendant." See Gal. 3:16.

worshiped the LORD in that place. He set up camp there, and his servants dug a well.

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

²⁷Isaac asked, “Why have you come to see me? You were not friendly to 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 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 him about the well they had dug. The servants said, “We found water in that well.” ³³So Isaac named it Shibah.^a And that city is still called Beersheba.^b

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 unhappy.

Jacob Tricks Isaac

27 ¹Isaac grew old, and his eyes became so weak that he could not see clearly. One day he called his older son Esau to him and 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.

^a **26:33 Shibah** A Hebrew word meaning “seven” or “oath.”

^b **26:33 Beersheba** This name means “well of the oath.”

Rebekah was listening when Isaac told this 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 it. Then, with the LORD as witness, I will bless you before I die.’ ⁸So listen, son, and do what I tell you. ⁹Go out to our goats and bring me two young ones. 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 because I tried to trick him.”

¹³So Rebekah said to him, “I will accept the blame if there is trouble. Do what I said. Go 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. She put these clothes on the younger son Jacob. ¹⁶She took the skins of the goats and put them on Jacob’s hands and on his neck. ¹⁷Then she got the food she had cooked and gave it to Jacob.

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

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

¹⁹Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau, your first son. I have done what you told me. Now sit up and eat the meat from 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, 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. 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 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. When Isaac smelled Esau’s clothes, he blessed him and said,

“My son smells like the fields
the LORD has blessed.

²⁸ May God give you plenty of rain,
good crops, and wine.

²⁹ May the nations serve you
and many people 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. He brought it to his father and said, “Father, I am your son. Get up and eat the meat from the animals that I killed 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 so upset that he began to shake. He 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.”

³⁴When Esau heard his father’s words, he became very angry and bitter. He cried out and 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.^a 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, “I have already given Jacob the power to rule over you. And I said all his brothers would be his servants. I have given him the blessing for much grain and wine. There is nothing left to give you, my 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.

You will not have much rain.

⁴⁰ You will have to fight to live,
and you will be a slave to your
brother.

But when you fight to be free,
you will break away from his
control.”

Jacob Leaves the Country

⁴¹After that Esau hated Jacob because of this blessing. Esau said to himself, “My father will soon die, and after we are finished with 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 until your brother stops being angry. ⁴⁵When your brother forgets what you did to him, I will send a servant to bring you

^a 27:36 **Jacob** This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “heel.” It also means “the one who follows” or “tricky.”

back. I don't want to lose both of my sons the same day."

⁴⁶Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "Your son Esau married Hittite women. I am very upset about this, because they are not our people. I'll have nothing to live for if Jacob marries one of these women!"

28 ¹Isaac called Jacob and blessed him. Then Isaac gave him a command and 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^a will bless you and give you many children. I pray that you will become the father of a great nation ⁴and 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 Rebekah's brother in Paddan Aram. Jacob went to Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean. Laban was the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

⁶Esau learned that his father Isaac blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan Aram to find a wife there. He also learned that Isaac commanded Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman. ⁷Esau 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 Abraham's son Ishmael and married another woman, Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael. Mahalath was Nebaioth's sister.

Jacob's Dream at Bethel

¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and went to Haran. ¹¹The sun had already set when he came to a good place to spend the night. He took a rock there 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. He saw the

angels of God going up and down the ladder. ¹³And then Jacob saw the LORD standing by the ladder. He 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 as many descendants as there are particles of dust on the 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 everywhere you go. I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised."

¹⁶Then Jacob woke up 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 and 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. He 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 it a memorial to God. ¹⁹The name of that place was Luz, but Jacob named it Bethel.^b

²⁰Then Jacob made a promise. He said, "If God will be with me, and if he will protect me on this trip, and if he gives me food to eat and clothes to wear, ²¹and if I return in peace to my father's house—if he 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 ¹Then Jacob continued his trip. He went to the country in the East. ²He looked and saw a well in the field. There were three flocks of sheep lying near the well, where the sheep drank water. There was a large rock covering the mouth of the well. ³When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll

^b **28:19 Bethel** A town in Israel. This name means "God's house."

^a **28:3 God All-Powerful** Literally, "El Shaddai."

the rock away from the well. Then all the sheep could drink from the water. After the sheep were full, the shepherds would 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. Look, that is his daughter Rachel coming now with his sheep.”

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 they said, “We cannot 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 her 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. ¹²He told her that he was from her father’s family. He told her that he was the son of Rebekah. So Rachel ran home and told her father.

¹³When Laban heard the news about his sister’s son Jacob, he 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, “You are a relative of mine. It is not right for you to continue working for me without pay. What should I pay you?”

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

¹⁷Leah’s eyes were gentle,^a but Rachel was beautiful. ¹⁸Jacob loved Rachel, so he 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.

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, and he 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 don’t allow the younger daughter to marry before the older daughter. ²⁷Continue 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 he made it possible for

^a **29:17 Leah’s eyes were gentle** This might be a polite way of saying Leah was not very pretty.

Leah to have children. But Rachel did not have any children.

³²Leah gave birth to a son, and she named him Reuben.^a She named him this because she said, “The LORD has seen my troubles. My husband does not love me. So now maybe my husband will love me.”

³³Leah became pregnant again and had another son. She named this son Simeon.^b She 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 this son Levi.^c She said, “Now, surely my husband will love me. I have given him three sons.”

³⁵Then Leah gave birth to another son. She named this son Judah.^d 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. She became jealous of her sister Leah. So Rachel said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I will die!”

²Jacob became angry with Rachel and said, “I am not God. He 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.^e Then I can be a mother through her.”

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

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

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.^g

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.^h ¹²Zilpah gave birth to another son. ¹³Leah said, “I am very happy! Now women will call me happy.” So she named that son Asher.ⁱ

¹⁴During the wheat harvest Reuben went into the fields and found some special flowers.^j He brought them 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.”

