

Genesis

The first stories in the Holy Bible

God made everything

¹ First of all God made everything. He made the earth and the sky.

² The ground was there but it was covered with deep water and it was really dark everywhere. But God's spirit was moving around over the water.

This is what happened on day 1

³ God said, "I want light", and straight away light was shining everywhere.

⁴ God looked at the light, and he saw that it was good. Then God cut the light away from the dark.

⁵ He called the light, *day time* and he called the dark, *night time*.

Night time came, and that was the end of day one.

This is what happened on day 2

⁶⁻⁸ God said, "I want to cut all the water that I made into 2 parts, and I will put air in between them, and I will call the air, *sky*. One lot of water will be on top of the sky and the other lot of water will be under the sky."

Night time came, and that was the end of day 2.

This is what happened on day 3

⁹ God said, “I want all the water under the sky to come together in one place, so that dry ground comes up.” And that is what happened. The water moved to one place, and dry ground came up.

¹⁰ God called the dry ground, *land*. And he called the water, *sea*. God looked at the land and the sea and he saw that they were good.

¹¹ Then God said, “I want the ground to grow all kinds of plants. I want grass that has seeds, and I want all kinds of trees that grow fruit that have seeds in them. I will make every seed that falls into the ground grow up like the plant that it came from.” And that is the way God made it happen.

¹² He made all the grass and the trees grow up from the ground. He made grass with seeds, and trees with fruit that have seeds in them. God looked at what he had made, and he saw that it was good.

¹³ Night time came, and that was the end of day 3.

This is what happened on day 4

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ God said, “I want 2 big lights up in the sky. I want one light for the day time and the other light for the night time. Those lights show people when it will be cold weather time and when it will be hot weather time every year. Yes, I will put those lights up in the sky to shine on the earth.”

So, God made 2 big lights. He made one big light and one small light. The big light is called the *Sun*, and it shines in the day time. The small light is called the *Moon* and it shines in the night time. God made all the stars too.

¹⁷ So God put all those lights up in the sky to shine down onto the earth.

¹⁸ One light shines in the day time and the other light shines at night time. Those lights show people when it is day time and when it is night time. God looked at all the lights and he saw that they were good.

¹⁹ Night time came, and that was the end of day 4.

This is what happened on day 5

²⁰ Then God said, “I want the water to be full of fish and all sorts of animals that live in water. And I want birds to fly up in the sky too.”

²¹ So God made everything that lives and moves in the sea. He made the great big sea animals and all the little animals that live in the sea. And God made all the birds too. God looked at all the things he had made, and he saw that they were good.

²² God blessed them, and he did that by doing good things for them. God made them strong and he said, “I want all living things to have lots of young ones, so that the sea will be full of fish and other animals that live in water. And I want lots of birds too.”

²³ Night time came, and that was the end of day 5.

This is what happened on day 6

²⁴⁻²⁵ Then God said, “I want the world to be full of different kinds of animals. I want wild animals and quiet animals. And I want different kinds of little animals that move around on the ground.” And that is what happened. God looked at all those animals, and he saw that they were good.

²⁶ Then God said, “We are going to make people. They will be like us. They will be the boss over the fish and everything that lives in the sea. They will be the boss over all the birds that fly in the sky. They will be the boss over all the wild animals, and all the quiet animals. And they will be the boss over all the little animals that move around on the ground. Yes, people will be the boss over all of them.”

²⁷ So God made people to be like himself. He made them man and woman.

²⁸ God blessed them, and he did that by doing good things for them. God made them strong and he said to them, “I want you to have lots of children so that they go everywhere all over the world, and they will be the boss over everything. They will be the boss over all the country, the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that move on the ground.”

²⁹ Then God said to the man and the woman, “Look, I made lots of different kinds of things for you to eat. I made grasses that have seeds in them, and I made trees that have fruit. You can eat the seeds from those grasses and you can eat food from the bushes and the trees.

³⁰ And I made green plants for all the animals to eat.”

³¹ God looked at all the things he made, and he saw that they were really good.

Night time came. That was the end of day 6.

2

This is what happened on day 7

¹ And so God finished making the earth and the sky.

² He made everything in 6 days, and on day 7, God rested and he stopped making things.

³ God made day 7 a special day. That means it was *different* from all the other days. God said, “I have finished making everything now, and that is why I am resting from my work.”

God made the first man and put him into the Garden of Eden

⁴ This story is about what happened after the Lord God made the earth and the sky.

⁵ At that time the Lord God had not sent any rain to fall on the ground and so nothing was growing yet. No grass or any kind of tree grew anywhere, and there weren't any people to dig the ground to get it ready for things to grow.

⁶ But spring water came up from the earth and wet the ground.

⁷ Then the Lord God took some ground and made a man from it. When he finished, God blew wind into the man's nose, and that wind made the man come alive. That is how the man became a living person.

⁸ Then the Lord God made a garden on the east side, at a place called Eden, and then God put the man that he just made, into the garden.

⁹ The Lord God made lots of different trees to grow in that garden. They looked really nice and they had fruit that was good to eat. And God put 2 special trees right in the middle of the garden. If anybody ate fruit from the first tree, they lived forever. And if anybody ate fruit from the second tree, they would know what is good and what is bad.

¹⁰ There was a river that watered the Garden of Eden. It started from inside the garden but after it left the garden, 4 different rivers came from it.

¹¹ The first river was called Pishon. It went across the country called Havilah. And in that country there was a lot of gold,

¹² and it was really good gold. In that country there was a pretty stone called Onyx. And there were some trees that gave out a nice smelling bush medicine.

¹³ The second river was called the Gee-hon. It went everywhere across the country called Cush.

¹⁴ The third river was called Tigris. It went along the east side of the country called Assyria.

And the fourth river was called Yoo-fray-tees.

¹⁵ The Lord God put the man into the garden to dig the ground and to take care of everything.

¹⁶ The Lord God said to the man, "You can eat fruit from any of the trees in this garden.

¹⁷ But you must not eat fruit from the tree that lets people know what is good and what is bad. If you eat fruit from that tree you will die."

God made the first woman

¹⁸ Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to live by himself. I am going to make a partner to help him with his work.”

¹⁹ So the Lord God took ground and made all the animals and all the birds. Then he took them to the man to find out what he would call them. Whatever the man called an animal, that was its name.

²⁰ So that is how every animal got its name. The man gave names to all the wild animals, all the quiet animals and all the birds. The man's name was *Adam*, but when he looked around at all the animals and birds, he could not find the right kind of partner for himself.

²¹ So the Lord God made the man go into a really deep sleep, and while he was asleep, God took out one of the man's rib bones, and closed the hole in his side.

²² Then the Lord God used that rib bone to make a woman. And when the man woke up, God took the woman to the man.

²³ The man looked at the woman and said,
“Now I have a partner for myself.
She was made from one of my bones.
She has come from a man's body,
so I am going to call her woman.”

²⁴ Yes, God made the woman out of the man's body. This is why when a man gets married, he leaves his mother and father and lives with his wife. They join together, and it is like they are one body.

²⁵ The man and the woman did not have any clothes on, but they didn't feel any shame.

3

The snake tricked the woman

¹ God made lots of animals, but the snake was the most sneaky of all the wild animals. One day the snake went up to the woman and said, "Did God really say that you must not eat fruit from any of the trees in this garden? Is that true?"

² The woman said, "No, that is not true. We can eat fruit from any of the trees in the garden.

³ But God did say, 'You must not eat any of the fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and do not even touch the fruit. If you do, you will die.' "

⁴ The snake said to the woman, "No. That's not right. You will not die.

⁵ God knows that if you eat fruit from that tree, you will be like God and you will know what is good and what is really bad."

The man and the woman turned away from God

⁶ The woman looked at the tree. It looked really nice, and the fruit on that tree looked really good to eat. And she said to herself, "If I eat some of that fruit, I will know and understand everything." So the woman picked some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some of the fruit to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it too.

⁷ Straight away the man and the woman could think in a different way. It was like their eyes

were opened for the first time and they found out that they had nothing on. They felt shamed, and wanted to cover themselves up, so they picked some big leaves from a tree. Then they put the leaves together to make some clothes for themselves.

The man and the woman tried to hide from God

⁸ Late in the afternoon, the man and the woman heard the Lord God coming their way, so they got behind some trees and tried to hide from him.

⁹ But the Lord God called out, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ The man said, “I heard you walking in the garden and I was frightened. You see, I had no clothes on, and I was shamed. That is why I tried to hide from you.”

¹¹ God asked the man, “Why are you shamed to have no clothes on? Did you eat some of the fruit that I told you not to eat?”

¹² The man answered, “Yes, I did eat the fruit. That woman you gave me. She's the one, she gave it to me.”

¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, “Why did you do that?”

The woman said, “That snake tricked me. That is why I ate the fruit.”

God judged the snake

¹⁴ Then the Lord God said, “Snake, you have tricked this woman and so I will put a curse on you. I curse you more than I will ever curse any other animal. From now on you are going to move

around on your belly, and everything you eat will have dirt on it.

¹⁵ You and the woman will always be enemies. The family that will come from her will always hate you. And snake, the family that comes from you will always hate the woman's family too. You will always be enemies. And I tell you straight, someone from her family will smash your head, but you will bite his foot."

God judged the woman

¹⁶ Then God said to the woman, "You did the wrong thing and so I am going to give you a lot of trouble and a lot of pain when your babies are born. You will want to have a husband and try to be his boss, but he will be your boss."

God judged the man

¹⁷ Then God said to Adam, "You listened to your wife. Remember, I told you, 'You must not eat that fruit,' but you still ate it. Now that you have gone against what I said to you, I am going to put a curse on the ground. And for the rest of your life you will have to work really hard to get your food.

¹⁸ When you grow food plants there will always be lots of weeds and prickles growing there too.

¹⁹ For the rest of your life you will have to work very hard to get your food, and you will get hot and sweaty. And when you die, someone will bury your body in the ground. You see, I made you from the ground and so your body will turn back into the ground that I made you from."

God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden

²⁰ Adam's wife was the first woman, and so all the people in the world came from her. That is why Adam named her Eve. That name means that *life came from her*.

²¹ Then the Lord God killed some animals and used their skins to make clothes for Adam and his wife.

²² Then the Lord God said, "The man is like us now. He knows what is good and what is bad. We have to stop him from eating any fruit from the other tree in the middle of the garden. If anyone eats fruit from that tree, they will live forever."

²³ So the Lord God sent the man out of the garden of Eden so that he had to work the ground that he was made from.

²⁴ God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden and he put some of his angels to block the east side of the garden. Those angels had big knives with flames coming out of them, and those angels waved those knives everywhere to block anybody from getting to the fruit that makes people live forever.

4

Cain and Abel took presents to God

¹ Adam slept with his wife Eve and at the right time she had a baby boy and Eve named him Cain. She said, "The Lord helped me to have a son."

² Later on Eve had another son, and she named him Abel.

When the boys were grown up, Abel looked after sheep, and Cain got the ground ready to grow food plants.

³ One day, Cain wanted to show respect to the Lord, so he took some food from his garden and gave it to the Lord.

⁴ Abel wanted to show respect to the Lord too, so he went and took some of the first born sheep. He killed them, and gave the best parts to the Lord.

God was happy with Abel and he was happy with what Abel gave him.

⁵ But God was not happy with Cain, and he was not happy with what Cain gave him. And so, Cain got very angry and his face had an ugly look.

⁶ The Lord said “Cain, why are you angry? Why do you look so sad?”

⁷ If you do the right thing, I will be happy with you. But, if you don't do the right thing, look out. You are thinking the wrong way. It is like you have a wild animal inside your head that wants you to do all sorts of bad things. You have to be the boss of your thinking.”

⁸ But Cain went and found his brother Abel and said to him, “Let's go for a walk.” And while they were walking, Cain hit his brother and killed him.

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

Cain said, “I don't know. It's not my job to look after him.”

¹⁰ The Lord said to Cain, “Why have you done this really bad thing? I can see your brother's

blood on the ground, and it is like his blood is calling out to me. That blood is telling me that you killed your brother.

¹¹ You killed your brother and the ground soaked up his blood. And so I am going to put a curse on you. From now on the ground will be your enemy.

¹² And if you try to grow plants in the ground, nothing will grow for you. You will always go from place to place, and you will never settle down anywhere.”

¹³ Cain said to the Lord, “You are too hard on me.

¹⁴ You are forcing me away from you and this country and I will not be able to grow food for myself. I will have to walk around from place to place and never settle down. And anyone that finds me will kill me. Yes God, you are being too hard on me.”

¹⁵ Then the Lord said, “Cain, I promise you, that if someone kills you, I will punish that person 7 times more than I punished you.” Then the Lord put a special mark on Cain to stop anyone from killing him.

The family that came from Cain

¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the Lord and lived in a country called Nod. Nod was on the east side of the Garden of Eden.

¹⁷ Cain slept with his wife, and they had a baby son and they named him Enock. Cain built a town, and he called the town, Enock for his son.

¹⁸ Enock grew up and he had a son named Irad.

Irad grew up and he had a son named Methu-jayel.

Methu-jayel grew up, and he had a son named Methu-shayel.

Methu-shayel grew up and had a son named Larmek.

¹⁹ Larmek grew up and married 2 women. The name of one wife was Adah. The name of the other wife was Zillah.

²⁰ Larmek's wife Adah had a baby boy named Jabal.

Jabal grew up and he was the first person to live in a tent and look after sheep and bullocks.

²¹ Adah had another son, a brother for Jabal. His name was Jubal.

Jubal grew up and he was the first person to play music on an instrument like a guitar and other instruments that had pipes.

²² Larmek's other wife Zillah had a son named Tubal-Cain, and a daughter named Naymah.

Tubal-Cain grew up and made tools from iron and another brown metal called bronze.

²³⁻²⁴ One day Larmek said to his 2 wives,

“Adah and Zillah, listen to me.

A long time ago, Cain killed his brother,

And God punished him.

If anyone killed Cain,

God said he would punish that person 7 times more.

Well, I killed a man that hurt me.

But, if someone kills me,

that person must get payback 77 times more.”

Adam and Eve had another son

²⁵ Adam slept with his wife again, and they had another son. Eve named him Seth. She said, “God has given me another son to take Abel’s place in the family.”

²⁶ Seth grew up and had a son and they named him Enosh.

It was about this time that people started to pray to the Lord and show him respect.

5

The family that came from Adam

¹ This is the story of Adam’s family. You see, when God made people, he made them to be like himself.

² He made them to be a man and a woman, and he blessedd them. That means that he was good to them, and he called them humans.

This is a list of people that were in Adam’s family line.

³ Adam was alive for 130 years and then he had a son that he named Seth. When Seth was born, he was just like Adam and looked like him too.

⁴ Adam lived for another 800 years after Seth was born and Adam had more sons and daughters.

⁵ Adam died when he was 930 years old.

⁶ When Seth was 105 years old he had a son named Enosh.

⁷ Seth lived for another 807 years, and he had more sons and daughters.

⁸ Seth died when he was 912 years old.

⁹ When Enosh was 90 years old he had a son named Keynan.

¹⁰ Enosh lived for another 815 years, and he had more sons and daughters.

¹¹ Enosh died when he was 905 years old.

¹² When Keynan was 70 years old he had a son named Maha-lalel.

¹³ Keynan lived for another 840 years, and he had more sons and daughters.

¹⁴ Keynan died when he was 910 years old.

¹⁵ When Maha-lalel was 65 years old he had a son named Jared.

¹⁶ Maha-lalel lived for another 830 years, and he had more sons and daughters.

¹⁷ Maha-lalel died when he was 895 years old.

¹⁸ When Jared was 162 years old he had a son named Enock.

¹⁹ Jared lived for another 800 years, and he had more sons and daughters.

²⁰ Jared died when he was 962 years old.

²¹ When Enock was 65 years old he had a son named Methu-selah.

²² Enock lived for another 300 years after Methu-selah was born, and he had more sons and daughters.

²³⁻²⁴ Enock was a good man who spent a lot of time with God. Enock lived until he was 365 years old, then one day, people didn't see him anymore. You see, he did not die. God took him straight up to heaven.

²⁵ When Methu-selah was 187 years old he had a son named Larmek.

²⁶ Methu-selah lived for another 782 years, and he had more sons and daughters.

²⁷ Methu-selah died when he was 969 years old.

²⁸ When Larmek was 182 years old he had a son.

²⁹ Larmek named his son Noah. Larmek said, “The Lord has cursed the ground, and that is why we have to work really hard to get our food. But I will call my son Noah. He will make us feel better.”

The name Noah sounds like the Hebrew word that means, *He will make us feel better*.

³⁰ Then Larmek lived for another 595 years and he had more sons and daughters.

³¹ Larmek died when he was 777 years old.

³² When Noah was 500 years old he had 3 sons, named Shem, Ham and Jay-feth.

6

There were big, strong fighting men

¹ The time came when there were a lot of people living on the earth, and some of the women were very beautiful.

² And in those days there were some spirit men, called the *Sons of God*. When they saw some of those beautiful women, they married the ones they wanted.

³⁻⁴ Their children grew up to be big strong fighting men called Nef-ilim. And then for a lot of years, people told stories about what those great fighters did.

But the Lord looked at what was happening and said, “I put my life spirit into people to keep them

alive, but I will not let that spirit stay in them forever. They will only live for 120 years and then they will die.”

People were really bad

⁵ The Lord looked at the people on the earth and saw that they were getting worse and worse. They were always thinking the wrong way and working out ways to do bad things all the time.

⁶ And so the Lord was really sad. It was like a pain in his heart, and he said to himself, “I am really sorry that I made people.

⁷ I made all those people, but now, I am going to kill them all, and I will kill all the animals that I made too. I will even kill all the little animals that move around on the ground, and I will kill all the birds that fly in the sky.”

⁸ But the Lord was pleased with Noah.

The story about Noah

⁹ This is the story about Noah and his family.

Noah was a good man. At that time, Noah was the only man on the earth that lived God's way and so God was really happy with him.

¹⁰ Noah had 3 sons named Shem, Ham, and Jayfeth.

¹¹ Everyone else on the earth was living in a rubbish way. They were fighting and hurting each other all the time.

¹² So when God looked and saw that all the people were doing really bad things,

¹³ he said to Noah, “Look, nobody is living the way I want them to live. They are fighting all the

time and people are getting hurt. I have made up my mind, I am going to kill everybody and every other living thing on this earth.”

God told Noah to build a big boat called an Ark

¹⁴ Then God said to Noah, “I want you to make a really big boat called an Ark. Make it out of wood and make rooms inside it. Then paint it on the inside and on the outside with tar to keep the water out.

¹⁵ Listen Noah, this is how big I want you to make the boat. It has to be 140 metres long, and 23 metres wide, and 14 metres high.

¹⁶ I want you to put a roof over it and just under the roof make a window half a metre high all the way around. And put a big door in the side of the boat. Make 3 floors inside the boat, one floor for the bottom and 2 more floors upstairs.

¹⁷ You see, soon I will send a lot of flood water, and it will cover the whole earth and everything that breathes will die.

¹⁸ But do not worry, Noah, I am making a strong promise to you. I will look after you, your wife, your sons, and their wives too. You will all be safe inside that boat.

¹⁹⁻²⁰ Take one boy and one girl of every kind of animal and bird into the boat with you. I will make all those animals come to you so that they can be safe too.

²¹ Go out into the countryside and pick up as much food as you can and put it inside the boat. You will need a lot of food for your family and a lot of food for all the animals too.”

22 Then Noah did everything that God said.

7

God told Noah to get ready for a flood

¹ Then the Lord said to Noah, “You are the only man alive today that lives the right way. It is time for you to take your family into the really big boat called the Ark.

² And take every kind of animal with you. There are 2 groups of animals that I want you to take into the boat. In the first group there are animals that I call *clean* animals. Those clean animals are the animals that you can kill and burn to show me respect. Take 7 boy ones and 7 girl ones of those clean animals into the boat.

But the second group of animals, I call them *unclean*. You are not allowed to kill them and burn them to show me respect. Take only 1 boy one and 1 girl one of those unclean animals.

³ Take 7 boy ones and 7 girl ones of each kind of bird from all over the world with you into the boat.

All those animals and birds will be safe with you. That way, after the flood, there will always be animals and birds living on the earth.

⁴ You see, in 7 days time I am going to make rain fall down from the sky. It will rain for 40 days and 40 nights so that everything I made will die and be washed away.”

⁵ So Noah did everything the Lord said to him.

The flood water came

⁶⁻⁷ Noah was 600 years old when he and his wife, his 3 sons and their wives all went into the boat to be safe from the floodwaters.

⁸⁻⁹ A lot of animals came to Noah. There were boy and girl animals of every kind and Noah took them into the boat too. There were clean and unclean animals, as well as birds and small animals that move along the ground. Noah did everything that God said.

¹⁰ Then 7 days later, the flood water came.

¹¹⁻¹⁶ Noah was 600 years old at the time that the flood water came. And it came on the 17th day of the 2nd month of that year.

On the same day that the rain started, Noah and his wife, and his sons, Shem, Ham and Jayfeth, and their wives went into the boat. All the animals went with them into the boat. There were wild animals and quiet animals, big animals and small animals. All the birds went into the boat too. Just like God told Noah, there were boys, and girls of every kind of animal, and they went in 2 at a time. When the last animal went into the boat with Noah and his family, God shut the door.

And it rained really hard for 40 days and 40 nights. It was just like God opened up a big window in the sky to let all the water out. Spring water came up from deep down under the ground too.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ The flood water kept getting higher and higher for 40 days, and the boat started to float on the water, high above the ground.

¹⁹ The water got so high that it covered all the really big hills everywhere.

²⁰ It covered the tops of those hills with about 7 metres of water.

²¹ Every living thing that was outside the boat died. The flood water killed all the birds, all the wild animals, all the quiet animals, all the little animals that move along the ground and every living person.

²² Yes, everything that breathed air and lived on the earth died.

²³ There was nothing left alive on the earth. There were no birds, big animals, little animals, or people. God killed them all and washed them away. Noah, his family and all the animals and birds inside the boat were the only ones that were still alive.

²⁴ The flood water covered the earth for 5 months.

8

The flood water went down

¹⁻² God did not forget about Noah and the animals in that big boat called the Ark. So God stopped the water from coming up from under the ground. He stopped the rain falling from the sky and he made a strong wind blow on the floodwater to help it go down.

³⁻⁴ The flood water got lower and lower, and 5 months after the flood started, the water was so low that the boat sat down on some very high hills. Those hills were called the Ararat Mountains.

⁵ The flood water went down until the tops of the really high hills were sticking up out of the water.

Noah let some birds go out of the boat

⁶ Six weeks later, Noah opened the window in the top of the boat.

⁷ He let a black bird called a crow fly out from the boat to see what would happen. Every day the crow flew out and came back to the boat until all the floodwater had dried up.

⁸⁻⁹ And Noah let a bird called a pigeon fly out of the window to see if the flood water still covered all the ground. But the water was still too high and the pigeon could not find a place to sit down, so it went back to the boat. Noah picked it up and took it inside.

¹⁰ Noah waited for 7 more days and then he let the pigeon fly out of the boat again.

¹¹ And just before the sun went down, the pigeon came back. It had a new leaf from an olive tree in its mouth. Then Noah knew that the flood water was getting lower and the trees were growing leaves again.

¹² Noah waited another 7 days, then he sent the pigeon out again. This time it did not come back.

Everyone left the boat

¹³ By the time Noah was 601 years old, nearly all the water was gone. And on the first day of the new year Noah took the roof off the boat and looked around. He saw that the ground was starting to get dry.

¹⁴ Two months later, the earth was really dry.

¹⁵ Then God said to Noah,

¹⁶ “You can go out of the boat now. Take your wife, your sons and their wives with you.

¹⁷ And take all the animals, the birds, and every little animal that moves around on the ground, out of the boat. Then they can go and live all over the earth and have lots of young ones.”

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives all came out of the boat. All the animals and all the birds went out of the boat too, each group of animals came out together.

Noah said “Thank you” to the Lord and God made a promise

²⁰ Then Noah got some big stones and made them into a table with a flat top, called an “altar” for the Lord. Then he went and found some of the animals and birds that the Lord said were clean. They were the right ones to use to show him respect. He killed the animals, and burned them on the altar to say, “Thank you Lord for keeping us all safe”.

²¹ The Lord smelled the meat cooking on the altar and he was happy. He said to himself, “People always think the wrong way all their lives, right from the time they are little until they die. But I will never again kill off every living thing like I did this time. I will never curse the earth again for what people do.

²² While the earth is still here, everything will be the same. There will always be day time and night time, and every year there will be a hot weather time and a cold weather time, wet weather time and dry weather time. There will always be a right time to plant seeds for food and a right time to get the food from those plants.”

9

God made a promise to Noah

¹ God was good to Noah and his sons. God blessed them and said, “I want you to have lots of children so that the earth is full of people again.

² And I am making you the boss over everything that lives on the ground, all the animals, all the birds, and all the fish in the sea too. But they will be frightened of you.

³ Before now, I gave you plants to eat, but from now on you can eat anything that is alive.

⁴ But do not eat meat that still has blood in it. Let all the blood run out, you see that blood keeps an animal alive.

⁵⁻⁶ A person's life is so special that if an animal kills someone, that animal has to die. And if somebody murders another person, the murderer has to die.

You see, I made people like myself,
and that is why they are special to me.

⁷ But you Noah and your family, I want you to have a lot of children so that the earth is full of people again.”

