

Genesis

The Beginning of the World

¹ God created the sky and the earth. At first, ² the earth was completely empty. There was nothing on the earth. Darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit moved over* the water.

The First Day—Light

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

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

The Second Day—Sky

⁶ Then God said, "Let there be a space‡ to separate the water into two parts!" ⁷ So God

* **1:2** moved over The Hebrew word means "to fly over" or "to swoop down," like a bird flying over its nest to protect its babies. † **1:3** Or "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. While ² the earth had no special shape, and darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit hovered over the water, ³ God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." Or "When God began to create the sky and the earth, ² while the earth was completely empty, and darkness covered the ocean, and a powerful wind blew over the water, ³ God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." ‡ **1:6** space Or "firmament." The Hebrew word can refer to a piece of metal that has been hammered into the shape of a bowl.

made the space and separated the water. Some of the water was above it, and some of the water was below it. ⁸ God named that space “sky.” There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the second day.

The Third Day— Dry Land and Plants

⁹ Then God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered together so that the dry land will appear.” And it happened. ¹⁰ God named the dry land “earth,” and he named the water that was gathered together “seas.” And God saw that this was good.

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

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

The Fourth Day—Sun, Moon, and Stars

¹⁴ Then God said, “Let there be lights in the sky. These lights will separate the days from the nights. They will be used for signs to show when

special meetings[§] begin and to show the days and years. ¹⁵ They will be in the sky to shine light on the earth.” And it happened.

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

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

The Fifth Day—Fish and Birds

²⁰ Then God said, “Let the water be filled with many living things, and let there be birds to fly in the air over the earth.” ²¹ So God created the large sea animals.* He created all the many living things in the sea and every kind of bird that flies in the air. And God saw that this was good.

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

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

§ **1:14** special meetings The Israelites used the sun and moon to decide when the months and years began. Many Israelite festivals and special meetings began at the time of the new moon or full moon. * **1:21** large sea animals Or “sea monsters.”

*The Sixth Day—
Land Animals and People*

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

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

26 Then God said, “Now let’s make humans[†] who will be like us.[‡] They will rule over all the fish in the sea and the birds in the air. They will rule over all the large animals and all the little things that crawl on the earth.”

27 So God created humans in his own image. He created them to be like himself.[§] He created them male and female. 28 God blessed them and said to them, “Have many children. Fill the earth and take control of it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the air. Rule over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

29 God said, “I am giving you all the grain bearing plants and all the fruit trees. These trees make fruit with seeds in it. This grain and fruit

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

[‡] **1:26** Now let’s make ... like us Or “Now let’s make humans in our image and in our likeness.” [§] **1:27** So God created humans ... himself Or “So God created them in his image. In the image of God he created them.” Compare Genesis 5:1, 3.

will be your food. ³⁰ And I am giving all the green plants to the animals. These green plants will be their food. Every animal on earth, every bird in the air, and all the little things that crawl on the earth will eat that food.” And all these things happened.

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

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

2

The Seventh Day—Rest

¹ So the earth, the sky, and everything in them were finished. ² God finished the work he was doing, so on the seventh day he rested from his work. ³ God blessed the seventh day and made it a holy day. He made it special because on that day he rested from all the work he did while creating the world.

The First Man and the Garden of Eden

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

⁶ So water* came up from the earth and spread over the ground. ⁷ Then the LORD God took dust

* **2:6** water Or “a mist.”

from the ground and made a man.[†] He breathed the breath of life into the man's nose, and the man became a living thing. ⁸ Then the LORD God planted a garden in the East,[‡] in a place named Eden. He put the man he made in that garden. ⁹ Then the LORD God caused all the beautiful trees that were good for food to grow in the garden. In the middle of the garden, he put the tree of life and the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil.

¹⁰ A river flowed from Eden and watered the garden. The river then separated and became four smaller rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first river was Pishon. This river flowed around the entire country of Havilah.[§] ¹² (There is gold in that country, and that gold is pure. A kind of expensive perfume and onyx are also found there.) ¹³ The name of the second river was Gihon. This river flowed around the whole land of Cush.* ¹⁴ The name of the third river was Tigris. This river flowed east of Assyria. The fourth river was the Euphrates.

¹⁵ The LORD God put the man in the Garden of Eden to work the soil and take care of the garden. ¹⁶ The LORD God gave him this command: "You may eat from any tree in the garden. ¹⁷ But you

[†] **2:7** man The Hebrew word means "man," "people," or the name "Adam." It is like the word meaning "earth" or "red clay."

[‡] **2:8** East This usually means the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as far east as the Persian Gulf. **§ 2:11** Havilah The land along the west coast of the Arabian peninsula and possibly, the part of Africa south of Ethiopia. * **2:13** Cush Usually this means Ethiopia, but here, it probably refers to the area north and east of the Tigris River.

must not eat from the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil. If you eat fruit from that tree, on that day you will certainly die!”

A Companion for Adam

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

¹⁹ The LORD God used dust from the ground and made every animal in the fields and every bird in the air. He brought all these animals to the man, and the man gave them all a name.

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

²³ And the man said,

“Finally! One like me,
with bones from my bones
and a body from my body.
She was taken out of a man,
so I will call her ‘woman.’ ”

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

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

3

The Beginning of Sin

¹ The snake was the most clever of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. The snake spoke to the woman and said, “Woman, did God really tell you that you must not eat from any tree in the garden?”

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

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

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

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

⁸ During the cool part of the day, the LORD God was walking in the garden. The man and the woman heard him, and they hid among the trees

in the garden. ⁹ The LORD God called to the man and said, "Where are you?"

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

¹¹ God said to the man, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat fruit from that special tree? I told you not to eat from that tree!"

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

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

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

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the snake,

"You did this very bad thing,
so bad things will happen to you.

It will be worse for you
than for any other animal.

You must crawl on your belly
and eat dust all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will make you and the woman enemies to
each other.

Your children and her children will be ene-
mies.

You will bite her child's foot,
but he will crush your head."

¹⁶ Then God said to the woman,

"I will cause you to have much trouble
when you are pregnant.

And when you give birth to children,

you will have much pain.
 You will want your husband very much,
 but he will rule over you.”*

17 Then God said to the man,

“I commanded you not to eat from that tree.
 But you listened to your wife and ate from
 it.
 So I will curse the ground because of you.
 You will have to work hard all your life for
 the food the ground produces.

18 The ground will grow thorns and weeds for
 you.

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

19 You will work hard for your food,
 until your face is covered with sweat.
 You will work hard until the day you die,
 and then you will become dust again.

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

20 Adam‡ named his wife Eve.§ He gave her
 this name because Eve would be the mother of
 everyone who ever lived.

* **3:16** You will ... over you Or “You will want to rule your
 husband, but he will rule over you.” In Hebrew this is like the
 last part of Genesis 4:7. † **3:18** See Genesis 1:28-29. ‡ **3:20**
 Adam This name means “man” or “people.” It is like the word
 meaning “earth” or “red clay.” § **3:20** Eve This name is like
 the Hebrew word meaning “life.”

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

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

²³ So the LORD God forced the man out of the Garden of Eden to work the ground he was made from. ²⁴ God forced the man to leave the garden. Then he put Cherub angels and a sword of fire at the entrance to the garden to protect it. The sword flashed around and around, guarding the way to the tree of life.

4

The First Family

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

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

The First Murder

³⁻⁴ At harvest time,† Cain brought a gift to the LORD. He brought some of the food that he grew from the ground, but Abel brought some animals

* **4:1** Cain This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “make” or “get.” † **4:3-4** At harvest time Literally, “at the end of days.”

from his flock. He chose some of his best sheep and brought the best parts from them.‡

The LORD accepted Abel and his gift. ⁵ But he did not accept Cain and his offering. Cain was sad because of this, and he became very angry. ⁶ The LORD asked Cain, “Why are you angry? Why does your face look sad? ⁷ You know that if you do what is right, I will accept you. But if you don’t, sin is ready to attack you. That sin will want to control you, but you must control it.”§

⁸ Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”* So they went to the field. Then Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

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

Cain answered, “I don’t know. Is it my job to watch over my brother?”

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

¹³ Then Cain said to the LORD, “This punishment is more than I can bear! ¹⁴ You are forcing

‡ **4:3-4** He chose ... from them Literally, “He brought some of his firstborn sheep, especially their fat.” § **4:7** But if you ... control it Or “But if you don’t do right, sin is crouching at your door. It wants you, but you must rule over it.” * **4:8** Let’s go ... field This sentence is found in the ancient versions but not in the standard Hebrew text.

me to leave the land, and I will not be able to be near you or have a home! Now I must wander from place to place, and anyone I meet could kill me.”

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

Cain’s Family

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

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

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

¹⁹ Lamech married two women. One wife was named Adah, and the other was named Zillah.

²⁰ Adah gave birth to Jabal. Jabal was the father[‡] of people who live in tents and earn their living by keeping cattle. ²¹ Jabal was Jubal’s brother. Jubal was the father of people who play the harp and flute. ²² Zillah gave birth to Tubal-Cain. Tubal-Cain was the father of people who work with bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-Cain was named Naamah.

²³ Lamech said to his wives,

[†] **4:16** Nod This name means “wandering.” [‡] **4:20** father This probably means that this man invented these things or was the first one to use them.

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice!
 You wives of Lamech, listen to me.
 A man hurt me, so I killed him.
 I even killed a child for hitting me.
²⁴ The punishment for killing Cain was very bad.
 But the punishment for killing me will be
 many times worse!”

Adam and Eve Have a New Son

²⁵ Adam again had sexual relations with his wife, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth. § Eve said, “God has given me another son. Cain killed Abel, but now I have Seth.” ²⁶ Seth also had a son. He named him Enosh. At that time people began to pray to the LORD.*

5

The History of Adam’s Family

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

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

* 4:26 people ... the LORD Literally, “people began calling on the name YAHWEH.” * 5:1 Adam This name means “man” or “people.” It is like the word meaning “earth” or “red clay.”

† 5:1 When God ... like himself Literally, “He made him in the image of God.” See Genesis 1:27; 5:3. ‡ 5:2 humans The Hebrew word means “Adam,” “man,” or “people.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

[§] **5:3** he had ... like Adam Or “he fathered a son in his image and likeness.” In Hebrew this is like Genesis 1:27; 5:1.

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

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

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

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

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

6

People Become Evil

¹⁻⁴ The number of people on earth continued to increase. When these people had daughters, the sons of God saw how beautiful they were. So they chose the women they wanted. They married them, and the women had their children.

* **5:24** Or “Enoch pleased God. Enoch disappeared. God took him.” † **5:29** Noah This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “to rest,” “to be sorry,” or “comfort.”

Then the LORD said, "People are only human. I will not let my Spirit be troubled by them forever. I will let them live only 120 years."^{*}

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

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

⁸ But Noah pleased the LORD.

Noah and the Great Flood

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

¹¹⁻¹² When God looked at the earth, he saw that people had ruined it. Violence was everywhere, and it had ruined their life on earth.

¹³ So God said to Noah, "Everyone has filled the earth with anger and violence. So I will destroy all living things. I will remove them from the

* **6:1-4** People ... 120 years Or "The spirit from me will not live in people forever, because they are flesh. They will live only 120 years." Or "My Spirit will not judge people forever, because they will all die in 120 years."

earth. ¹⁴ Use cypress wood[†] and build a boat for yourself. Make rooms in the boat and cover it with tar inside and out.

¹⁵ “This is the size I want you to make the boat: 300 cubits[‡] long, 50 cubits[§] wide, and 30 cubits^{*} high. ¹⁶ Make a window for the boat about 1 cubit[†] below the roof.[‡] Put a door in the side of the boat. Make three floors in the boat: a top deck, a middle deck, and a lower deck.

¹⁷ “Understand what I am telling you. I will bring a great flood of water on the earth. I will destroy all living things that live under heaven. Everything on the earth will die. ¹⁸ I will make a special agreement with you. You, your wife, your sons, and their wives will all go into the boat. ¹⁹ Also, you will take two of every living thing on the earth with you into the boat. Take a male and female of every kind of animal so that they might survive with you. ²⁰ Two of every kind of bird, animal, and creeping thing will come to you so that you might keep them alive. ²¹ Also bring

[†] **6:14** cypress wood In Hebrew, “gopher timbers.” It is uncertain what kind of wood this is. It might be a kind of tree or squared timbers. [‡] **6:15** 300 cubits 437' 1/8" (133 m) if this was the short cubit or 510' 1 13/16" (155.5 m) if it was the long cubit.

[§] **6:15** 50 cubits 72' 10" (22.2 m) if this was the short cubit or 85' 5/16" (25.92 m) if it was the long cubit. ^{*} **6:15** 30 cubits 43' 8 7/16" (13.3 m) if this was the short cubit or 51' 3/16" (15.55 m) if it was the long cubit. [†] **6:16** 1 cubit 17 1/2" (44.4 cm) if this was the short cubit or 20 5/8" (51.83 cm) if it was the long cubit. [‡] **6:16** Make a window ... below the roof Or “Make an opening for the boat about 18 inches tall.”

every kind of food into the boat, for you and for the animals.”

²² Noah did everything God commanded him.

7

The Flood Begins

¹ Then the LORD said to Noah, “I have seen that you are a good man, even among the evil people of this time. So gather your family, and all of you go into the boat. ² Get seven pairs (seven males and seven females) of every kind of clean animal. And get one pair (one male and one female) of every other animal on the earth. Lead all these animals into the boat with you. ³ Get seven pairs (seven males and seven females) of all the birds. This will allow all these animals to continue living on the earth after the other animals are destroyed. ⁴ Seven days from now, I will send much rain on the earth. It will rain for 40 days and 40 nights, and I will wipe everything off the face of the earth. I will destroy everything I made.” ⁵ Noah did everything the LORD told him to do.

⁶ Noah was 600 years old at the time the rains came. ⁷ He and his family went into the boat to be saved from the flood. His wife and his sons and their wives were on the boat with him. ⁸ All the clean animals, all the other animals on the earth, the birds, and everything that crawls on the earth ⁹ went into the boat with Noah. These animals went into the boat in groups of two, male and female, just as God commanded. ¹⁰ Seven

days later the flood started. The rain began to fall on the earth.