But Rachel answered, “If you will give me your son’s flowers, 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. ¹⁸She said, “God has given me a reward because I gave my slave to my husband.” So she named her son Issachar.^k

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

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

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

^a **29:32 Reuben** This is like the Hebrew word meaning “Look, a son.”

^b **29:33 Simeon** This is like the Hebrew word meaning “He hears.”

^c **29:34 Levi** This is like the Hebrew word meaning “accompany,” “be joined together,” or “become close.”

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

^e **30:3 she will have a child for me** Literally, “she will give birth on my knees, and I, too, will have a son through her.”

^f **30:6 Dan** This is like the Hebrew word meaning “to decide” or “to judge.”

^g **30:8 Naphtali** This is like the Hebrew word meaning “my struggle.”

^h **30:11 Gad** This is like the Hebrew word meaning “lucky” or “fortunate.”

ⁱ **30:13 Assachar** This is like the Hebrew word meaning “blessed” or “happy.”

^j **30:14 special flowers** Or “mandrakes.” The Hebrew word means “love plant.” People thought these plants could help women have babies.

^k **30:18 Issachar** This is like the Hebrew word meaning “reward” or “salary.”

^l **30:20 Zebulun** This is like the Hebrew word meaning “praise” or “honor.”

children.²³ She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She said, “God has taken away my shame.”²⁴ Rachel named the son Joseph,^a saying, “May the Lord give me another son.”

Jacob Tricks Laban

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

²⁷Laban said to him, “Please, let me say something. I know^b that the LORD has blessed me because of you.²⁸ Tell 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.³⁰ When I came, you had little. Now you have much, much more. Every time I did something for you, the LORD blessed you. Now it is time for me to work for myself—it is time to do things for my family.”

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

Jacob answered, “I don’t want you to give me anything! I only want you to let me do this one thing: I will go back and take care of your sheep.³² But let me go through all your flocks today and take every lamb with spots or stripes. Let me take every black young goat and every female goat with stripes or spots. That will be my pay.³³ In 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, you will know that I stole it.”

³⁴Laban answered, “I agree to that. We will do what you ask.”³⁵ But that day Laban hid all the male goats that had spots. And he hid all the female goats that had spots on them. He also hid all the black sheep. Laban told his sons to watch these sheep.³⁶ So 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.

³⁷Then Jacob cut green branches from poplar and almond trees. He stripped off some of the bark so that the branches had white stripes on them.³⁸ He put the branches in front of the flocks at the watering places. When the animals came to drink, they also mated in that place.³⁹ Then 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. He kept his animals separate from Laban’s.⁴¹ Any time the stronger animals in the flock were mating, Jacob put the branches before their eyes. The animals mated near those branches.⁴² But when the weaker animals mated, Jacob did not put the branches there. So the young animals born from the weak animals were Laban’s. And the young animals born from the stronger animals were Jacob’s.⁴³ In this way Jacob became very rich. He had large flocks, many servants, camels, and donkeys.

Time to Leave—Jacob Runs Away

31 ¹One day Jacob heard Laban’s sons talking. They said, “Jacob has taken everything that our father owned. He has become rich—and he has taken all this wealth from our father.”² Then Jacob noticed that Laban was not as friendly as he had been in the past.³ The 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.⁵ He said to them, “I have noticed that your father is not as friendly with me as he used to be. But the God of my father has been with me.⁶ You both know that I have worked as hard as I could for your father.⁷ But he cheated me. He 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

^a 30:23–24 **Joseph** This is like the Hebrew word meaning “to add.”

^b 30:27 **know** Or “guessed,” “divined,” or “concluded.”

keep all the goats with spots. This will be your pay.' After he said this, all the animals gave birth to spotted goats, 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, all the animals gave birth to striped goats. 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 that 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 has been 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, and there you made an altar, poured olive oil on it, and made a promise to me. Now I want you to be ready to go back to the country where you were born.'

¹⁴Rachel and Leah answered Jacob, "Our father has nothing to give us when he dies. ¹⁵He 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 the trip. He put his children 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 with him that he had gotten while he lived in Paddan Aram.

¹⁹While Laban was gone to cut the wool from his sheep, 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 he gathered his men together and began to chase Jacob. After seven days Laban found Jacob near the hill country of Gilead. ²⁴That night God came to Laban in a dream and said, "Be careful! Be careful of every word you say to Jacob."

The Search for the Stolen Gods

²⁵The next morning Laban caught up with Jacob. Jacob had set up his camp on the mountain, so Laban and all his men set up 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 the God of your father 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 anyone here with me who has taken your gods, they will be killed. Your men will be my witnesses. You can look for anything that belongs to you. Take anything that is yours." (Jacob 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 he went into Rachel's

tent.³⁴ Rachel 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 and said, "What wrong have I done? What law have I broken? What right do you have to chase me and stop me? ³⁷You looked through everything I own and found nothing that belongs to you. If you found something, 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 the loss 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,^a was with me. If God had not been with me, you would have sent me away with nothing. But he saw the trouble that I had and 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. 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 to make a pile of rocks. Then they ate beside the pile of rocks. ⁴⁷Laban named that place Yegar Sahadutha.^b But Jacob named that place Galeed.^c

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.^d

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 to 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.

^b **31:47 Yegar Sahadutha** Aramaic words meaning "rock pile of the agreement."

^c **31:47 Galeed** Another name for Gilead. This Hebrew name means "rock pile of the agreement."

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

^a **31:42 Fear of Isaac** A name for God.

Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau

32¹Jacob also left that place. While he was traveling, he saw God's angels.²When he saw them, he said, "This is God's camp!" So Jacob named that place Mahanaim.^a

³Jacob's brother Esau was living in the area called Seir in the hill country of Edom. Jacob sent messengers to Esau.⁴He told them, "Tell this to my master Esau: 'Your servant Jacob says, I have lived with Laban all these years. ⁵I have many cattle, donkeys, flocks, and 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."