⁸ Then God said to Noah and his sons,

⁹ “Right now I am going to make a strong promise to you and to all the family that will come from you.

¹⁰ And I am making the same promise to all the animals that live on the earth too, all the birds, all the quiet animals, and all the wild animals. I

promise this to all of the animals that came out of the boat with you.

¹¹ This is my promise. I will never again send a flood that kills everything.”

God sent a rainbow to help people remember what he promised

¹²⁻¹³ Then God said, “I am going to put a rainbow up in the sky. It will be a sign for everyone that I have made a strong promise to you and to everything that lives on the earth. That promise will last forever.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ So, when I make the clouds come across the sky and there is a rainbow that everyone can see, I will remember the promise I made to you and to everything that is alive. That promise is that I will never again send a flood that kills every living thing on the earth.

¹⁶ Yes, when I see a rainbow in the sky, I will remember my promise to you and to everything that lives on the earth. That promise will last forever.”

¹⁷ Then God said to Noah, “This is very important. That rainbow will show us that I made this promise to every living thing that lives on the earth.”

Noah got drunk

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ When Noah went out of the boat, his 3 sons, Shem, Ham, and Jay-feth went with him. The sons and their wives had children and grandchildren until there were a lot of people living on the earth again. One of Ham's sons was named Canaan.

²⁰ Noah was a farmer, and so he started to grow food in a garden. He planted some grape vines and later on, he used the grapes to make wine.

²¹ One day Noah drank too much of the wine and got drunk. He took off all his clothes and went to sleep in his tent.

²² Ham went into the tent and saw his father sleeping with no clothes on. But Ham, the father of Canaan, did not respect his father. He went outside and told his brothers.

²³ When Shem and Jay-feth heard what Ham said, they got a coat to cover their father. They held it between them and walked backwards into the tent and put the coat over their father and covered him up. They made sure they did not turn around and look at their father's body.

²⁴ Noah woke up and when he was sober, he found out what his youngest son Ham did.

²⁵ And so Noah said, "I am putting a curse on Ham's son, Canaan. He will be forced to work really hard for his relations and he will not get paid. He will be a slave.

²⁶ I know that Shem respects God and so I am going to ask the Lord to make Canaan a slave for Shem.

²⁷ I am going to ask God to make Jay-feth's country much bigger. Jay-feth and Shem will live together in that country, and Canaan will work hard as a slave for both Jay-feth and Shem."

²⁸ Noah lived for another 350 years after the flood.

²⁹ He died when he was 950 years old.

10

The story about Noah's family

¹ This story is about Shem, Ham and Jay-feth, the sons of Noah. It is a list of the children that were born after the flood.

The tribes that came from Jay-feth

² Jay-feth's sons were named Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Me-shek and Tiras.

³ Gomer's sons were named Ash-ken-az, Rif-ath and Togar-mah.

⁴ Javan's sons were named Elishah, Tar-shish, Kittim and Rod-anim.

⁵ All of the people that came from Jay-feth had families and they ended up being different tribes. Every tribe had their own language and their own country. Some of these tribes lived in country next to the Mediterranean Sea.

The tribes that came from Ham

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

⁷ Cush's sons were named Seba, Havi-lah, Sab-tah, Rarmah and Sab-teca.

And the sons of Rarmah were named Sheba and Dedan.

⁸⁻⁹ One of Cush's sons was named Nimrod. When Nimrod grew up he was a strong fighter, and with God's help he became a really good hunter. Whenever people talked about good hunters, they said things like, "That man is a really good hunter like Nimrod."

¹⁰ Later on, Nimrod was the boss of all the towns called Bab-y-lon, Erech, Accad and Cal-nar. All these towns were in a country called Shinah, which is another name for Bab-y-lonia.

¹¹⁻¹² From there Nimrod went to another country called Assyria and he built the towns called Nineva, Re-ho-both Ir, Calah, and a big town called Resen. Resen was between Nineva and Calah.

A list of Ham's sons

¹³⁻¹⁴ Ham had a son named Egypt. This is a list of Egypt's sons. Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naf-tuh, Path-rus, Cas-luh and Caf-tor. All these sons had families and their families grew so big they were called tribes. The Filistine nation came from the Cas-luh tribe.

¹⁵⁻¹⁸ Ham's other son, Canaan, named his first son Sidon. These are the names of Canaan's other sons, Heth, Jebus, Amor, Girgash, Hiv, Arrk, Sinn, Arvad, Zemar, and Hamath.

All these sons had families and their families grew so big they were called tribes. Later on, the tribes that came from Canaan split up and went to different places.

¹⁹ The tribes that came from Canaan were called Canaanites. Those tribes lived in country that went as far north as a town called Sidon and as far south as the town of Gaza, and as far east as the towns called Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboyim and Lasha.

²⁰ Yes, all these people were part of Ham's family. All the sons had their own tribes, languages and their own country.

The tribes that came from Shem

²¹ Shem was Jay-feth's older brother and Eber's family were part of Shem's family.

²² You see, Shem's sons were Elam, Ashur, Ar-faxad, Lud, and Aram.

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

²⁴ Ar-faxad's son was named Shelah, and he had a son named Eber.

²⁵ Eber had 2 sons. The first son was Peleg and his younger brother was Joktan. The name Peleg means *split up*. You see, Peleg was still alive when all the people split up into different tribes and went all over the world.

²⁶⁻³⁰ Joktan was the father of Almo-dad, Shelef, Hazarm-aveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimale, Sheba, Ofir, Havi-lah, and Jobab.

All of these people came from Joktan, and lived in the east hill country that goes from a place called Mesha all the way to another place called Seffar.

³¹ All these people came from Shem. They were all different tribes and had their own country and their own language.

³² And so this is a list of all the families and tribes that came from Noah. They split up into their own nations and spread out all over the earth after the big flood.

11

People tried to build a high building in Babylon

¹ Right from the time Noah and his family came out of the really big boat called the Ark, everyone talked the same language.

² When people started to move further east, they came to plain country called Babylonia, and they stayed there.

3-4 They said to each other, “Hey, let’s build a big town here on this plain country. We can use the ground to make bricks. Then we will put them into a fire so that they get really hard and we will use tar to put them together. And we will make a really high building that goes right up to the sky. If we do that everyone will say that we are a great people. And we can stay right here in this country and we will not have to spread out all over the earth.”

God made people talk in different languages

⁵ The Lord came down from heaven to look at the big town and the tall building that the people were making.

⁶ He said, “These people are like one big tribe and they all talk the same language. This is just the start of what they will do. If they keep on going this way, nothing will stop them from doing anything they want to do.

⁷ Come on, we will go down and we will make them talk in different languages so that they cannot understand each other.”

⁸ So God made all the people talk in different languages. They could not understand each other and so they stopped building their big town and they all moved away to different places, all over the world.

⁹ The town was called Babel or Babylon and those names sound like a word that means *mixed up*. You see, God mixed up the languages there and forced everyone to leave Babylon and go to live in different places all over the world.

The story of Shem's family

¹⁰ This is the story of Shem's family.

Shem was 100 years old when he had a son named Ar-fax-ad. This was 2 years after the big flood.

¹¹ Shem lived for 500 years after he had Ar-fax-ad, and he had more sons and daughters.

¹² Ar-fax-ad was 35 years old when he had a son named Shelah.

¹³ Ar-fax-ad lived for 403 years after he had Shelah, and he had more sons and daughters.

¹⁴ Shelah was 30 years old when he had a son named Eber.

¹⁵ Shelah lived for 403 years after he had Eber, and he had more sons and daughters.

¹⁶ Eber was 34 years old when he had a son named Peleg.

¹⁷ Eber lived for 430 years after he had Peleg, and he had more sons and daughters.

¹⁸ Peleg was 30 years old when he had a son named Reu.

¹⁹ Peleg lived for 209 years after he had Reu, and he had more sons and daughters.

²⁰ Reu was 32 years old when he had a son named Serug.

²¹ Reu lived for 207 years after he had Serug, and he had more sons and daughters.

²² Serug was 30 years old when he had a son named Nahor.

²³ Serug lived for 200 years after he had Nahor and he had more sons and daughters.

²⁴ Nahor was 29 years old when he had a son named Terah.

²⁵ Nahor lived for 119 years after he had Terah and he had more sons and daughters.

²⁶ Terah had 3 sons after he was 70 years old. Their names were Abram, Nahor and Haran.

Terah's family

²⁷⁻²⁹ This is the story of Terah's family. Terah had 3 sons named Abram, Nahor and Haran.

Haran, Terah's son, was born in a place called Ur, in a country called Kaldea. And so the people that lived in that country were called Kaldeans.

Haran had a son named Lot and 2 daughters named Milcah and Iscah. Terah was still alive when Haran died. He died in the same country that he was born in.

Nahor married Milcah and Abram married Sarai.

³⁰ But Sarai could not have a baby.

³¹ Terah left Ur, in the Kaldea country with his son Abram, Sarai, and his grandson Lot. They wanted to go to the country called Canaan, but stopped at a town called Harran and stayed there.

³² Terah died in Harran when he was 205 years old.

12

God picked Abram

¹ Abram was living in a big town called Harran when the Lord said to him, "Abram, I want you to leave your country, your family and all your relations. I am going to take you to live in a new country.

² I am going to bless you. That means I will do good things for you and make you strong. Everyone will know about you and respect your name. I will give you a big family and this family will grow into a strong nation. Your family will do good things for all the other nations on the earth.

³ If anyone looks after you and does good things for you, I will look after them and be kind to them. But, if anyone puts a curse on you and makes life hard for you, I will put a curse on them and I will make their life very hard. I will use your family to do good things for all the people in the world.”

⁴⁻⁵ Abram was 75 years old when he left Harran to go to the country of Canaan. This was the country the Lord told him to go to. Abram took his wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot. Before Abram left Harran he picked some men and women to work for him. Abram took all his workers and everything he had with him to Canaan.

⁶ When Abram got to the Canaanite country, he walked right across that country until he got to a place called Shekem. In that place there was a special tree called Moreh.

⁷ Then the Lord visited Abram and made a strong promise to him. God said to Abram, “You are the first person in my new family. I promise that I will give this country to the family that comes after you.” The Lord had visited Abram and so Abram piled up some stones to make a special table called an altar. And then he burned some animals on that altar to show respect to the Lord.

⁸ Later on, Abram left Shekem and went down south to the hill country that was on the east side of a town called Bethel. And he made his camp between Bethel and another town called Ai. Ai was on the east side and Bethel was on the west side of his camp. Right there Abram built another stone altar and prayed to God using God's name.

⁹ Then Abram travelled further south to a dry country called "The Negev".

Abram and Sarai go to Egypt

¹⁰ At that time, there was not much food in that country, and so Abram and everyone with him went to live for a short time in the country called Egypt.

¹¹⁻¹² Just before they got to the border of Egypt, Abram said to Sarai, "You are a beautiful woman and when the Egyptian people see you, they will say, 'That woman is married to Abram. Let's kill him so that we can have her for ourselves.' They will kill me but they will let you live.

¹³ You have to tell everyone that you are my sister so they will not kill me."

¹⁴ What Abram said came true. When they got into Egypt, the Egyptian people saw that Sarai was really beautiful.

¹⁵ And when the king's workers saw Sarai, they told the king how beautiful she was, and they took her to live with him.

¹⁶ The king thought Abram was Sarai's brother and so he was very kind to him. The king gave Abram, sheep, cows, donkeys, and camels as well as men and women workers.

¹⁷ But God was not pleased that Sarai had gone to live with the king of Egypt. God made the king and everyone who lived in his house really sick.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ When the king found out that Sarai was married to Abram, he got really wild and sent someone to get Abram. The king said to him, "What have you done to me? Sarai is your wife! Why did you trick me? You said, 'She is my sister' and you let me marry her. Now, here is your wife. Take her away, and then, you and all your people, get out of my country!"

²⁰ The king told his soldiers what to do with Abram. He said, "Take Abram, Sarai, all his people, animals and workers out of Egypt and make them go back to where they came from!" And the soldiers did what the king said.

13

Abram and his nephew Lot split up

¹⁻² Abram, Sarai, and Lot left Egypt and went back to the dry country called The Negev with everything they owned. Abram was very rich now, he had a lot of silver and gold and a big mob of animals.

³⁻⁴ When they had been in The Negev for a while, they left that dry country and went north. They moved from place to place until they got back to where they had camped between the towns of Bethel and Ai. That was where Abram had built the stone altar to show respect to God. That was where he prayed using the Lord's name.

⁵ Abram and his nephew Lot were still travelling together. And just like Abram, Lot had a big mob of sheep, goats, cattle and workers with him.

⁶⁻⁷ But there was a problem. Abram and Lot had too many animals for that country to feed. And so the workers that looked after Abram's animals started to fight the workers that looked after Lot's animals. They were fighting about whose animals should get all the grass and water.

The traditional owners of that country were called the Canaanite and Perrizite people and they were still living there.

⁸ Abram said to Lot, "I don't like this trouble. You and I are close relations, and I do not want any trouble between us. And I don't want our workers arguing and fighting one another.

⁹ I think we should split up. Take a look at all this country and you will see that there is plenty of room for both of us. I want you to pick which part of the country you want to live in and I will go somewhere else. If you pick the country to the east side, then I will take the country to the west but if you pick the west country, then I will take the country to the east."

¹⁰⁻¹² Lot looked towards a town called Zoar in the plain country that was around the Jordan River. He saw that there was plenty of grass and water. He thought it looked just like God's Garden, and the country in Egypt too. So Lot picked all the plain country to the east, and Abram stayed up in the hill country called Canaan. Lot moved away from Abram and there was no more trouble.

In the plain country around the Jordan River there were a lot of towns, and Abram's nephew made his camp near one of those towns called Sodom. When Lot picked that country next to the Jordan River it was really beautiful. But some time later the Lord blew up the 2 towns called Sodom and Gomorrah. And he burnt all the plain country around them too.

¹³ You see, the people that lived in Sodom were very bad. They were always going against God and doing bad things all the time.

God made a promise to Abram

¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Abram, "Look at all the country around you. Look to the north, to the south, to the east and to the west.

¹⁵ I am going to give you all the country that you can see. All that country will be for you, your children, your grandchildren and all the families that will come after you. It will be their country forever.

¹⁶ Look at the ground you are standing on Abram, there is too much dirt. Your family will be like that dirt, there will be so many people that no one can count them.

¹⁷ Abram, get up, walk everywhere and look at all the country that I am giving to you."

¹⁸ So Abram went to live near the Great Trees of Mamre near a town called Hebron. Abram made his camp there, and he built another altar

of stones so that he could burn animals to show respect to God.

14

Abram saved Lot

¹⁻¹⁰ In that country there were 2 groups of kings. In the first group there were 4 kings and they worked together. And there were 5 kings in the second group and they worked together. Every king had their own army of fighting men.

King Kedor-lay-omer was the boss over all the kings in both groups and he lived in a place called Elam. Here are the names of the other 3 kings in the first group, and where they lived,

King Amrafel of Babylonia,

King Arioch of Ellasar, and

King Tidal of Goy-im.

Here is a list of the 2nd group of kings and where they lived,

King Bera of Sodom,

King Birsha of Gomorrah,

King Shinab of Admah,

King Shem-eber of Zeboy-im, and the

King of Bela. Zoar is the other name for Bela.

King Kedor-lay-omer was the boss over all the kings for 12 years. Then, at the end of the 12 years, the group of 5 kings turned against King Kedor-lay-omer.

King Kedor-lay-omer and the other 3 kings in his group got really upset about that and a year later they went down to fight the group of 5 kings. On the way they stopped to fight with some other people groups.

This is a list of those people and where they lived.

The Refaites in Ash-ter-oth Karnay-im,
the Zuzites in Ham,
the Emites in Shar-vay Kiriath-ay-im,
and the Hoorites in the hill country of Edom.

King Kedor-lay-omer's men went on fighting those people all the way to a place called El-Paran, near the dry country.

King Kedor-lay-omer and his group were the winners over all these people and they went back to the town of En-Mishpat, the other name for that town was Kadesh.

They took all the land that belonged to the Amalekite people. And then they had a fight with the Amorite people who were living in Hazezon-Tamar. King Kedor-lay-omer and his group were the winners.

When all those fights were finished, they marched to the Dead Sea that is in the plain country called the Valley of Siddim. The armies of the 5 kings that had turned away from King Kedor-lay-omer were waiting for him and the other 3 kings and their armies.

Both groups of armies lined up and faced each other ready to fight. It was 4 kings and their armies against 5 kings and their armies.

Kedor-lay-omer and his group of 3 kings were the winners over the 5 kings and their armies.

In that plain country called the Valley of Siddim there were a lot of holes in the ground full of sticky black stuff called tar. When the fight was finished, the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and

their armies ran away. Some of the men fell into those tar pits and the rest of the men ran away up into the hills.

¹¹ King Kedor-lay-omer and his soldiers went to Sodom and Gomorrah and grabbed all the people that lived there. Kedor-lay-omer's men took everything the people owned, even their food, and then they started to go back to their own country.

¹² Lot and his family were living in Sodom at that time, and so the soldiers grabbed them too and took all their things.

Abram saved Lot and everything that was stolen

¹³⁻¹⁴ A man got away from the fight and ran to tell Abram what had happened to Lot. At that time, Abram was living near the Great Trees that belonged to a man named Mamre. Abram, the Hebrew man, was good friends with Mamre and his 2 brothers named Eshcol and Aner. They belonged to a group of people named Amorites.

Abram, Mamre and his brothers were from different tribes but they had promised to look after each other.

Abram had 318 fighting men in his camp. These men had lived with Abram all their lives. So Abram and his men joined up with the 3 Amorite brothers and their fighting men. Together they chased King Kedor-lay-omer and the 3 other kings all the way north to a place called Dan.

¹⁵ That night Abram split up all the men with him into groups to fight King Kedor-lay-omer and the other 3 kings. Abram and all his men won that fight and they chased the kings and their men all

the way to a place called Hobah that is north of a town called Damascus.

¹⁶ So Abram saved Lot, and he saved the women and all the other people that had been taken from Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram took back all the things the kings had stolen from Lot and all the things that were stolen from the people that lived in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abram met Mel-kiz-edek the king of Salem

¹⁷ Abram and all his fighting men started to go back home after they beat Kedor-lay-omer and the other kings.

The king of Sodom went out to meet them when they got to the Valley of Shevah, the low country between the hills. That low country was called the King's Valley.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ In that country there was a man named Mel-kiz-edek who was the king of a town called Salem. And he was the people's ceremony man for the One True God. And like the king of Sodom, Mel-kiz-edek went out to meet Abram. Mel-kiz-edek gave Abram and all the fighting men some bread and wine and he blessed Abram.

This is the way Mel-kiz-edek blessed Abram.

Mel-kiz-edek prayed and said,

"God, you are more powerful than any other god.

You are the one who made heaven and earth.

And I ask you to do good things for Abram and to make him strong.

²⁰ God, I want to thank you and tell everyone how great you are.

You are the one who helped Abram to be the winner over his enemies.”

When Mel-kiz-edek finished saying this, Abram got all the things that the kings had stolen from the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and split them up into 10 heaps. He gave one of those heaps to Mel-kiz-edek.

²¹ The king of Sodom said to Abram, “I only want my people back. You can keep everything else.”

²²⁻²³ But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I tell you and I make a strong promise to God, the God who made heaven and the earth, I will not take anything that belongs to you. I will not even take a piece of string or a shoelace that belongs to you. You see, I do not want you to say to anybody, ‘I made Abram rich. I gave him everything.’

²⁴ The only thing my men and I will keep is the food we ate. Listen to me king of Sodom, I did not save your people and your things by myself. These Amorite men named Aner, Eshcol and Mamre helped me, and so you can give them their share of the things we took back from the 4 kings”.

15

God made a strong promise to Abram

¹ Later on, after Abram saved Lot from the 4 kings, the Lord talked to Abram in a vision. It was like he was dreaming with his eyes open. The Lord said,

“Abram, don't be frightened,

I will keep you safe so that no one can hurt you,

and I am going to do a lot of good things for you.”

²⁻³ But Abram said, “O Lord. What can you give me? You have not given me the one thing I really want. You have not given me any children. When I die, one of my workmen named Elee-ay-zer from Damascus, will get everything I have.”

⁴ The Lord said to Abram, “I tell you. That man from Damascus will not get everything when you die. I am going to give you a son and he will be the one who gets everything.”

⁵ Then the Lord took Abram outside the tent and said, “Look up at the sky and try to count all those stars. You cannot do that. And just like those stars, there will be so many people in your family you will not be able to count them.”

⁶ Abram believed the Lord's words, and so God said to himself, “Abram is a good man who lives the right way for me. No one can say that he is guilty of doing anything wrong.”

God made another promise to Abram

⁷ The Lord said to Abram, “I am your God. I am the one who led you out of your homeland of Ur in Kaldea, and I am going to give you this country to live in.”

⁸ But Abram asked, “O Lord. How can I know that I will have all this country for myself?”

⁹ So the Lord said to Abram, “Bring me a cow that has not had a calf, a girl goat and a boy sheep. All these animals have to be 3 years old. And I want you to bring me 2 different kinds of pigeons.”

15:5 Deuteronomy 1:10; 1 Chronicles 27:23; Romans 4:18; Hebrews 11:12 **15:6** Romans 4:3,9,22; Galatians 3:6; Hebrews 11:11; James 2:23-24 **15:7** Acts 7:6-7

¹⁰ Abram did what God told him. He killed the animals and split them in half. He put the halves of the animals on the ground in 2 lines so that their feet were nearly touching. But he did not cut the birds in half.

¹¹ Some eagles flew down and tried to eat the animals, but Abram chased them away.

¹² As the sun went down, Abram fell into a really deep sleep and a scary darkness came down on top of him.

¹³⁻¹⁵ Then the Lord said to Abram, “I want you to know for sure what will happen to you later on. When you die, you will be really old but you will feel good and quiet inside yourself.

But I have to tell you something. Later on, your family will leave this country and move to another country. They will be strangers in that land and later on they will be prisoners and have to work very hard. The people that live in that country will do really bad things to your family for 400 years. Then I will save your people from that hard time and I will punish that nation for what they did to your family. Your family will be really rich when they leave that country. They will have a lot of money and animals.

¹⁶ And I will bring your family back here to this country that I have promised to you. You see the Amorite people that live in this country do really bad things. They go against me all the time and they are getting worse and worse. And so, after your grandchildren have grandchildren,

I will take this country away from the Amorite people and give it to your family.”

¹⁷ When the sun went down and it was really dark, Abram saw a fire bucket with smoke coming out of it and a fire stick. ¹⁸⁻²¹ This was the way God showed Abram that he was serious about the promise he made. God said to him again, “I am going to give all this country to your family, from the river in Egypt all the way to the great river Youfray-tees that is in the country where you came from. This is a list of the tribes that live in this country. They are called, the

Kenites, Kenizzites,
Kadmonites, Hittites,
Perizzites, Refay-ites,
Amorites, Canaanites,
Gir-gash-ites, and the Jebusites.

I will take this country away from all these people and give it to your family.”

16

Hagar and Ishmael

¹⁻³ Abram and Sarai had lived in Canaan for 10 years and Sarai still did not have a baby. She said to Abram, “I think God has stopped me from having my own baby. But I have a plan, here is my Egyptian working girl, Hagar. I want you to take her as a second wife. She belongs to me and so if she has a baby, then that baby will be mine.”

⁴ Abram did what Sarai wanted and slept with Hagar. When Hagar knew that she was going to have a baby, she started to rubbish Sarai.

⁵ Sarai said to Abram, "I blame you for this trouble. I gave Hagar to you, and now that she is having a baby she is rubbishing me. She hates me, and it's your fault. I want the Lord to tell us who is right, you or me."

⁶ But Abram said to Sarai, "Hagar belongs to you. Do whatever you want with her."

So Sarai gave Hagar such a hard time, she ran away.

⁷ The Lord's angel found Hagar sitting at a waterhole near the road that went to a town called Shur.

⁸ The angel said to her, "Hagar, I know that you belong to Sarai, so why are you sitting out here in the dry country. Where are you going?"

Hagar answered, "I am running away from Sarai."

⁹ The angel said to her, "I want you to go back to Sarai. She owns you, and so you must do what she says."

¹⁰ Then the angel said, "I am going to make the family that will come from you so big that no one will be able to count them.

¹¹ You are going to have a baby boy. I want you to name him Ishmael, which means *God listens*. You see he has heard about your trouble.

¹² But I have to tell you, Ishmael will be like a wild donkey. He will be against everybody and everybody will be against him. He will always fight with his brothers."

¹³ Hagar heard what the angel said, and she knew that the message came from the Lord. So she named him, *You are the God who sees me*. And she said to herself, "I have seen the back of God. He is the one who sees me."

¹⁴ From that time, the waterhole where the angel talked to Hagar, was called Beer La-hai Roy. In that language it means *Waterhole that belongs to the living God who sees me*. That waterhole is between 2 places called Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵ Later on, Hagar had Abram's son and Abram named the baby Ishmael.

¹⁶ Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.

17

God made a strong promise with Abram

¹ When Abram was 99 years old, God visited him and said, "I am God most powerful. I want you to live my way and do what I say is right.

² We will make a strong promise to each another, and I will give you a really big family."

³ Abram bowed down with his face on the ground and God said to him,

⁴ "This is my side of the promise. You are going to be the father of many nations. A lot of people are going to come from you.