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

¹⁴ They and every kind of animal on the earth were in the boat. Every kind of cattle, every kind of animal that crawls on the earth, and every kind of bird were in the boat. ¹⁵ All these animals went into the boat with Noah. They came in groups of two from every kind of animal that had the breath of life. ¹⁶ All these animals went into the boat in groups of two, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind Noah.

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

²¹⁻²² Every living thing on earth died—every man and woman, every bird, and every kind of

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

animal. All the many kinds of animals and all the things that crawl on the ground died. Every living, breathing thing on dry land died. ²³ In this way God wiped the earth clean—he destroyed every living thing on the earth—every human, every animal, everything that crawls, and every bird. All that was left was Noah and his family and the animals that were with him in the boat. ²⁴ The water continued to cover the earth for 150 days.

8

The Flood Ends

¹ But God did not forget about Noah. God remembered him and all the animals that were with him in the boat. God made a wind blow over the earth, and all the water began to disappear.

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

⁶ Forty days later Noah opened the window he had made in the boat. ⁷ Then he sent out a raven. The raven flew from place to place until the ground was dry and the water was gone.

⁸ Noah also sent out a dove. He wanted it to find

dry ground. He wanted to know if water still covered the earth.

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

¹⁰ After seven days Noah again sent out the dove. ¹¹ And that afternoon the dove came back to Noah. The dove had a fresh olive leaf in its mouth. This was a sign to show Noah that there was dry ground on the earth. ¹² Seven days later Noah sent the dove out again. But this time the dove didn't come back.

¹³ After that Noah opened the door* of the boat. He looked and saw that the ground was dry. This was the first day of the first month of the year. He was 601 years old. ¹⁴ By the 27th day of the second month, the ground was completely dry.

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

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

²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to honor the LORD. Noah took some of all the clean birds and some

* **8:13** opened the door Literally, "removed the covering."

of all the clean animals and burned them on the altar as a gift to God.

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

9

The New Beginning

¹ God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Have many children. Fill the earth with your people. ² Every animal on earth, every bird in the air, every animal that crawls on the ground, and every fish in the sea will be afraid of you. All of them will be under your control. ³ In the past, I gave you the green plants to eat. Now every animal will also be food for you. I give you everything on earth—it is yours. ⁴ But I give you one command. You must not eat meat that still has its life (blood) in it. ⁵ Also, I will demand your blood for your lives. That is, I will demand the life of any person or animal that takes a human life.

⁶ “God made humans to be like himself. So whoever kills a person must be killed by another person.

⁷ “Have many children and fill the earth with your people.”

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

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

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

Problems Begin Again

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

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

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

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

²⁶ Noah also said,

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

May Canaan be Shem's slave.

²⁷ May God give more land to Japheth.

May God live in Shem's tents,
and may Canaan be their slave."

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

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

10

Nations Grow and Spread

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

Japheth's Descendants

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

³ Gomer's sons were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

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

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

Ham's Descendants

⁶ Ham's sons were Cush,† Mizraim,‡ Put, and Canaan.

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

Raamah's sons were Sheba and Dedan.

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

* **10:4** Dodanim Or "Rodanim, the people of Rhodes." † **10:6** Cush Another name for Ethiopia. ‡ **10:6** Mizraim Another name for Egypt. Also in verse 13.

man is like Nimrod, a great hunter before the LORD.”

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

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

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

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

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

Shem’s Descendants

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

§ **10:21** One ... Hebrew people Literally, “To Shem was born the father of Eber’s sons.”

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

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

²⁴ Arphaxad was the father of Shelah.

Shelah was the father of Eber.

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

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

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

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

11

The Tower of Babel

¹ There was a time when the whole world spoke one language. Everyone used the same

* **10:25** Peleg This name means "division." † **10:30** East This usually means the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as far east as the Persian Gulf. Also in 11:2.

words. ² Then people began to move from the East. They found a plain in the land of Babylonia and stayed there to live. ³ Then they said to each other, "Let's make some bricks of clay and bake them in the fire." Then they used these bricks as stones, and they used tar as mortar.

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

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

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

The History of Shem's Family

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The History of Terah's Family

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

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

12

God Calls Abram

¹ The LORD said to Abram, "Leave your country and your people. Leave your father's family and go to the country that I will show you.

² I will build a great nation from you.

I will bless you

and make your name famous.

People will use your name

to bless other people.

³ I will bless those who bless you,

[†] **11:28** Ur of Babylonia Literally, "Ur of the Chaldeans." A city in southern Babylonia. Also in verse 31.

and I will curse those who curse you.
I will use you to bless
all the people on earth.”

Abram Goes to Canaan

⁴ So Abram left Haran just like the LORD said, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran. ⁵ He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the slaves, and all the other things he had gotten in Haran. Then he and his group moved to the land of Canaan. ⁶ Abram traveled through the land as far as the town of Shechem and then to the big tree at Moreh. The Canaanites were living in the land at that time.

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

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

Abram in Egypt

¹⁰ During this time there was not enough food in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to live.

¹¹ Just before they arrived in Egypt, Abram told Sarai, “Look, I know that you are a very beautiful

* **12:7** The LORD appeared God often used special shapes so that people could see him. Sometimes he was like a man, an angel, a fire, or a bright light. † **12:8** Ai The name of this town means “the ruins.”

woman. ¹² When the Egyptian men see you, they will say, 'This woman is his wife.' Then they will kill me and keep you alive because they want you. ¹³ So tell them that you are my sister. Then they will be good to me because of you. In this way you will save my life."

¹⁴ So when Abram went into Egypt, the Egyptian men saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. ¹⁵ Even some of Pharaoh's officials noticed her and told Pharaoh how beautiful she was. So they took her to Pharaoh's house. ¹⁶ Pharaoh was kind to Abram because he thought Abram was Sarai's brother. He gave Abram sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and men and women servants.

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

13

Abram Returns to Canaan

¹ So Abram left Egypt. He traveled through the Negev with his wife and everything he owned. Lot was also with them. ² At this time Abram

was very rich. He had many animals and much silver and gold.

³ Abram continued traveling around. He left the Negev and went back to Bethel. He went to the place between the city of Bethel and Ai,* where he and his family had camped before.

⁴ This was where Abram had built an altar earlier. So he worshiped the LORD there.

Abram and Lot Separate

⁵ During this time Lot was also traveling with Abram. Lot had many animals and tents.

⁶ Abram and Lot had so many animals that the land could not support both of them together.

⁷ (The Canaanites and the Perizzites were also living in this land at the same time.) The shepherds of Abram and Lot began to argue.

⁸ So Abram said to Lot, "There should be no arguing between you and me or between your people and my people. We are all brothers. ⁹ We should separate. You can choose any place you want. If you go to the left, I will go to the right. If you go to the right, I will go to the left."

¹⁰ Lot looked and saw the whole Jordan Valley. He saw that there was much water there. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. At that time the Jordan Valley all the way to Zoar was like the LORD'S Garden. This was good land, like the land of Egypt.) ¹¹ So Lot chose to live in the Jordan Valley. The two men separated, and Lot began traveling east.

¹² Abram stayed in the land of Canaan, and Lot

* **13:3** Ai The name of this town means "the ruins."

lived among the cities in the valley. Lot moved as far as Sodom and made his camp there. ¹³ The LORD knew that the people of Sodom were very evil sinners.

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

¹⁸ So Abram moved his tents. He went to live near the big trees of Mamre. This was near the city of Hebron. There he built an altar to honor the LORD.

14

Lot Is Captured

¹ Amraphel was the king of Babylonia, Arioch was the king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer was the king of Elam, and Tidal was the king of Goiim.

² All these kings fought a war against King Bera of Sodom: King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela. (Bela is also called Zoar.)

³ All these kings joined their armies in the Valley of Siddim. (The Valley of Siddim is now the Salt Sea.) ⁴ These kings had served Kedorlaomer for twelve years. But in the 13th year, they all rebelled against him. ⁵ So in the 14th year, King Kedorlaomer and the kings with

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

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

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

¹¹ So Kedorlaomer and his armies took everything that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah owned. They took all their food and clothing and left. ¹² Lot, the son of Abram's brother, was living in Sodom, and they captured him. They also took everything he owned and left. ¹³ One of the men

* **14:6** Seir Or "Edom." † **14:6** El Paran Probably the town Elath, at the southern tip of Israel near the Red Sea.

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

who had escaped went to Abram the Hebrew and told him what happened. Abram was camped near the trees of Mamre the Amorite. Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner[§] had made an agreement to help each other, and they had also signed an agreement to help Abram.

Abram Rescues Lot

¹⁴ When Abram learned that Lot was captured, he called all of his family together. There were 318 trained soldiers. He led the men and chased the enemy all the way to the town of Dan.

¹⁵ That night he and his men made a surprise attack against the enemy. They defeated them and chased them to Hobah, north of Damascus.

¹⁶ Then Abram brought back everything the enemy had stolen, as well as the women and servants, his nephew Lot, and everything Lot owned.

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

Melchizedek

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

“Abram, may you be blessed by God Most High,

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

the one who made heaven and earth.
²⁰ And we praise God Most High,
who helped you defeat your enemies.”

Abram gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything he had taken during the battle. ²¹ Then the king of Sodom told Abram, “Give me my people who were captured. But you can keep everything else.”

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

15

God’s Agreement With Abram

¹ After all these things happened, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision. God said, “Abram, don’t be afraid. I will defend you and give you a great reward.”

² But Abram said, “Lord GOD, there is nothing you can give me that will make me happy, because I have no son. My slave Eliezer from Damascus will get everything I own after I die.”

³ Abram said, “You have given me no son, so

a slave born in my house will get everything I have.”

⁴ Then the LORD spoke to Abram and said, “That slave will not be the one to get what you have. You will have a son who will get everything you own.”

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

⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and because of this faith the Lord accepted him as one who has done what is right. ⁷ He said to Abram, “I am the LORD who led you from Ur of Babylonia.* I did this so that I could give you this land. You will own this land.”

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

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

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

¹² The sun began to go down and Abram got very sleepy. While he was asleep, a very terrible darkness came over him. ¹³ Then the Lord said to Abram, “You should know this: Your

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

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

¹⁵ “You yourself will live to be very old. You will die in peace and will be buried with your family. ¹⁶ After four generations your people will come to this land again and defeat the Amorites. That will happen in the future because the Amorites are not yet guilty enough to lose their land.”

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

¹⁸ So on that day the LORD made a promise and an agreement with Abram. He said, “I will give this land to your descendants. I will give them the land between the River of Egypt[§] and the great river Euphrates. ¹⁹ This is the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰ Hittites,

[†] **15:17** firepot A clay pot in which burning coals were placed to be used for starting new fires. [‡] **15:17** passed between ... animals This showed that God “signed” or “sealed” the agreement he made with Abram. People showed that they were sincere in making an agreement by walking between the parts of animals that had been cut into pieces and saying something like, “May this same thing happen to me if I don’t keep the agreement.” [§] **15:18** River of Egypt That is, the stream called “Wadi El-Arish.”

Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹ Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”

16

Hagar the Servant Girl

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

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

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

Hagar’s Son Ishmael

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

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

⁹ The angel of the LORD said to her, "Sarai is your owner. Go home to her and obey her."

¹⁰ The angel of the LORD also said, "From you will come many people—too many people to count."

¹¹ Then the angel of the LORD said,

"Hagar, you are now pregnant,
and you will have a son.

You will name him Ishmael,*
because the LORD has heard that you were
treated badly.

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

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

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

¹³ The LORD talked to Hagar. She began to use a new name for God. She said to him, "You are 'God Who Sees Me.'" She said this because she thought, "I see that even in this place God sees me and cares for me!" ¹⁴ So the well there was called Beer Lahai Roi.† It is between Kadesh and Bered.

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

* **16:11** Ishmael This name means "God hears." † **16:14** Beer Lahai Roi This means "The well of the Living One who sees me."

17

Circumcision—Proof of the Agreement

¹ When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him. He said, “I am God All-Powerful.* Obey me and live the right way. ² If you do this, I will prepare an agreement between us. I will promise to make your people a great nation.”

³ Then Abram bowed down before God. God said to him, ⁴ “This is my part of our agreement: I will make you the father of many nations. ⁵ I will change your name from Abram[†] to Abraham,[‡] because I am making you the father of many nations. ⁶ I will give you many descendants. New nations and kings will come from you. ⁷ And I will prepare an agreement between me and you. This agreement will also be for all your descendants. It will continue forever. I will be your God and the God of all your descendants. ⁸ And I will give this land to you and to all your descendants. I will give you the land you are traveling through—the land of Canaan. I will give you this land forever, and I will be your God.”

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

* **17:1** God All-Powerful Literally, “El Shaddai.” † **17:5** Abram This name means “honored father.” ‡ **17:5** Abraham This name means “great father” or “father of many.”

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

Isaac—the Promised Son

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

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

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

§ **17:14** cut off from his people This means he must be separated from his family and lose his share of the inheritance. * **17:15** Sarai A name, probably Aramaic, meaning “princess.” † **17:15** Sarah A Hebrew name meaning “princess.”

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

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

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

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

18

The Three Visitors

¹ Later, the LORD again appeared to Abraham near the oak trees of Mamre. It was the hottest

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

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

The three men said, “Do as you wish.”

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

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

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

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

Sarah was listening in the tent and heard these things. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were very old. Sarah was past the right age for women to have children. ¹² So she laughed to herself and said,

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

“I am old, and my husband is old. I am too old to have a baby.”

¹³ Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Sarah laughed and said she was too old to have a baby.

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

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

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

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

Abraham’s Bargain With God

¹⁷ The LORD said to himself, “Should I tell Abraham what I am going to do now?

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

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

²² So the men turned and started walking toward Sodom while Abraham stood there before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham approached him and

asked, “Will you destroy the good people while you are destroying those who are evil? ²⁴ What if there are fifty good people in that city? Will you still destroy it? Surely you will save the city for the fifty good people living there. ²⁵ Surely you would not destroy the city. You would not destroy fifty good people to kill those who are evil. If that happened, those who are good would be the same as those who are evil—both would be punished. As the judge of the whole world, surely you would do the right thing!”