⁷Jacob was very frightened and worried. He divided the people who were with him and all the flocks, herds, and camels into two groups.⁸Jacob thought, "If Esau comes and destroys one group, the other group can run away and be saved."

⁹Then Jacob 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 own enough things to have two full groups. ¹¹I ask you to please save me from my brother Esau. I am afraid that he will come and kill us all, 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. He prepared some things to give to Esau as a gift. ¹⁴He took 200 female goats and 20 male goats, 200 female sheep and 20 male sheep. ¹⁵He took 30 camels and their colts, 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys. ¹⁶He gave

^a **32:28 Mahanaim** This name means "two camps."

each flock of animals to his servants. Then he said to them, "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 he 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. He sent them as a gift to you, my master Esau. And he also is 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 say 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, maybe Esau will forgive me and accept me." ²¹So Jacob sent the gifts to Esau, but he stayed that night in the camp.

²²During the night, Jacob got up and began moving his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven sons across the Jab-bok River at the crossing. ²³After he sent his family across the river, he sent across everything he had.

The Fight With God

²⁴Jacob was left alone, and a man came and wrestled with him. The man fought with him until the sun came up. ²⁵When the man saw that he could not defeat Jacob, he touched Jacob's leg and put it 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.^b I give you this name because you have

^b **32:28 Israel** This name might mean "he fights for God," "he fights with God," or "God fights."

fought with God and with men, and you have won.”

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

But the man said, “Why do you ask my name?” Then the man blessed Jacob at that place.

³⁰So Jacob named that place Peniel.^a He said, “At this place, I saw God face to face, but my life was spared.” ³¹Then the sun came up as Jacob left Peniel. He was limping 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 Meets Esau

33 ¹Jacob looked and saw Esau coming with 400 men. 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 he put Leah and her children behind them, and he put Rachel and Joseph in the last place.

³Jacob himself went out before them. While he was walking toward his brother Esau, he bowed down to the ground seven times.

⁴When Esau saw Jacob, he ran to meet him. He put his arms around Jacob, hugged 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 him 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, “These 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 really accept me, 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 you to also accept the gifts I give you. God has been very good to me. I have more than I need.” Because Jacob begged Esau to take the gifts, he accepted them.

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 slowly enough for the cattle and other animals to be safe and so that my children will not get too tired. I will meet you in Seir.”

¹⁵So Esau said, “Then I will leave some of my men 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.^b There he built a house for himself and small barns for his cattle. That is why the place was named Succoth.

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

The Rape of Dinah

34 ¹One day, Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob, went out to see the women of that place. ²She was seen

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

^c **33:20 El** A Hebrew name for God.

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

by Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, who ruled that area. Shechem took Dinah and raped her.³ But he was so attracted to her that he fell in love and began expressing his feelings to her.⁴ He told his father, “Please get this girl for me so that I can marry her.”

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

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

⁸But Hamor talked to Dinah’s brothers and said, “My son Shechem wants Dinah very much. Please let him marry her.⁹ This marriage will show we have a special agreement. Then our men can marry your women, and your men can marry our women.¹⁰ You 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 to Dinah’s brothers and said, “Please accept me. I will do anything you ask me to do.¹² I will give you any gift^a you want if you will only allow me to marry Dinah. I will give you anything you ask, but let me marry her.”

¹³Jacob’s sons decided to lie to Shechem and his father because Shechem had done such a bad thing to their sister Dinah.¹⁴ The brothers said to them, “We cannot allow our sister to marry you because you are not yet circumcised. That would bring us shame.¹⁵ But we will allow you to marry her if you do this one thing: Every man in your town must be circumcised like us.¹⁶ Then your men can marry our women, and our men can marry your women. Then we will become one people.

^a **34:12 gift** Or “dowry.” Here, the money a man paid for a wife.

¹⁷If you refuse to be circumcised, we will take Dinah away.”

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

Shechem was the most honored man in his family.²⁰ Hamor and Shechem went to the meeting place of their city. They spoke to the men of the city and said,²¹ “These people 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 to marry.²² But there is one thing that all our men must agree to do. They must agree to be circumcised as they are.²³ If we do this, we will become rich from all their cattle and other animals. We should make this agreement with them so that they will stay here with us.”²⁴ All 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.²⁶ Dinah’s brothers, Simeon and Levi, killed Hamor and his son Shechem. Then they took Dinah out of Shechem’s house and left.²⁷ Jacob’s sons went to the city and stole everything that was there because of what Shechem had done to their sister.²⁸ So the brothers took all their animals, all their donkeys, and everything else in the city and in the fields.²⁹ The brothers took everything those people owned. They even took their wives and children.

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

³¹But the brothers said, “Should we let these people treat our sister like a

prostitute? They were wrong to do that to our sister!”

Jacob in Bethel

35 ¹God said to Jacob, “Go to the town of Bethel.^a That is where I appeared to you when you were running away from your brother Esau. Live there and make an altar to honor me as El,^b the God who appeared to you.”

²So Jacob told his family and all the other people with him, “Destroy all these foreign gods that you have. Make yourselves pure. Put on clean clothes.³We will leave here and go to Bethel. There I will build an altar to the God who has always helped me during times of trouble. He has been with me wherever I have gone.”

⁴So the people gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had, and they gave him all the rings they were wearing in their ears. He buried everything under an oak tree near the town called Shechem.

⁵Then Jacob and his sons left that place. The people in the surrounding cities wanted to follow and kill them, but God filled them with such great fear that they did not go after them. ⁶So Jacob and his people went to Luz, which is now called Bethel. It is in the land of Canaan. ⁷Jacob built an altar there. He named the place “El Bethel.”^c Jacob chose this name because that is the place where 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.^d

Jacob’s New Name

⁹When Jacob came back from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again. God blessed Jacob ¹⁰and said to him, “Your name is Jacob, but I will change that name. You will no longer be called Jacob. Your

^a **35:1 Bethel** A town in Israel. This name means “God’s house.”