⁵ And so, I am going to change your name. You are named Abram, which means *Respected Father*, but I will change your name to Abraham. Abraham means *Father of Many Nations*.

⁶ Yes, I will give you a very big family and later on it will split into different nations. Some of your family will be the kings of those nations.

⁷ I will make this promise with you and all the family that comes after you, and this promise will never end. I will be your God and I will be the God of all your family that comes after you.

⁸ You Abraham will still live like a stranger in this country called Canaan, but later on, I will give this country to the families that come from you. They will have this country for themselves forever and I will be their God.”

⁹⁻¹⁰ Then God said to Abraham, “You and all the families that come from you have to keep your side of our promise too. This is what you have to do. Every man and boy in your camp has to have the young men's ceremony.

¹¹ You all have to have that ceremony to show that we have made this promise together.

¹²⁻¹³ Every boy born into your family from now on, must have that operation when they are 8 days old. Every man slave worker you got from somewhere else who lives in your camp has to have that ceremony too. Every boy born into a slave family must have that operation when they are 8 days old. And so, every man and boy in your camp must have the mark of that operation on their bodies. Abraham, those marks show that you and I made this promise together, a promise

17:7 Psalms 105:8-10; Micah 7:20; Luke 1:55

12:7; 13:14-15; 26:3; 28:13-14; 48:3-4; Acts 7:5

17:8 Genesis 17:9-10 Genesis 21:4; 34:14-24; Exodus 4:26; 12:44,48; Leviticus 12:3; Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Acts 7:8; Romans 4:11

that will be true forever.

¹⁴ Any man or boy that does not have that ceremony mark has broken our promise and will be sent away from his tribe.”

¹⁵ Then God said to Abraham, “I am going to change your wife's name too. Her name is Sarai, but now you must name her Sarah.

¹⁶ I will do a good thing for her and together you will have a son. Yes, I will do this good thing for her so that she will be called the *Mother of Many Nations*, and kings will come from her.”

¹⁷ Abraham bowed down on the ground again and laughed. He said to himself, “I am nearly 100 years old and Sarah is 90, how can we have a baby? We are too old.”

¹⁸ And so Abraham said to God, “Might be, my son Ishmael can be the son you promised me.”

¹⁹ But God said to Abraham, “Listen to me. What I say is true, Sarah will have a baby boy, and you will name him Isaac. He will be the one that gets all the promises I made to you. The promise I made with you, will be the same for him and for all the family that comes from him. And again I tell you, that promise will last forever.

²⁰ Abraham, you asked me about Ishmael. I will do good things for him too. I will make a way for him to have a really big family and 12 rulers will come from that family. In that way Ishmael's family will become a great nation.

²¹ But I tell you, Sarah will have a baby boy about this time next year and when he is grown up, I will make the same promise with Isaac that I just made with you.”

²² God said all this, and then he left Abraham.

²³⁻²⁷ Straight away, on that same day, Abraham, Ishmael and every man and boy in Abraham's camp had that young men's ceremony. Even all the workers that were slaves from other countries had that operation too. Ishmael was 13 and Abraham was 99 years old when they had that ceremony.

18

God promised to give Abraham and Sarah a son

¹ Some time later, when Abraham was camped near the Great Trees of Mamre, the Lord came to talk to Abraham again. It was the hottest part of the day and Abraham was sitting in the doorway of his tent.

² He looked up and saw 3 men standing there. When Abraham saw them, he left his tent and ran to meet them. He bowed down with his face on the ground in front of them.

³⁻⁵ He said, "My lord, if you are happy with me, please come and sit down with me. Let me look after you, and I will get someone to bring water so that you can wash your feet. You can rest under this tree and I get some food ready for you. When you have finished eating, you will feel strong again and then you can keep going."

The 3 men said, "Thank you, yes, we will do that."

⁶ Straight away, Abraham went and found Sarah in the tent and said, "Quick, get some of our best flour and make bread for our visitors."

⁷ Then he ran and picked a nice young calf from his mob of cattle. He gave it to one of his workers, who quickly killed the calf and cooked it for the men.

⁸ Abraham gave the men some milk, yogurt and meat to eat, and then stood in the shade of a tree.

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

Abraham answered, “She is right there in our tent.”

¹⁰ Sarah was sitting in the tent behind where the men were eating, and she heard one of the men say, “I will come back to visit you this time next year, and Sarah will have a baby boy.”

¹¹⁻¹² Sarah could not believe it, and so she laughed to herself. She was thinking, “My husband Abraham is really old and I am too old and worn out to have my own baby. I will never be happy that way.”

¹³ The Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say to herself, ‘I am too old to have a baby?’

¹⁴ I tell you, God can do anything. Just like I said, at the right time next year, I will come back to visit you, and Sarah will have a baby boy.”

¹⁵ Sarah was frightened and so she lied and said, “I did not laugh.”

But the Lord said, “Yes you did. You did laugh.”

Abraham tried to save Sodom

¹⁶ When the 3 men finished eating, they got up to leave. Abraham walked with them to say goodbye

and as they walked along the men looked down at the town called Sodom.

¹⁷ The Lord was saying to himself as they walked, “Is it a good idea to tell Abraham what I am going to do, or will I say nothing?”

¹⁸ Abraham's family will be a big and powerful nation one day, and I will use his family to do good things for all the nations on the earth.

¹⁹ I have picked him so that he can teach his family to live my way and do what is right. If Abraham's family do these things, I will keep my promise to him.”

²⁰ Then the Lord said, “Abraham, I have heard about all the really bad things that happen in Sodom and Gomorrah. And I am shocked to hear what those people do.

²¹ I am going to go down and find out if what I hear is true. If it is true, I will burn those towns.”

²² Straight away, the other 2 men turned and walked towards Sodom. They left Abraham standing next to the Lord.

²³ Abraham turned to the Lord and asked, “Are you going to kill all the good people when you kill all the bad people that have gone against you?”

²⁴⁻²⁵ There might be 50 good people in that town. Will you still burn it? I don't think you will do that. I know that you are the judge of the whole world and you always do what is right. And I don't think you will do to the good people what you are going to do to the bad people.”

²⁶ The Lord answered, “Ok Abraham. If I find 50 people that live my way in Sodom, I will leave that town alone. Those 50 good people will save everyone else in the town.”

²⁷⁻²⁸ Abraham asked again, “I know that I am just a man, but I want to ask you another question. What if there are only 45 good people who live your way. Will you still burn the town?”

God answered, “If I find 45 good people, I will not burn the town.”

²⁹ Again Abraham asked, “What if there are only 40 good people there?”

God said, “If I only find 40 good people, I will not burn the town.”

³⁰ And again, Abraham asked, “Please do not get angry with me, but what if there are only 30 good people?”

God said, “I will not burn the town if there are 30 good people.”

³¹ Abraham asked, “I know that I am being brave to ask you this but, what if there are only 20 people that live your way in the town?”

God answered, “I will not burn the town if I find 20 good people there.”

³² Abraham said, “Please do not be angry with me if I ask one last question. What if you only find 10 good people in that town?”

God answered, “If I find 10 good people, I will not burn that town.”

³³ When they finished talking, the Lord left Abraham and Abraham went back to his camp.

19

The men in Sodom are really bad

¹ The sun was going down when the 2 angels got close to Sodom. At that time, Abraham's nephew who was named Lot was sitting near the town gate. When he saw the men coming, he went out to meet them. He bowed down and put his face on the ground in front of them.

² He said, "My lords. Come and stay in my house. You can wash your feet and rest before you leave tomorrow."

The angels answered, "No, it's ok! We will sleep outside in the park."

³ But Lot asked them again and again to stay with him in his house. And so, the 2 angels went with him. Lot cooked some good food for them, and they ate the food with some flat bread.

⁴⁻⁵ Before the angels went to sleep, all the men in Sodom, both young and old, came and stood around Lot's house and shouted, "Where are the 2 men that came to your house tonight? Bring them out here so that we can take them to bed."

⁶⁻⁷ Lot went outside and shut the door. He said to the men, "My friends, please do not do this really bad thing."

⁸ Look, I have 2 daughters. They are both young girls that have never been with a man. Let me bring them out here for you so that you can do whatever you want to do with them. But please do not do any bad thing to these men. They are living in my house and under our law, I have to keep them safe."

⁹ But the men of Sodom said to each other, “This man is a stranger here and he wants to tell us what to do. He has no right to do that.” And so they said, “Get out of our way or we will do even worse things to you.” They started to push Lot back against the house. They wanted to break the door down and grab the men that were inside.

¹⁰ But the 2 angels quickly opened the door and pulled Lot inside and shut the door again.

¹¹ Straight away the angels used their power to blind all the men outside the house, so that the men could not even find the door.

¹²⁻¹³ Then the angels said to Lot, “Do you have any more family here in Sodom? Do you have any more children? Are there any men that are married to your daughters, or anyone else that belongs to you? You see the people in this town are so bad, God has sent us to burn the whole town. You have to get your family away from here, straight away.”

¹⁴ So Lot went and found the men that were promised to marry his 2 daughters. He said to them, “You have to get out of Sodom. God is going to burn the town.” But the 2 men thought Lot was joking.

¹⁵ Very early the next day, the angels tried to get Lot to leave Sodom quickly. They said, “Hurry up Lot. Get your wife and daughters and get away from here. If you do not get away, you will die like everyone else.”

¹⁶ But Lot did not hurry, so one of the angels grabbed Lot's hand and his wife's hand, and the

other angel grabbed the hands of Lot's 2 daughters and led them quickly out of the town. You see, God wanted Lot and his family to be safe.

¹⁷ As soon as they were all outside, one of the angels said to them, "Run away quickly. Do not look back, but keep running until you get to the hills. Do not stop anywhere on the plain country. If you don't do as I say, you will die like all the people in Sodom."

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ Lot said to one of the angels, "My lord, you have been very kind to me and you have saved my life, but I cannot run all the way to the hill country, it is too far. I just can't make it and so I will die like everyone else.

²⁰ Look there is a little town over there. Maybe I could run there and be safe. It is not too far for me."

²¹ The angel answered, "Ok, I will let you go to that little town. I will not burn it up and you will be safe there.

²² But run quickly. I will not do anything until you are safe in that little town called Zoar." In that language Zoar means *Little*.

God sent fire onto Sodom and Gomorrah

²³⁻²⁵ Just as Lot and his daughters got to Zoar, the sun came up. Then the Lord sent burning stone called sulfur down from the sky onto Sodom and Gomorrah. Both those towns and all the plain country around them was burnt. All the people, all the plants and every living thing there died.

19:16 2 Peter 2:7 **19:23-25** Deuteronomy 29:23; Jeremiah 49:18; 50:40; Lamentations 4:6; Matthew 10:15,; 11:23-24; Luke 10:12; 17:29; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7

²⁶ But Lot's wife turned around and looked at what was happening, and straight away her body turned into a block of salt.

²⁷⁻²⁸ Early the next day, Abraham went to the place where he talked with God. He looked down the hill at where the 2 towns, Sodom and Gomorrah used to be. The towns and everything on the plain country was on fire. There was a lot of smoke, like the smoke from a really big bushfire.

²⁹ And so, what God told Abraham came true that day. God could not find 10 good people in the towns and so he sent fire and burned them up. But God was kind to Abraham and God saved Lot and his 2 daughters.

Lot's daughters do the wrong thing

³⁰ Lot and his daughters were frightened to stay in Zoar and so they went and lived in a cave up in the hill country.

³¹ One day the oldest daughter said to her sister, "Our father is really old, and there are no men around here that will marry us.

³² Let's get our father drunk and get him to sleep with us so that we can have babies. That way our family line will keep going."

³³ So, that night the 2 daughters got their father drunk and the oldest daughter slept with her father so that she could have a baby. Lot was so drunk he did not know what happened.

³⁴ The next morning, the older daughter said to her sister, "I slept with our father last night. It's your turn now. We will get him drunk again tonight and you can go and sleep with him. Then

we will both have babies and our family line will keep going.”

³⁵ The 2 sisters got their father drunk again and the younger daughter slept with her father. And again, Lot had no idea what happened.

³⁶ And so both sisters had babies from their father.

³⁷ The oldest daughter had a son and she named him Moab which means in their language, *He came from my father*. All the families that came from that son were called Moabites and they are still living today.

³⁸ The younger daughter had a son too, and she named him Ben-Ammi. In their language it means *Son of my relation*. All the families that came from this son were called Ammonites and they are still living today.

20

Abraham tricked Abimelek

¹ Later on, Abraham moved his camp south to the dry country called The Negev and camped between the 2 towns called Kadesh and Shur in a place called Gerar.

² Abimelek, the king of Gerar heard about Sarah, so he sent someone to get her. He wanted Sarah to be his wife. And it was there that Abraham again said, “Sarah is my sister.”

³ God was not happy with Abimelek's plan. And so one night God spoke to Abimelek in a dream and said, “You are going to die. You have taken

Sarah to be your wife. She is already married to Abraham.”

⁴⁻⁵ At that time, Abimelek had not touched Sarah or gone to bed with her and so he said to the Lord, “But Lord! Abraham said that Sarah was his sister, and she said that Abraham was her brother. I did not know that I was doing something wrong. I thought she was not married. Would you kill me and all my people who have done nothing wrong?”

⁶ God answered him, “Yes I know that you did nothing wrong. You did not know that Sarah was a married woman. That is why I stopped you from doing the wrong thing with her.

⁷ Give Sarah back to Abraham. He is my special man and he will pray for you so that you do not die. But I tell you, if you do not give her back to Abraham, I will kill you and everyone who lives with you.”

⁸ So early the next day, Abimelek called a meeting for all his important workers. He told them everything that God had said and they were all very frightened.

⁹ Then Abimelek sent someone to get Abraham to come to the meeting. Abimelek said to Abraham, “What have you done! And what have I done to you so that you pay us back with this trouble? You have done the wrong thing to me and my people.

¹⁰ What were you thinking? Why did you tell everyone that Sarah was your sister?”

¹¹ Then Abraham answered and said, “I didn't think anyone here respected God, and I was fright-

ened that you would kill me so that you could have Sarah as your wife.

¹² But it is true. Sarah is my wife and she is my sister. We have the same father but different mothers. In our culture, we are allowed to marry our half-sisters and so that is what I did.

¹³ When God told me to leave my father's country, we moved from place to place. I was frightened for myself and so I said to her, 'If you love me you have to tell everyone that you are my sister. Then I will be safe.' "

¹⁴ Abimelek did what God told him to do. He gave Sarah back to Abraham, and gave him some sheep and cattle as well as men and women workers as a present.

¹⁵ Abimelek said to Abraham, "Friend, look at all my country. You can live anywhere you like."

¹⁶ Then Abimelek said to Sarah, "I gave your brother Abraham a lot of silver in front of everyone, to show that you did nothing wrong."

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ Then Abraham prayed to God, and God made Abimelek strong again. And he made Abimelek's wife and all the women who lived in his house better so that they could have babies again. You see God had stopped all the women from having babies when Abimelek tried to marry Sarah.

21

Sarah had a son named Isaac

¹⁻³ The Lord was kind to Sarah and she found out that she was going to have a baby. Then, at the right time, the baby that the Lord promised to

Sarah was born. And so Sarah gave that old man Abraham a son. And Abraham named the baby Isaac which means *Laughing*.

⁴ Abraham remembered his side of the promise he made with God. And so when Isaac was 8 days old, Abraham did the young men's operation on Isaac to show that Isaac belonged to God.

⁵ Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.

⁶ Sarah said, "God has given me a chance to laugh now, and everyone who hears my story will laugh and be happy with me."

⁷ Then she said, "We are so old that no one thought that Abraham and I could ever have a baby. But now we have a son."

⁸ Isaac grew and on the day he stopped just having milk and started to eat food, Abraham gave a big party.

Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away from his camp.

⁹⁻¹⁰ One day Sarah saw Ishmael and Isaac playing together. And she started to worry that Hagar's son Ishmael would get a share of everything after Abraham died. So she said to Abraham, "When you die, my son Isaac must get everything you own. Hagar's son must not get anything. Send him and his mother away from here."

¹¹ Abraham was really upset by Sarah's words, you see, Ishmael was his son too.

21:1-3 Hebrews 11:11 **21:4** Genesis 17:10-27; 34:14-24; Exodus 4:26; 12:44,48; Leviticus 12:3; Deuteronomy 10:16; Acts 7:8 **21:4** Genesis 17:12; Acts 7:8 **21:9-10** Galatians 4:29-30

12 But God said to Abraham, “Do not worry about Ishmael. It is ok. I will look after him and his mother. You should listen to Sarah and do what she says. Remember that I promised you a family. That family will come from Isaac, not Ishmael.

13 I will give Ishmael a family too. His family will grow into a nation. He is your son and that is why I will do good things for him.”

14 The next morning, Abraham got some food and a water bag. He put them on Hagar's shoulder and sent her and Ishmael out of the camp. Together they walked into the dry country called Beersheba.

15-16 They walked until there was no water left in the water bag. They stopped and Hagar left Ishmael under a tree, and then she went and sat by herself a long way off. She said to herself, “I cannot watch him die”, and she started to cry.

17-18 God heard the boy crying too and so he sent an angel from heaven to talk to Hagar. He said to her, “Why are you upset? God has heard Ishmael crying under that tree. Go and get your son, and do not be frightened. I promise you, a great nation will come from your son.”

19 Then God showed her where to find a water-hole. She filled the water bag and gave Ishmael a drink.

20-21 God kept Ishmael safe as he grew up in the dry country called Paran. He learned how to be a great hunter and later on Hagar got a wife for him from Egypt.

Abraham and Abimelek made a promise together

²² One day, Abimelek and the leader of his army called Fycol, came to talk to Abraham. It was Abimelek who had nearly married Sarah.

Abimelek said to Abraham, “We know that God is very good to you and helps you with everything you do.

²³ But, Abraham, you are not one of my people. You are a stranger living here in my country and I have been kind to you and to all your people. And so, I want you to be kind to me and to all my people. And I want you to promise me that you will never try to trick me, or the family that comes after me. And I want you to say, ‘God, punish me if I break this promise.’ ”

²⁴ Abraham said, “Abimelek, I promise to do the right thing to you and to your family. And I say, ‘God, I want you to punish me if I break my promise to Abimelek’.”

²⁵ Then Abraham said to Abimelek, “We have just promised to be good friends, but I have a problem. Some of your people grabbed one of our waterholes, and then stopped us from getting any water from it.”

²⁶ Abimelek said, “I do not know who did this. Why didn't you tell me before now?”

²⁷ Abraham went to his camp and picked some sheep and cows and took them back to the meeting. He gave the animals to Abimelek and the 2 men made strong promises to each other again.

²⁸ Abraham picked 7 girl lambs and put them to one side.

²⁹ Abimelek asked, “Why did you put these 7 girl lambs to one side. What does it mean?”

³⁰ Abraham answered, “I want to give you these lambs as a present. When people see you take these sheep from me they will know that you and I agree that I dug this waterhole.”

³¹ From that time on, that place was called Beersheba. You see in that language it means *Promise Waterhole*, and it was where Abraham and Abimelek made strong promises to each other.

³² Then Abimelek and Fycol, the leader of his army, went back home to the country where the Philistines lived.

³³ Abraham planted a Tamarisk tree in Beersheba. He did this to mark the place where he prayed and showed respect to the one true God who lives forever.

³⁴ Abraham and all his people lived in the land that belonged to the Philistines for a very long time. But they were always strangers in that country.

22

God wanted to know if Abraham really trusted him

¹ A long time later God wanted to know if Abraham really trusted him with everything.

God called out to him and said, “Abraham.”

And Abraham answered, “Yes God I am listening to you.”

² Then God said, “I know that you love your special son Isaac, but I want you to take him to the country called Moriah. On one of the big hills that I will show you, I want you to show how much you respect me. I want you to kill Isaac there and burn his body on a table made of stones called an altar.”

³ The next morning, Abraham cut wood for the fire and tied the wood onto his donkey. He took his son Isaac and 2 workmen, and they started to walk to the place that God was taking him to.

⁴⁻⁵ They had walked for nearly 3 days when Abraham looked up and saw the place God talked about. It was a long way off, but he said to his workmen, “I want you to stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there to show respect to God, then we will come back to you.”

⁶⁻⁷ Abraham put the wood onto Isaac's back and Abraham carried the fire stick and the knife. Abraham and Isaac walked along for a while, then Isaac said, “Father.”

Abraham answered, “Yes, my son.”

Isaac said, “We have the wood and the fire stick, but where is the young sheep we are going to burn to show respect to God?”

⁸ Abraham answered, “God will give us the animal so that we can show him respect.” And they walked on together.

⁹ They got to the place God wanted Abraham to go to. Abraham piled up some stones to make the altar and put the wood on the top. Then he tied up his son Isaac and put him on top of the wood.

10-11 Abraham picked up his sharp knife and was about to kill Isaac, but an angel sent from God called out to him from heaven. The angel said, “Abraham, Abraham.”

And Abraham answered, “Yes, I can hear you”.

12 The angel said, “Do not kill Isaac or hurt him in any way. Now I can see that you respect God so much that you are ready to kill your special son.”

13 Abraham looked around him and saw a boy sheep with its horns stuck in a bush. He took Isaac off the wood and let him go free. Then Abraham grabbed the sheep, killed it, and put the sheep on the altar table where Isaac had been lying. So Abraham did not burn Isaac, he burnt the sheep to show respect for God.

14 Abraham called that place, *God will give you what you need*. Even today, people say, “On the Lord's Mountain, he will give you what you need.”

15-16 God's angel called out to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, “Abraham, I make my promise with you again. I saw that you were ready to give your son, your only son, to me.

17 And so, I will do really good things for you and make you strong. I will give you a big family. Your children's children and all those that come from them will be so many, that they will be like the stars in the sky. And just like you cannot count all the pieces of dirt on the ground, your family will be that many. Your families will grab the towns that belong to any people that go against them.

¹⁸ And I will use your family to do good things for all the nations in the world. You trusted me and did what I asked and so I will keep my promise.”

¹⁹ Abraham and Isaac walked back to where Abraham's workers were waiting with the donkey and they all went back to their camp at Beersheba. Abraham and all his people camped there for a long time.

Abraham got news about his brother's family

²⁰⁻²³ Later on, someone came from Abraham's homeland with news about his family. Abraham heard that his brother Nahor's first wife named Milcah had given birth to 8 sons. Their names were, Uz who was the eldest, Buz, Kemuel, who later had a son named Aram, Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaf and Bethuel.

Bethuel grew up and had a daughter named Rebekah.

²⁴ Nahor had a second wife named Reumah. She had sons for Nahor and they were named, Tebar, Gaham, Tahash and Maycar.

23

Sarah died

¹⁻² Sarah lived for 127 years and died at a place called Kiriath Arba. Hebron is another name for Kiriath Arba and is in the country called Canaan. Abraham was very sad and he sat down to cry next to her body.

³ Then he got up and had a meeting with the Hittite people who owned that country.

⁴ Abraham said to them, “I am a stranger here, and my wife has died. Can I buy some land from you so that I can bury her body?”

⁵⁻⁶ The Hittite people answered, “Sir. We know that you are a great leader living in our country. You can bury your wife in the best place in our cemetery. We respect you and so no one will stop you.”

⁷⁻⁹ Abraham got down on his knees in front of the Hittite people. He said, “Thank you, but can you ask the man named Efron son of Zohar, if I can buy the cave in a place called Mack-pelah? I want to pay the full price for that cave so that I can bury my wife the right way for my culture. If I pay Efron that money, you will all know that from now on it is our cemetery.”

¹⁰⁻¹¹ Efron the Hittite was at the meeting. He said to Abraham, “Sir, I am going say something to you in front of all these witnesses. I will give you the cave and the whole paddock as a present. Go and bury your wife in that cave.”

¹²⁻¹³ Abraham got down on his knees again in front of the Hittite people and said, “Thank you, but I really want to pay you the full price for that paddock and cave. Please accept my money so that I can bury my wife properly.”

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ Efron answered Abraham, “Sir, that paddock and cave is worth only 400 pieces of silver. It is like nothing to me. Please take the land and go and bury your wife.”

23:4 Genesis 17:8; 19:9; Leviticus 25:23; Acts 7:16; Hebrews 11:9,13 **23:7-9** Genesis 47:30; 50:13

¹⁶ Abraham agreed with the price and gave Efron the 400 pieces of silver in front of the Hittite people who were standing near the town gate.

¹⁷⁻²⁰ And so, the cave and all the trees that were in the paddock belonged to Abraham and that was where he buried his wife Sarah.

Mack-pelah was near a place called Mamre in the country of Canaan, and later Mamre was called Hebron.

That is how Abraham got a cemetery for his family from the Hittite people.

24

Abraham gets a wife for Isaac

¹ Right from the start, God was good to Abraham. And now that Abraham was really old he wanted to find a wife for his son Isaac.

²⁻³ Abraham had a special worker that looked after everything that Abraham owned. One day, Abraham said to his worker, "I want you to find a wife for my son Isaac.

My countrymen have a promise ceremony and this is what we do when we make a strong promise. Come here and put your hand on my leg and promise me that you will not get a wife for my son from the Canaanite families in this country. I want you to say that promise out loud so that the God who made heaven and earth hears what you say and is a witness.

⁴ You see, I want you to go back to my homeland, and get a wife for Isaac from my relatives."

⁵ The worker asked, "What if the woman does not want to leave her homeland and come here.

What do you want me to do then? Maybe I could send Isaac back there to find a wife for himself.”