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

²⁷ Then Abraham said, “Compared to you, Lord, I am only dust and ashes. But let me bother you again and ask you this question. ²⁸ What if there are five less than fifty? Will you destroy a whole city because of just five people?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

³³ The LORD finished speaking to Abraham and left. Then Abraham went back home.

19

Lot’s Visitors

¹⁻² That evening the two angels came to the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting near the city gates and saw them. He got up and went to them. He bowed to show respect and said, “Sirs, please come to my house, and I will serve you. There you can wash your feet and stay the night. Then tomorrow you can continue your journey.”

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

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

⁴ That evening, just before bedtime, men from every part of town came to Lot’s house. They stood around the house and called to Lot. They said, ⁵ “Where are the two men who came to you

tonight? Bring them out to us. We want to have sex with them.”

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

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

¹⁰ But the two men staying with Lot opened the door, pulled him back inside the house, and closed the door. ¹¹ Then they did something to the men outside the door—they caused all these evil men, young and old, to become blind. So the men trying to get in the house could not find the door.

The Escape From Sodom

¹² The two men said to Lot, “Are there any other people from your family living in this city? Do you have any sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or any other people from your family here? If so,

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

you should tell them to leave now. ¹³ We are going to destroy this city. The LORD heard how evil this city is, so he sent us to destroy it.”

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

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

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

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

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

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

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

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

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

²⁹ God destroyed the cities in the valley, but he remembered what Abraham had said. So God sent Lot away from those cities before destroying them.

Lot and His Daughters

³⁰ Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar, so he and his two daughters went to live in the mountains in a cave. ³¹ One day the older daughter said to the younger, “Everywhere on the earth, men and women marry and have a family. But our father

[†] **19:22** Zoar This name means “small.”

is old, and there are no men around here to give us children. ³² So let's get our father drunk with wine. Then we can have sex with him. That way we can use our father to keep our family alive!"

³³ That night the two girls went to their father and got him drunk with wine. Then the older daughter went and had sexual relations with him. He did not even know when she came to bed or when she got up.

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

³⁶ Both of Lot's daughters became pregnant. Their father was the father of their babies. ³⁷ The older daughter gave birth to a son. She named him Moab.‡ Moab is the ancestor of all the Moabites living today. ³⁸ The younger daughter also gave birth to a son. She named him Ben-Ammi.§ Ben-Ammi is the ancestor of all the Ammonites living today.

‡ **19:37** Moab In Hebrew this name sounds like "from father."

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

20

Abraham Goes to Gerar

¹ Abraham left that place and traveled to the Negev. He settled in the city of Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur. While in Gerar, ² Abraham told people that Sarah was his sister. King Abimelech of Gerar heard this. Abimelech wanted Sarah, so he sent some servants to take her. ³ But one night God spoke to Abimelech in a dream and said, "You will die. The woman you took is married."

⁴ But Abimelech had not yet slept with Sarah, so he said, "Lord, I am not guilty. Would you kill an innocent man?" ⁵ Abraham himself told me, "This woman is my sister," and she also said, "This man is my brother." I am innocent. I did not know what I was doing."

⁶ Then God said to Abimelech in a dream, "Yes, I know that you are innocent and that you did not know what you were doing. I saved you. I did not allow you to sin against me. I was the one who did not allow you to sleep with her." ⁷ So give Abraham his wife again. He is a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you don't give Sarah back to him, I promise that you will die. And all your family will die with you."

⁸ So very early the next morning, Abimelech called all his servants and told them about the dream. The servants were very afraid. ⁹ Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "Why have you done this to us? What wrong did I do to you? Why did you lie and say that

she was your sister? You brought great trouble to my kingdom. You should not have done this to me. ¹⁰ What were you afraid of? Why did you do this to me?"

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

¹⁴ So Abimelech gave Sarah back to Abraham. Abimelech also gave Abraham some sheep, cattle, and slaves. ¹⁵ And Abimelech said, "Look all around you. This is my land. You may live any place you want."

¹⁶ Abimelech said to Sarah, "I gave your brother Abraham 1000 pieces of silver. I did this to show that I am very sorry. I want everyone to see that I did the right thing."

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ The LORD made all the women in Abimelech's family not able to have children. God did this because Abimelech had taken Sarah, Abraham's wife. But Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his servant girls.

21

Finally, a Baby for Sarah

¹ The LORD came back to visit Sarah as he said he would, and he kept his promise to her. ² At

exactly the time God said it would happen, Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. ³ Abraham named his son Isaac.* ⁴ Abraham did what God commanded and circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old.

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

Trouble at Home

⁸ Isaac continued to grow, and soon he was old enough to begin eating solid food. So Abraham gave a big party. ⁹ Sarah saw Hagar's son playing. (Hagar was the Egyptian slave woman who gave birth to Abraham's first son.) ¹⁰ Sarah said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son. Send them away! When we die, our son Isaac will get everything we have. I don't want that slave woman's son sharing these things with my son Isaac!"

¹¹ This upset Abraham very much. He was worried about his son Ishmael. ¹² But God said to Abraham, "Don't worry about the boy and the slave woman. Do what Sarah wants. Your descendants will be those who come through Isaac. ¹³ But I will also bless the son of your slave woman. He is your son, so I will make a great nation from his family also."

* **21:3** Isaac This name means "he laughs" or "he is happy."

¹⁴ Early the next morning Abraham took some food and water and gave them to Hagar. She carried them and left with her boy. She left that place and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.

¹⁵ After some time, when all their drinking water was gone, Hagar put her son under a bush.

¹⁶ Then she walked a short distance away and sat down. She thought her son would die because there was no water. She did not want to watch him die. She sat there and began to cry.

¹⁷ God heard the boy crying, and God's angel called to Hagar from heaven. He said, "What is wrong, Hagar? Don't be afraid! God has heard the boy crying there. ¹⁸ Go help the boy. Hold his hand and lead him. I will make him the father of many people."

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

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

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

Abraham's Bargain With Abimelech

²² Then Abimelech and Phicol spoke with Abraham. Phicol was the commander of Abimelech's army. They said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do. ²³ So make a promise to me here before God. Promise that you will be fair with me and with my children. Promise that you will be kind to me and this country where

you have lived. Promise that you will be as kind to me as I have been to you.”

²⁴ And Abraham said, “I promise to treat you the same way you have treated me.” ²⁵ Then Abraham complained to Abimelech because Abimelech’s servants had captured a well of water.

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

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

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

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

³¹ So after that, the well was called Beersheba.‡ Abraham gave the well this name because it was the place where they made a promise to each other.

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

³³ Abraham planted a special tree at Beersheba and prayed to the LORD, the God who lives

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

‡ **21:31** Beersheba This name means “well of the oath.”

forever. ³⁴ And Abraham lived as a stranger for a long time in the country of the Philistines.

22

Abraham, Kill Your Son

¹ After these things God decided to test Abraham's faith. God said to him, "Abraham!"

And he said, "Yes!"

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

³ In the morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took Isaac and two servants with him. He cut the wood for the sacrifice. Then they went to the place where God told them to go.

⁴ After they traveled three days, Abraham looked up, and in the distance he saw the place where they were going. ⁵ Then he said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go to that place and worship. Then we will come back to you later."

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

⁷ Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!"

Abraham answered, "Yes, son?"

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

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

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

¹¹ But the angel of the LORD stopped him. The angel called from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!”

Abraham answered, “Yes?”

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

¹³ Then Abraham noticed a ram whose horns were caught in a bush. So Abraham went and took the ram. He offered it, instead of his son, as a sacrifice to God. ¹⁴ So Abraham gave that place a name, “The LORD Provides.”* Even today people say, “On the mountain of the LORD, he will give us what we need.”†

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time. ¹⁶ The angel said, “You were ready to kill your only son for me. Since you did this for me, I make you this promise: I, the LORD, promise that ¹⁷ I will surely

* **22:14** The LORD Provides Hebrew, “*Yahweh Yireh*,” which can mean “the LORD sees” or “the LORD gives.” † **22:14** On the mountain ... need Or “On this mountain the LORD can be seen.”

bless you and give you as many descendants as the stars in the sky. There will be as many people as sand on the seashore. And your people will live in cities that they will take from their enemies. ¹⁸ Every nation on the earth will be blessed through your descendants. I will do this because you obeyed me.”

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

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

23

Sarah Dies

¹ Sarah lived to be 127 years old. ² She died in the city of Kiriath Arba (Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Abraham was very sad and cried for her there. ³ Then he left his dead wife and went to talk to the Hittites. He said, ⁴ “I am only a foreigner staying in your country. I have no place to bury my wife. Please give me some land so that I can bury her.”

⁵ The Hittites answered Abraham, ⁶ “Sir, you are a great leader* among us. You can have the best place we have to bury your dead. You can have any of our burying places that you want. None of us will stop you from burying your wife there.”

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

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

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

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

¹⁶ Abraham understood that Ephron was telling him the price of the land.‡ So Abraham paid him for the land. He weighed out ten

* **23:6** great leader Literally, “God’s prince.” † **23:15** Ten pounds Literally, “400 shekels” (4.6 kg). Also in verse 16. ‡ **23:16** Abraham understood ... the land Literally, “Abraham heard.”

pounds of silver for Ephron and gave it to the merchant. §

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

24

A Wife for Isaac

¹ Abraham lived to be a very old man. The LORD blessed him and everything he did. ² Abraham's oldest servant was in charge of everything he owned. Abraham called that servant to him and said, "Put your hand under my leg.*" ³ Now I want you to make a promise to me. Promise to me before the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry a girl from Canaan. We live among these people, but don't let him marry a Canaanite girl. ⁴ Go back to my country, to my

§ **23:16** merchant Someone who earns their living by buying and selling things. Here, this is probably a person who was helping Abraham and Ephron write the contract in verses 17 and 18. * **24:2** Put your hand under my leg This was a sign of a very important promise that Abraham trusted his servant to keep.

own people, to find a wife for my son Isaac. Bring her here to him.”

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

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

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

The Search Begins

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

¹² The servant said, “LORD, you are the God of my master Abraham. Please show your kindness to my master by helping me find a wife for his son Isaac. ¹³ Here I am, standing by this well of water, and the young women from the city are coming out to get water. ¹⁴ I will say to one of them, ‘Please put your jar down so that I can

drink.’ Let her answer show whether she is the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. If she says, ‘Drink, and I will also give water to your camels,’ I will know that she is the right one. It will be proof that you have shown kindness to my master.”

A Wife Is Found

¹⁵ Before the servant finished praying, a young woman named Rebekah came to the well. She was the daughter of Bethuel. (Bethuel was the son of Milcah and Nahor, Abraham’s brother.) Rebekah came to the well with her water jar on her shoulder. ¹⁶ She was very pretty. She was a virgin; no man had ever had sexual relations with her. She went down to the well and filled her jar. ¹⁷ Then the servant ran to her and said, “Please give me a little water to drink from your jar.”

¹⁸ Rebekah quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder and gave him a drink. She said, “Drink this, sir.” ¹⁹ As soon as she finished giving him something to drink, Rebekah said, “I will also pour some water for your camels.” ²⁰ So Rebekah quickly poured all the water from her jar into the drinking trough for the camels. Then she ran to the well to get more water, and she gave water to all the camels.

²¹ The servant quietly watched her. He wanted to be sure that the LORD had given him an answer and had made his trip successful. ²² After the camels finished drinking, he gave Rebekah

a gold ring that weighed 1/4 ounce.[†] He also gave her two gold arm bracelets that weighed 2 ounces[‡] each. ²³ The servant asked, “Who is your father? And is there a place in your father’s house for me and my men to sleep?”

²⁴ Rebekah answered, “My father is Bethuel, the son of Milcah and Nahor.” ²⁵ Then she said, “Yes, we have straw and other food for your camels and a place for you to sleep.”

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

²⁸ Then Rebekah ran and told her family about all these things. ²⁹⁻³⁰ She had a brother named Laban. She told him what the man had said to her. Laban was listening to her. And when he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, he ran out to the well. There the man was, standing by the camels at the well. ³¹ Laban said, “Sir, you are welcome to come in![§] You don’t have to stand outside here. I have prepared a room for you to sleep in and a place for your camels.”

³² So Abraham’s servant went into the house. Laban unloaded his camels and gave them straw and feed. Then he gave Abraham’s servant water so that he and the men with him could wash their feet. ³³ Laban then gave him food to eat, but the

[†] **24:22** 1/4 ounce Literally, “1 *beka*” (5.75 g). [‡] **24:22** 2 ounces Literally, “5 measures” (57.5 g). [§] **24:31** Sir, you are welcome to come in Literally, “Come in, blessed of the LORD!”

servant refused to eat. He said, "I will not eat until I have told you why I came."

So Laban said, "Then tell us."

Bargaining for Rebekah

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

⁴² "Today I came to this well and said, 'LORD, God of my master Abraham, please make my trip successful. ⁴³ I will stand by this well and wait for a young woman to come to get water. Then

I will say, "Please give me water from your jar to drink." ⁴⁴ The right woman will answer in a special way. She will say, "Drink this water, and I will also get water for your camels." That way I will know that she is the one the LORD has chosen for my master's son.'

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

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

⁵² When Abraham's servant heard this, he bowed to the ground before the LORD. ⁵³ Then

he gave Rebekah the gifts he brought. He gave her beautiful clothes and gold and silver jewelry. He also gave expensive gifts to her mother and brother. ⁵⁴ Then he and his men had something to eat and drink, and they spent the night there. Early the next morning they got up and the servant said, "Now we must go back to my master."

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

⁵⁶ But the servant said to them, "Don't make me wait. The LORD has made my trip successful. Now let me go back to my master."

⁵⁷ Rebekah's brother and mother said, "We will call Rebekah and ask her what she wants to do."

⁵⁸ They called her and asked her, "Do you want to go with this man now?"

Rebekah said, "Yes, I will go."

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

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

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

⁶² Isaac had left Beer Lahai Roi and was now living in the Negev. ⁶³ One evening he went out

to the field to think.* He looked up and saw the camels coming from far away.