^b **35:1 El** A Hebrew name for God.

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

^d **35:8 Allon Bacuth** This name means “the oak tree of sadness.”

new name will be Israel.^e” So God named him Israel.

¹¹God said to him, “I am God All-Powerful,^f 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 the land to you and to all your people who will live after you.” ¹³Then God left that place. ^{14–15}Jacob set up a memorial stone there. He 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. Before they came to Ephrath, Rachel began giving birth to her baby. ¹⁷She was having a lot of trouble with this birth. She was in great pain. When her nurse saw this, she said, “Don’t be afraid, Rachel. You are giving birth to another son.”

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

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

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

The Family of Israel (Jacob)

These are the names of Jacob’s twelve sons:

²³ His firstborn son was Reuben, whose mother was Leah. Jacob’s other sons by Leah were Simeon, Levi,

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

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

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

^h **35:18 Benjamin** This name means “right-hand” or “favorite son.”

ⁱ **35:21 Eder tower** Or “Migdal Eder.”

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

Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

²⁴ His sons by Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

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

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

These were Jacob's sons who were born in Paddan Aram.

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

Esau's Family

36 ¹This is the history of the family of Esau (Edom). ²Esau married women from the land of Canaan. His wives were Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the son of Zibeon the Hivite, and ³Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. ⁴Esau and Adah had a son named Eliphaz. Basemath had a son named Reuel. ⁵Oholibamah had three sons: Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These were Esau's sons who were born in the land of Canaan.

⁶⁻⁸ Jacob and Esau's families became too big for the land in Canaan to support them all, so Esau moved away from his brother Jacob. He took his wives, sons, daughters, all his slaves, cattle and other animals, and everything else that he had gotten in Canaan and moved to the hill country of Seir.^a (Esau is also named Edom.)

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

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

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

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

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

These were Esau's grandsons from his wife Basemath.

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

¹⁵ These are the family groups that came from Esau:

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

All these family groups came from Esau's wife Adah.

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

All these families came from Esau's wife Basemath.

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

¹⁹ They were all sons of Esau and leaders of the family groups of Edom.^b

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

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

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

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

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

²⁵ Anah was the father of Dishon and Oholibamah.

²⁶ Dishon had four sons. They were

^b **36:19 Esau ... Edom** Two names for the man Esau and the country Edom.

^c **36:22 Heman** Or "Homam."

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

Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran.

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

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

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

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

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

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

³⁴ When Jobab died, Husham ruled. Husham was from the land of the Temanites.

³⁵ When Husham died, Hadad ruled that area. Hadad was the son of Bedad. (He was the man who defeated Midian in the country of Moab.) Hadad was from the city of Avith.

³⁶ When Hadad died, Samlah ruled that country. Samlah was from Masrekah.

³⁷ When Samlah died, Shaul ruled that area. Shaul was from Rehoboth by the River.

³⁸ When Shaul died, Baal Hanan ruled that country. Baal Hanan was the son of Acbor.

³⁹ When Baal Hanan died, Hadad^a ruled that country. Hadad was from the city of Pau. His wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred. (Mezahab was Matred's father.)

⁴⁰⁻⁴³ Esau was the father of these 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 ¹Jacob 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 take care of 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 was very old, so Israel loved him more than he loved his other sons. Jacob gave him a special coat, which was long and very beautiful.^b ⁴When Joseph'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 him.

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

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

⁸His brothers said, "Do you think this means that 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, and he told his brothers about it. He 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?"

^b **37:3 beautiful** The Hebrew means "striped," or possibly, "many colored."

^a **36:39 Hadad** Or "Hadar."

¹¹Joseph's brothers continued to be jealous of him, but his father thought about all these things and wondered what they could mean.

¹²One day Joseph's brothers went to Shechem to 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."

¹⁴His 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 got 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. ¹⁹They said to each other, "Here comes Joseph the dreamer. ²⁰We should kill him now while we can. We could throw his body into one of the empty wells and 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. He 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. ²³When Joseph 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. They looked up and saw a group of traders^a 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 and sold him to the traders for 20 pieces of silver. The traders took him to Egypt.

²⁹Reuben had been gone, but when he came back to the well, he saw that Joseph was not there. He tore his clothes to show that he was upset. 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?"

³³His father saw the coat and knew that it was Joseph's. He 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. He 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. He said, "I will be sad about my son until the day I die." So Jacob continued to mourn his son Joseph.

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

Judah and Tamar

38 ¹About that time, Judah left his brothers and went to stay with a man named Hirah 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 and named him Er. ⁴Later, she gave birth to another son and named him Onan. ⁵Then she had another son named Shelah. Judah lived in Kezib when his third son was born.

^a **37:25 traders** Literally, "Ishmaelites."

⁶Judah chose a woman named Tamar to be the wife of his first son Er. 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.^a Become like a husband to her. If children are born, they will belong to your brother Er."

⁹Onan knew that the children from this union would not belong to him. He had sexual relations with Tamar, but he did not allow himself to stay inside her. ¹⁰This made the LORD angry. So he 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. So 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 and saw her, but he thought that she was a prostitute. (Her face was covered with a veil like a prostitute.) ¹⁶So he went to her and said, "Let me have sex with you." (Judah did not know that she was Tamar, his daughter-in-law.)

She said, "How much will you give me?"

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^b and your walking stick." Judah gave these things to her. Then Judah and Tamar had sexual relations, and she became pregnant. ¹⁹Then Tamar went home, took off her veil that covered her face, and again put on 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. Judah also told Hirah to get the special seal and the walking stick from her, but Hirah could not find her. ²¹He asked some of the men at the town of Enaim, "Where is the prostitute who 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 who live 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 that said, "The man who made me pregnant is the man who owns these things. Look at them. Whose are they? Whose special seal and string is this? Whose walking stick is this?"