⁶ Abraham answered, “No way! Make sure you do not take Isaac back to my homeland.

⁷ The God who made Heaven told me to leave my country and all my relations. He led me to this country and made a strong promise to me. He said, ‘I will give this country to all the family that comes after you’.

God will send an angel to help you find the right woman for Isaac.

⁸ But if the woman God shows you does not want to leave her homeland and come here to marry Isaac, you are free from your promise to me and to God. But I tell you again. You must not take my son back to my homeland.”

⁹ So the worker did what Abraham asked him to do. He put his hand on Abraham's leg and said out loud, “I promise to go and find a wife for Isaac from your countrymen. And I promise that I will never take Isaac out of this country.”

¹⁰ Then the worker took 10 camels to carry all the presents for Abraham's relations. The worker travelled east and a little bit north towards the place where Abraham's brother Nahor lived. Nahor's town was in a country called Meso-pot-aim-ia. This is between the 2 great rivers called the Tigris and You-Fray-tees.

¹¹ The worker and his camels walked for many days until they got to the town where Nahor lived. Abraham's worker made the camels get down on

their knees to rest at a waterhole just outside the town. When it was nearly night time, the young girls from the town came out to the waterhole to get water in their billycans.

¹² Then the worker prayed. He said, “O God, you are the one who looks after my boss Abraham, please be kind to him today.

¹³ I am standing next to this waterhole and all the young girls from the town are coming out to get water. Please help me pick the right girl for Abraham's son, Isaac.

¹⁴ I will say to one of them, ‘Can you give me a drink?’ If she says ‘Yes,’ and if she says, ‘I will give your camels a drink too’, then I will know that she is the girl you have picked for Isaac. And I will know that you have been very kind to my boss, Abraham.”

¹⁵ The worker was still praying when Rebekah walked out of the town with a big billycan on her shoulder. Rebekah's father was named Bethuel and his parents were Milcah and Nahor. And Nahor was Abraham's brother.

¹⁶ Rebekah was a very beautiful young girl who had never gone to bed with a man.

She went down into the waterhole, filled up her billycan with water and started to walk back up.

¹⁷ Abraham's worker ran to her and said, “Can I have a drink of water from your billycan?”

¹⁸ Rebekah answered, “Yes, my master, please have a drink.” And she gave him the billycan.

¹⁹ When Abraham's worker finished his drink, Rebekah said, “Wait, I will get water for your camels too.”

²⁰ Then she went quickly and put the rest of the water from the billycan into a big water bucket to let the camels have a drink. She went back to the waterhole to get water again and again, until all the camels finished drinking.

²¹ Abraham's worker stood quietly next to the waterhole. He watched to see if God had answered his prayers and led him to the right girl for Isaac to marry.

²² When the camels had finished drinking, Abraham's worker got out a gold nose ring and 2 gold arm bands, and gave them to Rebekah.

²³ He asked Rebekah, "Who is your father? Is there somewhere we can camp at your place?"

²⁴ Rebekah answered, "My father's name is Bethuel. And my grandparents are Milcah and Nahor.

²⁵ We have plenty of room and food for you and your camels."

²⁶ Abraham's worker bowed down to show respect for God.

²⁷ He said, "Thank you God. Lord, you are so good. You have kept your promise and you have been very kind to my boss, Abraham. You have led me to his relations."

²⁸⁻³⁰ Rebekah ran home to tell everyone in her mother's camp about the man at the waterhole and showed them the ring and arm bands. When Rebekah's brother Laban heard her story and saw the gold ring and gold bands on her arms, he ran back to the waterhole and found Abraham's worker still standing with his camels.

³¹ Laban said to Abraham's worker, "God has been good to you. He has kept you safe and led you

to our camp. Don't stand out here at the waterhole but come home and stay with us. We have plenty of room for your camels."

³² Abraham's worker and his men followed Laban to his camp. They took everything off the camels and gave the camels food to eat and grass to sleep on. The worker and his men were given some water so that they could wash their feet.

³³ Then Rebekah's brother Laban gave them some food. But Abraham's worker said, "I cannot eat until I tell you why I came here."

Laban said to him, "Ok, tell us why you are here."

³⁴ Abraham's worker said, "I work for Abraham.

³⁵ And God has been really good to him, he is a rich man now. God has given him a lot of sheep and cattle, camels and donkeys as well as a lot of men and women that work for him. He has a lot of money too.

³⁶ Abraham's wife, Sarah was really old when God made a way for her to give Abraham a son, and so Abraham has given him everything.

³⁷ But Abraham was worried about getting a wife for his son, and so he made me make a promise out loud so that God was a witness. I had to say, 'I will not get a wife for Isaac from any of the families in the Canaanite country where Abraham lives.'

³⁸ Abraham said to me, 'You have to go to my homeland and find my relations. You should be able to find a wife for Isaac there.'

³⁹ But I asked Abraham, 'What if the young girl will not come with me?'

⁴⁰⁻⁴¹ Abraham said, 'I have trusted God for a long time. I know he will send an angel to help you. He will help you find the right girl for Isaac from my father's family. But if the girl's relations will not let her go with you, you will be free from the promise you made to me and to God.'

⁴² And so, when I got to the waterhole today, I prayed to God and said, 'O God, I know my boss respects and trusts you. So please help me finish the job he sent me to do.'

⁴³ I said, 'God, I am standing next to this waterhole and I will wait for a young girl to come and get water. I will say to her, "Please can I have a drink of water from your billycan?"'

⁴⁴ And if she says to me, 'Yes, have a drink and I will get water for your camels too,' then I will know that she is the girl you have picked for Abraham's son.

⁴⁵ Even before I finished praying, Rebekah came out from your camp with her billycan. She went down and got water from the waterhole. And when she came out I asked her, 'Please can I have a drink of water from your billycan?'

⁴⁶ Straight away she put her billycan down and said, 'Yes, have a drink and I will get water for your camels too.' So I had a drink and she gave water to my camels.

⁴⁷ Then I asked her, 'Who is your father?'

She answered, 'My father is Bethuel and his parents are Milcah and Nahor.' When I heard her say the name Nahor, I knew that God had shown me the right girl and so I put the gold ring in her nose and put the gold bands on her arms.

⁴⁸ Then I bowed my head and said, 'Thank you' to the God that my master Abraham respects. You see, it was God who had led me straight to my master's relatives and to my master's niece. It was God that helped me find a wife for my master's son.

⁴⁹ And so now you have heard my story. Will you do the right thing for Abraham and be kind to him? Will you let me take Rebekah home with me? If you say no, I will make other plans."

⁵⁰ Rebekah's brother Laban and her father Bethuel answered, "We believe your story and we can see that God made all this happen. We cannot change God's plan.

⁵¹ Here is Rebekah. Take her to Abraham's country so that she can be Isaac's wife. It is what God wants."

⁵² When Abraham's worker heard this, he bowed down and said, "Thank you God."

⁵³ Then he gave Rebekah some really nice clothes, and pretty things to wear made out of silver and gold. He gave her brother Laban and her mother presents that cost a lot of money.

⁵⁴ Then Abraham's worker and his men ate their food and went to sleep.

The next morning, Abraham's worker said to everyone, "I think we should start going back to Abraham today."

⁵⁵ But Laban and Rebekah's mother said, "Can you let the young girl stay here for 10 more days, and then go?"

⁵⁶ But Abraham's worker said to them, "God has made everything good so far. Please do not stop me from going back to Abraham today."

⁵⁷ So Laban and Rebekah's mother said, "We will talk to Rebekah and ask her what she wants to do."

⁵⁸ They asked Rebekah, "Are you ready to go with this man and marry Isaac?"

Rebekah answered, "Yes I am ready. I will go."

⁵⁹⁻⁶¹ Then Rebekah's family asked God to give Rebekah good things and make her strong,

They said,

"We ask God to give you a lot of children and grandchildren.

We ask God to make your family strong so that they can beat any people who try to fight them."

And so, Laban and all Rebekah's family said goodbye to her and they were happy for her to go and marry Isaac.

There was a woman that had looked after Rebekah from the time she was a little girl. And so when Rebekah got ready to leave her family, she took the woman with her. They climbed up onto their camels, and followed Abraham's worker as he left the camp.

⁶² Back in Canaan, Isaac left his camp in a place called Beer La-hai Roy and went south to live in that dry country called The Negev.

⁶³ As Isaac was walking out in the paddocks late one day, he looked up and saw a big mob of camels coming towards him.

⁶⁴⁻⁶⁵ Rebekah looked up too and saw Isaac. She got down off her camel and asked Abraham's worker, "Who is that man walking over there?"

The worker answered, "That is Abraham's son, Isaac."

Rebekah got some cloth and covered her face. In her culture, that is what young girls did when they saw the man they were going to marry.

⁶⁶ Then Abraham's worker told Isaac everything that happened.

⁶⁷ Isaac married Rebekah and took her to live in the tent that his mother Sarah used to live in. And so, Rebekah was now Isaac's wife and he loved her. Isaac was very sad about losing his mother, but Rebekah made him happy again.

25

Abraham married Keturah

¹ Some time after Sarah died, Abraham married another woman and her name was Keturah.

² Abraham and Keturah had 6 sons together and their names were Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

³ Later on, Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan, and when Dedan grew up, he had 3 sons. From these 3 sons came the Assyrian, Letush and Leum people.

⁴ Midian had 5 sons, and they were named Efah, Effer, Hanock, Abida, and Elday-ah. All these people came from Abraham and Keturah.

⁵⁻⁶ Before he died, Abraham was very kind to the sons he had with Hagar and Keturah and gave them a lot of presents. But he sent them away to live in country to the East. He did not want them to live close to Isaac. And so, when Abraham died, Isaac got everything that belonged to his father.

Abraham died

⁷⁻⁸ Abraham was 175 years old when he died and he was buried just like his old father's before him. He had lived a long time and had a good life.

⁹⁻¹⁰ His 2 sons, Isaac and Ishmael took Abraham's body and put it in the same cave where Abraham buried his wife Sarah. It was called Mack-pelah and was near Mamre. Abraham had paid Efron for that land. Efron's father was named Zoar the Hittite.

¹¹ Isaac lived near Beer La-hai Roy after Abraham died and it was there that God was good to Isaac.

This is Ishmael's Story

¹² Many years before, Sarah had an Egyptian woman that worked for her. Her name was Hagar. When Sarah found that she could not have a baby, she gave Hagar to be like a wife for Abraham. Sarah did this so that Hagar and Abraham could have a baby together. Hagar did have a son and Abraham named him Ishmael. Later on, Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away from his camp. But God had promised Hagar that Ishmael would have a big family.

This is the family that came from Ishmael

¹³⁻¹⁵ This is a list of Ishmael's sons. Neb-you-cad-nezzaray-oth, was the oldest, then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Nafish, and Kedemah was the youngest.

¹⁶ Each of the 12 sons was the leader of his own tribe and they all lived in their own country.

¹⁷ Ishmael died when he was 137 years old.

¹⁸ The tribes that came from Ishmael lived in a big area that went from Havilah to Shur. Shur is near the Egyptian border, on the west side of Assyria. And what the angel said to Hagar years before at the waterhole, came true. Ishmael's mob did fight with each other all the time.

This is Isaac's story

¹⁹ This is the story of Abraham's son named Isaac.

²⁰ Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah. She came from Abraham's country and was the daughter of Bethuel who lived in Harran. Her brother's name was Laban and he was called *The Aramean*.

²¹ Isaac and Rebekah were married for 20 years and they still did not have any children and so Isaac prayed for her. God heard his prayer and later on Rebekah knew she was going to have a baby.

²² But she was going to have twins and they started to fight each other even before they were born. Rebekah was upset and said to herself, "Why is this happening to me?" Then she prayed to the Lord.

²³ And the Lord said to her,

"There are 2 boys inside you.

One day, they will be 2 nations.

And they will be against each other all the time.

One nation will be stronger than the other,

and the boy that is born second

will be the boss over the boy that is born first."

24-25 On the day the twins were born, the first one was all red and had hair all over his body like a coat, and so they named him Esau.

26 When the second baby was born, he was holding his brother's foot so they named him Jacob. Jacob means *Tricky One* in their language. Isaac was 60 years old when his sons were born.

27 When the boys grew up, Esau was a very good hunter. He loved being out in the bush, but Jacob was a quiet man who like to stay around his parent's camp.

28 Isaac loved to eat the bush food that Esau took home and so Esau was Isaac's favourite son, but Rebekah loved Jacob the best.

Esau gave up his place in the family

29-30 One day, Esau came home after hunting, and he was really hungry. He found Jacob cooking some stew and said, "I am really hungry, give me some of that red stew." And that is why people named him Edom. It means *Red*.

31 Jacob answered, "I will give you the stew, if you give me your place in the family. That means that I will be like the oldest son and will get more than you, when our father dies."

32 Esau said, "I am so hungry that I feel like I am going to die. I am not worried about getting my father's things after he dies."

33 But Jacob said, "First, you have to make a strong promise to me." And so Esau promised that Jacob would be the leader of the family after Isaac died. It was like Esau sold his place in the family for a bowl of stew.

³⁴ Jacob gave Esau some bread and stew with vegetables in it. Esau ate and drank and then he went away. In this way, Esau showed that he did not care about being the next leader of the family after Isaac died.

26

God made the same promise to Isaac that had he made to Abraham

¹⁻⁶ There came a time when there was not much food in the country where Isaac and Rebekah were living. But God said to Isaac, “Do not go down to Egypt. I want you to stay in this country.

This hard time will not last long and I will bless you, I will look after you and do good things for you and make you strong.

Just like I promised your father Abraham, I make this same promise to you. I will give you all this country. Yes, I will give it to you and to all the family that comes from you. And just like I promised your father, your family will be like the stars in the sky, they will be so many you will not be able to count them. Your family will have this country and I will use them to do good things for all the people in the world. Your father Abraham listened to me and did everything I told him to do. That is why I am making this promise to you now.”

Isaac moved his camp to Gerar and stayed there. This was the country where Abimelek was the king of the Philistines.

⁷ The men in Gerar saw Rebekah and saw that she was very beautiful. They asked Isaac who she was and he said, “She is my sister.” You see, Isaac was frightened that if he said, “She is my wife”, the men would kill him so that they could have her.

⁸ Isaac and Rebekah lived there for a long time. One day Abimelek, king of the Philistines looked down from his window and saw Isaac hugging and kissing Rebekah.

⁹ Abimelek sent someone to get Isaac and when he arrived, Abimelek said, “Rebekah is your wife! Why did you tell everyone that she is your sister?”

Isaac answered, “I was frightened that one of your men might kill me so that they could have her for a wife.”

¹⁰ Abimelek was angry with Isaac and said, “What were you thinking? One of my men might have taken Rebekah as his wife. That man would not know that he had done the wrong thing, but all of our people would be guilty for what happened!”

¹¹ Then Abimelek made a new law and said to his people, “Anyone that hurts Isaac or Rebekah will be killed!”

Isaac gets very rich

¹²⁻¹³ While Isaac lived in Gerar, he started to grow seed plants. The Lord was good to Isaac, and in that first year his plants grew so much seed that he became very rich.

¹⁴ Isaac had so many sheep, cattle and workmen that the Philistine people in that land were jealous of him.

¹⁵ They were so jealous, they filled in the water holes Abraham's workers had dug many years before.

¹⁶ Abimelek went to see Isaac and said, "You have to go away from here and live somewhere else. You are too strong for us and there will be trouble if you do not go.

¹⁷ So Isaac moved his camp away from Gerar. He went to a dry river bed called the *Valley of Gerar*.

Isaac dug new waterholes

¹⁸ Many years before this time, Abraham had dug waterholes in this country too, but after he died, the Philistine people filled them up with dirt. Isaac got his workers to dig all the dirt out of those waterholes and he called the waterholes the same names Abraham did.

¹⁹ Isaac's workers dug in the dry river bed and found fresh water.

²⁰ But the men that looked after animals from Gerar came along and argued with Isaac's workers. They said, "That water is ours!"

Isaac called that waterhole *Esek* which means *Argue* in their language. He called it that because the men that looked after animals from Gerar argued with his workers.

²¹ His workers dug another waterhole and the Gerar men said the same thing and so Isaac called that waterhole, *Sitnah* which means *They are against us*.

²² Isaac moved again and his workers dug another waterhole. This time no one came to fight them for the water and so Isaac called it *Rehoboth* which means *More Room*. He said, "God has given

us this place, and our families can stay here and have a good life.”

²³ Later on, Isaac moved his camp to Beersheba.

²⁴ That same night, the Lord came to Isaac and said, “Do not be frightened. I am the God that your father Abraham respected, and I will look after you. I will bless you, I will do good things for you and make you strong. Your sons will have big families. This is the same promise I made to your father. He trusted me and so that is why I am making this promise with you.”

²⁵ Isaac made an altar table made of stones, and burnt an animal on it to show the Lord respect. And it was there that Isaac called out to God and used God's name.

Isaac got his workers to dig another waterhole, so that they could camp there for a while.

²⁶ Abimelek came from Gerar to visit Isaac. He had his close helper named *Ahuzzath* and the leader of their army named Fycol.

²⁷ Isaac said to them, “Why have you come to talk to me? You forced me to leave your country. You spoke to me as if you hated me and I was your enemy!”

²⁸⁻²⁹ King Abimelek said, “When you lived with us, we were good to you. And we could see that God was helping you. God blessed you and did good things for you and made you strong. God helped you that much that you started to be too strong for us, and we were frightened of what you might do. That is why we sent you away and did not try to hurt you. We wanted to live quietly by ourselves. But we can see that God is doing more

good things for you. And so, we think that you and I should make a promise that our people will not fight each other.”

³⁰ Isaac told his workers to get a big party ready for everybody, and they all ate and drank together.

³¹ Early the next morning, Isaac and Abimelek had a special promise ceremony. They shook hands and promised that their people would not fight each other. Isaac said goodbye to Abimelek and his men and from that time there was no more trouble between them.

³² That same day, Isaac's workers came and told him about the new waterhole they dug. They said, “We have found water!”

³³ Isaac called that new waterhole, *Shibah* which means *Promise*. That is why that place is still called Beersheba, even today. Beersheba means *Promise Waterhole*.

³⁴ Isaac and Rebekah's oldest son Esau did not marry girls from his own tribe. He was 40 years old when he married Judith the daughter of a man named Berri, and he married Bas-e-math the daughter of Elon too. Both these families were from the Hittite tribe.

³⁵ And those Hittite women gave Isaac and Rebekah a lot of trouble.

27

Rebekah and Jacob trick Isaac

¹ Many years later, when Isaac was really old and he could not see very well, he called out to his oldest son. He said, “Esau, my son.”

And Esau answered, "I am here father."

² Isaac said, "I am getting really old and I do not know when I will die.

³ I want you to go hunting. Take your bow and arrows and get some bush meat for me.

⁴ I want you to cook that meat with bush leaves, just the way I like it. Bring it to me and I will eat it and then I will ask God to bless you. I will ask him to be good to you and make you strong. You will get more than anyone else when I die and you will get the promises God made to Abraham and to me. I must do this before I die."

⁵ And so, Esau left his father and went hunting. Isaac did not know that Rebekah was outside and heard what he had said to Esau. ⁶⁻⁷ Rebekah went and found Jacob and said, "I just heard your father tell Esau to go hunting to get some bush meat for him. He told him to bring it home and cook it with leaves to make it tasty. That is how your father likes his meat. Your father told Esau that after he ate the food, he would bless him and ask God to be good to him and make him strong. If your father says those words to Esau, he will get more than anyone else after your father dies. Esau will get the promises God made to Abraham and to your father. You see, your father has to say those words before he dies.

⁸ Jacob. Do what I tell you.

⁹ Go and get 2 of our best young goats and bring them here. I will cook them with leaves just the way your father likes to eat his meat.

¹⁰ When it is ready, you can take the food to him and your father will say all the things to you that

he was going to say to Esau.”

¹¹ Jacob said to his mother, “But Esau is a hairy man and I am not. My skin is smooth.

¹² What if my father touches my skin? He will know that I am tricking him and instead of asking God to do good things for me he would ask God to put a curse on me.”

¹³ Rebekah said to him, “If anything goes wrong, I will take the curse. Go and do what I tell you and get those goats for me!”

¹⁴ So, Jacob went and got the goats and took them to his mother. She cooked the meat with bush leaves, just like Isaac liked it.

¹⁵ She went into the house and found Esau's best clothes and put them on Jacob.

¹⁶ Then she took the skins from the goats and tied them onto Jacob's hands and neck.

¹⁷ She gave Jacob the tasty meat and the bread that she had made.

¹⁸ Jacob took them and went into his father's room and said, “Father.”

Isaac answered, “Yes my son, but who are you?”

¹⁹ Jacob said, “I am Esau, your oldest son. I have done what you asked me to do. Please sit up and eat this bush meat and then you can ask the Lord to bless me. When you do that, the Lord will do good things for me and make me strong.”

²⁰ Isaac asked him, “How did you find the meat so quickly?”

Jacob answered, “The Lord your God helped me find it.”

²¹ Isaac said to Jacob, "Come here so that I can touch you. Then I will know if you really are Esau or someone else."

²²⁻²³ Jacob went close to his father. Isaac touched Jacob's hands but he did not know that it was Jacob pretending to be his brother Esau. You see Jacob was wearing the goat's hair on his hands. Isaac said, "Your voice sounds like Jacob, but your hands feel like Esau's hands, they are really hairy." Isaac felt the hairy hands and started to say the special words to Jacob asking God to bless him and do good things for him.

²⁴ But to make sure, he asked, "Are you really my son Esau?"

Jacob answered, "Yes I am."

²⁵ And so Isaac said, "My son, give me some of that meat and then I will ask God to bless you and do good things for you and make you strong."

Jacob took the meat and the bread to his father and Isaac ate it. Then Jacob gave Isaac some wine and he drank it.

²⁶ Isaac said to Jacob, "Come close to me my son and kiss me."

²⁷ Jacob went to Isaac and kissed him. Isaac smelled Esau's clothes that Jacob was wearing and so he blessed him and asked God to do good things for him and make him strong. He said,

"Yes, I smell my son Esau.

That smell comes from being in the bush,
and God has made that smell good and strong.

²⁸ I want God to give you good country and good rain.

I ask God to make your country grow a lot of food and grapes to make wine.

²⁹ I ask God to make you strong so that you are boss over other nations, and they will bow down to show you respect.

My son, I ask God to make you the boss over your brothers

and that your brothers will bow down and show you respect too.

I ask God that if anyone puts a curse on you, they will get a curse from God,

but if anyone does good things for you, I ask God to do good things for them.”

Isaac finished saying these words and Jacob went outside.

Esau asks Isaac for his blessing

³⁰ Just after Jacob left Isaac's tent, Esau came home from hunting.

³¹ He cooked the meat with bush leaves and took it to his father. He said, “Hello father, I have cooked the meat the way you like it. Sit up and eat it and then you can bless me and ask God to do good things for me.”

³² Isaac said, “Who are you?”

Esau answered, “I am Esau, your oldest son.”

³³ Isaac was really frightened and nearly took a fit. He was shaking and said, “Someone just gave me bush meat and I ate it. Who was that? I have just asked God to be good to him and he will take my place after I die. What I asked God for him will come true.”

³⁴ When Esau heard what Isaac said, he was very upset and started to cry out loud. He said, “My father, can you bless me and ask God to do good things for me too?”

³⁵ Isaac answered, “Your brother was the one who gave me the meat. He tricked me and I blessed him. I asked God to be good to him. He has taken the special words I was going to say for you.”

³⁶ Esau said, “You really did call him the right name. His name means *Tricky One* and now he has tricked me 2 times. He took my place as head of the family and now he has taken my blessing. Can you bless me too father and ask God to be good to me?”

³⁷ Isaac answered, “Esau, I tell you now that I have made him boss over you. And all our relations will do what he says. I have given him all the food and wine that he needs. I have given him everything. I am sorry but I have nothing to give you.”

³⁸ Esau said, “Please father, can you bless me and ask God to be good to me. Can you just say something to make me strong too?” Then he started to cry out loud again.

³⁹ Isaac answered him and said,
“You will not live in good country.

You will live in dry country. It will not rain so that plants can grow.

⁴⁰ You will fight and steal from other people to get food all your life.

Your brother will be your boss, but one day you will make up your mind to break free from him.”

Jacob ran away from Esau

⁴¹ Esau hated Jacob for tricking their father, and he made up his mind to kill Jacob after his father died. You see Jacob stole his brother's blessing, the special words that should have been given to Esau.

⁴² Rebekah heard about Esau's plan to kill Jacob, and so she called Jacob to come to her. She said, “Listen to me. Your brother Esau is planning to kill you. He wants to pay you back for what you did. If he kills you, he thinks everything will be alright.”

⁴³⁻⁴⁴ And so you have to run away to Haran where my brother Laban lives. Go straight away! Stay with my countrymen until Esau stops being angry.

⁴⁵ Esau will forget what you did to him, and then I will send a message to you so that you can come back. If he kills you, he might be killed too and I do not want to lose both of my sons on the same day.

⁴⁶ Rebekah went to see Isaac and said, “I hate those Hittite women that Esau married. If Jacob marries a woman from this country my life will be too hard.”

28

Isaac sent Jacob to Rebekah's family

¹ Isaac called out for Jacob to come to him. And when they were together, Isaac prayed and asked God to be good to Jacob. Then Isaac said, “Jacob, you must not marry a woman from this country!