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

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

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

25

Abraham’s Family

¹ Abraham married again. His new wife was named Keturah. ² She gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. ³ Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. The people of Asshur,* Leum, and Letush were descendants of Dedan. ⁴ The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these sons came from the marriage of Abraham and Keturah. ⁵⁻⁶ Before Abraham died, he gave some gifts to his sons who were from his slave women. He sent them to the East,† away from Isaac. Then Abraham gave everything he owned to Isaac.

* **24:63** think Or “to go for a walk.” * **25:3** Asshur Or “Assyria.” † **25:5-6** East This usually means the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as far east as the Persian Gulf.

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

¹² This is the list of Ishmael's family. Ishmael was Abraham and Hagar's son. (Hagar was Sarah's Egyptian maid.) ¹³ These are the names of Ishmael's sons: The first son was Nebaioth; then Kedar was born, then Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵ Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. ¹⁶ These were the names of Ishmael's sons. Each son had his own camp that became a small town. The twelve sons were leaders over their own people. ¹⁷ Ishmael lived to be 137 years old. Then he died and went to be with his people. ¹⁸ His descendants settled throughout the desert area from Havilah to Shur. This area begins near Egypt and goes toward Assyria. Ishmael's people were often at war with[‡] the other descendants of Abraham.

Isaac's Family

¹⁹ This is the story of Isaac. Abraham had a son named Isaac. ²⁰ When Isaac was 40 years old, he married Rebekah. Rebekah was from Paddan Aram. She was Bethuel's daughter and

[‡] **25:18** were often at war with Or "lived away from."

the sister of Laban the Aramean. ²¹ Isaac's wife could not have children. So Isaac prayed to the LORD for her. The LORD heard Isaac's prayer, and he allowed Rebekah to become pregnant.

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

"The leaders of two nations are in your body.
Two nations will come from you,
and they will be divided.
One of them will be stronger,
and the older will serve the younger."

²⁴ When the right time came, Rebekah gave birth to twins. ²⁵ The first baby was red. His skin was like a hairy robe. So he was named Esau. § ²⁶ When the second baby was born, he was holding tightly to Esau's heel. So that baby was named Jacob.* Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob and Esau were born.

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

²⁹ One day Esau came back from hunting. He was tired and weak from hunger. Jacob was

§ **25:25** Esau This name is like the word meaning "hairy."

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

boiling a pot of beans. ³⁰ So Esau said to Jacob, “I am weak with hunger. Let me have some of that red soup.” (That is why people call him “Red.”[†])

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

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

³³ But Jacob said, “First, promise me that you will give them to me.” So Esau made an oath to him and sold his rights as the firstborn son to Jacob. ³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil[‡] soup. Esau ate the food, had something to drink, and then left. So Esau showed that he did not care about his rights as the firstborn son.

26

Isaac Lies to Abimelech

¹ Now there was a famine. This was like the famine that happened during Abraham’s life. So Isaac went to the town of Gerar, to King Abimelech of the Philistines. ² The LORD spoke to Isaac and said, “Don’t go down to Egypt. Live in the land that I commanded you to live in. ³ Stay in this land, and I will be with you. I will bless you. I will give you and your family all these lands. I will do what I promised to Abraham your father. ⁴ I will make your family as many as the stars of heaven, and I will give all these lands to your family. Through your descendants* every nation on earth will be blessed. ⁵ I will do this

[†] **25:30** Red Literally, “Edom,” a name that means “red.”

[‡] **25:34** lentil A type of bean. * **26:4** descendants Or “Descendant.” See Gal. 3:16.

because your father Abraham obeyed my words and did what I said. He obeyed my commands, my laws, and my rules.”

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

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

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

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

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

Isaac Becomes Rich

¹² Isaac planted fields in that place, and that year he gathered a great harvest. The LORD blessed him very much. ¹³ Isaac became rich. He gathered more and more wealth until he became a very rich man. ¹⁴ He had many flocks and herds of animals. He also had many slaves. All the Philistines were jealous of him. ¹⁵ So

they destroyed all the wells that Isaac's father Abraham and his servants had dug many years before. They filled them with sand. ¹⁶ Abimelech said to Isaac, "Leave our country. You have become much more powerful than we are."

¹⁷ So Isaac left that place and camped near the little river of Gerar. He stayed there and lived. ¹⁸ Long before this time, Abraham had dug many wells. After he died, the Philistines filled the wells with sand. So Isaac went back and dug those wells again. He gave them the same names his father had given them. ¹⁹ Isaac's servants also dug a well near the little river and found fresh water.† ²⁰ But the men who herded sheep in the Valley of Gerar argued with Isaac's servants. They said, "This water is ours." So Isaac named that well Esek.‡ He gave it that name because it was the place where they had argued with him.

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

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

²³ From there Isaac went to Beersheba. ²⁴ The LORD spoke to him that night and said, "I am the

† **26:19** fresh water Or "an underground stream." Literally, "living water." ‡ **26:20** Esek This means "argument" or "fight."

§ **26:21** Sitnah This means "hatred" or "being an enemy."

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

God of your father Abraham. Don't be afraid. I am with you, and I will bless you. I will make your family great. I will do this because of my servant Abraham." ²⁵ So Isaac built an altar and worshiped the LORD in that place. He set up camp there, and his servants dug a well.

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

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

²⁸ They answered, "Now we know that the LORD is with you. We think that we should make an agreement. We want you to make a promise to us. ²⁹ We did not hurt you; now you should promise not to hurt us. We sent you away, but we sent you away in peace. Now it is clear that the LORD has blessed you."

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

³² On that day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well they had dug. The servants said, "We found water in that well." ³³ So Isaac named it Shibah.† And that city is still called Beersheba.‡

Esau's Wives

† **26:33** Shibah A Hebrew word meaning "seven" or "oath."

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

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

27

Jacob Tricks Isaac

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

Esau answered, "Here I am."

² Isaac said, "I am old. Maybe I will die soon.

³ So take your bow and arrows and go hunting. Kill an animal for me to eat. ⁴ Prepare the food that I love. Bring it to me, and I will eat it. Then I will bless you before I die." ⁵ So Esau went hunting.

Rebekah was listening when Isaac told this to his son Esau. ⁶ Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Listen, I heard your father talking to your brother Esau. ⁷ Your father said, 'Kill an animal for me to eat. Prepare the food for me, and I will eat it. Then, with the LORD as witness, I will bless you before I die.' ⁸ So listen, son, and do what I tell you. ⁹ Go out to our goats and bring me two young ones. I will prepare them the way your father loves them. ¹⁰ Then you will carry the food to your father, and he will bless you before he dies."

¹¹ But Jacob told his mother Rebekah, "My brother Esau is a hairy man. I am not hairy like him. ¹² If my father touches me, he will know

that I am not Esau. Then he will not bless me—he will curse me because I tried to trick him.”

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

¹⁴ So Jacob went out and got two goats and brought them to his mother. His mother cooked the goats in the special way that Isaac loved.

¹⁵ Then Rebekah took the clothes that her older son Esau loved to wear. She put these clothes on the younger son Jacob. ¹⁶ She took the skins of the goats and put them on Jacob’s hands and on his neck. ¹⁷ Then she got the food she had cooked and gave it to Jacob.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

²⁴ Isaac said, "Are you really my son Esau?"
Jacob answered, "Yes, I am."

The Blessing for Jacob

²⁵ Then Isaac said, "Bring me the food. I will eat it and bless you." So Jacob gave him the food, and he ate it. Then Jacob gave him some wine, and he drank it.

²⁶ Then Isaac said to him. "Son, come near and kiss me." ²⁷ So Jacob went to his father and kissed him. When Isaac smelled Esau's clothes, he blessed him and said,

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

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

²⁹ May the nations serve you
and many people bow down to you.

You will rule over your brothers.

Your mother's sons will bow down to you
and obey you.

Whoever curses you will be cursed.

Whoever blesses you will be blessed."

Esau's "Blessing"

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

³² But Isaac said to him, "Who are you?"

He answered, "I am your son—your first son—Esau."

³³ Then Isaac became so upset that he began to shake. He said, "Then who was it that cooked and brought me food before you came? I ate it all, and I blessed him. Now it is too late to take back my blessing."

³⁴ When Esau heard his father's words, he became very angry and bitter. He cried out and said to his father, "Then bless me also, father!"

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

³⁶ Esau said, "His name is Jacob.* That is the right name for him. He has tricked me twice. He took away my rights as the firstborn son. And now he has taken away my blessing." Then Esau said, "Have you saved any blessing for me?"

³⁷ Isaac answered, "I have already given Jacob the power to rule over you. And I said all his brothers would be his servants. I have given him the blessing for much grain and wine. There is nothing left to give you, my son."

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

³⁹ Then Isaac said to him,

"You will not live on good land.

You will not have much rain.

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

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

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

Jacob Leaves the Country

⁴¹ After that Esau hated Jacob because of this blessing. Esau said to himself, “My father will soon die, and after we are finished with that, I will kill Jacob.”

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

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

28

¹ Isaac called Jacob and blessed him. Then Isaac gave him a command and said, “You must not marry a Canaanite woman. ² So leave this place and go to Paddan Aram. Go to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father. Laban, your mother’s brother, lives there. Marry one of his daughters. ³ I pray that God All-Powerful* will

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

bless you and give you many children. I pray that you will become the father of a great nation⁴ and that God will bless you and your children the same way he blessed Abraham. And I pray that you will own the land where you live. This is the land God gave to Abraham.”

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

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

Jacob’s Dream at Bethel

¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and went to Haran. ¹¹ The sun had already set when he came to a good place to spend the night. He took a rock there and laid his head on it to sleep. ¹² Jacob had a dream. He dreamed there was a ladder that was on the ground and reached up into heaven. He saw the angels of God going up and down the ladder. ¹³ And then Jacob saw the LORD standing by the ladder. He said, “I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham. I am the God of

Isaac. I will give you the land that you are lying on now. I will give this land to you and to your children. ¹⁴ You will have as many descendants as there are particles of dust on the earth. They will spread east and west, north and south. All the families on earth will be blessed because of you and your descendants.

¹⁵ “I am with you, and I will protect you everywhere you go. I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised.”

¹⁶ Then Jacob woke up and said, “I know that the LORD is in this place, but I did not know he was here until I slept.”

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

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

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

† **28:19** Bethel A town in Israel. This name means “God’s house.”

29

Jacob Meets Rachel

¹ Then Jacob continued his trip. He went to the country in the East. ² He looked and saw a well in the field. There were three flocks of sheep lying near the well, where the sheep drank water. There was a large rock covering the mouth of the well. ³ When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the rock away from the well. Then all the sheep could drink from the water. After the sheep were full, the shepherds would put the rock back in its place.

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

They answered, "We are from Haran."

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

The shepherds answered, "We know him."

⁶ Then Jacob said, "How is he?"

They answered, "He is well. Look, that is his daughter Rachel coming now with his sheep."

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

⁸ But they said, "We cannot do that until all the flocks are gathered together. Then we will move the rock from the well, and all the sheep will drink."

⁹ While Jacob was talking with the shepherds, Rachel came with her father's sheep. (It was

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

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

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

Laban Tricks Jacob

¹⁵ One day Laban said to Jacob, "You are a relative of mine. It is not right for you to continue working for me without pay. What should I pay you?"

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

¹⁷ Leah's eyes were gentle,* but Rachel was beautiful. ¹⁸ Jacob loved Rachel, so he said to Laban, "I will work seven years for you if you will allow me to marry your daughter Rachel."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jacob’s Family Grows

³¹ The LORD saw that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, so he made it possible for Leah to

have children. But Rachel did not have any children.

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

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

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

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

30

¹ Rachel saw that she was not giving Jacob any children. She became jealous of her sister Leah. So Rachel said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I will die!”

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

[†] **29:32** Reuben This is like the Hebrew word meaning “Look, a son.” [‡] **29:33** Simeon This is like the Hebrew word meaning

“He hears.” [§] **29:34** Levi This is like the Hebrew word meaning “accompany,” “be joined together,” or “become close.” * **29:35** Judah This name is like the word meaning “He is praised.”

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁴ During the wheat harvest Reuben went into the fields and found some special flowers.† He brought them to his mother Leah. But Rachel

* **30:3** she will have a child for me Literally, “she will give birth on my knees, and I, too, will have a son through her.” † **30:6** Dan This is like the Hebrew word meaning “to decide” or “to judge.” ‡ **30:8** Naphtali This is like the Hebrew word meaning “my struggle.” § **30:11** Gad This is like the Hebrew word meaning “lucky” or “fortunate.” * **30:13** Asher This is like the Hebrew word meaning “blessed” or “happy.” † **30:14** special flowers Or “mandrakes.” The Hebrew word means “love plant.” People thought these plants could help women have babies.

said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's flowers."

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

But Rachel answered, "If you will give me your son's flowers, you can sleep with Jacob tonight."

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

¹⁷ Then God allowed Leah to become pregnant again. She gave birth to a fifth son. ¹⁸ She said, "God has given me a reward because I gave my slave to my husband." So she named her son Issachar.‡

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

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

²² Then God heard Rachel's prayer and made it possible for Rachel to have children. ²³ She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She said, "God has taken away my shame." ²⁴ Rachel

‡ **30:18** Issachar This is like the Hebrew word meaning "reward" or "salary." § **30:20** Zebulun This is like the Hebrew word meaning "praise" or "honor."

named the son Joseph,* saying, “May the Lord give me another son.”

Jacob Tricks Laban

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

²⁷ Laban said to him, “Please, let me say something. I know[†] that the LORD has blessed me because of you. ²⁸ Tell me what I should pay you, and I will give it to you.”

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

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

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

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

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

any goat that isn't spotted or any sheep that isn't black, you will know that I stole it."

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

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

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

31

Time to Leave—Jacob Runs Away

¹ One day Jacob heard Laban's sons talking. They said, "Jacob has taken everything that our father owned. He has become rich—and he has taken all this wealth from our father." ² Then Jacob noticed that Laban was not as friendly as he had been in the past. ³ The LORD said to Jacob, "Go back to your own land where your ancestors lived. I will be with you."