²⁶Judah recognized these things and

^b **38:18 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. Also in verse 25.

^a **38:8 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.

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. 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, so the other baby was born first. So the nurse said, “You were able to break out first!” So they named him Perez.^a ³⁰After this, the other baby was born. This was the baby with the red string on his hand. They named him Zerah.^b

Joseph Is Sold to Potiphar in Egypt

39 ¹The traders^c who bought Joseph took him down to Egypt. They sold him to the captain of Pharaoh’s guard, Potiphar. ²The LORD helped Joseph become a successful man. Joseph lived in the house of his master, Potiphar the Egyptian.

³Potiphar saw that the LORD was with Joseph and that the LORD helped Joseph be successful in everything he did. ⁴So Potiphar was very happy with Joseph. He allowed Joseph to work for him and to help him 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 also blessed everything that grew in Potiphar’s fields. The Lord did this because of Joseph. ⁶So Potiphar allowed Joseph to take responsibility for everything in the house. Potiphar didn’t have to worry about anything except deciding what to eat.

Joseph Refuses Potiphar’s Wife

Joseph was a very handsome, good-looking man. ⁷After some time, the wife of Joseph’s master began to pay special

attention to him. 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 given me responsibility for everything here. ⁹My master has made me almost equal to him in his house. I cannot sleep with his wife! That is wrong! It is a sin against God.”

¹⁰The woman talked with Joseph every day, but he 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 that Joseph had left his coat in her hand and had run out of the house. ¹⁴She called to the men outside and 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. ¹⁷She 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.”

¹⁹Joseph’s master listened to what his wife said, and he became very angry. ²⁰So Potiphar put Joseph into the prison where the king’s enemies were held, and that is where Joseph remained.

Joseph in Prison

²¹The LORD was with Joseph and continued to show his kindness to him, so 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

^a **38:29 Perez** This name is like the word meaning “to break out.”

^b **38:30 Zerah** This name is like the word meaning “bright.”

^c **39:1 traders** Literally, “Ishmaelites.”

Joseph. The LORD helped Joseph be successful in everything he did.

Joseph Explains Two Dreams

40 ¹Later, 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 he 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 baker and the wine server each had his own dream, and each dream had its own meaning. ⁶Joseph went to them the next morning and saw that the two men were worried. ⁷He asked them, "Why do you look so worried today?"

⁸The two men answered, "We both had dreams last night, but we don't understand what we dreamed. There is no one to explain the dreams to us."

Joseph said to them, "God is the only one who can understand and explain 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 kidnapped and taken from the land of my

people, the Hebrews. I have done nothing wrong! I should not be in prison."

The Baker's Dream

¹⁶The baker saw that the other servant's dream was good, so he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream. I dreamed there were three baskets of bread on my head. ¹⁷In the top basket there were all kinds of baked food 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 and cut off your head! He will hang your body on a pole, and the birds will eat it."

Joseph Is Forgotten

²⁰Three days later it was Pharaoh's birthday. He gave a party for all his servants. At the party Pharaoh allowed the wine server and the baker to leave the prison. ²¹He freed the wine server and gave him his job back, and once again 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 him to Pharaoh. The wine server forgot about Joseph.

Pharaoh's Dreams

41 ¹Two years later Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile River. ²In the dream, seven cows came out of the river and stood there eating grass. They were 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 looked sick. 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. ⁶Then 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 explain the dreams.

The Servant Tells Pharaoh About Joseph

⁹Then the wine servant remembered Joseph and said to Pharaoh, “I remember something that happened to me.¹⁰You were angry with the baker and me, 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 it happened. He also said the baker would die, and it happened!”

Joseph Is Called to Explain the Dreams

¹⁴So Pharaoh called Joseph from the prison. The guards quickly got Joseph out of prison. Joseph shaved, put on some clean clothes, and went to see Pharaoh.¹⁵Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I had a dream, and no one can explain it for me. I heard that you can explain dreams when someone tells you about them.”

¹⁶Joseph answered, “I cannot! But God can explain the dream for you, Pharaoh.”

¹⁷Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream I was standing by the Nile River.¹⁸Seven cows came up out of the river and stood there eating the grass. They were healthy, good-looking cows.¹⁹Then I saw seven more cows come up out of the river after them, but these cows were thin and looked sick. They were the worst cows I had ever seen anywhere in Egypt!²⁰The 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, “Both of these dreams have the same meaning. God is telling you what will happen soon.²⁶The 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. He will make these things happen just as I told you.²⁹For seven years there will be plenty of food in Egypt.³⁰But then there will be seven years of hunger. The people will forget how much food there had been in Egypt before. This famine will ruin the country.³¹It will be so bad that people will forget what it was like to have plenty of food.

³²“Pharaoh, you had two dreams about the same thing. That means 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 all the food during the seven good years and store it in the cities until it is needed. 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 one more powerful than you.”

⁴¹Pharaoh 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. ⁴³Then he told Joseph to ride in his second chariot. Pharaoh’s officials said, “Let him be the governor over the whole land of Egypt!”^a

⁴⁴Then Pharaoh said to him, “I am Pharaoh, the king over everyone in Egypt, but no one else in Egypt can lift a hand or move a foot unless you say he can.” ⁴⁵Then Pharaoh gave Joseph another name, Zaphenath Paneah.^b He 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. He traveled throughout the country of Egypt. ⁴⁷During the seven good years, the crops in Egypt grew very well. ⁴⁸Joseph saved the food in Egypt during those seven years and stored the food in the cities. In every city he stored grain that grew in the fields around the city. ⁴⁹Joseph stored so much grain that it was like the sands of the sea. He stored so much grain that it could not be measured.