² I want you to leave Canaan straight away, and go to where your mother's father, Bethuel lives in Harran. Your uncle Laban lives there too. Go and marry one of his daughters."

³ Isaac prayed for Jacob, and said,

"God most powerful, I am asking you to bless my son Jacob and do good things for him.

Help him find a wife, and give him so many children that they become many nations.

⁴ God most powerful, you promised this country to my father Abraham, but we still live like strangers here.

I am asking you to make the same promise to Jacob that you made to my father Abraham, so that the family that comes from Jacob will have this country for themselves."

⁵ Then Isaac sent Jacob to his mother's relations who lived in Harran. That was where his grandfather Bethuel the Aramean, and his uncle Laban lived. Esau and Jacob's mother Rebekah was Laban's sister.

Jacob's brother Esau married another woman

⁶ Esau found out that Isaac had said to Jacob, "I do not want you to marry a woman from this Canaanite country!" And Esau heard that Isaac had prayed for Jacob and sent him to Harran to find a wife from their relations.

⁷⁻⁸ When Esau found out that Jacob had listened to his parents and gone to his uncle's place in Harran, he understood how much his Canaanite wives upset his father.

⁹ So Esau went to his uncle Ishmael to get another wife. Ishmael had a daughter, named Mahal-ath and a son named Neb-you-cad-nezzaray-oth. Esau married Ma-hal-ath and so now he had 3 wives.

Jacob had a dream

¹⁰ This is the story of Jacob's trip. He left his home in Beersheba and started to go to Harran.

¹¹ Just as the sun was going down, Jacob set up his camp. He found a stone and used it as a pillow and went to sleep.

¹² In the night he had a dream. He saw stairs going up from the ground all the way into heaven. And he saw God's angels going up and down the stairs.

¹³ In his dream, Jacob saw God standing near him. God said, "Jacob, I am the Lord. I am the God that your father Isaac and your grandfather Abraham worshipped and respected.

Listen, just like I promised your grandfather Abraham and your father Isaac, I will give you all this country, this ground that you are sleeping on. And it will belong to you and to all the families that will come from you.

¹⁴ No one can count the little bits of dirt on the ground and just like that, no one will be able to count the families that will come from you. Your family will spread out all over the world and be a blessing to all people.

28:12 John 1:51 **28:13** Genesis 12:7; 13:14-15; 17:8; 26:3; 48:3-4

28:14 Genesis 13:16; 28:14; 32:12; Hebrews 6:13-14; 11:12

¹⁵ Jacob, I will be with you wherever you go. I will look after you and make sure nothing bad happens to you. One day I will bring you back to this country. I will keep my promise and I will always be with you.”

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ Jacob woke up from his dream and was very frightened. He said, “This is a powerful place. I did not know it, but God must live here. This place is like a doorway into heaven.”

¹⁸ Early the next morning, Jacob picked up the stone that he had used for a pillow and stood it up in a place where people would see it. Then he poured olive oil all over the stone to show that it was a special place for God.

¹⁹ He called that place *Bethel*. Bethel means *God's house*. But before that time, it was called Luz.

²⁰⁻²¹ Jacob stood there and made a strong promise to God. He said,

“God, if you go with me and look after me while I am travelling,

if you give me food and clothes to wear,

and if you take me back to my father Isaac's camp safely,

then you, Lord, you will be my God.

And I tell you, I will not worship or respect any other gods or spirit.

You are the only God that I will respect, and I will do everything you tell me.

²² God most powerful, I have put this stone here as a sign that it is a special place.

It will be a place where people can pray and show respect to you.

I promise you, God most powerful, that when you give me anything, I will split it up into 10 parts and I will give you the first part.”

29

Jacob got to his uncle's place

¹ Jacob walked east until he got to his grandfather's country.

² When he got there, he saw 3 mobs of sheep lying down in a paddock. They were all waiting next to a waterhole that had a big flat stone on top.

³ In that culture, the shepherds and their sheep had to wait until everyone's sheep got there. Then the shepherds would take the stone off the waterhole and give water to all the sheep. When the sheep had finished drinking, the shepherds put the stone back over the waterhole to keep the water safe.

⁴ Jacob walked up to the shepherds and said, “Hello my brothers, where are you from?”

And they answered, “We are from Harran.”

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

They answered, “Yes we know him.”

⁶ Jacob asked, “How is he?”

And they answered, “He is well, but hey look, here comes his daughter Rachel with his sheep.”

28:22 Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-33; Deuteronomy 14:22

29:6 Ruth 4:11; Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:18

⁷ Jacob said, "It is still the middle of the day. It's a bit early to put them in the stockyard for the night. Why don't you give them some water now and then let them go back out into the paddock?"

⁸ The shepherds said, "No. We do not give water to any of the sheep until all the sheep are here. When they are all here, we will roll the stone away from the waterhole and give water to them."

⁹ While Jacob was still talking with the shepherds, Rachel came to the waterhole with her father's sheep. It was her job to look after them.

¹⁰ When Jacob saw Rachel with the sheep, he went to the waterhole and rolled the stone off the top. Then he gave water to her sheep. You see, the sheep belonged to Laban, and Laban was Jacob's uncle.

¹¹ Jacob kissed Rachel on the side of her face. He was so happy he cried out loud.

¹² He said to her, "I am Rebekah's son and your father is my uncle. I am your cousin." When Rachel heard what he said, she ran home to tell her father, Laban.

¹³ As soon as Laban heard what Rachel said, he ran to meet Jacob. He hugged him and kissed him, and then took him to his house. Jacob told his uncle Laban the whole story.

¹⁴ Then Laban said, "You are family for me."

Laban tricked Jacob

Jacob stayed and worked for his uncle for one month.

¹⁵ At the end of the month Laban said to Jacob, "You are my close relation. I cannot let you work for nothing. How can I pay you?"

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ Laban had 2 daughters. The oldest daughter was named Leah and she had nice eyes, but Rachel looked really beautiful.

¹⁸ Jacob loved Rachel and so he said to Laban, “I will work for you for 7 years, if you let me marry your younger daughter Rachel.”

¹⁹ Laban said, “I am really happy that you want to marry her. It is better that you marry her than for her to marry any other man. Yes, stay and work for me.”

²⁰ And so, Jacob worked for 7 years so that he could marry Rachel. Jacob loved Rachel that much, the 7 years were like 7 days for him.

²¹ When Jacob had worked for 7 years, he said to Laban. “I have worked the 7 years for you and now I want to marry Rachel.”

²²⁻²⁴ To let everyone know that Rachel and Jacob were getting married, Laban gave a special party for all his friends and family.

That night Laban tricked Jacob. Laban did not take Rachel to Jacob, he took Leah. It was so dark in the bedroom that Jacob did not know that he slept with Leah.

Some time before, Laban had given Leah a young woman named Zilpah to work for her.

²⁵ In the morning, Jacob got a big shock when he woke up and found Leah in his bed. Straight away he knew that Laban had tricked him, and he was married to Leah, not Rachel. Jacob went and growled at Laban. He said, “What have you done to me. I worked for 7 years to marry Rachel. Why did you trick me?”

²⁶ Laban answered, “In this culture, the oldest daughter must be married before the younger sisters can get married.

²⁷ I tell you what. At the end of one week I will let you marry Rachel as well. But you will have to stay and work for me for another 7 years.”

²⁸⁻³⁰ Jacob agreed to Laban's plan and a week later he married Rachel. Just like he did for Leah, Laban gave Rachel a young woman to work for her. Her name was Bilhah.

Jacob worked for Laban for another 7 years, but he loved Rachel more than he loved Leah.

Jacob's family

³¹ God saw that Jacob did not love Leah and so God was kind to her and let her have babies but he did not let Rachel have any.

³² Jacob slept with Leah and she had a son. She named him Reuben. In her language that name means *God knows about my sadness* and she said to herself, “My husband will love me now.”

³³ Leah had another son and she named him Simeon and said, “God knows that Jacob does not love me and so he has given me another son.”

³⁴ Leah had another son and she named him Levi and said, “Jacob must love me now. I have given him 3 sons!”

³⁵ Leah had another son and she named him Judah and said, “I will say good things about God.” Then Leah stopped having any more children.

30

¹ Rachel was jealous of Leah. Leah was having babies all the time, but she had none. She got

really wild with Jacob and said, “Give me children. I will die if you do not give me children.”

² Jacob was really angry with Rachel and said, “I am not God! He is the one who has stopped you from having children.”

³ Rachel said, “Here is Bilhah, my young working girl. I want you to sleep with her like she is your wife. In that way, she can have a baby for me, and then I can have a family too.”

⁴⁻⁵ So Rachel gave Bilhah, her young working girl to Jacob to be another wife for him. Jacob slept with Bilhah and she gave Jacob a son.

⁶ Rachel said, “God has heard me and given me a son” and she named him Dan.

⁷ Jacob slept with Bilhah, Rachel's working girl again, and she gave him a second son.

⁸ Rachel said, “My sister and I are jealousying each other all the time, but I am the winner.” So she named the baby Naftali.

⁹ Leah knew that she could not have any more children and so she gave her working girl named Zilpah to Jacob to be another wife for him. She did this so that she could have another baby that way.

¹⁰ So Jacob slept with Zilpah, Leah's working girl and she had a baby boy.

¹¹ Leah said, “I am lucky to have another son”, and she named him Gad.

¹² Jacob slept with Zilpah again and she gave Jacob another son.

¹³ Then Leah said, “I am really happy. Other women will see me and say, ‘Look at her, she is really happy now!’ ” Leah named the baby, Asher.

¹⁴ It was the right time of the year to get all the food seeds out of the paddocks. The men were collecting the seeds and putting them in sheds. One day, Reuben, Jacob's oldest son went out into the paddocks and found some plants called Mandrakes growing there. He picked them and took them to his mother Leah. But Rachel saw the plants and said to Leah, "Please give me some of those Mandrakes so that I can eat them and have a baby for myself." You see, people thought that Mandrakes had special powers and that if you ate them, you would have a baby.

¹⁵ Leah was angry and said, "You have already stopped me sleeping with my husband. Do you have to take my son's Mandrakes as well?"

Rachel answered and said, "I tell you what, if you give me those plants, I will let you sleep with Jacob tonight."

¹⁶ That night, as Jacob came home from working in the paddocks, Leah went out and said to him, "You have to sleep with me tonight. I paid for you. I gave Rachel the Mandrake plants that Reuben found in the paddock today. I gave them to her so that I could sleep with you tonight."

And so, Jacob slept with his first wife Leah that night.

¹⁷ God was kind to Leah and gave her baby number 5.

¹⁸ She said, "I gave Jacob my young working girl and God has paid me back by giving me a son." Leah named the baby Iss-a-car.

¹⁹⁻²⁰ Jacob slept with Leah again and she had another baby boy. She now had 6 sons and so she

said, "God has given me a good present. Must be Jacob will respect me now. I have given him 6 sons." So she named him, Zeb-you-lun.

²¹ Later on Leah had a baby girl and named her Dinah.

²² God saw how sad Rachel was, and so he answered her prayers. He made a way for her to have a baby.

²³ Jacob slept with Rachel and she had a son. Rachel said after he was born, "Now God has taken away my shame."

²⁴ She named the baby Joseph but said, "Lord, can I have another son please?"

Jacob tricked Laban

²⁵⁻²⁶ A little bit later, after Joseph was born, Jacob said to Laban, "I have worked hard for you for 14 years. I have paid for my wives and so, please let me take them and my children to live back in my own country. That is where my home is."

²⁷ But Laban said, "If I have made you happy, please stay here with me. In our culture we have a special ceremony way to find out about things. I did that special ceremony and now I know that God has used you to do good things for me. I am a rich man now.

²⁸ How much can I pay you to stay with me?"

²⁹ Jacob answered, "You know that I have worked hard for you and you have a lot more sheep and cattle now.

³⁰ When I came to live here, you only had a few animals, but now you are rich. Everything I did

for you worked out well. You see, God has used me to give you good things. But it is time for me to do something good for my own family.”

³¹ Laban asked, “What can I give you?”

Jacob answered, “I do not want you to give me anything. Just let me do one thing and I will stay and look after your animals.

³² Let me look at all your animals and take all the sheep and goats that have black spots in their wool or hair. And I will take all the young sheep that have black wool. Those animals will be my pay.

³³ This is the test for you to know if I am an honest man. When you look at all my animals, you will only find animals that have dark skin or have spots. That way you will know that I have not stolen any animals from you.”

³⁴ Straight away, Laban said, “Ok, I agree with that plan.”

³⁵ That same day, Laban tried to trick Jacob again. He took all the boy goats that had stripes or spots in their fur and all the goats that had spots or had white patches in their fur away from all the animals that had only one colour. He did the same with all the black sheep, and then told his sons to guard them.

³⁶ Laban and his sons rounded up all those animals and walked with them for 3 days until they were a long way from Jacob's camp. Jacob stayed behind and looked after the rest of Laban's animals.

³⁷ Jacob knew that his uncle was tricking him again, and so he cut some sticks from 3 different

kinds of trees. He cut some of the bark off the sticks so that they had stripes.

³⁸⁻⁴⁰ He put those sticks in the animal's water tanks. When the animals came to drink from those tanks, they mated and when the baby animals were born they had stripes and spots in their fur.

In the mating season, Jacob put the boy animals that were white in with his spotty and dark coloured animals. The animals mated, and when the babies were born they were all spotty and dark coloured. Then Jacob took all of the spotted and dark coloured animals and put them in his own paddock. He made sure that his animals stayed away from Laban's animals. This is how Jacob made his mob of animals grow bigger in number.

⁴¹⁻⁴² When Jacob saw the stronger sheep and goats start to mate, he put the special sticks in front of them, but when the weak sheep and goats started to mate he took those sticks away. In the end, Jacob's sheep and goats were stronger than Laban's.

⁴³ Jacob was very rich now. He had the biggest mob of animals, a lot of workers, as well as camels and donkeys.

31

Jacob ran away from Laban

¹ Jacob heard that Laban's sons were grumbling about him. They said, "Jacob's animals are really our father's animals. He has stolen them and that is why he is so rich!"

² And Jacob noticed that Laban was not as friendly as he was before.

³ The Lord said to Jacob, "It is time for you to go back home. Go back to the land of your father and grandfather. Remember, I will be with you and help you all the way."

⁴ So Jacob sent someone to bring Rachel and Leah out into the paddock where their animals lived.

⁵ He said to them, "I can see that your father does not like me anymore but my father's God has been with me all the time.

⁶⁻⁸ You both know that I have worked really hard for your father. And you know that he has cheated me and changed what he owes me 10 times, but God has stopped him from hurting me. Your father said, 'You can have all the spotty animals as your pay.' And that is what happened, all the mother animals had babies with spots. Then your father changed his mind and said, 'You can have all the animals that have stripes for your pay.' And again, that is what happened, all the mother animals had babies with stripes.

⁹ So you see God has taken your father's animals away from him and given them to me.

¹⁰ I had a dream one night when the animals were mating. I saw that it was only the boy goats with different coloured skins that were mating.

¹¹ While I was looking, God's angel spoke to me in that dream. He said, 'Jacob.'

And I answered, 'Yes I am listening.'

¹² The angel said, 'Look. Can you see that it is only the boy goats with different coloured skins

that are mating? And that none of the goats with only one colour are mating? I saw how badly Laban has cheated you and that is why I have made his goats stop mating.

¹³ I am the God who spoke to you at Bethel, the place where you put up the stone and poured olive oil all over it. That was where you made a promise to me. Now I want you to leave this country and go back home to the country where you were born.’ ”

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ Rachel and Leah said to Jacob, “We think you should do what God said to you. Our father did not respect us. He treated us like we were strangers and sold us to you like we were animals. You worked hard for him to pay for us, and you made a lot of money for him. But he has sold all those animals and spent the money and so now he has nothing to give us when he dies. We know that God has taken everything away from our father and given it to us and to our children.”

This is how Jacob tricked his uncle Laban

¹⁷⁻²¹ Jacob did not tell Laban that he was leaving Harran and taking his family to Canaan to live with his father Isaac. Jacob sent all his animals ahead of his family. He put his wives and children and everything they owned onto camels and they left Laban's country very quickly. They crossed the big river called You-Fray-tees and walked towards the hill country called Gilead. But before they left, Rachel waited until her father was away in his sheep paddock cutting the wool off his sheep. She went into her father's house and stole his special ceremony things.

Laban chased Jacob

²² Three days later Laban found out that Jacob and his family had gone.

²³⁻²⁵ He called some of his relations to help him to go and catch Jacob. Seven days later Laban and his relations found Jacob's camp in the hill country called Gilead, and they made their camp nearby.

That night before Laban could speak to Jacob, God spoke to Laban in a dream. He said "Laban, be very careful how you speak to Jacob. Do not speak angry words to him."

²⁶⁻²⁷ The next morning, Laban said to Jacob, "Why did you sneak away like a thief. You have taken my daughters like they are prisoners of war. Why did you trick me and not tell me that you wanted to go? If you had told me, I would have given you a party with lots of food and music, and I would have been happy to say goodbye to all of you.

²⁸ You did not even let me kiss my daughters and grandchildren to say goodbye. You have done a stupid thing!

²⁹ I have a lot of fighting men with me and I could really hurt you, but last night, the God that your father respects said to me, 'Laban, be very careful how you speak to Jacob. Do not speak angry words to him.'

³⁰ I can understand that you really want to go home, but why did you steal my special ceremony

things?”

³¹ Jacob answered, “I was frightened that you would use your fighting men to take your daughters away from me. That is why we left quickly.

³² But I have no idea who took your ceremony things. Everyone standing here are my witnesses. I tell you, I will kill the person who stole those things from your camp. You can look at all our stuff and take anything that is yours.” You see Jacob did not know that Rachel stole her father's ceremony things.

³³⁻³⁴ So Laban looked in Jacob's tent. He looked in the tent that the 2 working girls camped in, and then Leah's tent, but he did not find the ceremony things. Laban went into Rachel's tent and found her sitting on her camel's saddlebags. Laban had a good look but did not find anything. He did not know that Rachel had hidden the ceremony things inside her saddlebags.

³⁵ Rachel said to her father, “Please do not be angry with me, but I have women's troubles today and I cannot stand up to show you respect.” Laban had another look around but found nothing.

³⁶ Jacob got wild with Laban and said, “What have I done wrong to make you chase me all this way.

³⁷ You have looked into all my bags and found nothing that belongs to you. If you have found something, show it to all our families here so that they can be witnesses. They can say who is right and who is wrong.

³⁸ I worked for you for 20 years. None of your baby lambs or goats died when they were born. I never ate any of your boy sheep.

³⁹ And whenever I found one of your sheep that was killed by wild animals, I did not tell you and blame a wild animal. I put one of my animals in with yours so that your mob stayed the same size. But you forced me to pay for any animal that was stolen in the day or night.

⁴⁰ I got weak working hard in the sun all day and I was so cold at night, I could not sleep.

⁴¹ I really worked like a slave for you all those 20 years. I worked the first 14 years to pay for your daughters and the last 6 years to get my animals. And in all that time you changed what you owed me 10 times.

⁴² But I have to tell you, the God of Abraham and Isaac was with me, and he saw how hard I worked for you and he saw what you were doing. He knew that you would have sent me away with nothing and that is why he growled at you last night.”

Jacob and Laban made a promise to each other

⁴³ Laban said to Jacob, “These women are my daughters, and so their children belong to me too. Even all these animals are mine. Everything you see here belongs to me, but what can I do about my daughters and grandchildren? Nothing! I cannot take them away from you.

⁴⁴ I think we should put up a pile of stones and make a strong promise to each other, and every time we see these stones, we will remember what we said.”

⁴⁵ So Jacob found a big stone and stood it up on its end.

⁴⁶ He told all his relatives to pick up stones and put them around the standing stone. Then they sat down next to the pile of stones and ate food together.

⁴⁷ Laban and Jacob both gave that place a name in their own languages that means *A pile of stones to help us remember*.

⁴⁸ Laban said, “This pile of stones is like a witness to the promise we are making today.” That is why he called it Galeed.

⁴⁹ But its other name is Mizpah which means *watchtower*.

Laban went on to say, “I am asking God to watch us, so that we both keep our side of the promise, even when we are living in different places.

⁵⁰ Jacob, you must not give my daughters a hard time or hurt them in any way. You must not marry any more wives. Nobody might see you marry another woman, but the God you respect will see. He is a witness to this promise we are making today.

⁵¹⁻⁵² See these stones I have piled up with the witness stone, they help both of us remember our promises. And this is the promise we will make. For my side, I promise you that I will not go past these stones to hurt you in any way. And for your side, you must promise not to go past these stones to hurt me in any way.

⁵³ Our old people, Abraham, Nahor, and their father Terah worshipped and respected God. So

God will be our witness when we make those promises to each other. And we will ask him to punish us if we do the wrong thing.”

Jacob agreed with his uncle and used God's name as he made his promise.

⁵⁴ Jacob took one of his animals, killed it and burned it as a sacrifice present to God. And he asked his relations to sit down and eat the rest of the animal with him. That night they all camped together in the hill country.

⁵⁵ Early the next day, Laban kissed his daughters and his grandchildren and then asked God to bless them and do good things for them. Then Laban and his men went home.

32

Jacob got ready to meet his brother Esau

¹ Some of God's angels met Jacob and his family as they started to leave the place where Jacob and Laban made a promise to each other.

² When Jacob saw the angels he said, “This must be God's camp.” And so he called that place Mahan-ayim which means *2 camps*.

³ Jacob and all his family kept on walking south until they were almost back in Jacob's homeland. But Jacob was worried what his brother Esau would do when he heard that they were coming home. So Jacob sent some messengers to go and talk to Esau, who was living in a place called Seir in the country of Edom.

⁴ Jacob told his messengers to say, “Jacob has lived with his uncle Laban all this time but now he wants to work for you. You are his boss.

⁵ Jacob is a rich man now, he has a lot of cattle, sheep, donkeys and male and female workers. He told us to tell you this and he hopes that you are happy to see him.”

⁶ The messengers came back to Jacob and said, “We met your brother and gave him your message. He is coming, right now, to meet you with 400 men.”

⁷ Jacob was still frightened and worried what Esau was going to do and so he put all the people, animals and camels into 2 groups.

⁸ He said to himself, “If Esau attacks one group, maybe the other group will get away and not get hurt.”

⁹ Jacob cried out to God and said, “You are the God of my grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac. You told me to leave Laban's country and come back home. You said that you would look after me.

¹⁰ I know that I am nothing and I have not done anything good, but you have been very kind and good to me all the time. A long time ago, when I was running away from Esau, I left my country and crossed the Jordan River with just my walking stick. But now I have come back with a lot of people that are in 2 camps.

¹¹ Please save us from my brother Esau. I am frightened that he will come and kill us all, even all the women and children.

¹² You said that you would be good to me and give me a big family. You said that there would be

so many people in my family nobody could count them, just like nobody can count all the bits of dirt on the ground.”

¹³ Jacob made his camp for the night there and got a present ready for Esau.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ He picked 200 girl goats and 20 boys goats, 200 girl sheep and 20 boy sheep, 30 girl camels and their babies, 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 girl donkeys and 10 boy donkeys.

¹⁶ Jacob put each mob of animals into groups by themselves and had different workmen look after each group of animals. He told his workmen, “I want you to walk ahead of us and do not let any group of animals get too close to any other group. Do not let them get mixed up.”

¹⁷ Then Jacob said to the workmen leading the first group of animals, “You will meet my brother Esau first, and he will say to you, ‘Who is your boss? Who owns these animals and where are you going?’

¹⁸ You have to say, ‘We work for Jacob. He told us that you are his boss, and that he wants to give you these animals as a present. Jacob is coming behind us.’ ”

¹⁹ Jacob told the workmen that were looking after all the other groups of animals to say the same thing.

²⁰ And he said, “Make sure you say, ‘Your workman Jacob is coming behind us.’ ”

You see, Jacob thought, “If I send these presents to Esau, might be, he will not pay me back for

when I tricked him, and maybe he will be pleased to see me again.”

²¹ Jacob sent all the animals as a present for Esau, but he stayed in his camp that night.

Jacob had a wrestle with God

²²⁻²³ In the night time, Jacob got up from his bed and took Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, Zilpah and his 11 sons to the other side of the Jabbok River. Then he went back to the old camp and told his workmen to take everything they owned over to the other side of the river too.

²⁴ When Jacob was alone in the old camp, a man came to him. Jacob and the man had a wrestle all night until the sun came up.

²⁵ The man could not beat Jacob, so he hit Jacob on the hip so that he could not walk properly anymore.

²⁶ The man said, “Let go of me. The sun is coming up!”

But Jacob said, “No way! I will only let you go if you bless me and do something good for me and make me strong.”

²⁷ The man said, “What is your name?”

And Jacob answered, “My name is Jacob.”

²⁸ The man said, “I am going to change your name to Israel. You see, you have had trouble from people and you have wrestled with God, but you are the winner. That is why I have changed your name to Israel.”

²⁹ Then Jacob asked, “What is your name?”

But the man said, “Why do you ask me what my name is? You should know who I am.”

The Lord blessed Jacob to make him strong and then went away. He left Jacob alone.

³⁰ Jacob said to himself, “I have seen God's face and I did not die.” So he called that place Peniel which means *Face of God*.

³¹⁻³² The sun came up and Jacob's hip was very sore and so he limped from Peniel across the Jabbok River to the rest of his people.

