

*The*  
*Hebrew Scriptures*

*also known as*

*The*  
*Old Testament*

*A Private Translation*

*by*

*Herman A. Hartmann*

## *Frontispiece*

Having retired after forty plus years as a parish pastor, it was never my intention to translate the entire Bible into 'My English' (*or, My Vocabulary*). Having purchased a Greek English Lexicon at the Half Priced Book Store, I thought I would translate The Good News According to Mark and give it to family and special friends as a small Christmas gift. I then translated Philippians because of my personal interest in that epistle. That would be the end of my translation.

However, it was an interesting project, and it continued and in due time I completed the translation of the New Testament into 'My English.' I enjoyed the translation, and had been doing translation as a volunteer for an organization that dealt with Genealogy, I looked for other possibilities to widen my understanding of the Bible. Most of the Psalms were not too long, and there were a lot of them. Why not translate the Psalms. Granted, it had been more than fifty years since my last class in Hebrew, but I would try it. The translation was a struggle but the joy of translation far exceeded the struggle and gradually I learned to be more 'at home' with the Hebrew Scriptures.

The learning level shot up daily and my joy in translating soared. Now, in my 92<sup>nd</sup> year I have completed the Hebrew Scriptures. There has been learning and the understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures that far exceed my expectation. I rejoice in having spent twenty-five years working on translation as the major project in my retirement, but in spite of that I was able to enjoy my family, friends, travel, and ventures that have enriched me in a way that is immeasurable.

## Dedication:

This translation is the result  
of the work of those who guided me  
across the years:  
my parents,  
Herman K. Hartmann,  
whose Greek New Testament was always within reach,  
and my mother, Jenny Hartmann,  
whose urging me to keep learning guided me in my life,  
my wife Blanche,  
my language professors:  
Cornelius Plantinga, Richard C. Oudersluys,  
and Lester Kuyper;  
encouraging friends,  
and a cadre of people  
who have given me support  
in these later years of my life.

## *Introduction*

The completion of this translation marks the end of a project that has been a large portion of my life for a bit more than 25 years, following my retirement as a parish pastor. I received strong support from my wife, Blanche, even when she faced her own struggle with Alzheimer's, and I became her sole caregiver.

Encouragement also came from members of the congregation which has been my church home during these years of retirement.

While in Seminary seventy years ago I felt no one could really master both Hebrew and Greek well enough to make a good translation of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. There were two exceptions: James Moffet and Herman Menke. I also had strong feelings that there should be no footnotes in a translation. As I began to translate, I found the need of additional clarification and soon footnotes were added to explain what the reader in the twenty-first century would not understand.

Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures came about when, having translated, and twice revised my translation of the New Testament, caused me to think of what I would do next. My understanding of being called into ministry tells me that I am to be about the work of ministry until the moment of death comes and the transfer to Eternity takes place. Granted, I have not done just translation in my retirement, even to the point of – in my seventies – being a tour guide for the Ohio Conference of my denomination in Europe. This had been a pleasant activity on vacations over a considerable portion of years when I was an active pastor.

Recently, at a birthday party, on my 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday someone asked, knowing that there were only a few more chapters of the Hebrew Scriptures to translate asked, “What are you going to do next?” One of my dearest friends quickly responded, “I suppose he will translate the Apocrypha.” The day before that I had decided, if the Good Lord gives me health and ability that is what I would like to do.” We will see what is ahead.

While I have diligently attempted to proof read there are surely mistakes, which I regret. Let's say, ‘These are genuine Hartmann errors, suitable for framing.’”

Should anyone read this translation it is my hope that those who read will feel as blessed because of their reading of these words as I have been blessed by its translation.

May God richly bless you in the days ahead!

June 22, 2015

# ***GENESIS***

## ***Introduction***

The word “Genesis” means “origin.” The title “Genesis” comes from the Septuagint (*or, LXX*) translation which is a translation from Hebrew into Greek.. In Hebrew the title is the first word in the book: “Beresheth” (*or, In the beginning*). Tradition says that this and the next four books in the Hebrew Scriptures were written by Moses. Study of the book makes it evident that the book is a compilation of various stories, surely from several sources, with these stories intertwined. Included in these stories are deception, false witness, cruelty, adultery, fornication, murder, along with other kinds of disobedience. But: there are also stories of faith, obedience, difficult circumstances, faithfulness, worship, prayer, and loyalty.