^a **41:43** Or “Then Pharaoh had Joseph ride in the chariot of his second-in-command, and they said, ‘Bow before Joseph.’ In this way Joseph became the governor over all of Egypt.”

^b **41:45 Zaphenath Paneah** This Egyptian name probably means “sustainer of life,” but it is like Hebrew words meaning “a person who explains secret things.”

⁵⁰Joseph’s wife, Asenath, 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. ⁵¹Joseph named the first son Manasseh.^c He was given this name because Joseph said, “God made me forget all my hard work and everything back home in my father’s house.” ⁵²Joseph named the second son Ephraim.^d Joseph gave him this name because he said, “I had great troubles, but God has made me successful in everything.”

The Famine Begins

⁵³For seven years people had all the food they needed, but those years ended. ⁵⁴Then the seven years of hunger began, just as Joseph had said. No food grew anywhere in any of the countries in that area. But in Egypt people had plenty to eat because Joseph had stored the grain. ⁵⁵The famine 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. He 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 Joseph in Egypt to buy grain.

The Dreams Come True

42 ¹During the famine in Canaan, Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt. So he said to his sons, “Why are you sitting here doing nothing? ²I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go there and buy grain for us so that we will live and not die!”

³So ten of Joseph’s brothers went to Egypt to buy grain. ⁴Jacob did not send Benjamin. (Benjamin was Joseph’s only

^c **41:51 Manasseh** This is like the Hebrew word meaning “to forget.”

^d **41:52 Ephraim** This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “twice fruitful.”

full brother.⁴) 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.

⁶Joseph was the governor of Egypt at the time. He was the one who checked the sale of grain to people who came to Egypt to buy it. Joseph's brothers came to him and bowed before him. ⁷Joseph saw his brothers and 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 have come from the land of Canaan to buy food."

⁸Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not know who he was. ⁹Then Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed about his brothers.

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 spy on us!"

¹³And the brothers said, "No, sir, we come as servants from Canaan. We are all brothers, sons of the same father. There were twelve brothers in our family. Our youngest brother is still at home with our father, and the other brother died a long time ago."

¹⁴But Joseph said to them, "No! I can see that 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 will not let you go until your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶One of you must go back to get your youngest brother while the rest of you stay here in prison. Then we can prove whether you are telling the truth or not. If you are not telling the

truth, then by Pharaoh, I swear that you are spies!" ¹⁷Then Joseph put them all in prison for three days.

The Troubles Begin

¹⁸After three days Joseph said to them, "I am a God-fearing man. Do this, and I will let you live. ¹⁹If you are honest men, 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 will not 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. Now we are being punished for his death."

²³⁻²⁴Joseph was using an interpreter to talk to his brothers, so the brothers did not know that he understood their language. He heard and understood everything they said, and that made him want to cry. So he turned away and left the room. When he came back, he took one of the brothers, Simeon, and tied him up while the others watched. ²⁵Joseph told the servants to fill the bags with grain. The brothers had given Joseph the money for the grain, but he didn't keep the money. He put the money in their bags of grain. Then he gave them what 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 afraid. They said to one another, "What is God doing to us?"

^a **42:4 full brother** Literally, "brother." Joseph and Benjamin had the same mother.

The Brothers Report to Jacob

²⁹The brothers went back to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told him about everything that had happened. ³⁰They said, “The governor of that country spoke rudely to us. He thought that we were spies! ³¹We told him, ‘We are honest men, not spies. ³²There are twelve of us brothers, all from the same father. But one of our brothers is no longer living, and the youngest is still at home with our father in Canaan.’

³³“Then the governor of that country said 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. ³⁴Bring 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. When the brothers and their father saw the money, they were afraid.

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 him 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 a very sad, old man.”

Jacob Lets Benjamin Go to Egypt

43 ¹The famine 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,

^a **42:38** grave Or “Sheol,” the place of death.

“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, I will refuse to talk to you.’ ⁴If you send Benjamin with us, we will go down and buy grain. ⁵But if you refuse to send Benjamin, we will not go. The man warned us to not come back without him.”

⁶Israel said, “Why did you tell him you had another brother? Why did you do such a bad thing to me?”

⁷The brothers answered, “He asked lots of questions. He wanted to know all about us and about our family. He asked us, ‘Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother 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, 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, you can blame me forever. ¹⁰If you had let us go before, we could have already made two trips for food.”

¹¹Then their father Israel said, “If it is really true, 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, spices, 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 children.”

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

¹⁶When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his servant, "Bring these men into my house. Kill an animal and cook it. They will eat with me at noon today."¹⁷The servant did as he was told. He brought the men into Joseph's house.

¹⁸The brothers were afraid when they were taken to Joseph's house and said, "We have been brought here because of the money that was put back in our sacks the last time. They will use this as proof against us and 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. ²¹⁻²²On 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 fed their donkeys.

²⁵The brothers heard that they were going to eat with Joseph, so they worked until noon preparing their gifts for him.

²⁶When Joseph came home, the brothers gave him the gifts they had brought with them. Then they bowed down to the ground in front of him.

²⁷Joseph asked them how they were doing. Then he said, "How is your elderly father you told me about? Is he still alive?"

²⁸The brothers answered, "Yes, sir, our father is still alive." And they again bowed before Joseph.

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!"

³⁰Joseph felt a strong desire to show his brother Benjamin that he loved him. He was about to cry and didn't want his brothers to see him, so he ran into his private room and cried there. ³¹Then Joseph washed his face and came out. He regained 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 a table by themselves. The Egyptians believed that it was wrong for them to eat with Hebrews.^a ³³Joseph's brothers were seated at a table facing him. The brothers were looking at each other because, to their surprise, they had been seated in order, from the oldest to the youngest. 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 with Joseph until they were drunk.