Even today the people of Israel do not eat the strings that hold an animal's leg to its hip. You see the man hit Jacob there and that is why they do not eat those strings.

33

Jacob and his family meet Esau

¹ When Jacob was leaving that place, he looked up and saw Esau coming towards him with his 400 men. So Jacob quickly split up his wives with their children into 3 groups.

² He put Bilhah and Zilpah and their children in the first group, then Leah and her children in the next group and then Rachel and Joseph behind them.

³ Jacob went out the front and walked towards his brother. On the way, he stopped and bowed down to the ground 7 times to show respect for his brother.

⁴ But Esau ran towards Jacob and put his arms around him and kissed him. Both Esau and Jacob were so happy they cried together.

⁵ Esau looked at the women and children standing there and said, "Who are all these people with you?"

Jacob said, "God has been very good to me! He gave me these wives and children."

⁶ Then Bilhah and Zilpah, the 2 women that worked for Leah and Rachel took all their children to Esau and they all bowed down to him.

⁷ Next, Leah came with her children and they did the same thing. Last of all, Rachel and Joseph bowed down to the ground in front of Esau.

⁸ Then Esau said, "On the way here, I came across workmen with big groups of animals. What was that all about?"

Jacob said, "I wanted to give you a present so that you would be happy to see me."

⁹ But Esau said, "I already have a lot of animals. You keep them."

¹⁰ Jacob said, "No, if you are happy to see me, please take them. I am really happy to see your face with a smile on it. It is like seeing God himself.

¹¹ Please take my present, you see, God has been so good to me and I have more than I need." Jacob kept on talking like that and so Esau was happy to take the animals.

¹² Esau said, "Let's get going. I will lead you to my country."

¹³ But Jacob answered, "My brother, you can see that some of my children are a little bit weak and my animals have little ones too. You and your men

can move fast, but we can't. If we try to keep up with you, even for one day, all the animals would die.

¹⁴ So, you go ahead of us and we will follow you slowly. We will walk as fast as the animals and children can go. We will see you in Seir."

¹⁵ Esau answered, "Ok, but I think I will leave some of my men to show you the way."

Jacob answered and said, "Thank you my brother, but you do not need to do that. I am just happy that you are friendly towards me."

¹⁶ And so, Esau and his men left Jacob and started to go back to their home in Seir.

¹⁷ But Jacob did not follow Esau down to Seir. He went to Su-coat and built a house to live in and made shelters for his animals as well. In their language Su-coat means *shelters*.

¹⁸ And so, that is how Jacob and all his family left his uncle's country in Harran and travelled safely to a place called Su-coat. Then they moved to just outside the town of Shekem in Canaan. And it was there that he made his camp.

¹⁹ The leader for that country was named Hamor and one of his sons was named Shekem. Jacob paid Hamor's sons 100 pieces of silver for the land he was camping on.

²⁰ Jacob made an altar out of stones with a flat top and called it, *This altar belongs to God, the God of Israel*.

34

Shekem raped Dinah, Jacob and Leah's daughter

¹ Some time later, Jacob and Leah's daughter Dinah went to visit some of the women that lived in that country.

² On the way there, Sheckem saw her. Sheckem was the son of Hamor who was the Hivite leader for that country. When Sheckem saw Dinah, he grabbed her and raped her.

³ But then, Sheckem fell in love with Dinah and said sweet words to her. He wanted her to love him.

⁴ Sheckem went home and said to his father Hamor, "Can you ask Jacob if I can marry Dinah?"

⁵ Dinah went home and told her father what Sheckem did to her. Jacob listened, but he did not say anything until his sons came home from working with their animals.

⁶ While he was waiting for his sons to come home, Hamor and Sheckem came to talk to Jacob.

⁷ They were still talking when Jacob's sons came home from their work. When her brothers heard what Sheckem did to Dinah they were very angry. Sheckem had done the wrong thing and shamed all of Israel's family.

⁸ Hamor said to Jacob and his sons, "My son Sheckem really loves Dinah. Will you let him marry her?"

⁹ And I have an idea. Why don't your daughters and sons marry our sons and daughters?

¹⁰ Why don't you come and live here with us? You can own your own land and buy and sell things just like we do."

¹¹⁻¹² Sheckem said to Jacob, "Please be kind to me. I will give you anything you ask for. Ask for

as much money or animals as you like, just let me marry your daughter.”

Jacob's sons trick Shekem and his family

¹³ Jacob's sons were thinking about the bad thing that happened to their sister Dinah. So they made up their minds to trick Shekem and his father Hamor.

¹⁴ Jacob's sons said, “We cannot let you marry our sister. You have not had that young men's ceremony. If we let you marry Dinah, we would all be shamed.

¹⁵ There is only one way we will let you marry Dinah, all your men must have that young men's ceremony. Then we will all be the same.

¹⁶ Then you can marry our women and our men can marry your women and it will be like we are one nation.

¹⁷ But if you will not have that young men's ceremony, we will take Jacob's daughter Dinah and leave this country.”

¹⁸ Hamor and Shekem both thought it was a good idea to have that young men's ceremony.

¹⁹⁻²⁰ Shekem loved Dinah that much, he wanted to have that operation straight away. Shekem was the most important person in Hamor's family and so he and his father went to the town gate and had a meeting with all the leaders.

²¹ They said to the leaders, “These people that have come to live here are very friendly. We think

we should let them live with us. We have plenty of room and our sons can marry their daughters and their sons can marry our daughters.

²² But they will only stay here if all our men have their young men's ceremony. If we do that we can be one big mob together.

²³ You see, if we agree to do that, they will stay here. All their animals and everything they own will be ours too. Come on, let's do what they ask."

²⁴ All the men in the town agreed with Hamor and Sheckem and had the young men's ceremony.

²⁵ Simeon and Levi, 2 of Jacob's sons and full brothers for Dinah, waited until the 3rd day after all the men had the operation and the men were still in a lot of pain. Then Simeon and Levi picked up their long knives, and they moved quickly into the town and killed all the men.

²⁶ They killed Hamor and Sheckem and then took Dinah from Sheckem's house and went home.

²⁷⁻²⁹ Then all of Jacob's sons joined Simeon and Levi and together they took everything they could find from the town where their sister was raped. They took all the women and children as prisoners. And they even took all the animals that were in the paddocks.

³⁰ When they went home, Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have made a lot of trouble for me. All the Canaanite people that live in this country will hate me. What were you thinking? We are only a small family. If the Canaanites and Perizzites gang up and fight us, we will be finished. All my family will die."

³¹ But his sons said, “Shechem should not have treated our sister like a woman that sleeps with men for money.”

35

God sent Jacob and his family to live in Bethel

¹ Then God said to Jacob, “Go back and live in Bethel. And pile up some stones to make an altar there so that you can burn animals to show me respect.

Bethel is the place where I met you and showed you that stairway going up to heaven when you were running away from your brother Esau.”

²⁻³ So Jacob said to everyone in his camp, “We are going to live in a place called Bethel. God met me there and helped me when I was really frightened. And from that time, he has always been with me and looked after me.

So now there are two things that you have to do before we go to Bethel. The first thing is that you have to throw away any ceremony or magic things you took from your homeland. And if you picked up any magic thing here in Shekem you have to throw that away too.

The second thing is, go and wash yourselves and then put on clean clothes. When we get to Bethel, I will pile up stones to make an altar and burn an animal to show respect to God.”

⁴ So all the people in Jacob's camp gave him all their earrings and ceremony things they had,

35:2-3 Genesis 31:19,34; Exodus 20:3-4; Deuteronomy 5:7; 6:14; 7:25; 11:28; 32:16; Joshua 23:7; 1 Samuel 7:3

and Jacob buried them under the big tree near Shekem.

⁵ When they left Shekem to go to Bethel, God made the people that lived around Shekem really frightened of Jacob and his family. The people in those towns did not try to chase them or try to pay them back for what Jacob's sons did in Shekem.

⁶ Jacob and all the people with him got to a place called Luz. The other name for Luz is Bethel and it is in the country of Canaan.

⁷ Jacob made his camp there and built a stone table called an altar so that he could burn an animal to show respect for God.

Jacob changed the name of that place to El-Bethel, which means *The God of God's house*. Years before, God had met with him there when he was running away from his brother Esau. At that time he called the meeting place Bethel, but now it was called El-Bethel.

⁸ Many years before this time, when Jacob's mother Rebekah was a young girl, she had a woman named Deborah who looked after her. When Rebekah left her homeland and married Isaac, Deborah went with her to live in Canaan. But when Deborah was very old, she died. And someone buried her under the big tree just south of Bethel and from that time, that place was called *You can cry under this tree*.

⁹⁻¹¹ So Jacob and all his people had come back from his mother's homeland called Harran. And while they were camped at Bethel, God met Jacob again and blessed him and said to him, "I am God

most powerful. Your name is Jacob, but I am changing your name to Israel.

I want you to have a lot of children so that your family becomes a lot of nations. And I tell you that some of the men in your family will be kings. Those kings will be the leaders of those nations.

¹² I promised this country to your grandfather Abraham and to your father Isaac, and now I am making the same promise to you. This country is now your country and it will be for all the family that comes from you.”

¹³ Then God left Jacob standing all by himself.

¹⁴ When God left him, Jacob put a big stone up on its end so that people could see it. And he poured wine and olive oil all over it so that everyone would know it was a special place.

¹⁵ He called that place Bethel, God's House, because that was where God talked to him.

Rachel died

¹⁶ Some time later, Jacob and all his people left Bethel and went to a place called Bethlehem. Before they got there, it was time for Rachel's second baby to be born.

¹⁷ But Rachel was having a lot of trouble, so the nurse helping her said, “Do not be frightened Rachel. You have another son.”

¹⁸ Rachel was dying as the baby was born, and just before she died Rachel named the baby, Ben-Oni which means *This boy has given me a lot of trouble*. But Jacob named him, Benjamin which

means *This is my son. He will be with me and will make me feel happy.*

¹⁹ Jacob buried Rachel next to the road that went to Bethlehem.

²⁰ Jacob put a tall stone over Rachel's grave, and it is still there today.

Reuben did the wrong thing with Bilhah

²¹ Israel, who was named Jacob before, left there and went past a place called Migdal Eder, and made his camp on the other side.

²² While they were camped in that country, Jacob's eldest son Reuben slept with Bilhah like she was his wife. Bilhah was one of Jacob's 4 wives, and when Jacob heard what Reuben did, he was very upset.

Israel's family

Jacob had 12 sons.

²³ Leah had 6 sons with Jacob and their names were Reuben who was Jacob's oldest son, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Iss-a-car and Zeb-you-lun.

²⁴ Rachel had 2 sons with Jacob and their names were Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁵ Rachel's worker named Bilhah had 2 sons with Jacob and their names were Dan and Naftali.

²⁶ Leah's worker named Zilpah had 2 sons with Jacob and their names were Gad and Asher.

So, this is the full list of Jacob's sons born in Haran.

Isaac died and his sons Jacob and Esau buried him

²⁷ Jacob moved back to live in Mamre. This was where Abraham and his father Isaac had camped

before. Mamre was near a place called Kiriath Arba and that is now called Hebron.

²⁸⁻²⁹ Isaac was 180 years old when he died. He lived a long time and a lot of good things happened to him. Isaac's 2 sons, Esau and Jacob buried him in the family cemetery.

36

Esau's family line

¹ This is the story of Esau's family. Esau's other name was Edom.

²⁻⁵ Esau married 3 women who came from the country called Canaan. Their names were Adah, Ohol-i-bar-mah and Bas-e-math, whose other name was Ma-ha-lath.

Adah was the daughter of a Hittite man called Elon, and she gave Esau a son named Eli-faz.

Ohol-i-bar-mah was the daughter of a man named Anah. Her grandfather's name was Zibeon who was a Hivite man.

Ohol-i-bar-mah gave Esau 3 sons, Jeush, Jalam and Korah.

Bas-e-math's father was Ishmael, Isaac's brother. Bas-e-math had a brother who was named Neb-you-cad-nezzaray-oth.

Bas-e-math gave Esau a son named Rew-el.

All these children were born while Esau and his wives lived in Canaan.

⁶⁻⁸ Jacob and Esau had too many animals for that country to feed, so Esau moved away from there and lived in a country called Seir. Seir was a long way from Canaan.

Esau took his wives, his children, all his workers, all his animals and everything else that he got while he lived in Canaan.

More story about Esau

⁹ This is the story of Esau's sons and their families that lived in the hill country called Seir. Esau was the father of all the people called Edomites.

¹⁰ This is the list of Esau's sons.

Eli-faz. His mother was Adah

Rew-el. His mother was Bas-e-math

¹¹ Adah and Esau's son Eli-faz had 5 sons. Their names were Teman, Omar, Zefo, Gatam and Kenaz.

¹² Eli-faz and his second wife named Timna had a son and his name was Amalek.

So Elifaz's mother, Adah, was grandmother for all of Eli-faz's 6 boys.

¹³ Bas-e-math and Esau's son, Rew-el had 4 sons. Their names were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. And so Bas-e-math was grandmother for these 4 boys.

¹⁴ Ohol-i-bar-mah, whose father was Anah and whose grandfather was Zibeon had 3 sons with Esau. The son's names were Jeush, Jalam and Korah.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ This is the list of the leaders of the tribes that came from Esau. They all lived in Edom.

Esau's first born son was named Eli-faz. Eli-faz's sons were named Teman, Omar, Zefo, Kenaz, Korah, Gatam and Amalek.

They were leaders of new tribes in the country of Edom. And Esau's wife Adah was their grandmother.

¹⁷ This next list of men were the sons of Esau's son named Rew-el and they were leaders of new tribes in Edom.

Their names were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

Esau's wife Bas-e-math was their grandmother.

¹⁸ This next list of men were Esau and Ohol-i-bar-mah's sons. Their names were Jeush, Jalam and Korah. They were all leaders of new tribes.

¹⁹ And so Esau, whose other name was Edom, was the father of all these men and each of them were leaders for their own tribes.

²⁰⁻²¹ Esau and his family moved to a country called Seir, but there were other people already living there. Seir was called after a man with that name. He was from the Horite tribe.

This is a list of Seir's sons. Their names were Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These men were leaders of their tribes.

²² Lotan had 2 sons. They were named Hori and Homam. Lotan had a sister named Timna.

²³ Shobal had 5 sons and they were named Alvan, Mana-hath, Ebal, Sheffo and Onam.

²⁴ Zibeon had 2 sons, and they were named Ayah and Anah. Anah was the man who found springs of hot water in the dry country while he was looking after his father's donkeys.

²⁵ Anah had 2 children. The boy was named Dishon and the daughter was named Ohol-i-bar-mah.

²⁶ Dishon had 4 sons and they were named Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Keran.

²⁷ Ezer had 3 sons and they were named Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan.

²⁸ Dishan had 2 sons, and they were named Uz and Aran.

²⁹⁻³⁰ This is a list of the leaders of the Horite clans that lived in the country called Seir.

Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. The clans were called the same name as their leaders.

The Kings of Edom

³¹ This is a list of the kings of Edom before the Israel people had a king.

³² The king of Edom was named Bela, and his father was named Beor. Bela's town was called Din-ha-bah.

³³ When Bela died, Jobab was king. Jobab's father was named Zerah and he came from a place called Bozrah.

³⁴ When Jobab died, Husham was king. He came from a country where the people were called Temanites.

³⁵ When Husham died, Hadad was king, and his town was called Avith. Hadad's father was named Bedad, and Hadad's army beat the Midianite army in the country called Moab.

³⁶ When Hadad died, Samlah was king. He came from a place called Mas-re-kah.

³⁷ When Samlah died, Shaul was king. He came from a place called Reho-both. It was next to the You-Fray-tees River.

³⁸ When Shaul died, Baal-Hanan was king. His father was named Acbor.

³⁹ When Baal-Hanan, the son of Acbor, died, Hadad was king. His town was called Pau and his wife's name was Mehet-abel. She was the

daughter of Matred, who was the daughter of Me-Zahab.

⁴⁰ This is the list of the tribes that came from Esau. It is a list of the leaders and where they lived.

Timna, Alvah, Jethah,

⁴¹ Ohol-i-ba-mah, Elah, Pinon,

⁴² Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar,

⁴³ Magdiel and Iram.

These were the tribal leaders in the country called Edom.

Later on, Esau was named the father of the Edomite people.

37

Joseph's story

¹ Jacob lived in Canaan where his father Isaac had lived.

²⁻⁴ This story is about Jacob's family. Jacob's other name was Israel.

Joseph was born when Jacob was an old man and that is why Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons.

Jacob made Joseph a really special coat that had a lot of colours.

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than he loved them, they hated Joseph, and never said anything good to him.

When Joseph was 17 years old, he was out in the paddocks looking after his father's sheep with his brothers. These brothers were the sons from 2 of Jacob's wives, named Bilhah and Zilpah.

Joseph went home and told Jacob that he did not like what his brothers were doing.

Joseph had a dream

⁵⁻⁷ One day, Joseph had a dream and he told his brothers about it. He said, “I had a dream last night. All of us were out in the paddock tying up bundles of long grass, called wheat. My bundle stood up in the middle and all your wheat stood in a circle around my wheat. Then your wheat bowed down to my wheat.”

⁸ Joseph's brothers said to him, “You think you will be our boss and tell us what to do.” And they hated him even more after he told them about the dream he had.

⁹ Joseph had another dream, and again he told his brothers about it. He said, “Listen, I had another dream. This time, the sun and the moon and 11 stars bowed down to the ground in front of me.”

¹⁰ When Joseph told his father what he saw in his dream, his father growled at him and said, “You should not tell people that sort of dream. Do you really think that your mother, your brothers and I will bow down in front of you?”

¹¹ Joseph's brothers were jealous and upset with him, but his father kept thinking about Joseph's dream all the time.

Joseph was sold by his brothers and taken to Egypt

¹²⁻¹⁴ While Jacob and all his family were living in the Valley of Hebron, Joseph's brothers were looking after Jacob's sheep near Shekem. Jacob said to his son Joseph, “Your brothers are in Shekem

looking after my sheep. I want you to go and see if they are alright, then come back and tell me.”

Joseph said, “Yes I will go.”

But when he got to Shekem, he could not find his brothers or the sheep anywhere.

¹⁵ A man saw Joseph wandering around and said, “What are you looking for?”

¹⁶ Joseph answered, “I am looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are?”

¹⁷ The man said, “They were here, but I heard them say that they were going to a place called Dothan.” So Joseph left Shekem and went and found his brothers and the sheep in Dothan.

¹⁸ Joseph's brothers saw him coming and they started to make plans to kill him.

¹⁹ They said, “Here comes the boy that has lots of dreams.

²⁰ Come on, let's kill him and throw his body into one of the deep wells in the ground. We can tell everyone that a wild animal ate him. That way, his dreams will never come true, and he will never be our boss.”

²¹⁻²² But Reuben heard their plans and said, “No. Don't kill him, don't even hurt him. Just put him in one of those dry wells here in the dry country.” You see, Reuben planned to save Joseph later on and give him back to his father.

²³ When Joseph came to his brother's camp, they grabbed him, took off his special coat,

²⁴ and threw him into one of the deep wells in the ground. These wells used to have water in them, but now they were empty and dry.

²⁵ When Joseph's brothers sat down to eat, they saw a long line of camels coming towards them. Ishmaelite people were taking these camels from a place called Gilead to Egypt, a country to the south west. These camels carried big boxes of sweet smelling leaves, oils and medicine called Myrrh. The Ishmaelites were going to sell all these things in Egypt.

²⁶ While Reuben was somewhere else, Judah, another one of Joseph's brothers said, "I don't think it's a good idea to kill Joseph and then try to cover up his death.

²⁷ He is our brother, and our own flesh and blood. If we sell him to these Ishmaelites, we can get rid of him that way." And his brothers thought it was a good idea.

²⁸ When the Ishmaelites, whose other name is Midianites, came to the brother's camp, Joseph's brothers pulled him up out of the hole in the ground. The brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites for 20 pieces of silver. And so, Joseph went to Egypt as a prisoner.

²⁹ When Reuben came back to the well, he found that Joseph was not there anymore. He was so upset he ripped his clothes.

³⁰ He went to his brothers and said, "The boy has gone. What am I going to do now? What will we say to our father?"

³¹ The brothers talked about the problem and decided to trick their father. They killed a goat and put some of the blood on Joseph's special coat.

³² Then they went back to their father Jacob and said, “We found this coat. Is it the coat you gave Joseph?”

³³ Jacob looked at the coat and said, “Yes, it is my son's coat. A wild animal has killed him, torn him apart and eaten him.”

³⁴ Jacob was so sad that he ripped his good clothes and put on rough clothes made from animal hair. Jacob cried for his son for many days.

³⁵ All Jacob's family tried to make him feel better but he was too sad. He couldn't listen to them and he said, “I will never be happy again. I will be sad for my son until the day I die.” That is how Jacob cried for his son Joseph.

³⁶ When the Midianites got to Egypt, they sold Joseph to a man named Potifar. Potifar was one of the king's special leaders. He was the captain of the guards that kept the king safe in the government building. The people in Egypt called their king, Pharaoh, and he was the boss for the whole country.

38

The story of Judah and Tamar

¹ A little bit later, Jacob's son Judah left the family camp and went to stay with a man named Hirah in a place called Adullam.

² While he was living there, he met a Canaanite woman who was the daughter of a man named Shua. They got married and slept together as husband and wife.

³ Later on Judah's wife had a baby boy and they named him Er.

⁴ Judah and his wife slept together again and she had another baby boy, and she named him Onan.

⁵ Judah's wife then had another baby boy. He was born at a place called Kezib and his name was Shelah.

⁶ Er was Judah's oldest son. Years later, when he was grown up, Judah got a wife for him. Her name was Tamar.

⁷ But Er, Judah's firstborn son, was always going against God and doing bad things and so God killed him.

⁸ Judah said to Onan, his second son, "Your brother Er has died and so by our culture, you have to marry his wife Tamar. Go and sleep with her so that she can have a baby to keep your older brother's family line going."

⁹ But Onan knew that if he slept with Tamar and she had a baby, that baby would belong to the brother that died and it would not belong to him. So every time he and Tamar slept together, he would stop half way. He did this so that his brother would not have children.

¹⁰ God was really angry with Onan for not doing the right thing for the brother that had died and so God killed Onan too.

¹¹ Judah said to his daughter in law Tamar, "I want you to go back and live in your father's house but do not marry anyone else. Wait until my third son Shelah grows up and then you can marry him". So Tamar went back to her father's place. You see Judah was frightened that his son Shelah would die just like his 2 older brothers.

¹² Years later, Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua died. And Judah cried for her. When the sorry time was finished, he left his camp and went to a place called Timnah. That was where Judah's men were cutting the wool off his sheep. His friend Hirah from Adullam, went with him.

¹³ Judah's daughter in law, Tamar, heard that Judah was going to Timnah to cut the wool off his sheep and she knew what she had to do.

¹⁴ In that culture, widows wore special sorry clothes. And so to make her plan work, Tamar stopped wearing her widow's clothes. She put on other clothes and covered her face with a cloth, so that no one would know who she was. Then she went and sat down next to the gates of a town called Enay-im which was on the way to Timnah.

Tamar remembered Judah's promise to her. She had worked out that Judah's youngest son, Shelah, would be the right age to marry her now. You see, Tamar's 2 husbands had died, and now it was time for Shelah to be her husband.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ When Judah saw the woman sitting next to the town gates he did not know that the woman was his daughter in law. He thought she was a woman that went to bed with men for money.

Judah said to her, "Come and sleep with me."

Tamar answered, "And what will you give me if I sleep with you?"

¹⁷ Judah said, "I will send you a young goat."

But Tamar said, "Can you give me something of yours to keep until you send the goat. When I get the goat I will give that special thing back to you."

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ Judah said, "What sort of thing should I give you?"

Tamar said, "Give me your necklace with your name on it, and your walking stick."

Judah gave her his necklace and walking stick and they went to bed together.

When Tamar went home, she took the cloth off her face and put on her widow's clothes again.

Some time later, Tamar knew she was going to have a baby.

²⁰ Judah kept his promise and sent his friend Hirah back to the woman Judah had slept with. Hirah took a goat so that he could swap it for Judah's necklace and walking stick. But when he got to the right place, he could not find the woman anywhere.

²¹ Hirah said to the men that lived there, "I am looking for the ceremony woman that sleeps with men for money. She was sitting near the gate to Enay-im. Do you know where she is?"

The men answered, "You have made a mistake. There has never been a ceremony woman like that here."

²² Hirah went back to Judah and said, "I didn't find the woman, and the men that lived there said, 'There has never been a ceremony woman here.'"

²³ Judah said, "I kept my promise. I sent the young goat back to her, and you tried to find her, so do not worry about it. Let her keep those things. If people find out what happened they will laugh at us."

²⁴ Three months later someone said to Judah, "Tamar your daughter in law has been sleeping

with men for money, and she is going to have a baby.”

So Judah said, “Bring her here so that we can burn her alive.”

²⁵ The people started to take Tamar to Judah, but she sent a message to him. She said, “The man who owns these things is the father of my baby. Tell me who owns this necklace that has a name written on it and who owns this walking stick.”

²⁶ Straight away, Judah saw that the necklace and walking stick were his and so he said, “I didn't let Tamar marry my son Shelah. That is why she did this. She is right and I am wrong.”

Judah never went to bed with Tamar again.

²⁷ When the time came for the baby to be born, Tamar found that she was going to have twins.