Here we find the stories from creation to the Israelites residing in Egypt. The book is divided into two sections. Chapters 1 to 11 have a universal scope, telling of creation of the universe, the blessings of God who established the universe, and also the beginning of humans who were to multiply, develop skills, disperse over the face of the earth, and care for the earth that God has created. Later accounts in history tell of the failure of human beings to properly care for God’s created earth, as had been the message given by the storyteller in Genesis. It then tells of ills that took place on this earth with accounts describing the first of these events. This section of Genesis could be called ‘The Stories Around the Campfire.’ When reading the first eleven chapters one can readily imagine a group of prehistoric Bedouin seated around a campfire at night and someone asking, “How did this all begin?” and the storyteller telling the story which is carefully listened to by those who hear his message.

The next section, chapters 12 – 50 basically describe the descendants of one family, the family of Abram (*or, Abraham, as he was later named*). Abraham is described as a monotheist who lived in Ur of the Chaldeans, among people who were polytheists, and felt it was necessary to flee to a location where he could believe in and practice monotheism. He traveled with several others who had similar beliefs, but who did not move as far from Ur, as Abraham did. He settled in a relatively unpopulated area known to us as Israel. The story continues with several generations, though, of the children in each generation, only one is selected to be a major person in the story. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are the major descendants within Genesis.

These people are under the guidance, and judgment of God. Despite trials and tribulations they move before God, in the direction of the land of Egypt, which at that time offered a benevolent land for them in which to settle.

Throughout the book God is the main being, who judges and punishes those who do wrong, but also helps, leads, and shapes lives. It is a record of people’s faith, and how, often under great difficulty kept the faith, and were sustained by God.

In Chapter 32 the verses as found in bibles in English do not correspond with the versification in Hebrew. The change is noted as follows: 1 [H, 2]

# GENESIS

## <CHAPTER 1>

### I. The Creation 1:1 – 2:4 <sup>1</sup>

#### A. In the Beginning 1:1 – 2

<sup>1</sup> When God began to create <sup>2</sup> the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup> the earth was a vast wasteland, formless and empty, covered in darkness, though the spirit (*or, wind*) of God hovered over the watery vastness. <sup>3</sup>

#### B. The First Day 1:3 – 5

<sup>3</sup> God said, “Let there be light,” <sup>4</sup> and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good, <sup>5</sup> and God put the light in useful places, by separating it from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God named the light, calling it Day. He also named the darkness, calling it Night. The result was that darkness was followed by light at regular times. This was the first day. <sup>6</sup>

#### C. The Second Day 1:6 – 8

<sup>6</sup> God said, “Let there be an expanse <sup>7</sup> in the midst of the waters, separating the rain clouds from the water on earth. <sup>7</sup> God made this expanse which separated the waters which were above this expanse from those that were below it, and it took place. <sup>8</sup> <sup>8</sup> God called the expanse “Sky,” and there was evening and there was morning. This was the second day.

#### D. The Third Day 1:9 – 13 <sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> God said, “Let the water under the sky <sup>10</sup> be gathered together in one place, and let dry ground appear,” and it happened. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry ground Earth, and the waters were gathered and they were called Seas. God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup> God said,

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<sup>1</sup> This story of creation was surely the answer of a storyteller to the question “How did this all begin?” Cf.: Introduction.)

<sup>2</sup> It is also correct to translate the Hebrew words as “In the beginning.” The message assumes that there is a God who has the capacity of establishing a covenant with his creation.

<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew word translated as “hovered” is a word that would describe a mother bird hovering over its newly hatched offspring. This passage is carefully written in Hebrew, even having words that rhyme that speak of “formless and empty.” God is described as being the one who hovers over, and cares for this primordial abyss and darkness and changes it into an orderly place. When considering this creation story one must remember that it is a story told by a storyteller who no doubt had been asked: “How did this all begin?” The storyteller gives a beautiful and orderly description of the creation, with a step by step development of the results of God’s creative process from being “formless and empty” to being the home for humanity Cf.: ANET p. 4a..

<sup>4</sup> The Vulgate says “Fiat lux.” “Create light.” Psalm 33 says: “He spoke, and it came to be, he commanded, and it stood firm.”