Joseph Sets a Trap

44 ¹Then Joseph gave a command to his servant. He said, "Fill the men's sacks with as much grain as they can carry. Then put each man's money into his sack with the grain. 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?'^b ⁵My master drinks from that

^a **43:32 The Egyptians ... Hebrews** The Egyptians would not eat with them because they were shepherds and ate meat from cattle, sheep, and goats. To the Egyptians, these animals represented some of their gods. See Gen. 46:34.

^b **44:4 Why did ... silver cup** This is from the ancient Greek version.

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 to them what Joseph had 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 the silver cup in any of our sacks, let that man die. You can kill him, and we will be your slaves.”

¹⁰The servant said, “I agree, except that only the man who is found to have the cup 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.

¹⁴When Judah 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 one is better at this than I am!”

¹⁶Judah said, “Sir, there is nothing we can say. There is no way to explain. There is no way to show that we are not guilty. God has judged us guilty for something else we have done. So all of us, even Benjamin, will be your slaves.”

¹⁷But Joseph said, “I will not make you all slaves! Only the man who stole the cup will be my slave. You others can go in peace to your father.”

Judah Pleads for Benjamin

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 younger brother. Our father loves him because he was born while our father was old. This youngest son’s brother is dead, so he is the only son who is left from that mother. Our father loves him very much.’ ²¹Then you said to us, ‘Bring that brother to me. I want to see him.’ ²²And we said to you, ‘That young boy cannot come. He cannot leave his father. If his father loses him, his father will be so sad that he will 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.’ ²⁶We said to our father, ‘We cannot 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, I will be sad enough to die.’ ³⁰Now, imagine what will happen when we go home without our youngest brother—he 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, you can blame me for the rest of 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 cannot 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 he told them who he was. ²Joseph continued to cry, and all the Egyptian people in Pharaoh’s house heard it. ³He said to his brothers, “I am your brother Joseph. Is my father doing well?” But the brothers did not answer him because they were confused and afraid.

⁴So Joseph said to his brothers again, “Come here to me. I beg you, come here.” When the brothers went to him, he 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 people’s lives. ⁶This terrible famine has continued for two years now, and there will be five more years without planting or harvest. ⁷So God sent me here ahead of you so that I can save your people in this country. ⁸It was not 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 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 quickly. Don’t wait. 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.’

¹²“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 cried as he kissed all his brothers. After this, the brothers began talking with him.

¹⁶Pharaoh learned that Joseph’s brothers had come to him. This news spread throughout Pharaoh’s house. Pharaoh and his servants were very excited! ¹⁷So Pharaoh 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. ¹⁹Also 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 just as Pharaoh had promised. And Joseph gave them enough food for their trip. ²²He gave each brother a suit of beautiful clothes. But to Benjamin he gave five suits of beautiful clothes and 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 loaded with grain, bread, and other food for his father on his trip back. ²⁴Then Joseph told his brothers to go. While they were leaving, he 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. ²⁶They 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. Then their father saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to bring him back to Egypt, and he became excited and 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 ¹So Israel began his trip to Egypt. First he went to Beersheba. There he worshiped God, the God of his father Isaac. He offered sacrifices. ²During the night God spoke to Israel in a dream and said, “Jacob, Jacob.”

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 there, but Joseph will be with you. His own hands will close your eyes when you die.”

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 everything 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.

The Family of Jacob (Israel)

⁸These are the names of Israel’s sons and family who went to Egypt with him:

Reuben was Jacob’s first son.

⁹Reuben’s sons were Hanoah, 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 these 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, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. Also there were Beriah’s sons, Heber and Malkiel.

¹⁸All these 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.

¹⁹Benjamin was also with Jacob.

Benjamin was Jacob and Rachel’s son. (Joseph was also Rachel’s son, but he 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, Huppmim, and Ard.

²²These 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.

²⁵These 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 who went with him to Egypt was 66 people. (The wives of Jacob’s sons were not counted in this number.) ²⁷Also, Joseph had two sons in Egypt. With these two grandsons, Jacob’s family in Egypt numbered 70 people in all.

Israel Arrives in Egypt

²⁸Jacob sent Judah ahead to speak to Joseph. Judah went to Joseph in the land

of Goshen. Then Jacob and his people followed into the land. ²⁹Joseph learned that his father was coming. So he prepared his chariot and went out to meet his father, Israel, 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. Egyptians don’t like shepherds, so it is better that you stay in Goshen.”

Israel Settles in Goshen

47 ¹Joseph 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, just as our ancestors were shepherds before us.” ⁴They said to Pharaoh, “The famine 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, they can also care for my cattle.”

⁷Then Joseph called his father Jacob to come in to meet Pharaoh. Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

⁸Then Pharaoh said to him, “How old are you?”

⁹Jacob said to Pharaoh, “I have had a short life with many troubles. I am only 130 years old. My father and his ancestors lived to be much older than I am.”

¹⁰Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and left from his meeting with him.

¹¹Joseph did what Pharaoh said and gave his father and brothers land in Egypt. It was the best land in Egypt, in the eastern part of the country, around Rameses. ¹²Joseph also gave his father, his brothers, and all their people the food they needed.

Joseph Buys Land for Pharaoh

¹³The famine got 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 the people had no animals and nothing to buy food with. So they 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, 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 everywhere in Egypt all the people became 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 continues today. The law says that one-fifth of everything from the land belongs to the Pharaoh who owns all the land. The only land he does not own is the land of the priests.

Don’t Bury Me in Egypt

²⁷Israel stayed in Egypt. He lived in the land of Goshen. His family grew and became very large. They became land-owners there and did very well.

²⁸Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years, so he was 147 years old. ²⁹The time came when Israel knew he would soon die, so he called his son Joseph to him. He said, “If you love me, put your hand under my leg and make a promise.^a 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 laid his head back down on the bed.^b

Blessings for Manasseh and Ephraim

48 ¹Some time later Joseph learned that his father was very sick. So he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and went to his father. ²When Joseph arrived, 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. ⁴He 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.’ ⁵Now 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 like 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 in the land of Canaan. This made me very sad. 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

^b **47:31 Then Israel ... on the bed** Or “Then Israel bowed down at the head of his bed” or “Then Israel worshiped on the head of the staff.”