²⁸ One of the babies put out his hand and the nurse tied a red string around it and said, “This one was born first.”

²⁹ But the baby pulled its hand back and the other baby was born first. The nurse said, “OK, you were in a big hurry to be born first.” So they named him Perez.

³⁰ Then the baby with the red string on his hand was born and they named him Zerah.

39

Joseph's life in Egypt

¹ When the Ishmaelites got to Egypt, they sold Joseph to a man named Potifar. Potifar was an important man in Egypt. He was boss over all the soldiers that guarded the government building. That was where the king worked.

² God was very good to Joseph and helped him to do everything the right way. Joseph was so good at what he did, he was allowed to live in Potifar's house.

³ Potifar saw that God helped Joseph do everything just right.

⁴ And so Potifar was happy with Joseph and made him the boss over all the people in his house and over everything he owned.

⁵ God blessed Potifar's house even more after Potifar made Joseph the boss of everything that he had. God made all Potifar's animals grow fat and his paddocks grow a lot of food. Joseph was God's man and that is why all these good things happened for Potifar.

⁶ And so Potifar had no worries, he only had to worry about the food he ate.

Potifar's wife tried to get Joseph to do the wrong thing

⁷ Potifar's wife looked at Joseph and saw that he was strong and good looking, and she wanted him. One day she said to him, "Come to bed with me."

⁸ Joseph said, "No way. I cannot do that. Your husband trusts me to look after everything he owns.

⁹ I am the boss of this house, and your husband has not kept anything from me, just you. You are his wife and you belong to him, and so there is no way that I will do this really bad thing that you want me to do. If I did that bad thing, I would be going against God."

¹⁰ Day after day, she tried to get him to sleep with her, but every day he said, “No.” He would not listen to her or stay near her.

¹¹⁻¹² But one day, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, Potifar's wife saw her chance to get him. She knew that there weren't any other men in the house and so she grabbed Joseph's coat and said, “Come to bed with me!”

But Joseph got out of his coat and ran outside.

¹³⁻¹⁵ When Potifar's wife saw that she still had Joseph's coat in her hand, she got wild and shouted out to the workers, “Look at this. This coat belongs to that Hebrew stranger. My husband has let him come into my house and he has shamed me. He came and tried to sleep with me like I was his wife, but I screamed and he ran away without his coat.”

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ She kept Joseph's coat and when her husband came home she told him the same story. She said, “That Hebrew stranger you let come into our house tried to shame me. He tried to sleep with me like we were married.

¹⁸ But I screamed and he ran away without his coat.”

¹⁹ Potifar listened to his wife's story and got really angry.

²⁰ He arrested Joseph and put him in jail where the king's prisoners were kept.

²¹ But again, God was with Joseph and was kind to him. God made the boss of the jail respect Joseph.

²² The jail boss picked Joseph to be the next boss under him. Joseph had to look after everything that happened in the jail. And he was the boss over all the other prisoners too.

²³ And so the guard did not have to worry about anything that happened in the jail. The Lord was with Joseph and helped him do everything just right.

40

Joseph helped 2 prisoners understand their dreams

¹⁻³ Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had 2 special workers. One man was the baker who made the king's bread and the other man gave the king his wine in a special cup. But one day the king got really angry with both of them, and put them in the same jail that Joseph was in.

⁴ The jail boss gave them to Joseph and he looked after them. And they stayed in jail for a long time.

⁵ One night both the baker and the man who gave the king his wine, had dreams. Their dreams were different and had different meanings.

⁶ In the morning Joseph saw that they were upset.

⁷ So he said to them, "Why do you look so unhappy today?"

⁸ The men answered, "We both had dreams last night, but no one can tell us what they mean."

Joseph said, "God is the only one who can tell people all about dreams. Tell me what you saw, and God will tell me what they mean."

⁹⁻¹⁰ The man who gave the king his wine told Joseph his dream first. He said, "In my dream I saw a grape vine and it had 3 branches. I watched the branches grow flowers and then grapes grew from those flowers. They looked ready to eat.

¹¹ And I saw that I was holding the king's cup, so I grabbed the grapes and squeezed them so that the juice ran into the cup. Then I gave the cup to the king."

¹² Joseph said to him, "This is what your dream means. The 3 branches are a picture for 3 days.

¹³ And so, in 3 days time, the king will make you free from this jail and he will let you go back to your work. You will give the king his wine just like you did before."

¹⁴ Then Joseph said, "Will you do something for me? When you are free, can you be kind to me and remember to tell the king my story? I just want to get out of this jail.

¹⁵ You see, I was stolen from my Hebrew homeland, I was sold as a slave and then later on, I was put in jail. I have done nothing wrong."

¹⁶ The king's baker listened to what Joseph said and he was happy with what he heard. So he said to Joseph, "I had a dream too. I saw that I had 3 baskets of bread on top of my head.

¹⁷ In the top basket there were all sorts of bread that the king likes to eat, but birds came and started to eat that bread."

¹⁸ Joseph said to him, "The 3 baskets are a picture for 3 days,

¹⁹ and so, in 3 days time, the king will cut off your head and hang your body on a tree. The birds will

come and eat your body.”

²⁰ Three days later, it was the king's birthday and so he gave a big party for all the leaders that worked for him. He sent someone to the jail to get the baker and the man that gave him his wine.

²¹ The man who gave the king his wine got his job back,

²² but the baker was killed and his body was hung up on a tree. Everything Joseph said about the dreams, came true.

²³ But the man who gave the king his wine did not remember his promise to Joseph. He forgot all about him.

41

Pharaoh, the King of Egypt had a dream

¹ It was 2 years later that Pharaoh, the king of Egypt had a dream. In his dream he saw himself standing next to the Nile River.

² He saw 7 cows come up out of the river. They were fat and looked really good, and they started to eat the river grass next to the water.

³ Then Pharaoh saw 7 more cows come out of the river. These cows were ugly and skinny. They stood next to the other fat cows on the side of the river.

⁴ Then the 7 skinny, ugly cows ate up the 7 good looking fat cows. And the king woke up.

⁵ He went back to sleep again and had a second dream. This time he saw a long piece of grass, and it had 7 bunches of seeds on the top and they were fat and looked really good to eat.

⁶ Then he saw another long piece of grass, but the 7 bunches of seeds on top of this grass looked thin and weak. They looked like they were burnt by the hot east wind.

⁷ Then the weak thin bunches of seeds, ate the good looking fat seeds. When Pharaoh woke up he knew it was a dream.

⁸ In the morning the king was upset. He was worried what the dreams were all about. And so he sent messengers all over Egypt to get all the clever men and men that understood dreams to come to a meeting. He told them what he saw in his dreams, but none of them could tell him the meaning of those dreams.

⁹ The man who gave the king his wine said, “O King, I have just remembered that I have broken a promise I made to someone.

¹⁰ You were angry with your baker and me 2 years ago and put us in jail.

¹¹ One night, the baker and I both had dreams but our dreams were different. And we did not know the meaning of those dreams.

¹² But there was a young Hebrew man who worked for the boss of the jail. When we told him our dreams, he told us the meaning.

¹³ And what he said came true. I got my job back and the baker was killed and his body put up on a tree.”

¹⁴ When Pharaoh heard this, he sent someone to get Joseph. They took him out of the jail, and after he shaved his face and put on clean clothes, they took him to talk to the king.

¹⁵ The king said to Joseph, “I had a dream, but no one can tell me what it means. Someone said that you can do that.”

¹⁶ But Joseph said to the king, “I cannot tell people what their dreams mean, but God can help me do that.”

¹⁷ So Pharaoh told Joseph what he saw in his dream.

He said, “In my dream I was standing next to the Nile River.

¹⁸ I saw 7 cows come up out of the river. They were fat and looked really good. They started to eat the river grass next to the water.

¹⁹ Then I saw 7 more cows come out of the river. These cows were ugly and skinny. I have never seen such thin and ugly cows in all of Egypt.

²⁰ The skinny, ugly cows ate up the 7 good looking fat cows that came out of the river first.

²¹ But then I saw that after the skinny cows ate the fat cows, they stayed skinny and ugly and no one would know that they had eaten the other 7 cows. Then I woke up.

²² I went to sleep again and had a second dream, but this time I saw a long piece of grass. It had 7 bunches of seeds on the top and they were fat and looked really good.

²³ Then I saw another long piece of grass, but the 7 bunches of seeds on top looked thin and weak. They looked like they were burnt by the hot east wind.

²⁴ Then the weak, thin bunches of seeds ate up the 7 good looking seeds. And I woke up.

I told my dreams to my clever men but they cannot tell me what they mean.”

²⁵ Joseph said to Pharaoh, the king, “Both your dreams mean the same thing, and God is telling you what he is going to do.

²⁶ The 7 good looking cows and the 7 good bunches of seeds are pictures of the same thing. They are pictures of 7 good years that are coming.

²⁷ The 7 skinny ugly cows and the 7 thin weak bunches of seeds that look like the hot east wind has burnt them, are pictures of the same thing. They are pictures of 7 bad years that will come after the 7 good years.

²⁸ God is telling you what he is going to do, and it will happen just like I said.

²⁹ You and all the people in Egypt are going to have 7 good years. All your animals will get fat and all your food plants will grow a lot of seeds. Everyone in Egypt will have a lot to eat.

³⁰ When the 7 good years are over there will be 7 bad years. People will forget all about the 7 good years when everyone had a lot to eat. It will be like the bad years ate all the good years. Then nothing will grow in the whole country.

³¹ Yes, the 7 bad years will be so hard for everyone, that they will forget the good years.

³² God gave you those 2 dreams to let you know what he is going to do. And he will make it happen soon.

³³ I have told you God's message and so it would be good for you to find a man who knows what to do. You should make that man the boss over the whole country of Egypt.

³⁴ And you Pharaoh, should pick leaders from every part of the country to help that man do his job.

This is what has to happen. For the next 7 good years, after the farmers have finished picking up all the food seeds from their paddocks, these leaders have to take one bag from every 5 bags of seeds that the farmers grow.

³⁵ Then the leaders have to take those bags of seeds and put them into big government sheds in every town. And put soldiers around those sheds.

³⁶ This food must be kept safe until the 7 bad years come. That way, when the country does not grow any food, your people will not get too hungry and die.”

Pharaoh made Joseph the leader of Egypt

³⁷ Pharaoh and all the men who worked for him had a meeting and they all liked Joseph's plan.

³⁸ Pharaoh said to them, “I do not think we can find a better man than Joseph to do that job. I can see that God's spirit has told him what to do.”

³⁹ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I can see that God has told you what to do. God has made you understand the problem. No one else can do the job better than you can.

⁴⁰ I am putting you in charge of my house and my government. Everyone in all of Egypt has to do what you tell them. But remember, I am still the king. I am still your boss.”

⁴¹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Joseph. You are now the boss over the whole country of Egypt.”

⁴² Pharaoh had a ring that had special marks on it. He used this ring to put his special mark on papers to prove that he had written them. Pharaoh took that ring off his finger and put it on Joseph's finger to show that Joseph was working for him. And he gave Joseph really nice clothes to wear and put a gold chain around his neck.

⁴³ Pharaoh gave Joseph a chariot to ride in. A chariot is a war wagon pulled by horses. The king did this to show that Joseph was the second boss over Egypt. And from that time, everywhere Joseph went in his chariot, soldiers walked in front of him, shouting out to the people in the street, "Move off the road, and bow down to Joseph."

In this way Pharaoh showed his people that Joseph was the boss over the whole country of Egypt.

⁴⁴ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, I am the king, but before anyone in Egypt does anything, they have to ask you first."

⁴⁵ And Pharaoh gave Joseph another name. He named him Zafen-ath-Pan-ay-ah and gave him a wife named As-en-ath. Her father was named Potifera, who was an Egyptian ceremony man from a town called On.

Joseph went all over the country of Egypt to see what it was like and everyone respected him as their leader.

⁴⁶ Joseph was 30 years old when he started to work for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. He did not

stay in one place but went everywhere in Egypt to see that people were doing the right thing.

⁴⁷ In the 7 good years, the whole country grew a lot of food.

⁴⁸ Every time food was grown, the farmers had to give some of their bags of seeds to the men that worked for Joseph. The workers took the bags of seeds and put them into the government sheds to keep them safe.

⁴⁹ The workers stored so many bags of seeds they stopped counting them. There were just too many.

⁵⁰ Before the bad years came, As-en-ath, the daughter of Potifera, the ceremony man in On, gave Joseph 2 sons.

⁵¹ Joseph named the first son Manasseh and said, "I called him that because God has made me forget all my troubles, and I have even forgotten that I miss my family."

⁵² And he named his second son, Ephraim and said, "I have had a hard time in this country, but God has been good to me and given me children."

⁵³⁻⁵⁴ At the end of the 7 good years, the land in Egypt stopped growing food. It was the start of the 7 bad years that Joseph said would come.

All the countries around Egypt started to run out of food. But all the Egyptians still had a lot of food in their own sheds.

⁵⁵ Later on, the people in Egypt had nothing to eat and so they asked Pharaoh for food. But Pharaoh said, "Go and see Joseph. He will tell you what to do."

⁵⁶ When all the Egyptians were hungry and the bad years got worse, Joseph opened the government sheds and sold the food to the Egyptians.

⁵⁷ All the countries around Egypt were having a hard time too, and when they heard that Egypt had food, they went to Joseph to buy seeds.

42

Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to get food

¹ When Jacob heard that there was food in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why are you sitting around doing nothing?”

² I have heard that there is food in Egypt. Go down and buy some food and bring it back here so that we can stay alive.”

³ So 10 of Joseph's brothers left their home in Canaan and went to Egypt to buy food.

⁴ But Jacob did not send Joseph's younger brother, Benjamin. You see Jacob was frightened that something bad might happen to him.

⁵ A lot of people from Canaan were going to Egypt to buy food, and so Jacob's sons went with them. All the countries in that part of the world were having a hard time, no food would grow.

⁶ Joseph was the boss over all of Egypt and if anyone wanted to buy food, they had to speak to him. And so, Joseph's brothers went to him and bowed down to the ground in front of him.

⁷ As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he knew who they were, but he acted like he did not know

them. He spoke hard words to them and said, "Where do you come from?"

His brothers answered, "We come from the country called Canaan. We have come to buy food."

⁸ Joseph knew who they were, but they did not know that he was Joseph, their brother.

⁹ And Joseph remembered the dreams about them bowing down to him.

He said to them, "I think you are spies. You are looking to see if our country is weak, so that you can fight us."

¹⁰ But they cried out, "No Sir! We are not spies. We are like slaves to you. We just want to buy food.

¹¹ We are all good men and all have the same father. We are honest men and never tell lies. We are not spies."

¹² Joseph said, "No. I think you have come to Egypt to see where our country is weak."

¹³ But Joseph's brothers said, "We are 10 of the 12 brothers from the same father and we all live in the country of Canaan. We left our little brother back home with our father, and we do not know where the other brother is. He is gone and he might be dead."

¹⁴ Then Joseph said, "No. I am right. You have come to find out about our country.

¹⁵ But I will give you a chance to prove what you say is true. I have the power to say who can come to Egypt and who can go. I tell you that you

will stay in Egypt until the brother you left behind comes and stands in front of me.

¹⁶ I want one of you to go home and bring that brother to me. I will put the rest of you in jail until he comes back. If he comes back with his brother I will know that I can trust what you say. But if he does not come back I will know that you have told me a lie and that you really are spies. And the king trusts me to do the right thing.”

¹⁷ Then Joseph told soldiers to take his brothers to jail.

¹⁸ They were in jail for 2 days and on the third day, Joseph said to them, “I am a man who trusts and respects God, and so if you do what I say, you will stay alive.

¹⁹ You have said that you are honest men that live the right way. Ok, only one of you has to stay here in jail. The rest of you can go back home with food to feed your hungry families.

²⁰ But I tell you, you have to bring your little brother back to me. If you do that, then I will know what you have said is true and I will not kill you.” The brothers said to Joseph, “We will do what you say.”

²¹ They said to each other, “We are getting payback for what we did to our brother Joseph. All those years ago we saw that he was really frightened. He asked us again and again not to hurt him, but we would not listen. That is why we are having this trouble now.”

²² Jacob's oldest son Reuben said, “I told you not to hurt the boy, but you didn't listen to me. All of us are getting payback for what we did.”

²³ Joseph's brothers were talking in their Hebrew language. They did not know that Joseph could understand what they were saying. You see he spoke to them in the Egyptian language and another man told the brothers what Joseph said in their own language.

²⁴ When Joseph heard what his brothers said about payback, he went into another room and cried. And when he had settled down, he went back to his brothers and talked to them again.

Then Joseph told his soldiers to tie up Simeon and take him away from his brothers and put him in jail.

²⁵ Joseph told his workers to fill all the brother's bags with food seeds, as well as food for the trip home. And he told his workers to put the money his brothers had paid in the top of their bags. When all this was done,

²⁶ the brothers put their bags of seeds onto their donkeys and left Egypt to go back to Canaan.

²⁷ That night, they stopped to camp. One of the brothers opened his bag of seeds to give his donkey a feed. Straight away he found that his money was right there on the top.

²⁸ He called out to his brothers and said, "Hey, the money I paid for this food is here in the top of my bag." And all the brothers were very frightened. They said, "What is going on. Why is God doing this to us?"

The brothers go back to Jacob.

²⁹ When the brothers got back to their home in Canaan, they told their father Jacob everything that had happened to them.

³⁰ They said, “The boss of Egypt said hard words to us. He said that we were spies and were finding out about his country.

³¹ But we said, ‘We are honest men who live the right way. We are not spies.

³² We told him that we were twelve brothers from the same father, but one of the brothers had gone and the last one was with you here in Canaan.’

³³ The boss of that country said, ‘I want to make sure that you are honest men that live the right way. One of you must stay behind in Egypt, while the rest of you take food back to your families.

³⁴ You have to bring your little brother back with you. If you bring him back, I will know that you are not spies and that you are honest men that live the right way. And I will give you back the brother who is in jail and all of you can be free to go anywhere in this country of Egypt.’ ”

³⁵ The brothers emptied all their bags of seeds, and each brother found his money right at the top of their bags. When Jacob and his sons saw the money, they were all very frightened.

³⁶ Then Jacob cried out, “What is happening? Do you want me to lose all my sons? Joseph has gone and now Simeon has gone. Do you want to take Benjamin from me too? All this trouble is going against me.”

³⁷ Jacob's eldest son Reuben said to his father, “I promise you father. I will look after Benjamin and

bring him back to you. If I do not keep my promise, then you can kill my 2 sons.”

³⁸ But Jacob said, “No. I will not let you take Benjamin to Egypt. His brother Joseph is dead and Benjamin is the only son left from my wife Rachel. I am frightened that something bad will happen to him. If anything happened to him I would be really sad until I die.”

43

The brothers go back to Egypt

¹ The land of Canaan was still not growing any food.

² And so when Jacob's family had eaten all the food the brothers got from Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, “Go back to Egypt and buy some more food.”

³ But Judah said to his father, “The boss of that country warned us. He told us straight, ‘If you do not bring your youngest brother with you, you will not be allowed to see me.’

⁴ If you let us take Benjamin with us, we will go back to Egypt to buy food.

⁵ But if you do not let us take him then we will not go back. The boss of the food said that he would not talk to us if we did not have our youngest brother with us.”

⁶ Jacob said, “Why did you tell the man that you had another brother? You have made trouble for me.”

⁷ The brothers answered, “The man asked us a lot of questions about ourselves and our family. He even asked if our father was still alive and did we have another brother. We just answered his

questions. We didn't know that he would ask us to bring Benjamin to him.”

⁸ Then Judah said to his father Jacob, “Please father, let me take the boy to see this man. We can go straight away and bring food back so that you and all our families can stay alive.

⁹ I promise you father that I will keep Benjamin safe and bring him back to you. If I break my promise, then you can blame me for the rest of my life.

¹⁰ We have wasted too much time. We could have been to Egypt and back 2 times.”

¹¹ Jacob said to his sons, “You win. I can see that there is no other way. Take Benjamin with you, but take the man some presents. Take him some of the best things we have in this country. You know, some rubbing oil, honey, spices, peanuts, almonds and the medicine called myrrh.

¹² Oh, yes, take double the money you took last time. Try and give back the money you found in your bags. Maybe someone made a mistake last time.

¹³ Go now and take Benjamin to see the man.

¹⁴ I will pray and ask God to make the man be kind to you, that way you can bring Simeon and Benjamin back to me. If I lose my children, then I lose them, but I will be very sad.”

¹⁵ So the brothers left their father's camp and started to go back to Egypt to meet with Joseph. They took Benjamin and presents with them. They took money to buy the food as well as the money that they found in their bags before.

¹⁶ When they got to Egypt, they went to see Joseph. As soon as Joseph saw Benjamin with his brothers, he told the boss of his house what to do. He said, "Take these men to my house, kill an animal and get food ready for them. I will have lunch with them today."

¹⁷ The worker did what Joseph said and took the brothers to Joseph's house.

¹⁸ When they got to his house, the brothers were really frightened to be there. They said to each other, "He must know about the money that was in our bags last time. He wants to blame us for taking that money, and he is going to take our donkeys and put us in his work camp. We will have to work for him for no pay. We will never get home."

¹⁹⁻²⁰ Just before they got to the door of Joseph's house, they said to the worker, "Sir, the last time we came here, we paid the right money for our food and then started to go home.

²¹⁻²² But on the first night, when we opened our food bags, we found money inside. It was the same money that we paid the man for the food. We don't know how that money got into our bags and so we carried it back here again so that we can give it to you. And we have more money to pay for the food that we want to buy this time."

²³ Joseph's worker said to them, "Don't be frightened. It's all right. Your God, the God of your father must have put that money back in your bags. You paid me for the food you got last time."

Then he went and got Simeon out of jail and gave him back to his brothers.

²⁴ The worker took the brothers into Joseph's house. He gave them water so that they could wash their feet and he gave them food for their donkeys.

²⁵ The brothers heard that Joseph was going to come home and have lunch with them and so they got all the presents ready to give to him.

²⁶ When Joseph came home, they bowed down in front of him and gave him the presents.

²⁷ Joseph asked them, "How are you? Last time you were here, you talked about your old father. Is he still alive?"

²⁸ The brothers answered, "Our old father is still alive and well, and he has heard that you are a powerful man. If he was here, he would bow down and show you respect." Then all the brothers bowed down to the ground again to show respect to Joseph.

²⁹ Joseph and Benjamin had the same mother and father, and when Joseph saw Benjamin, he said, "You told me that you had a younger brother. Is this him?" Then he said to Benjamin, "I will pray and ask God to be good to you my son."

³⁰ Joseph was so happy to see his younger brother, he felt tears coming into his eyes, so he ran and looked for somewhere to cry. He went to his bedroom and cried there.

³¹ When he settled down, he washed his face and went back to his brothers in the other room. Then he told his workers to put the food on the table so that they could eat.

³² The workers put out 3 tables. Joseph ate his food by himself on the first table. Joseph's brothers ate their food together on another table, and the Egyptian workers ate their food on the third table. You see Egyptians did not like Hebrew people and would not sit down and eat with them.

³³ When the brothers sat down at their table, they were shocked to find that they were put in a line by their age, from the oldest at one end of the table to the youngest at the other end.

³⁴ The workers took food from Joseph's table and gave it to Benjamin and his brothers. Each of the brothers was given one lot of food, but Benjamin got 5 lots of food. Joseph and his brothers had a good time as they ate and drank together.

44

Joseph gave his brothers another test

¹ Later on, Joseph said to the man that looked after his house and workers, "Fill up their bags with food, and put their money in the top of each bag again.

² When you fill up the bag that belongs to the youngest man, put my silver cup in the bag with his money." The worker did what Joseph said.

³ The next morning, the 11 brothers were allowed to leave with their donkeys and food bags.

⁴ They had not gone very far when Joseph said to the man that looked after his house, "Go after those men and say, 'We did good things for you. Why did you pay us back by doing a bad thing?'

⁵ My boss has a special silver drinking cup. That cup helps him to find out things using signs and magic. You stole it and so you have done a very bad thing.’ ”

⁶ The worker followed Joseph's brothers and when he found them, he told them what Joseph said.

⁷ But the brothers said, “What are you talking about? We would not do that.

⁸ We are good men. We carried back the money we found in our bags last time. And so we would not steal any silver or gold from the house your boss lives in.

⁹ Have a look in our bags. If you find the silver cup, then kill the man who owns the bag and the rest of us will work for you for no pay. We will be your slaves.”

¹⁰ The worker said to the men, “Ok, we will do as you say, but the man who took the cup will be our slave and the rest of you can go free.”

¹¹ Straight away, each brother took his bag off his donkey, put it on the ground and opened it.

¹² The worker looked in every bag. He started with the oldest brother until he got to the youngest brother. He found the silver cup in Benjamin's bag.

¹³ When the brothers saw the man find the silver cup, they ripped their clothes to show how upset they were. Then the brothers put their bags onto their donkeys and they all went back to the town.

¹⁴ When Judah and his brothers went into Joseph's house, Joseph was there waiting for

them. The brothers bowed face down to the ground in front of him.

¹⁵ Joseph said, “Why did you do this to me? Didn't you know that a man like me can find out things by signs and magic?”

¹⁶ Judah said, “We don't know what to say to you. There is no way we can make you believe that we are not guilty. God has shown that we are guilty and so we will all be your slaves, not just Benjamin.”

¹⁷ But Joseph said, “No. I would not do that. Only the man who stole my cup will be my slave. The rest of you can go home to your father.”