⁴ So Jacob told Rachel and Leah to meet him in the field where he kept his flocks of sheep and goats. ⁵ He said to them, "I have noticed that your father is not as friendly with me as he used to be. But the God of my father has been with me. ⁶ You both know that I have worked as hard as I could for your father. ⁷ But he cheated me. He has changed my pay ten times. But during all this time, God protected me from all of Laban's tricks.

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

¹⁰ "I had a dream during the time when the animals were mating. I saw that the only male goats that were mating were the ones with

stripes and spots. ¹¹ The angel of God spoke to me in that dream. The angel said, 'Jacob!'

"I answered, 'Yes!'

¹² "The angel said, 'Look, only the striped and spotted goats are mating. I am causing this to happen. I have seen all the wrong things Laban has been doing to you. I am doing this so that you can have all the new baby goats. ¹³ I am the God who came to you at Bethel, and there you made an altar, poured olive oil on it, and made a promise to me. Now I want you to be ready to go back to the country where you were born.' "

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

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

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

²⁰ Jacob tricked Laban the Aramean. He did not tell Laban he was leaving. ²¹ Jacob took his family and everything he owned and left quickly.

They crossed the Euphrates River and traveled toward the hill country of Gilead.

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

The Search for the Stolen Gods

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

²⁶ Laban said to Jacob, “Why did you trick me? Why did you take my daughters like they were women you captured during war? ²⁷ Why did you run away without telling me? If you had told me, I would have given you a party. There would have been singing and dancing with music. ²⁸ You didn’t even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters goodbye. You were very foolish to do this! ²⁹ I have the power to really hurt you. But last night the God of your father came to me in a dream. He warned me not to hurt you in any way. ³⁰ I know that you want to go back to your home. That is why you left. But why did you steal the gods from my house?”

³¹ Jacob answered, “I left without telling you, because I was afraid. I thought you would take your daughters away from me. ³² But I did not steal your gods. If you find anyone here with

me who has taken your gods, they will be killed. Your men will be my witnesses. You can look for anything that belongs to you. Take anything that is yours.” (Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen Laban’s gods.)

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

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

³⁶ Then Jacob became very angry and said, “What wrong have I done? What law have I broken? What right do you have to chase me and stop me? ³⁷ You looked through everything I own and found nothing that belongs to you. If you found something, show it to me. Put it here where our men can see it. Let our men decide which one of us is right. ³⁸ I have worked 20 years for you. During all that time none of the baby sheep and goats died during birth. And I have not eaten any of the rams from your flocks. ³⁹ Any time a sheep was killed by wild animals, I always paid for the loss myself. I did not take the dead animal to you and say that it was not

my fault. But I was robbed day and night. ⁴⁰ In the daytime the sun took away my strength, and at night sleep was taken from my eyes by the cold. ⁴¹ I worked 20 years like a slave for you. For the first 14 years I worked to win your two daughters. The last six years I worked to earn your animals. And during that time you changed my pay ten times. ⁴² But the God of my ancestors, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac,* was with me. If God had not been with me, you would have sent me away with nothing. But he saw the trouble that I had and the work that I did, and last night God proved that I am right.”

Jacob and Laban's Treaty

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

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

* **31:42** Fear of Isaac A name for God. † **31:47** Yegar Sahadutha Aramaic words meaning “rock pile of the agreement.” ‡ **31:47** Galeed Another name for Gilead. This Hebrew name means “rock pile of the agreement.”

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

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

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

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

32

Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau

§ 31:49 Mizpah This means “a place to watch from.”

¹ Jacob also left that place. While he was traveling, he saw God's angels. ² When he saw them, he said, "This is God's camp!" So Jacob named that place Mahanaim.*

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

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

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

⁹ Then Jacob said, "God of my father Abraham! God of my father Isaac! LORD, you told me to come back to my country and to my family. You said that you would do good to me. ¹⁰ You have been very kind to me. You did many good things for me. The first time I traveled across the Jordan River, I owned nothing—only my walking stick. But now I own enough things to have two full groups. ¹¹ I ask you to please save me from my brother Esau. I am afraid that he will

* **32:2** Mahanaim This name means "two camps."

come and kill us all, even the mothers with the children. ¹² Lord, you said to me, 'I will be good to you. I will increase your family and make your children as many as the sands of the sea. There will be too many to count.' "

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

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

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

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

The Fight With God

²⁴ Jacob was left alone, and a man came and wrestled with him. The man fought with him until the sun came up. ²⁵ When the man saw that he could not defeat Jacob, he touched Jacob's leg and put it out of joint.

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

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

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

And Jacob said, "My name is Jacob."

²⁸ Then the man said, "Your name will not be Jacob. Your name will now be Israel.† I give you this name because you have fought with God and with men, and you have won."

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

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

³⁰ So Jacob named that place Peniel.‡ He said, "At this place, I saw God face to face, but my life was spared." ³¹ Then the sun came up as Jacob left Peniel. He was limping because of his leg.

† **32:28** Israel This name might mean "he fights for God," "he fights with God," or "God fights." ‡ **32:30** Peniel A name that means "the face of God."

³² So even today, the people of Israel don't eat the muscle that is on the hip joint, because this is the muscle where Jacob was hurt.

33

Jacob Meets Esau

¹ Jacob looked and saw Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob divided his family into four groups. Leah and her children were in one group, Rachel and Joseph were in one group, and the two maids and their children were in two groups. ² Jacob put the maids with their children first. Then he put Leah and her children behind them, and he put Rachel and Joseph in the last place.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

34

The Rape of Dinah

¹ One day, Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob, went out to see the women of that place. ² She was seen by Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, who ruled that area. Shechem took Dinah and raped her. ³ But he was so attracted to her that he fell in love and began expressing his feelings to her. ⁴ He told his father, “Please get this girl for me so that I can marry her.”

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

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

[†] **33:20** El A Hebrew name for God.

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

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

¹³ Jacob's sons decided to lie to Shechem and his father because Shechem had done such a bad thing to their sister Dinah. ¹⁴ The brothers said to them, "We cannot allow our sister to marry you because you are not yet circumcised. That would bring us shame. ¹⁵ But we will allow you to marry her if you do this one thing: Every man in your town must be circumcised like us. ¹⁶ Then your men can marry our women, and our men can marry your women. Then we will become one people. ¹⁷ If you refuse to be circumcised, we will take Dinah away."

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

Shechem was the most honored man in his family. ²⁰ Hamor and Shechem went to the meeting place of their city. They spoke to the

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

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

²⁵ Three days later the men who were circumcised were still sore. Two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, knew that the men would be weak at this time. So they went to the city and killed all the men there. ²⁶ Dinah’s brothers, Simeon and Levi, killed Hamor and his son Shechem. Then they took Dinah out of Shechem’s house and left. ²⁷ Jacob’s sons went to the city and stole everything that was there because of what Shechem had done to their sister. ²⁸ So the brothers took all their animals, all their donkeys, and everything else in the city and in the fields. ²⁹ The brothers took everything those people owned. They even took their wives and children.

³⁰ But Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have caused me a lot of trouble. All the people in this place will hate me. All the Canaanites and the Perizzites will turn against me. There are only a few of us. If the people in this place gather

together to fight against us, I will be destroyed. And all our people will be destroyed with me.”

³¹ But the brothers said, “Should we let these people treat our sister like a prostitute? They were wrong to do that to our sister!”

35

Jacob in Bethel

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

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

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

⁵ Then Jacob and his sons left that place. The people in the surrounding cities wanted to follow and kill them, but God filled them with such great fear that they did not go after them. ⁶ So Jacob and his people went to Luz, which is now

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

† **35:1** El A Hebrew name for God.

called Bethel. It is in the land of Canaan. ⁷ Jacob built an altar there. He named the place “El Bethel.” ‡ Jacob chose this name because that is the place where God first appeared to him when he was running from his brother.

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

Jacob’s New Name

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

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

Rachel Dies Giving Birth

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

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

* **35:10** Israel This name might mean “he fights for God,” “he fights with God,” or “God fights.” † **35:11** God All-Powerful Literally, “El Shaddai.”

¹⁶ Jacob and his group left Bethel. Before they came to Ephrath, Rachel began giving birth to her baby. ¹⁷ She was having a lot of trouble with this birth. She was in great pain. When her nurse saw this, she said, “Don’t be afraid, Rachel. You are giving birth to another son.”

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

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

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

The Family of Israel (Jacob)

These are the names of Jacob’s twelve sons:

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

²⁴ His sons by Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

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

§ **35:18** Benjamin This name means “right-hand” or “favorite son.” * **35:21** Eder tower Or “Migdal Eder.” † **35:22** and he was very angry

These words are from the ancient Greek translation. They are not in the standard Hebrew text. See Genesis 49:4.

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

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

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

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

36

Esau's Family

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

⁶⁻⁸ Jacob and Esau's families became too big for the land in Canaan to support them all, so Esau moved away from his brother Jacob. He took his wives, sons, daughters, all his slaves, cattle and other animals, and everything else that he had

gotten in Canaan and moved to the hill country of Seir.* (Esau is also named Edom.)

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

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

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

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

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

These were Esau's grandsons from his wife Basemath.

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

¹⁵ These are the family groups that came from Esau:

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

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

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

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

All these families came from Esau's wife Basemath.

- ¹⁸ Esau's wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, gave birth to Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These three men were the leaders of their families.
¹⁹ They were all sons of Esau and leaders of the family groups of Edom.†

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

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

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

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

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

²⁵ Anah was the father of Dishon and Oholibamah.

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

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

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

²⁹ These are the names of the leaders of the Horite families: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ³⁰ Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These

† **36:19** Esau ... Edom Two names for the man Esau and the country Edom. ‡ **36:22** Heman Or "Homam."

men were the leaders of the families that lived in the country of Seir.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁴⁰⁻⁴³ Esau was the father of these Edomite families:

Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram. Each of these families lived in an area that was called by the same name as their family.

[§] **36:39** Hadad Or "Hadar."

37

Joseph the Dreamer

¹ Jacob stayed and lived in the land of Canaan. This is the same land where his father had lived.

² This is the story of Jacob's family.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Joseph answered, “I will go.”

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

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

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

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

Joseph Sold Into Slavery

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

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

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

29 Reuben had been gone, but when he came back to the well, he saw that Joseph was not there. He tore his clothes to show that he was upset. 30 Reuben went to the brothers and said,

[†] 37:25 traders Literally, "Ishmaelites."

“The boy is not in the well! What will I do?”

³¹ The brothers killed a goat and put the goat’s blood on Joseph’s beautiful coat. ³² Then the brothers showed the coat to their father. And the brothers said, “We found this coat. Is this Joseph’s coat?”

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

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

38

Judah and Tamar

¹ About that time, Judah left his brothers and went to stay with a man named Hirah from the town of Adullam. ² Judah met a Canaanite girl there and married her. The girl’s father was named Shua. ³ The Canaanite girl gave birth to a son and named him Er. ⁴ Later, she gave birth to another son and named him Onan. ⁵ Then she had another son named Shelah. Judah lived in Kezib when his third son was born.

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

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

¹² Later, Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. After Judah's time of sadness, he went to Timnah with his friend Hirah from Adullam. Judah went to Timnah to have the wool cut from his sheep. ¹³ Tamar learned that Judah, her father-in-law, was going to Timnah to cut the wool from his sheep. ¹⁴ Tamar always wore clothes that showed that she was a widow. So she put on some different clothes and covered her face with a veil. Then she sat down near the road going to Enaim, a town near Timnah. Tamar knew that Judah's younger son Shelah

* **38:8** Go and sleep ... wife In Israel if a man died without children, one of his brothers would take the widow. If a child was born, it would be considered the dead man's child.

was now grown up, but Judah would not make plans for her to marry him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

²⁰ Later, Judah sent his friend Hirah to Enaim to give the prostitute the goat he promised. Judah also told Hirah to get the special seal and the walking stick from her, but Hirah could not find her. ²¹ He asked some of the men at the town

[†] **38:18** seal ... string People wrote a contract, folded it, tied it with string, put wax or clay on the string, and pressed the seal onto it to seal it. This was like signing the agreement. Also in verse 25.

of Enaim, "Where is the prostitute who was here by the road?"

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

²² So Judah's friend went back to Judah and said, "I could not find the woman. The men who live in that place said that there was never a prostitute there."

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

Tamar Is Pregnant

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

Then Judah said, "Take her out and burn her."

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

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

²⁷ The time came for Tamar to give birth. She was going to have twins. ²⁸ While she was giving birth, one baby put his hand out. The nurse tied a red string on the hand and said, "This baby was born first." ²⁹ But that baby pulled his hand back

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

39

Joseph Is Sold to Potiphar in Egypt

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

³ Potiphar saw that the LORD was with Joseph and that the LORD helped Joseph be successful in everything he did. ⁴ So Potiphar was very happy with Joseph. He allowed Joseph to work for him and to help him rule the house. Joseph was the ruler over everything Potiphar owned. ⁵ After Joseph was made the ruler over the house, the LORD blessed the house and everything that Potiphar owned. The LORD also blessed everything that grew in Potiphar’s fields. The Lord did this because of Joseph. ⁶ So Potiphar allowed Joseph to take responsibility for everything in the house. Potiphar didn’t have to worry about anything except deciding what to eat.

Joseph Refuses Potiphar’s Wife

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

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

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

Joseph was a very handsome, good-looking man. ⁷ After some time, the wife of Joseph's master began to pay special attention to him. One day she said to him, "Sleep with me."

⁸ But Joseph refused. He said, "My master trusts me with everything in his house. He has given me responsibility for everything here. ⁹ My master has made me almost equal to him in his house. I cannot sleep with his wife! That is wrong! It is a sin against God."

¹⁰ The woman talked with Joseph every day, but he refused to sleep with her. ¹¹ One day Joseph went into the house to do his work. He was the only man in the house at the time. ¹² His master's wife grabbed his coat and said to him, "Come to bed with me." But Joseph ran out of the house so fast that he left his coat in her hand.