^a **47:29 put your hand ... make a promise** This was a sign of a very important promise that Jacob trusted Joseph to keep.

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 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 he put his left hand on Manasseh, even though Manasseh was the firstborn. ¹⁵And Israel blessed Joseph and said,

“My ancestors, Abraham and Isaac,
worshipped our God,
and that God has led me all my life.

¹⁶ He was the Angel who saved me from
all my troubles.

And I pray that he will bless these
boys.

Now they 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 because 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 refused and said, “I know, son. I know. Manasseh is the firstborn. He will be great and will be the father of many people. But his younger brother will be greater than he is. And the younger brother’s family will be much larger.”

²⁰So Israel blessed them that day. He said,

“The Israelites 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 one portion more than I gave to your brothers. I gave you the land that I won from the Amorites. I used my sword and bow to take that land.”

Jacob Blesses His Sons

49 ¹Then Jacob called all his sons to him. He said, “My sons, come here to me. I will tell you what will happen in the future.

² “Children of Jacob, gather around.
Come listen to Israel, your father.

Reuben

³ “Reuben, my first son, you are my
strength,
the first proof of my manhood.
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 are violent with their swords.

⁶ I will not join their secret meetings.
I will not take part in their evil
plans.

They have killed people out of anger
and crippled animals for fun.

⁷ Their anger is so strong that it is a
curse.

They are too cruel when they are
angry.

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 young lion.
My son, you are like a lion standing
over the animal it killed.

Like a lion, Judah 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.^a

Then many people will obey and
serve him.

¹¹ He ties his donkeys to the best
grapevines.
He washes his clothes in the best
wine.

¹² His eyes are red from drinking wine.
His teeth are white from drinking
milk.^b

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 that has
worked too hard.
He will lie down under his heavy
load.
¹⁵ He will see his land is pleasant
and that his resting place is good.
But he will agree to carry heavy loads;
he will agree to work as a slave.

Dan

¹⁶ “Dan^c will rule his people
as one of the tribes 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.

Gad

¹⁹ “A group of robbers will attack^d 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 are beautiful.

Joseph

²² “Joseph is like a wild donkey,
like a young donkey by a spring,
like colts grazing in a pasture.^e

²³ People attacked him and made life
hard for him.
Men 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 the God of your father who helps you.
May God All-Powerful bless you
and give you blessings
from the sky above and from the
deep below.

^a 49:10 before the real king comes Or “until Shiloh comes,”
“until the man it belongs to comes,” or “until his tribute comes.”
^b 49:10–12 Or “¹⁰The ruler’s scepter will not pass from
between Judah’s feet before he gets what is his, that is, the
people’s 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.”

^c 49:16 Dan This name means “judge” and is a wordplay with
“rule.”

^d 49:19 A group of robbers will attack The Hebrew words
for “group of robbers” and “attack” sound like the name Gad.

^e 49:22 Or “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.”

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.”

²⁸ These are the twelve families of Israel.
And this is what their father said to them.
He gave each son a blessing that was right
for him. ²⁹ Then Israel gave them a com-
mand. 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. ³⁰ That cave is in the
field of Machpelah near Mamre in the
land of Canaan. Abraham bought that field
from Ephron so that he could have a bury-
ing place. ³¹ Abraham 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. ³² That cave is
in the field that was bought from the Hit-
tites.” ³³ After Jacob finished talking to his
sons, he lay down, put his feet back on the
bed, and died.

Jacob’s Funeral

50 ¹ When Israel died, Joseph was
very sad. He hugged his father and
cried over him and kissed him. ² Joseph
commanded his servants to prepare his
father’s body. (These servants were doc-
tors.) The doctors prepared Jacob’s body
to be buried. They prepared the body in
the special way of the Egyptians. ³ When
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.

- ⁴ After the time of sadness was finished,

Joseph spoke to Pharaoh’s officers and
said, “Please tell this to Pharaoh: ⁵ “When
my father was near death, I made a prom-
ise 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.”

⁶ Pharaoh answered, “Keep your promise.
Go and bury your father.”

⁷ So Joseph went to bury his father. All
of Pharaoh’s officials, personal advisors,
and all the older leaders of Egypt went
with Joseph. ⁸ All the people in Joseph’s
family, his brothers, and all the people in
his father’s family went with him. Only the
children and the animals stayed in the land
of Goshen. ⁹ So there was a large crowd of
people with him. There was even a group
of soldiers riding in chariots and some on
horses.

¹⁰ They went to Goren Atad,^a east of
the Jordan River. There they had a long
funeral service for Israel, which contin-
ued for seven days. ¹¹ When the people who
lived in Canaan saw the funeral service
at Goren Atad, they said, “This is a time
of great sorrow for those Egyptians.” So
now that place across the Jordan River is
named Abel Mizraim.^b

¹² So Jacob’s sons did what their father
told them. ¹³ They carried his body to Ca-
naan and buried it in the cave at Mach-
pelah. This was the cave near Mamre in
the field that Abraham bought from Eph-
ron the Hittite. Abraham bought that cave
to use as a burial place. ¹⁴ After Joseph
buried his father, he and everyone in the
group with him went back to Egypt.

The Brothers Are Still Afraid of Joseph

¹⁵ After Jacob died, Joseph’s brothers were
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.” ¹⁶ So
the brothers sent this message to Joseph:
“Before your father died, he told us to give

^a 50:10 Goren Atad Or “Atad’s threshing floor.”

^b 50:11 Abel Mizraim This means “Egyptian time of sadness.”

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.’ And so Joseph said kind things to his brothers, and this made them feel better.

²²Joseph continued to live in Egypt

with his father’s family. He 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 out of Egypt.’

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.

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