<sup>5</sup> The storyteller describes the private thought of God. This is repeated six times. When it is not mentioned the work is not complete.

<sup>6</sup> The Hebrew word “*yom*” for “day” can mean a 24 hour period, or it is also used for an extended period of time. The action describes the orderly nature of God.

<sup>7</sup> The storyteller uses pictorial language to describe the separation of rain clouds from water on the earth.

<sup>8</sup> Cf.: ANET pp. 4a, 33b, 365b.

<sup>9</sup> Some scholars feel there are two stories that are intertwined with respect to the message of days two and three.

<sup>10</sup> The LXX has: “in one place.”

“Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants that have seeds, <sup>11</sup> fruit trees bearing a variety of fruit based on their species. <sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth vegetation, seed bearing plants of every species, and trees of all species, bearing fruit with their seed in them. <sup>13</sup> There was evening and there was morning, the third day. <sup>12</sup>

*E. The Fourth Day 1:14 – 19*

<sup>14</sup> God said; “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be signs for seasons, days, and years. <sup>15</sup> Let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth,” and it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made two great lights, -- the brighter one to dominate the day and the paler one to dominate the night, in addition he made the stars. <sup>13</sup> <sup>17</sup> God placed them in the expanse of the sky, to provide light for the earth. <sup>18</sup> They were placed as a way to dominate the night and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that this was good. <sup>14</sup> <sup>19</sup> There was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

*F. The Fifth Day 1:20 – 25*

<sup>20</sup> God said, “Let the waters be a place that swarms with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth and across the expanse of the sky.” <sup>15</sup> <sup>21</sup> God created huge creatures in the sea, <sup>16</sup> and every living creature that moves, of every species that swarms in the waters, and every species of winged bird. God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds multiply on earth.” <sup>23</sup> Then there was evening and morning of the fifth day.

*G. The Sixth Day 1:26 – 31*

<sup>24</sup> God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every species: cattle, creeping things, and wild animals.” <sup>17</sup> <sup>25</sup> God made all the species of wild animals that live on the earth, along with all the varieties of cattle and all the species of creeping things that are on the ground. God saw that it was good. <sup>18</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make a human being in our own image,” <sup>19</sup> and permit the human being to have domination over the fish of the sea, over birds of the air, over the cattle, over wild animals the creeping things, in the entire earth.” <sup>20</sup>

<sup>27</sup> It was in this manner  
that God created humanity,  
created in God’s image,  
both male and female,  
they were created by God. <sup>21</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Literally: “let vegetation vegetate, herbs seed seed, fruit trees make fruit according to their variety.”

<sup>12</sup> The language of the third day (verses 9 - 13) suits the theory of evolution very nicely.

<sup>13</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 369a.

<sup>14</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 13c.

<sup>15</sup> Some scholars feel that “living creatures” is a gloss. The LXX has “birds that may fly.”

<sup>16</sup> Some scholars feel that “huge creatures in the sea” is a gloss.

<sup>17</sup> There are three classifications: 1. Domesticated animals. 2. Creeping things. 3. Beasts of the earth.

<sup>18</sup> Note that there is no reference to blessing these animals.

<sup>19</sup> Humans are only a facsimile of God, therefore distinct from God.

<sup>20</sup> Humans are granted an additional responsibility of being over all living things on the earth. Human exploitation has shown that we are unfit to have this domination. Cf.: ANET pp. 68a, 101a.

<sup>21</sup> The power of procreation was granted to humanity with a special blessing. Cf.: 2:4b – 25. At this point scholars feel that several stories about creation are knit together. Cf.: ANET pp. 99d, 417d.

28 God blessed them and God also said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and every thing that moves on the earth.”

29 God said, “Be assured: I have given you every plant that produces seed that is on the surface of this earth, every tree having seeds within its fruit. These I have given you to be as food. 30 You are also to receive every beast of the earth, and every bird of the air, and everything that creeps on the earth, -- everything that has life and breath. I have given you 22 every green plant to serve as food.” This was truly so. 31 God saw everything that had been made and it indeed was very good. There was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. 23

## <CHAPTER 2>

### H. The Seventh Day: The Sabbath 2:1 – 43

1 It was in this way that the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their multitude.

2 By the seventh day 24 God had completed the creative work and rested. 25 3 God then blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because it was the day when God had finished all his work of creation. 26

#### I. The Creation of Human Beings 2:4 – 20

##### A. From the Dust of the Ground 2:4 – 7

4 These are the generations 27 of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, 5 when no shrub (*or, plant*) was growing in the field because God had not yet sent rain on the earth, and there was no one who tilled the ground, 6 but a stream would appear from the waters under the ground, and water the entire surface of the earth. 28

7 It was then that the Lord God molded a human being 29 from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath 30 of life, and man became a living being (*or, soul*).