¹³ The woman saw that Joseph had left his coat in her hand and had run out of the house. ¹⁴ She called to the men outside and said, "Look! This Hebrew slave was brought here to make fun of us. He came in and tried to attack me, but I screamed. ¹⁵ My scream scared him and he ran away, but he left his coat with me." ¹⁶ Then she kept his coat until her husband, Joseph's master, came home. ¹⁷ She told her husband the same story. She said, "This Hebrew slave you brought here tried to attack me! ¹⁸ But when he came near me, I screamed. He ran away, but he left his coat."

¹⁹ Joseph's master listened to what his wife said, and he became very angry. ²⁰ So Potiphar put Joseph into the prison where the king's

enemies were held, and that is where Joseph remained.

Joseph in Prison

²¹ The LORD was with Joseph and continued to show his kindness to him, so the commander of the prison guards began to like Joseph. ²² The commander of the guards put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. Joseph was their leader, but he still did the same work they did. ²³ The commander of the guards trusted Joseph with everything that was in the prison. This happened because the LORD was with Joseph. The LORD helped Joseph be successful in everything he did.

40

Joseph Explains Two Dreams

¹ Later, two of Pharaoh's servants did something wrong to Pharaoh. These servants were the baker and the man who served wine to Pharaoh. ² Pharaoh became angry with his baker and wine server, ³ so he put them in the same prison as Joseph. Potiphar, the commander of Pharaoh's guards, was in charge of this prison. ⁴ The commander put the two prisoners under Joseph's care. The two men continued to stay in prison for some time. ⁵ One night both of the prisoners had a dream. The baker and the wine server each had his own dream, and each dream had its own meaning. ⁶ Joseph went to them the next morning and saw that the two men were worried. ⁷ He asked them, "Why do you look so worried today?"

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

Joseph said to them, “God is the only one who can understand and explain dreams. So I beg you, tell me your dreams.”

The Wine Server’s Dream

⁹ So the wine server told Joseph his dream. The server said, “I dreamed I saw a vine. ¹⁰ On the vine there were three branches. I watched the branches grow flowers and then become grapes.

¹¹ I was holding Pharaoh’s cup, so I took the grapes and squeezed the juice into the cup. Then I gave the cup to Pharaoh.”

¹² Then Joseph said, “I will explain the dream to you. The three branches mean three days.

¹³ Before the end of three days, Pharaoh will forgive you and allow you to go back to your work. You will do the same work for Pharaoh as you did before. ¹⁴ But when you are free, remember me. Be good to me and help me. Tell Pharaoh about me so that I can get out of this prison. ¹⁵ I was kidnapped and taken from the land of my people, the Hebrews. I have done nothing wrong! I should not be in prison.”

The Baker’s Dream

¹⁶ The baker saw that the other servant’s dream was good, so he said to Joseph, “I also had a dream. I dreamed there were three baskets of bread on my head. ¹⁷ In the top basket there were all kinds of baked food for the king, but birds were eating this food.”

¹⁸ Joseph answered, “I will tell you what the dream means. The three baskets mean three days. ¹⁹ Before the end of three days, the king will take you out of this prison and cut off your head! He will hang your body on a pole, and the birds will eat it.”

Joseph Is Forgotten

²⁰ Three days later it was Pharaoh’s birthday. He gave a party for all his servants. At the party Pharaoh allowed the wine server and the baker to leave the prison. ²¹ He freed the wine server and gave him his job back, and once again the wine server put a cup of wine in Pharaoh’s hand. ²² But Pharaoh hanged the baker, and everything happened the way Joseph said it would. ²³ But the wine server did not remember to help Joseph. He said nothing about him to Pharaoh. The wine server forgot about Joseph.

41

Pharaoh’s Dreams

¹ Two years later Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile River. ² In the dream, seven cows came out of the river and stood there eating grass. They were healthy, good-looking cows. ³ Then seven more cows came out of the river and stood on the bank of the river by the healthy cows. But these cows were thin and looked sick. ⁴ The seven sick cows ate the seven healthy cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

⁵ Pharaoh went back to sleep and began dreaming again. This time he dreamed that he saw seven heads of grain growing on one plant.

They were healthy and full of grain. ⁶ Then he saw seven more heads of grain sprouting, but they were thin and scorched by the hot wind. ⁷ The thin heads of grain ate the seven good heads of grain. Then Pharaoh woke up again and realized it was only a dream. ⁸ The next morning Pharaoh was worried about these dreams, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told these men the dreams, but none of them could explain the dreams.

The Servant Tells Pharaoh About Joseph

⁹ Then the wine servant remembered Joseph and said to Pharaoh, "I remember something that happened to me. ¹⁰ You were angry with the baker and me, and you put us in prison. ¹¹ Then one night he and I had a dream. Each dream had a different meaning. ¹² There was a young Hebrew man in prison with us. He was a servant of the commander of the guards. We told him our dreams, and he explained them to us. He told us the meaning of each dream, ¹³ and what he said came true. He said I would be free and have my old job back, and it happened. He also said the baker would die, and it happened!"

Joseph Is Called to Explain the Dreams

¹⁴ So Pharaoh called Joseph from the prison. The guards quickly got Joseph out of prison. Joseph shaved, put on some clean clothes, and went to see Pharaoh. ¹⁵ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can explain it for

me. I heard that you can explain dreams when someone tells you about them.”

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

¹⁷ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream I was standing by the Nile River. ¹⁸ Seven cows came up out of the river and stood there eating the grass. They were healthy, good-looking cows. ¹⁹ Then I saw seven more cows come up out of the river after them, but these cows were thin and looked sick. They were the worst cows I had ever seen anywhere in Egypt! ²⁰ The thin, sick cows ate the first healthy cows, ²¹ but they still looked thin and sick. You couldn’t even tell they had eaten the healthy cows. They looked as thin and sick as they did in the beginning. Then I woke up.

²² “In my next dream I saw seven heads of grain growing on one plant. They were healthy and full of grain. ²³ And then seven more heads of grain grew after them, but they were thin and scorched by the hot wind. ²⁴ Then the thin heads of grain ate the seven good heads of grain.

“I told these dreams to my magicians. But no one could explain the dreams to me. What do they mean?”

Joseph Explains the Dream

²⁵ Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Both of these dreams have the same meaning. God is telling you what will happen soon. ²⁶ The seven good cows and the seven good heads of grain are

seven good years. ²⁷ And the seven thin, sick-looking cows and the seven thin heads of grain mean that there will be seven years of hunger in this area. These seven bad years will come after the seven good years. ²⁸ God has shown you what will happen soon. He will make these things happen just as I told you. ²⁹ For seven years there will be plenty of food in Egypt. ³⁰ But then there will be seven years of hunger. The people will forget how much food there had been in Egypt before. This famine will ruin the country. ³¹ It will be so bad that people will forget what it was like to have plenty of food.

³² “Pharaoh, you had two dreams about the same thing. That means God wanted to show you that he really will make this happen, and he will make it happen soon! ³³ So, Pharaoh, you should choose a wise, intelligent man and put him in charge of Egypt. ³⁴ Then you should choose other men to collect food from the people. During the seven good years, the people must give them one-fifth of all the food they grow. ³⁵ In this way these men will collect all the food during the seven good years and store it in the cities until it is needed. Pharaoh, this food will be under your control. ³⁶ Then during the seven years of hunger, there will be food for the country of Egypt. And Egypt will not be destroyed by the famine.”

³⁷ This seemed like a very good idea to Pharaoh, and all his officials agreed. ³⁸ Then Pharaoh told them, “I don’t think we can find

anyone better than Joseph to take this job! God's Spirit is in him, making him very wise!"

³⁹ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "God showed these things to you, so you must be the wisest man. ⁴⁰ I will put you in charge of my country, and the people will obey all your commands. I will be the only one more powerful than you."

⁴¹ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I now make you governor over all of Egypt." ⁴² Then Pharaoh gave his special ring to Joseph. The royal seal was on this ring. Pharaoh also gave Joseph a fine linen robe and put a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³ Then he told Joseph to ride in his second chariot. Pharaoh's officials said, "Let him be the governor over the whole land of Egypt!"*

⁴⁴ Then Pharaoh said to him, "I am Pharaoh, the king over everyone in Egypt, but no one else in Egypt can lift a hand or move a foot unless you say he can." ⁴⁵ Then Pharaoh gave Joseph another name, Zaphenath Paneah.† He also gave Joseph a wife named Asenath. She was the daughter of Potiphera, a priest in the city of On. So Joseph became the governor over the whole country of Egypt.

⁴⁶ Joseph was 30 years old when he began serving the king of Egypt. He traveled throughout the country of Egypt. ⁴⁷ During the seven good years,

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

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

the crops in Egypt grew very well. ⁴⁸ Joseph saved the food in Egypt during those seven years and stored the food in the cities. In every city he stored grain that grew in the fields around the city. ⁴⁹ Joseph stored so much grain that it was like the sands of the sea. He stored so much grain that it could not be measured.

⁵⁰ Joseph's wife, Asenath, was the daughter of Potiphera, the priest in the city of On. Before the first year of hunger came, Joseph and Asenath had two sons. ⁵¹ Joseph named the first son Manasseh.‡ He was given this name because Joseph said, "God made me forget all my hard work and everything back home in my father's house." ⁵² Joseph named the second son Ephraim.§ Joseph gave him this name because he said, "I had great troubles, but God has made me successful in everything."

The Famine Begins

⁵³ For seven years people had all the food they needed, but those years ended. ⁵⁴ Then the seven years of hunger began, just as Joseph had said. No food grew anywhere in any of the countries in that area. But in Egypt people had plenty to eat because Joseph had stored the grain. ⁵⁵ The famine began, and the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Pharaoh said to the Egyptian people, "Go ask Joseph what to do."

‡ **41:51** Manasseh This is like the Hebrew word meaning "to forget." § **41:52** Ephraim This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "twice fruitful."

⁵⁶ There was famine everywhere, so Joseph gave the people grain from the warehouses. He sold the stored grain to the people of Egypt. The famine was bad in Egypt, ⁵⁷ but the famine was bad everywhere. So people from the countries around Egypt had to come to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain.

42

The Dreams Come True

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

³ So ten of Joseph’s brothers went to Egypt to buy grain. ⁴ Jacob did not send Benjamin. (Benjamin was Joseph’s only full brother.*) Jacob was afraid that something bad might happen to Benjamin.

⁵ The famine was very bad in Canaan, so there were many people from Canaan who went to Egypt to buy grain. Among them were the sons of Israel.

⁶ Joseph was the governor of Egypt at the time. He was the one who checked the sale of grain to people who came to Egypt to buy it. Joseph’s brothers came to him and bowed before him. ⁷ Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted like he didn’t know them. He was

* **42:4** full brother Literally, “brother.” Joseph and Benjamin had the same mother.

rude when he spoke to them. He said, “Where do you come from?”

The brothers answered, “We have come from the land of Canaan to buy food.”

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

Joseph said to his brothers, “You have not come to buy food! You are spies. You came to learn where we are weak.”

¹⁰ But the brothers said to him, “No, sir, we come as your servants. We have come only to buy food. ¹¹ We are all brothers—we all have the same father. We are honest men. We have come only to buy food.”

¹² Then Joseph said to them, “No, you have come to spy on us!”

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

¹⁴ But Joseph said to them, “No! I can see that I am right. You are spies. ¹⁵ But I will let you prove that you are telling the truth. In the name of Pharaoh, I swear that I will not let you go until your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶ One of you must go back to get your youngest brother while the rest of you stay here in prison. Then we can prove whether you are telling the truth or not. If you are not telling the truth, then by Pharaoh,

I swear that you are spies!” ¹⁷ Then Joseph put them all in prison for three days.

The Troubles Begin

¹⁸ After three days Joseph said to them, “I am a God-fearing man. Do this, and I will let you live. ¹⁹ If you are honest men, one of your brothers can stay here in prison, and the others can go and carry grain back to your people. ²⁰ But then you must bring your youngest brother back here to me. Then I will know that you are telling the truth, and you will not have to die.”

The brothers agreed to this. ²¹ They said to each other, “We are being punished for the bad thing we did to our younger brother Joseph. We saw the trouble he was in. He begged us to save him, but we refused to listen. So now we are in trouble.”

²² Then Reuben said to them, “I told you not to do anything bad to that boy, but you refused to listen to me. Now we are being punished for his death.”

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

of grain. Then he gave them what they would need for their trip back home.

²⁶ So the brothers put the grain on their donkeys and left. ²⁷ That night the brothers stopped at a place to spend the night. One of the brothers opened his sack to get some grain for his donkey. And there in the sack, he saw his money! ²⁸ He said to the other brothers, "Look! Here is the money I paid for the grain. Someone put the money back in my sack." The brothers were very afraid. They said to one another, "What is God doing to us?"

The Brothers Report to Jacob

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

³³ "Then the governor of that country said to us, 'Here is a way to prove that you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me. Take your grain back to your families. ³⁴ Bring your youngest brother to me. Then I will know if you are honest men or if you were sent from an army to destroy us. If you are telling the truth, I will give your brother back to you. I will give him to you, and you will be free to buy grain in our country.' "

³⁵ Then the brothers started taking the grain out of their sacks, and every brother found his bag of money in his sack of grain. When the brothers and their father saw the money, they were afraid.

³⁶ Jacob said to them, “Do you want me to lose all of my children? Joseph is gone. Simeon is gone, and now you want to take Benjamin away too!”

³⁷ But Reuben said to his father, “Father, you may kill my two sons if I don’t bring Benjamin back to you. Trust me. I will bring him back to you.”

³⁸ But Jacob said, “I will not let Benjamin go with you. His brother is dead, and he is the only son left from my wife Rachel. It would kill me if anything happened to him during the trip to Egypt. You would send me to the grave[†] a very sad, old man.”

43

Jacob Lets Benjamin Go to Egypt

¹ The famine was very bad in that country.

² The people ate all the grain they had brought from Egypt. When that grain was gone, Jacob said to his sons, “Go to Egypt and buy some more grain for us to eat.”

³ But Judah said to Jacob, “But the governor of that country warned us. He said, ‘If you don’t bring your brother back to me, I will refuse to talk to you.’” ⁴ If you send Benjamin with us, we

[†] **42:38** grave Or “Sheol,” the place of death.

will go down and buy grain. ⁵ But if you refuse to send Benjamin, we will not go. The man warned us to not come back without him.”