¹⁸ Judah went to Joseph and said, “Sir, I know you are a very powerful man. You are like Pharaoh himself and so please do not be angry with me. Can I tell you our story?”

¹⁹ The last time we were here, you asked us, ‘Do you have a father or a brother?’

²⁰ And we answered you and said, ‘Yes we have an old father, and we have a younger brother who was born when our father was very old.’ You see there used to be another brother, but he is dead. Benjamin is the only child left from that mother and so our father loves him very much.

²¹ You said to us, ‘Bring that brother to me. I want to see him.’

²² And we said to you, ‘No, we can't bring him to you. The boy cannot leave his father or his father will die.’

23 But you said, 'If you do not bring your youngest brother, you will not be allowed to see me again.'

24 So we went home and told our father what you said.

25 Later, when all the food was gone, our father said to us, 'Go back to Egypt and buy us some more food.'

26 We said to him, 'We can't go back there. The man said that he would not see us if we did not take our youngest brother.'

27 Then our father said to us, 'My wife Rachel only had 2 sons.

28 I lost the first son. A wild animal ripped him apart and I never saw him again.

29 Now you want to take Rachel's second son away from me too. I am frightened that something bad will happen to him. If anything happened to him I would be really sad until I die.'

30 So you see, if I go home without Benjamin, I do not know what will happen. That boy is the most important thing in our father's life.

31 I think if we go home without Benjamin, our father will be so sad, he will die and it will be our fault.

32 Before I left Canaan, I made a promise to my father to keep the boy safe. I said to him, 'I promise you that I will bring the boy back to you. If I do not bring him back to you, you can blame me all my life.'

33 So, can you let Benjamin go home with his brothers.

³⁴ I can't go home if the boy is not with me. I can't let my father have so much pain."

45

Joseph told his brothers who he really was

¹ When Judah finished his story, Joseph could not stop himself from crying, and so he said to his workers, "Please leave me alone with these men." Then after all his workers had left the room, Joseph told his brothers who he really was.

² He cried, and he made so much noise that his workers heard him and everyone who worked in the government building heard about it.

³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers were so frightened, they could not say anything.

⁴ So Joseph said to them, "It's alright, come close to me." And when they came close, he said to them again, "I am Joseph, your brother. You sold me as a slave to those Ishmaelite men and they led me here to Egypt.

⁵ But do not be frightened or angry at yourselves for selling me, you see God sent me here to save the lives of a lot of people.

⁶ This country has not grown any food for 2 years and no food will grow for another 5 years.

⁷ God sent me here to make a way for your families to stay alive.

⁸ So then, you didn't send me here, God did. And he has made me the most important person that works for Pharaoh. You see, I am like a father for Pharaoh. I look after him and I am the boss of

the government and I am the boss over the whole country of Egypt.

⁹ I want you to go home to my father as fast as you can and say to him, ‘Your son Joseph says, “God has made me the boss over all of Egypt. You have to come to Egypt as fast as you can.

¹⁰ I want you to come and live in a place called Goshen. Bring all your children and grandchildren, all your animals and everything you have so that you can all live near me.

¹¹ There is going to be another 5 years when no food will grow, but I will look after you so that you and all your family will have all the food you need.” ’ ’ ”

¹² Then Joseph said to his brothers, “You can see for yourselves, and so can Benjamin, that I am your brother Joseph.

¹³ So tell my father how powerful I am here in Egypt. Tell him everything you have seen and heard. Quick, go and bring him here to me.”

¹⁴ Joseph put his arms around Benjamin and they cried together.

¹⁵ Joseph cried and kissed all his brothers, and they all sat down to talk.

¹⁶ When Pharaoh the king of Egypt and all his helpers heard that Joseph's brothers were in Egypt they were all happy for Joseph.

¹⁷ The king said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers to put bags of food onto their donkeys and go back to Canaan.

¹⁸ Tell them to bring their father and all their families back to me. I will give them the best land

that I can find in Egypt and they will have the best food that we can give them.

¹⁹ Joseph, give them some of our wagons. That way the women and children can ride in them when they come to Egypt. And make sure your father comes with them.

²⁰ Tell them not to worry if they have to leave some of their things behind. We will give them new things, they will be the best things we have here in Egypt.”

²¹ So Jacob's sons did what Pharaoh said. And Joseph gave them wagons and food for the trip.

²² He gave each of his brothers one lot of new clothes, but he gave Benjamin 5 lots of clothes and a really big bag full of silver money.

²³ Joseph sent his father some presents too. He sent 10 donkeys loaded with good things from Egypt and 10 girl donkeys with bags of seeds and bread and all the food they would need for the trip back to Canaan. And Joseph sent even more food for when everybody had to travel back to Egypt.

²⁴ Then before he sent his brothers away, he said, “Do not argue as you go home.”

²⁵ And so, the brothers left Egypt and went home to their father Jacob in Canaan.

²⁶ They said to their father, “Joseph is alive, and he is the boss over all of Egypt.” Jacob was shocked and did not believe them.

²⁷ But when he heard everything that Joseph said, and saw all the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry them back to Egypt, he felt better.

²⁸ Then Israel, whose other name was Jacob, said, "I believe you now. My son Joseph is alive and I will go and see him before I die."

46

Jacob and his family go to Egypt

¹ Joseph's father's name was Jacob, but God changed his name to Israel. Sometimes he was named Jacob and sometimes he was named Israel. And so, Israel and all the other families took everything they owned and started to go south to Egypt. When they got to Beersheba, Jacob burnt an animal to show respect to God, the God of his father Isaac.

² That night, God spoke to Israel and said, "Jacob, Jacob."

And Jacob answered, "Here I am. I am listening."

³ God said, "I am the God of your father Isaac. Do not be frightened to go down to Egypt. Your sons are going to have a lot of children and grandchildren, and I am going to make them into a great nation down there."

⁴ I will go down to Egypt with you, and at the right time, I will bring your family out of that country again. And I promise you, that your son Joseph will be with you when you die."

⁵ Then Jacob and all his family left Beersheba. Jacob's sons put their wives, children and their father into the wagons that the king of Egypt gave them.

⁶⁻⁷ When they left Canaan they took all their animals and everything they owned with them.

And so that is how Jacob took his family to Egypt. He took his sons, grandsons, daughters and granddaughters. Yes, all his family went to Egypt.

Jacob's family

⁸ This is a list of the names of Israel's sons and the families that went to Egypt. And Israel's other name was Jacob.

Reuben was Jacob's first son.

⁹ Reuben's sons were Hanoah, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi.

¹⁰ Simeon's sons were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul, and Shaul's mother was a Canaanite woman.

¹¹ Levi's sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹² Judah's sons were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah, but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.

Perez's sons were Hezron and Hamul.

¹³ Iss-a-car's sons were Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron.

¹⁴ Zeb-you-lun's sons were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

¹⁵ These sons were born while Jacob worked for Leah's father Laban in Harran. Jacob and Leah had a daughter too. Her name was Dinah. There were 33 people in this part of Jacob's family.

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ This is a list of the sons Jacob had with Zilpah. She was the working girl that Laban gave to Leah, and later on, Leah gave Zilpah to Jacob to be another wife.

Zilpah had 2 sons with Jacob.

Their names were Gad and Asher.

Gad's sons were Zefon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

Asher's sons were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah, and their sister was Serah. Beriah's sons were Heber and Mal-kiel. There were 16 people in this part of the family.

¹⁹ Jacob and Rachel had 2 sons, Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁰ While Joseph was in Egypt, he and his wife, As-en-ath had 2 sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. As-en-ath's father was the Egyptian ceremony man named Potifera. He was an Egyptian ceremony man at a place called On.

²¹ Benjamin's sons were Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

²² There were 14 people in this part of Jacob's family.

²³⁻²⁵ These are the sons that Jacob had with Bilhah. She was the working girl that Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, and later on Rachel gave Bilhah to be another wife for Jacob.

Bilhah had 2 sons with Jacob. Their names were Dan and Naftali.

Dan had a son named Hushi.

And Naftali had 4 sons, named Jar-ziel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem.

There were 7 people in this part of Jacob's family.

²⁶⁻²⁷ And so, there were 66 people in Jacob's family when he travelled to Egypt. But the wives of Jacob's sons were not counted in that number.

Joseph and his wife, As-en-ath had 2 sons when Joseph lived in Egypt.

There were 70 people living with Jacob when he was in Egypt.

Jacob and the families in Egypt

²⁸ Before Jacob and the family got to Goshen, he sent his son Judah to ask Joseph how to get there. When Jacob and all the families arrived in Goshen,

²⁹ Joseph told his workers to get his special wagon ready so that he could go and meet his father Jacob. As soon as Joseph saw his father, he put his arms around him and Joseph cried for a long time.

³⁰ Then Israel said to Joseph, “Now that I have seen that you are alive, I can die a happy man.”

³¹ Joseph said to all of his brothers and their families, “I am going to tell the king that you are here. I will say, ‘My brothers and all my father's family have left Canaan and have come to stay with me.’

³² They look after farm animals, and they have led all their animals here to Egypt. They have taken everything they own from Canaan and carried it here.’

³³ When the king wants you to go and talk to him, he will ask you, ‘What work do you do?’

³⁴ When you answer him, you must show him respect and say, ‘We have always looked after farm animals and our grandfathers from long ago did the same.’ If you say that, the king will let you live here in Goshen, away from where the

Egyptian people live. You see they do not like to live near people that look after sheep.”

47

Jacob asked God to bless Pharaoh and do good things for him

¹ Joseph went to see Pharaoh and said to him, “My father, my brothers and all their families are now living in Goshen. And they have taken everything they own from Canaan and carried it here to Egypt. All of their animals are here too.”

² Then Joseph took 5 of his brothers to meet Pharaoh, the king.

³ Pharaoh asked the brothers, “What work do you do?”

And the brothers answered, “Sir we work for you now. We look after farm animals, just like our father and grandfather before us.

⁴ We have all come to live in your country for a while. You see our country hasn't got any food to feed our animals and nothing will grow. Everyone is really hungry, and so we ask you, can we live in that part of Egypt called Goshen?”

⁵ Pharaoh said to Joseph, “It is really good that your father and brothers have come to live with you.

⁶ And as you are the boss over all of Egypt, you can let them live wherever you like. But give them the best land. Let them live in Goshen, and if any of them are really good at looking after animals, you can let them look after my sheep and cattle too.”

⁷ Then Joseph took his father Jacob to meet the king. Jacob blessed the king, he prayed and asked God to do good things for the king.

⁸ Pharaoh asked Jacob, “How old are you?”

⁹ And Jacob answered, “Sir, all my life I have moved from place to place, and I have had a lot of troubles in my short life. You see, I am only 130 years old but my father and grandfather lived much longer than that.”

¹⁰ Then, before leaving, Jacob said goodbye to the king and blessed him again.

¹¹ Joseph did what the king said. He gave his father and his brothers the best land in Egypt near a town called Rameses in Goshen.

¹² Joseph always made sure that his father, his brothers and everyone in their camp had all the food they needed.

Joseph got a lot of land for the king.

¹³ People in Egypt and Canaan started to have a very bad time. Everyone was hungry and nothing grew for people to eat.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ Joseph took all the money he got from selling the food and put it into the king's bank. But there came a time when the people had no more money to buy food. And so, the people in Egypt went to Joseph and said, “All our money is gone. Please give us some food. If we do not eat soon, we will die right here in front of you.”

¹⁶ Joseph answered and said, “Ok. You have run out of money, so now if you give me your farm animals, I will give you food.

¹⁷ So the people took all their farm animals to Joseph. All that year the people gave their horses, cows, sheep, goats and donkeys to Joseph and he gave the people food so that they could stay alive.”

¹⁸ The next year, the people came to Joseph and said, “You know that we do not have any money and you have all our animals. We have nothing more to sell. All we have is our land and ourselves.

¹⁹ Our land cannot grow anything and it looks like it is dead. Might be, the King can own our farms and we will work for him. We will be his slaves. Just give us seeds that we can plant and seeds for food. That way we can stay alive and our farms will not become dry and useless. Please do not let us die.”

²⁰ In the end, the people sold their farms to Joseph who was working for the king of Egypt. The hard times forced all the people to sell their land and become the King's slaves.

²¹ Everyone in the whole country of Egypt worked for Joseph and the king for no pay. They were slaves.

²² The only people that did not have to sell their land were the Egyptian ceremony men. The king paid them for their work and so they had money to buy food.

²³ At the end of the bad years, Joseph said to the Egyptian farmers, “You and all your land belongs to the king, and so I will give you seeds so that you can grow plants for food.

²⁴ When the growing time is finished you have to pick up all the seeds and put them into 5 heaps that are all the same size. Then you have to

take one of those heaps and give it to the king's workers. The other 4 heaps are for you to keep so that you and your families have seeds to grow food next year."

²⁵ And all the people said, "You have been good to us and saved our lives and so we will work for the king."

²⁶ Joseph made a new law for the country of Egypt, and it is still there today. That new law was, "Anything that grows on the king's farms has to be put into 5 heaps and one of those heaps belongs to the king."

The only land in all of Egypt that the king did not own was the land that belonged to the Egyptian ceremony men.

Jacob said, "Please do not bury me in Egypt"

²⁷ When the Israelites moved to the part of Egypt called Goshen, they bought land and had a lot of children.

²⁸ Jacob lived in Egypt for 17 years and lived until he was 147 years old.

²⁹ When Jacob knew that it was nearly time for him to die, he sent someone to get Joseph. He said to him, "If you really love me, then put your hand on my leg and make a promise to me. Promise that you will not bury me here in Egypt.

³⁰ Promise me that after I die, you will take my body out of Egypt and bury it where my father and grandfather are buried."

Joseph said, "Yes I will do what you ask."

³¹ Jacob said, "Make your promise right now."

And after Joseph made that promise to his father, Jacob bowed down on his bed and prayed to God.

48

Jacob asked God to be good to Joseph's sons

¹ Some time later a messenger told Joseph that his father was very sick. So Joseph took his 2 sons, Manasseh and Ephraim to see him.

² Jacob was very weak, but when he heard that Joseph had come to see him, he used all his strength to sit up in his bed.

³⁻⁴ When Joseph was with his father, Jacob said to him, "I met God all powerful in a place called Luz. Luz's other name is Bethel and it is in the country called Canaan. He blessed me and said, 'Jacob, I will give you a big family. You will be the father of a lot of people and I will give this country to all the family that comes after you, forever.'

⁵ Joseph, your 2 sons, who were born before I came to Egypt are now my sons too. I say that Ephraim and Manasseh are my sons, just like Reuben and Simeon are my sons.

⁶ But if you have any more children later on, they will be your children, not mine. And after all the family go back to the land that God promised me, those other children will get part of the country that Ephraim and Manasseh are given.

⁷ You see, when I left Haran and went back to Canaan, your mother Rachel died near a place

called Bethlehem, and I buried her near the road that goes there. I was very sad when she died.”

⁸ Jacob's other name was Israel. Israel looked at Joseph's sons and said, “Who are these boys?”

⁹ And Joseph answered, “They are the 2 sons God has given me here in Egypt.”

Israel said, “Bring your sons close to me so that I can bless them. I will ask God to be good to them and make them strong.”

¹⁰ At this time, Israel was very old and he could not see very well, so Joseph took his sons closer to his father. Israel put his arms around the boys and kissed them.

¹¹ He said to Joseph, “I did not think that I would ever see you again, but God has let me see you and your children too.”

¹² Then Joseph took the boys off Israel's knees and then bowed down to the ground.

¹³ Joseph stood up and put Ephraim near Israel's left hand side and he put Manasseh near Israel's right hand side and then moved them closer to his father.

¹⁴ But Israel crossed his hands over and put his right hand on the head of the younger son Ephraim, and his left hand on the head of the older son, Manasseh.

¹⁵ Then he blessed them. He prayed and said,
“O God, you are the God that my grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac believed in. They trusted you and followed you,

You have led me and helped me all my life.

¹⁶ You always sent angels to save me from all my troubles.

I ask you to bless these boys. Make them strong and do good things for them, so that people remember my name and the names of Isaac my father and Abraham my grandfather.

And, O God, give them a lot of children and grandchildren after them.”

¹⁷ When Joseph saw his father cross his arms and put his right hand on Ephraim's head, he got upset. And so he took his father's right hand and tried to put it on Manasseh's head.

¹⁸ He said to his father, “No, my father, this is the son that was born first. You should put your right hand on his head.”

¹⁹ But his father would not move his hand. He said to Joseph, “I know that he was born first. He will be a great man and a big family will come from him. But I tell you the younger brother will be more important than the older brother, and a group of nations will come from his family.”

²⁰ Then Jacob blessed them with these words and said,

“When Israelite people pray to God and ask him to bless other people and make them strong, they will say, ‘O God make this person just like Ephraim and Manasseh.’ ”

In this way Israel made Ephraim more important than Manasseh.

²¹ Then Israel said to Joseph, “I am about to die, but I know that God will be with all of my family. And one day God will take you all back to the country your father and grandfather came from.

²² I am giving you an extra piece of land in Canaan that your brothers will not get. It is the country called Shekem that I took from the Amorite people using my long knife and my bow and arrows.”

49

This is what Jacob said to his 12 sons before he died

¹ Then Jacob sent someone to bring all his sons to him. When they came he said, “My sons, stand around me so that I can tell you what is going to happen to each one of you later on.”

This is what he said to them.

² “Listen carefully, sons of Jacob. Listen to your father Israel.

³ Reuben. You were born first when I was young and strong. And you showed everyone that I could be a father.

You are the first born son. You are strong and you should be the leader for the family.

⁴ But you are like the floodwater. You cannot say, ‘No’ to yourself. You went and slept with one of my wives. You shamed me, and so you cannot be the leader of the family.

⁵ Simeon and Levi used their long knives the wrong way and were violent. They are both like that.

⁶ I will not sit down with them when they have their secret meetings. I do not want to know what they are planning to do next.

They were so angry that they killed men,

and they crippled cattle just for fun.

⁷ You are too violent and cruel and so this is my curse on you. I will split up your families and spread them into all the tribes of Jacob. Yes, I will split you up and spread your families into all the tribes of Israel.

⁸ Judah. All your brothers will say good things about you. And you will beat all your enemies. All your brothers will bow down to the ground in front of you to show respect.

⁹ You Judah, my son, are strong like a young lion that has killed an animal. You are like a lion that is lying down to rest, and everyone is too frightened to wake you up.

¹⁰ Kings will come from Judah's family. Someone from Judah's line will always sit on the king's special chair called a throne until the real king comes, and then all the nations will do what he says.

¹¹ That king will have a lot of grapevines and will tie his donkey to the best branch and if the donkey eats the leaves, the grapevine will still grow grapes.

The king will have a lot of wine, and he will wash his clothes in the best wine that he has.

¹² His eyes will be dark, like the colour of his wine, and his teeth will be white, just like milk.

¹³ Zeb-you-lun will live near the sea, and his country will go nearly to a town called Sidon. Ships will be safe when they are tied up next to his land.

¹⁴ Iss-a-car is like a big strong donkey that lies down when it has a heavy load.

¹⁵ When Iss-a-car sees that his country is good and that it is a good place to rest, he will want to live there. But he will be forced to work very hard for other people so that he can stay there.

¹⁶ Dan will be the leader of his tribe, just like the other brothers will lead their tribes.

¹⁷ But Dan's tribe will be small and dangerous, just like a small cheeky snake. Those snakes lie next to the road and bite horse's legs so that when the horse jumps up, the rider falls off its back."

¹⁸ Then Jacob called out, "O God, I am waiting for you to save me."

And Jacob kept telling his sons what was going to happen,

¹⁹ "Bad men will come to Gad and try to steal all his things, but Gad will fight them and beat them. He will force them to go away.

²⁰ Asher's country will grow a lot of food. That food will be so good, kings will want to eat it.

²¹ Naftali is like a wild animal that runs fast and is hard to catch. The family that comes from Naftali will be good looking.

²² Joseph is like a grapevine that grows a lot of fruit.

That strong vine gets its water from a spring, and its branches grow over the wall.

²³ His enemies were angry with him and wanted to fight him. They shot a lot of arrows at him.

²⁴ But his arms were strong. And he aimed his bow to shoot arrows back at them.

God is the most powerful one, he is the one who leads Israel. He is the one who keeps Israel safe, he is the one who makes Joseph strong.

²⁵ My God is the one that helps you. My God is the most powerful one, and he is the one who blesses you and makes you strong.

He will send good rain to you from the sky, and he will make water come up from under the ground for you.

He will give you a lot of children and your animals will grow in number.

²⁶ I am asking God to do good things for you. The country or hills can't give you any help like that.

Joseph is the powerful leader over his brothers and so I am asking God to give Joseph all the good things I want him to have.

²⁷ Benjamin is dangerous. He is like a wild dog. He and his men are always fighting other people and taking their things. Then at night he splits up what they have taken and gives his fighters their share."

²⁸ Jacob told his 12 sons what would happen to each one of them later on. All the 12 sons had families that were big and they were called the 12 tribes of Israel.

Jacob told his sons what to do with his body after he died

²⁹⁻³¹ Jacob said to his sons, "I am about to die. I want you to take my body back to where my father and grandfather are buried in Canaan. My grandfather Abraham paid money for some country that belonged to a man named Efron from the Hittite tribe. Abraham wanted to use the cave

in that country as a cemetery, and it is in the paddock called Mack-pelah on the east side of Mamre. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah are all buried in that cave. And I buried my wife Leah there too.

³² Remember that money was paid to the Hittite people for that paddock and the cave and so that cemetery belongs to us.”

³³ When Jacob finished talking he lay back down on his bed and died.

50

Jacob died and was buried in Canaan

¹ When Jacob died, Joseph kissed and hugged his father's body and cried for a long time.

²⁻³ In the Egyptian culture, after an important person died, special doctors worked on the body. They put leaves and medicine on it so that the body would not go bad and smell. Joseph told his doctors to do that to Jacob's body and it took them 40 days. All the people in Egypt cried for 70 days, to show how sorry they were.

⁴ When the sorry time was finished, Joseph asked the king's leading helpers to give the king this message

⁵ Joseph said, “When my father was about to die, he made me promise to take his body back to Canaan and bury him in the family cemetery. He got that cemetery ready before he came down here to Egypt. And so just before he died, I

promised that I would do what he asked. Can I go and bury my father, and then come back.”

⁶ The king sent his answer back to Joseph, “Yes. You have to keep your promise. Go and bury your father.”

⁷⁻⁹ So Joseph, his brothers, and all the people that lived with them, left Egypt and went back to Canaan to bury Jacob's body. But they left their children and all their animals behind in Goshen.

All the king's main helpers and important workers went with Joseph and his brothers to Canaan. The king sent soldiers to go with Joseph, some of them rode horses and others rode in war wagons called chariots. And so it was a very big group of people that went with Joseph.

¹⁰ They came to a place called Atad near the Jordan River. In that place there was a threshing floor where the farmers hit the long grass to get the seeds out. When they got there, all of the people with Joseph cried out loud for his father Jacob for 7 days.

¹¹ There were Canaanite people living in that part of the country. When they saw how sorry the Egyptians were at the threshing floor they said, “Those Egyptian people are really sad for the person that died”. And so they called the place Abel Miz-ray-im, and that name means, those *Egyptians are really sad*.

¹² Joseph and his brothers did what their father Jacob wanted.

¹³ They carried his body into Canaan and buried him in the cave that was in the paddock called Mack-pelah near Mamre. It was the same cave that Abraham paid money to a Hittite man named Efron so that Abraham's family could use the cave as a cemetery.

¹⁴ Joseph and his brothers buried their father and then went back to Egypt.

The brothers were still frightened of Joseph.

¹⁵ Joseph's brothers said to each other after their father died, "We did a lot of bad things to Joseph. What if he is still angry with us and wants to pay us back for what we did to him?"

¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph that said, "Before he died, this is what your father Jacob said to us,

¹⁷ 'Go and see Joseph and say to him, "Joseph, we were wrong when we did those bad things to you. We are sorry. Please forgive us. Our father is dead now and so we are asking you to forgive us for what we did to you. All of us belong to the same God your father respected and followed." ' "

When Joseph heard what they said, he cried.

¹⁸ His brothers went to see him and bowed down to the ground in front of him. They said, "We are like nothing, we are like workmen that belong to you."

¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not be frightened. I am not God. I am not a judge to say that you are guilty.

²⁰ You wanted to hurt me, but God used what you did so that good things could happen, and a lot of people stayed alive.

²¹ Again, I tell you, do not be frightened. I will look after you and all your children.” Joseph kept on saying good things to them and made them feel better inside themselves.

Joseph's family

²² Joseph and all his family stayed in Egypt for a long time. Joseph lived for 110 years

²³ and in his life time he saw that his son Ephraim had children and grandchildren. And he saw that his son Manasseh had a son named Makir and Joseph adopted Makir's sons for himself.

Joseph died

²⁴ Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, and I know that God will look after you. One day, God will lead you out of this country back to the country he promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

²⁵ Then Joseph asked all the families that came from his father Israel, to make a promise. He said, “Promise me that when God leads you out of Egypt, you will take my body with you and bury it in Canaan.”

²⁶ Joseph was 110 years old when he died. The special doctors worked on Joseph's body for 40 days so that it would not go bad and smell. When they had finished working on his body, they put it in a coffin.

And so, Joseph's body was kept safe in Egypt.

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