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

⁷ The brothers answered, “He asked lots of questions. He wanted to know all about us and about our family. He asked us, ‘Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother at home?’ We only answered his questions. We didn’t know he would ask us to bring our brother to him!”

⁸ Then Judah said to his father Israel, “Let Benjamin go with me. I will take care of him. We have to go to Egypt to get food. If we don’t go, we will all die—including our children. ⁹ I will make sure he is safe. I will be responsible for him. If I don’t bring him back to you, you can blame me forever. ¹⁰ If you had let us go before, we could have already made two trips for food.”

¹¹ Then their father Israel said, “If it is really true, take Benjamin with you. But take some gifts to the governor. Take some of the things we have been able to gather in our land. Take him some honey, pistachio nuts, almonds, spices, and myrrh. ¹² Take twice as much money with you this time. Take the money that was given back to you after you paid last time. Maybe the governor made a mistake. ¹³ Take Benjamin, and go back to the man. ¹⁴ I pray that God All-Powerful will help you when you stand before the governor. I pray that he will let Benjamin, and also Simeon,

come back safely. If not, I will again be sad from losing my children.”

¹⁵ So the brothers took the gifts to give to the governor. And the brothers took twice as much money with them as they took the first time. This time Benjamin went with the brothers to Egypt.

The Brothers at Joseph's House

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

¹⁸ The brothers were afraid when they were taken to Joseph's house and said, “We have been brought here because of the money that was put back in our sacks the last time. They will use this as proof against us and steal our donkeys and make us slaves.”

¹⁹ So the brothers went to the servant in charge of Joseph's house. ²⁰ They said, “Sir, I promise this is the truth. The last time we came, we came to buy food. ²¹⁻²² On the way home, we opened our sacks and found our money in every sack. We don't know how it got there, but we brought that money with us to give it back to you. And we have brought more money to pay for the food that we want to buy this time.”

²³ But the servant answered, “Don't be afraid; believe me. Your God, the God of your father, must have put the money in your sack as a gift. I remember that you paid me for the grain the last time.”

Then the servant brought Simeon out of the prison. ²⁴ The servant led the men into Joseph's house. He gave them water, and they washed their feet. Then he fed their donkeys.

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

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

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

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

²⁹ Then Joseph saw his brother Benjamin. (Benjamin and Joseph had the same mother.) Joseph said, "Is this your youngest brother that you told me about?" Then Joseph said to Benjamin, "God bless you, my son!"

³⁰ Joseph felt a strong desire to show his brother Benjamin that he loved him. He was about to cry and didn't want his brothers to see him, so he ran into his private room and cried there. ³¹ Then Joseph washed his face and came out. He regained control of himself and said, "Now it is time to eat."

³² The servants seated Joseph at a table by himself. His brothers were at another table by themselves, and the Egyptians were at a table by themselves. The Egyptians believed that it was

wrong for them to eat with Hebrews.* ³³ Joseph's brothers were seated at a table facing him. The brothers were looking at each other because, to their surprise, they had been seated in order, from the oldest to the youngest. ³⁴ Servants were taking food from Joseph's table and bringing it to them. But the servants gave Benjamin five times more than the others. The brothers continued to eat and drink with Joseph until they were drunk.

44

Joseph Sets a Trap

¹ Then Joseph gave a command to his servant. He said, "Fill the men's sacks with as much grain as they can carry. Then put each man's money into his sack with the grain. ² Put the youngest brother's money in his sack too. But also put my special silver cup in his sack." So the servant obeyed Joseph.

³ Early the next morning the brothers and their donkeys were sent back to their country. ⁴ After they had left the city, Joseph said to his servant, "Go and follow the men. Stop them and say to them, 'We were good to you! So why have you been bad to us? Why did you steal my master's silver cup?'" ⁵ My master drinks from that cup,

* **43:32** The Egyptians ... Hebrews The Egyptians would not eat with them because they were shepherds and ate meat from cattle, sheep, and goats. To the Egyptians, these animals represented some of their gods. See Genesis 46:34. * **44:4** Why did ... silver cup This is from the ancient Greek version.

and he uses it to learn secret things. What you did was wrong!’ ”

⁶ So the servant obeyed. He rode out to the brothers and stopped them. The servant said to them what Joseph had told him to say.

⁷ But the brothers said to the servant, “Why does the governor say these things? We wouldn’t do anything like that! ⁸ We brought back the money that we found in our sacks before. So surely we wouldn’t steal silver or gold from your master’s house. ⁹ If you find the silver cup in any of our sacks, let that man die. You can kill him, and we will be your slaves.”

¹⁰ The servant said, “I agree, except that only the man who is found to have the cup will be my slave. The others will be free.”

The Trap Is Sprung; Benjamin Is Caught

¹¹ Then every brother quickly opened his sack on the ground. ¹² The servant started looking in the sacks. He started with the oldest brother and ended with the youngest. He found the cup in Benjamin’s sack. ¹³ The brothers were very sad. They tore their clothes to show their sadness. They put their sacks back on the donkeys and went back to the city.

¹⁴ When Judah and his brothers went back to Joseph’s house, Joseph was still there. The brothers fell to the ground and bowed down before him. ¹⁵ Joseph said to them, “Why have you done this? Didn’t you know that I have a special way of learning secrets? No one is better at this than I am!”

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

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

Judah Pleads for Benjamin

¹⁸ Then Judah went to Joseph and said, “Sir, please let me speak plainly with you. Please don’t be angry with me. I know that you are like Pharaoh himself. ¹⁹ When we were here before, you asked us, ‘Do you have a father or a brother?’ ²⁰ And we answered you, ‘We have a father—he is an old man. And we have a younger brother. Our father loves him because he was born while our father was old. This youngest son’s brother is dead, so he is the only son who is left from that mother. Our father loves him very much.’ ²¹ Then you said to us, ‘Bring that brother to me. I want to see him.’ ²² And we said to you, ‘That young boy cannot come. He cannot leave his father. If his father loses him, his father will be so sad that he will die.’ ²³ But you said to us, ‘You must bring your youngest brother, or I will not sell you grain again.’ ²⁴ So we went back to our father and told him what you said.

²⁵ “Later, our father said, ‘Go back and buy us some more food.’ ²⁶ We said to our father, ‘We cannot go without our youngest brother. The

governor said he will not sell us grain again until he sees our youngest brother.’ ²⁷ Then my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife Rachel gave me two sons. ²⁸ I let one son go away, and he was killed by a wild animal. And I haven’t seen him since. ²⁹ If you take my other son away from me, and something happens to him, I will be sad enough to die.’ ³⁰ Now, imagine what will happen when we go home without our youngest brother—he is the most important thing in our father’s life! ³¹ Our father will die if he sees that the boy isn’t with us—and it will be our fault. We will send our father to his grave a very sad man.

³² “I took responsibility for the young boy. I told my father, ‘If I don’t bring him back to you, you can blame me for the rest of my life.’ ³³ So now I beg you, please let the boy go back with his brothers, and I will stay and be your slave. ³⁴ I cannot go back to my father if the boy is not with me. I am very afraid of what would happen to my father.”

45

Joseph Tells Who He Is

¹ Joseph could not control himself any longer. He cried in front of all the people who were there. Joseph said, “Tell everyone to leave here.” So all the people left. Only the brothers were left with Joseph. Then he told them who he was. ² Joseph continued to cry, and all the Egyptian people in Pharaoh’s house heard it. ³ He said to his brothers, “I am your brother Joseph. Is

my father doing well?” But the brothers did not answer him because they were confused and afraid.

⁴ So Joseph said to his brothers again, “Come here to me. I beg you, come here.” When the brothers went to him, he said to them, “I am your brother Joseph. I am the one you sold as a slave to Egypt. ⁵ Now don’t be worried. Don’t be angry with yourselves for what you did. It was God’s plan for me to come here. I am here to save people’s lives. ⁶ This terrible famine has continued for two years now, and there will be five more years without planting or harvest. ⁷ So God sent me here ahead of you so that I can save your people in this country. ⁸ It was not your fault that I was sent here. It was God’s plan. God made me like a father to Pharaoh. I am the governor over all his house and over all Egypt.”

Israel Invited to Egypt

⁹ Joseph said, “Hurry up and go to my father. Tell him his son Joseph sent this message: ‘God made me the governor of Egypt. So come here to me quickly. Don’t wait. ¹⁰ You can live near me in the land of Goshen. You, your children, your grandchildren, and all of your animals are welcome here. ¹¹ I will take care of you during the next five years of hunger. So you and your family will not lose everything you own.’

¹² “Surely you can see that I really am Joseph. Even my brother Benjamin knows it is me, your brother, talking to you. ¹³ So tell my father about the honor I have received here in Egypt. Tell

him about everything you have seen here. Now hurry, go bring my father back to me.” ¹⁴ Then Joseph hugged his brother Benjamin, and they both began crying. ¹⁵ Then Joseph cried as he kissed all his brothers. After this, the brothers began talking with him.

¹⁶ Pharaoh learned that Joseph’s brothers had come to him. This news spread throughout Pharaoh’s house. Pharaoh and his servants were very excited! ¹⁷ So Pharaoh told Joseph, “Tell your brothers to take all the food they need and go back to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸ Tell them to bring your father and their families back here to me. I will give you the best land in Egypt to live on. And your family can eat the best food we have here. ¹⁹ Also give your brothers some of our best wagons. Tell them to go to Canaan and bring your father and all the women and children back in the wagons. ²⁰ Don’t worry about bringing all of their belongings. We can give them the best of Egypt.”

²¹ So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them good wagons just as Pharaoh had promised. And Joseph gave them enough food for their trip. ²² He gave each brother a suit of beautiful clothes. But to Benjamin he gave five suits of beautiful clothes and 300 pieces of silver. ²³ Joseph also sent gifts to his father. He sent ten donkeys with bags full of many good things from Egypt. And he sent ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and other food for his father on his trip back. ²⁴ Then Joseph told his brothers

to go. While they were leaving, he said to them, "Go straight home, and don't fight on the way."

²⁵ So the brothers left Egypt and went to their father in the land of Canaan. ²⁶ They told him, "Father, Joseph is still alive! And he is the governor over the whole country of Egypt."

Their father did not know what to think. At first he didn't believe them. ²⁷ But then they told him everything Joseph had said. Then their father saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to bring him back to Egypt, and he became excited and very happy. ²⁸ Israel said, "Now I believe you. My son Joseph is still alive! I am going to see him before I die!"

46

God Assures Israel

¹ So Israel began his trip to Egypt. First he went to Beersheba. There he worshiped God, the God of his father Isaac. He offered sacrifices. ² During the night God spoke to Israel in a dream and said, "Jacob, Jacob."

Israel answered, "Here I am."

³ Then God said, "I am God, the God of your father. Don't be afraid to go to Egypt. In Egypt I will make you a great nation. ⁴ I will go to Egypt with you, and I will bring you out of Egypt again. You will die there, but Joseph will be with you. His own hands will close your eyes when you die."

Israel Goes to Egypt

⁵ Then Jacob left Beersheba and traveled to Egypt. His sons, the sons of Israel, brought their father, their wives, and all their children to Egypt. They traveled in the wagons the Pharaoh had sent. ⁶ They also had their cattle and everything they owned in the land of Canaan. So Israel went to Egypt with all his children and his family. ⁷ With him were his sons and his grandsons, his daughters and his granddaughters. All of his family went with him.

The Family of Jacob (Israel)

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

Reuben was Jacob's first son. ⁹ Reuben's sons were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

¹⁰ Simeon's sons were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, and Zohar. There was also Shaul. (Shaul was born from a Canaanite woman.)

¹¹ Levi's sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹² Judah's sons were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. (Er and Onan died while still in Canaan.) Perez's sons were Hezron and Hamul.

¹³ Issachar's sons were Tola, Puah, Job, and Shimron.

¹⁴ Zebulun's sons were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

¹⁵ Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were Jacob's sons from his wife Leah. Leah had these sons in Paddan Aram. She also

had a daughter named Dinah. There were 33 people in this family.

¹⁶ Gad's sons were Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

¹⁷ Asher's sons were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. Also there were Beriah's sons, Heber and Malkiel.

¹⁸ All these were Jacob's sons from his wife's servant, Zilpah. (Zilpah was the maid that Laban had given to his daughter Leah.) There were 16 people in this family.

¹⁹ Benjamin was also with Jacob. Benjamin was Jacob and Rachel's son. (Joseph was also Rachel's son, but he was already in Egypt.)

²⁰ In Egypt, Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. (Joseph's wife was Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara, the priest in the city of On.)

²¹ Benjamin's sons were Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

²² These were the sons of Jacob from his wife Rachel. There were 14 people in this family.

²³ Dan's son was Hushim.

²⁴ Naphtali's sons were Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

²⁵ These were the sons of Jacob and Bilhah. (Bilhah was the maid that Laban had given to

his daughter Rachel.) There were seven people in this family.

²⁶ The total number of Jacob's direct descendants who went with him to Egypt was 66 people. (The wives of Jacob's sons were not counted in this number.) ²⁷ Also, Joseph had two sons in Egypt. With these two grandsons, Jacob's family in Egypt numbered 70 people in all.

Israel Arrives in Egypt

²⁸ Jacob sent Judah ahead to speak to Joseph. Judah went to Joseph in the land of Goshen. Then Jacob and his people followed into the land. ²⁹ Joseph learned that his father was coming. So he prepared his chariot and went out to meet his father, Israel, in Goshen. When Joseph saw his father, he hugged his neck and cried for a long time.

³⁰ Then Israel said to Joseph, "Now I can die in peace. I have seen your face, and I know that you are still alive."

³¹ Joseph said to his brothers and to the rest of his father's family, "I will go and tell Pharaoh that you are here. I will say to Pharaoh, 'My brothers and the rest of my father's family have left the land of Canaan and have come here to me. ³² They are a family of shepherds. They have always kept sheep and cattle. They have brought all their animals and everything they own with them.' ³³ When Pharaoh calls you, he will ask, 'What work do you do?' ³⁴ You tell him, 'We are shepherds. All our lives we

have been shepherds, and our ancestors were shepherds before us.' Then Pharaoh will allow you to live in the land of Goshen. Egyptians don't like shepherds, so it is better that you stay in Goshen."

47

Israel Settles in Goshen

¹ Joseph went in to Pharaoh and said, "My father and my brothers and all their families are here. They have all their animals and everything they own from the land of Canaan with them. They are now in the land of Goshen." ² Joseph chose five of his brothers to be with him before the Pharaoh.

³ Pharaoh said to the brothers, "What work do you do?"

The brothers said to Pharaoh, "Sir, we are shepherds, just as our ancestors were shepherds before us." ⁴ They said to Pharaoh, "The famine is very bad in Canaan. There are no fields left with grass for our animals, so we have come to live in this land. We ask you to please let us live in Goshen."

⁵ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. ⁶ You can choose any place in Egypt for them to live. Give your father and your brothers the best land. Let them live in the land of Goshen. And if they are skilled shepherds, they can also care for my cattle."

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

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

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

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

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

Joseph Buys Land for Pharaoh

¹³ The famine got worse; there was no food anywhere in the land. Egypt and Canaan became very poor because of this bad time. ¹⁴ People in the land bought more and more grain. Joseph saved the money and brought it to Pharaoh’s house. ¹⁵ After some time, the people in Egypt and Canaan had no money left. They had spent all their money to buy grain. So the people of Egypt went to Joseph and said, “Please give us food. Our money is gone. If we don’t eat, we will die while you are watching.”

¹⁶ But Joseph answered, “Give me your cattle, and I will give you food.” ¹⁷ So the people used their cattle and horses and all their other animals to buy food. And that year, Joseph gave them food and took their animals.

¹⁸ But the next year the people had no animals and nothing to buy food with. So they went to

Joseph and said, “You know that we have no money left, and all our animals belong to you. So we have nothing left—only what you see—our bodies and our land. ¹⁹ Surely we will die while you are watching. But if you give us food, we will give Pharaoh our land, and we will be his slaves. Give us seed so that we can plant. Then we will live and not die, and the land will grow food for us again.”

²⁰ So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. All the people in Egypt sold Joseph their fields. They did this because they were very hungry. ²¹ And everywhere in Egypt all the people became Pharaoh’s slaves. ²² The only land Joseph didn’t buy was the land that the priests owned. The priests didn’t need to sell their land because Pharaoh paid them for their work. So they used this money to buy food to eat.

²³ Joseph said to the people, “Now I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh. So I will give you seed, and you can plant your fields. ²⁴ At harvest time, you must give one-fifth of your crops to Pharaoh. You can keep four-fifths for yourselves. You can use the seed you keep for food and planting the next year. Now you can feed your families and your children.”

²⁵ The people said, “You have saved our lives. We are happy to be slaves to Pharaoh.”

²⁶ So Joseph made a law at that time in the land, and that law continues today. The law says that one-fifth of everything from the land belongs to

the Pharaoh who owns all the land. The only land he does not own is the land of the priests.

Don't Bury Me in Egypt

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

²⁸ Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years, so he was 147 years old. ²⁹ The time came when Israel knew he would soon die, so he called his son Joseph to him. He said, "If you love me, put your hand under my leg and make a promise.* Promise that you will do what I say and that you will be truthful with me. When I die, don't bury me in Egypt. ³⁰ Bury me in the place where my ancestors are buried. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in our family grave."

Joseph answered, "I promise that I will do what you say."

³¹ Then Jacob said, "Make a vow to me." And Joseph vowed to him that he would do this. Then Israel laid his head back down on the bed.†

48

Blessings for Manasseh and Ephraim

¹ Some time later Joseph learned that his father was very sick. So he took his two sons, Manasseh

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

† **47:31** Then Israel ... on the bed Or "Then Israel bowed down at the head of his bed" or "Then Israel worshiped on the head of the staff."

and Ephraim, and went to his father. ² When Joseph arrived, someone told Israel, “Your son Joseph has come to see you.” Israel was very weak, but he tried hard and sat up in his bed.

³ Then Israel said to Joseph, “God All-Powerful appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan. God blessed me there. ⁴ He said to me, ‘I will make you a great family. I will give you many children and you will be a great people. Your family will own this land forever.’ ⁵ Now you have two sons. These two sons were born here in the country of Egypt before I came. Your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, will be like my own sons. They will be like Reuben and Simeon to me. ⁶ So these two boys will be my sons. They will share in everything I own. But if you have other sons, they will be your sons. But they will also be like sons to Ephraim and Manasseh—that is, in the future, they will share in everything that Ephraim and Manasseh own. ⁷ On the trip from Paddan Aram, Rachel died in the land of Canaan. This made me very sad. We were still traveling toward Ephrath. I buried her there on the road to Ephrath.” (Ephrath is Bethlehem.)

⁸ Then Israel saw Joseph’s sons. Israel said, “Who are these boys?”

⁹ Joseph said to his father, “These are my sons. These are the boys God gave me.”

Israel said, “Bring your sons to me. I will bless them.”

¹⁰ Israel was old and his eyes were not good. So Joseph brought the boys close to his father. Israel kissed and hugged the boys. ¹¹ Then Israel

said to Joseph, “I never thought I would see your face again. But look! God has let me see you and your children.”

¹² Then Joseph took the boys off Israel’s lap, and they bowed down in front of his father. ¹³ Joseph put Ephraim on his right side and Manasseh on his left side. (So Ephraim was on Israel’s left side, and Manasseh was on Israel’s right side.) ¹⁴ But Israel crossed his hands and put his right hand on the head of the younger boy Ephraim. Then he put his left hand on Manasseh, even though Manasseh was the firstborn. ¹⁵ And Israel blessed Joseph and said,

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

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

And I pray that he will bless these boys.

Now they will have my name

and the name of our ancestors, Abraham and Isaac.

I pray that they will grow to become great families and nations on earth.”

¹⁷ Joseph saw that his father put his right hand on Ephraim’s head. This didn’t make Joseph happy. Joseph took his father’s hand because he wanted to move it from Ephraim’s head and put it on Manasseh’s head. ¹⁸ Joseph said to his father, “You have your right hand on the wrong

boy. Manasseh is the firstborn. Put your right hand on him.”

¹⁹ But his father refused and said, “I know, son. I know. Manasseh is the firstborn. He will be great and will be the father of many people. But his younger brother will be greater than he is. And the younger brother’s family will be much larger.”

²⁰ So Israel blessed them that day. He said,

“The Israelites will use your names
whenever they bless someone.
They will say, ‘May God make you
like Ephraim and Manasseh.’ ”

In this way Israel made Ephraim greater than Manasseh.

²¹ Then Israel said to Joseph, “Look, my time to die is almost here, but God will still be with you. He will lead you back to the land of your ancestors. ²² I have given you one portion more than I gave to your brothers. I gave you the land that I won from the Amorites. I used my sword and bow to take that land.”

49

Jacob Blesses His Sons

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

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

Reuben

- 3 “Reuben, my first son, you are my strength,
the first proof of my manhood.
You were the most honored
and powerful of all my sons.
- 4 But your passion was like a flood you couldn’t
control.
So you will not remain my most honored
son.
You climbed into your father’s bed
and slept with one of his wives.
You brought shame to my bed,
to the bed you lay on.

Simeon and Levi

- 5 “Simeon and Levi are brothers.
They are violent with their swords.
- 6 I will not join their secret meetings.
I will not take part in their evil plans.
They have killed people out of anger
and crippled animals for fun.
- 7 Their anger is so strong that it is a curse.
They are too cruel when they are angry.
They will not get their own land in the land of
Jacob.
They will be spread throughout Israel.

Judah

- 8 “Judah, your brothers will praise you.
You will defeat your enemies.
Your brothers will bow down to you.
- 9 Judah is like a young lion.
My son, you are like a lion standing over the
animal it killed.
Like a lion, Judah lies down to rest,

and no one is brave enough to disturb him.

10 Men from Judah's family will be kings.

The sign that his family rules
will not leave his family before the real king
comes.*

Then many people will obey and serve him.

11 He ties his donkeys to the best grapevines.

He washes his clothes in the best wine.

12 His eyes are red from drinking wine.

His teeth are white from drinking milk.†

Zebulun

13 "Zebulun will live near the sea.

His seacoast will be a safe place for ships.

His land will continue as far as the city of
Sidon.

Issachar

14 "Issachar is like a donkey that has worked too
hard.

He will lie down under his heavy load.

15 He will see his land is pleasant

and that his resting place is good.

But he will agree to carry heavy loads;

he will agree to work as a slave.

Dan

* **49:10** before the real king comes Or "until Shiloh comes,"
"until the man it belongs to comes," or "until his tribute comes."

† **49:12** Or "10 The ruler's scepter will not pass from between
Judah's feet before he gets what is his, that is, the people's
obedience. 11 His young donkey will be tied to the very best
grapevines. He will wash his finest clothes in wine, the blood of
grapes. 12 His eyes will be redder than wine, his teeth whiter
than milk."

- 16 “Dan[‡] will rule his people
as one of the tribes of Israel.
- 17 Dan will be like a snake at the side of the road.
He will be like a dangerous snake lying near
the path.
That snake bites a horse’s foot,
and the rider falls to the ground.
- 18 “LORD, I am waiting for your salvation.
- Gad*
- 19 “A group of robbers will attack[§] Gad,
but Gad will chase them away.
- Asher*
- 20 “Asher’s land will grow much good food.
He will have food fit for a king!
- Naphtali*
- 21 “Naphtali is like a deer running free,
and his words are beautiful.
- Joseph*
- 22 “Joseph is like a wild donkey,
like a young donkey by a spring,
like colts grazing in a pasture.*
- 23 People attacked him and made life hard for
him.
Men with arrows became his enemies.
- 24 But he won the fight

[‡] **49:16** Dan This name means “judge” and is a wordplay with “rule.” [§] **49:19** A group of robbers will attack The Hebrew words for “group of robbers” and “attack” sound like the name Gad. * **49:22** Or “Joseph is very successful. Joseph is like a vine covered with fruit, like a vine growing by a spring, like a vine growing along a fence.”

with his mighty bow and his skillful arms.
He gets power from the Mighty One of Jacob,
from the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,
²⁵ the God of your father who helps you.
May God All-Powerful bless you
and give you blessings
from the sky above and from the deep below.
May he give you blessings
from breast and womb.
²⁶ My parents had many good things happen to
them.
And I, your father, was blessed even more.
Your brothers left you with nothing.
But now I pile all my blessings on you,
as high as a mountain.

Benjamin

²⁷ “Benjamin is like a hungry wolf.
In the morning he kills and eats.
In the evening he shares what is left.”

²⁸ These are the twelve families of Israel. And
this is what their father said to them. He gave
each son a blessing that was right for him.
²⁹ Then Israel gave them a command. He said,
“When I die, I want to be with my people. I
want to be buried with my ancestors in the cave
in the field of Ephron the Hittite. ³⁰ That cave
is in the field of Machpelah near Mamre in the
land of Canaan. Abraham bought that field from
Ephron so that he could have a burying place.
³¹ Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried in that
cave. Isaac and his wife Rebekah are buried in
that cave. I buried my wife Leah in that cave.

³² That cave is in the field that was bought from the Hittites.” ³³ After Jacob finished talking to his sons, he lay down, put his feet back on the bed, and died.

50

Jacob's Funeral

¹ When Israel died, Joseph was very sad. He hugged his father and cried over him and kissed him. ² Joseph commanded his servants to prepare his father's body. (These servants were doctors.) The doctors prepared Jacob's body to be buried. They prepared the body in the special way of the Egyptians. ³ When the Egyptians prepared the body in this special way, they waited 40 days before they buried the body. Then the Egyptians had a special time of sadness for Jacob. This time was 70 days.

⁴ After the time of sadness was finished, Joseph spoke to Pharaoh's officers and said, "Please tell this to Pharaoh: ⁵ 'When my father was near death, I made a promise to him. I promised that I would bury him in a cave in the land of Canaan. This is the cave that he prepared for himself. So please let me go and bury my father. Then I will come back here to you.' "

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

⁷ So Joseph went to bury his father. All of Pharaoh's officials, personal advisors, and all the older leaders of Egypt went with Joseph. ⁸ All the people in Joseph's family, his brothers, and all

the people in his father's family went with him. Only the children and the animals stayed in the land of Goshen. ⁹ So there was a large crowd of people with him. There was even a group of soldiers riding in chariots and some on horses.

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

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

The Brothers Are Still Afraid of Joseph

¹⁵ After Jacob died, Joseph's brothers were worried. They were afraid that Joseph would still be mad at them for what they had done years before. They said, "Maybe Joseph still hates us for what we did." ¹⁶ So the brothers sent this message to Joseph: "Before your father died, he told us to give you a message. ¹⁷ He said, 'Tell Joseph that I beg him to please forgive his

* **50:10** Goren Atad Or "Atad's threshing floor." † **50:11** Abel Mizraim This means "Egyptian time of sadness."

brothers for the bad things they did to him.’ So now Joseph, we beg you, please forgive us for the bad things we did to you. We are the servants of God, the God of your father.”

That message made Joseph very sad, and he cried. ¹⁸ His brothers went to him and bowed down in front of him. They said, “We will be your servants.”

¹⁹ Then Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. I am not God! I have no right to punish you. ²⁰ It is true that you planned to do something bad to me. But really, God was planning good things. God’s plan was to use me to save the lives of many people. And that is what happened. ²¹ So don’t be afraid. I will take care of you and your children.” And so Joseph said kind things to his brothers, and this made them feel better.

²² Joseph continued to live in Egypt with his father’s family. He died when he was 110 years old. ²³ During Joseph’s life Ephraim had children and grandchildren. And his son Manasseh had a son named Makir. Joseph lived to see Makir’s children.

The Death of Joseph

²⁴ When Joseph was near death, he said to his brothers, “My time to die is almost here. But I know that God will take care of you and lead you out of this country. God will lead you to the land he promised to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

²⁵ Then Joseph asked his people to make a promise. Joseph said, “Promise me that you will

carry my bones with you when God leads you out of Egypt.”

²⁶ Joseph died in Egypt when he was 110 years old. Doctors prepared his body for burial and put the body in a coffin in Egypt.

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