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22 “I have given you” is not found in the Hebrew text.

23 Some scholars feel that the last paragraph was a later interpolation as a portent to those who participated in other religions: sun worship, fertility cults, etc. Other scholars feel that it is a story to give the general sequence of God’s creative process, a simple description in simple terms for simple questioners.

Form	Fullness
1. Light / dark	4. Light of day / night
2. Sea and sky	5. Creatures of water and air
3. Fertile earth	6. Creatures of land

24 The LXX and Samaritan Pentateuch have “on the sixth day.”

25 The Hebrew word “*sabat*” literally means “ceased.” It is usually translated as “rested.” The Hebrew word is the source of our word “Sabbath.” This could be described as a rest of achievement, not inactivity. Cf.: ANET p. 5c.

26 This might be a later gloss. Cf.: ANET p. 37a.

27 Literally: “about.”

28 The Hebrew word can also be translated as “generations.” Verses 4 – 6 are a re-statement of what has already been stated. Cf.: ANET p.38a.

29 This sentence is the first time God is called “the Lord God.” It is used in this chapter but rarely after that. The word translated as “a human being” in Hebrew is “*adamah*.”

30 The Hebrew word “*ruach*” is literally “breath.” The word appears from time to time in the Hebrew Scriptures and also carries into the New Testament. Cf.: ANET pp. 99d, 101a, 365b.



### *B. The Garden of Eden 2:8 – 15*

<sup>8</sup> The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he placed the man he had formed. <sup>9</sup> The Lord God made trees grow, of every variety, which were a pleasure to see and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup> A river flowed out of the garden and was the headwater for four streams. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first of these streams was Pishon, <sup>31</sup> which borders the entire land of Havilah, <sup>32</sup> where there is gold. <sup>12</sup> (The gold of that land is good, as are bdellium <sup>33</sup> and onyx which are also found there.) <sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is Gihion, <sup>34</sup> which flows along the entire border of the land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> The name of the third is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria, and the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup> The Lord God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden that he might till and tend it.

### *C. The Forbidden Tree 2:16 – 17*

<sup>16</sup> The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You are free to eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup> but there is an exception: you are not to eat of the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil for, should you eat of it, you will certainly die.” <sup>35</sup>

### *D. Man Needs a Companion 2:18 – 20*

<sup>18</sup> Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that this man should be alone. I will fashion a partner that will be suited to him.” <sup>19</sup> Then the Lord God fashioned every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and whatever the man called them became the name of that living creature. <sup>36</sup> <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all the live stock, birds, and wild animals, but there was no partner to be a helper to him, to be found for the man. <sup>37</sup>

### *E. The Making of Woman 2:24 – 25*

<sup>24</sup> The Lord God caused a deep sleep to come over the man and while he was sleeping the Lord God took one of his ribs and closed up the opening with flesh. <sup>22</sup> The rib which the Lord God had taken from the man, and he fashioned a woman and she was brought to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one will be called Woman,  
for out of Man this one was taken.” <sup>38</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> A few scholars feel this is the Ganges River. Others feel it is descriptive of a river or canal that is, or was, in the area that later was occupied by the Medes and Persians.

<sup>32</sup> Apparently some where in Arabia.

<sup>33</sup> Bdellium is a yellowish aromatic gum resin. Some scholars translate the Hebrew word using a different root word, and describe it as “pearl.” Others feel it is lapis lazuli.

<sup>34</sup> A few scholars feel this is the Nile River, because of the reference to Cush. Others feel it is a river near the Tigris and Euphrates.

<sup>35</sup> God alone is immortal.

<sup>36</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 365b.

<sup>37</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 143b.

<sup>38</sup> The Hebrew word for “man” is “ish” and the word for “woman” is “ishah” meaning “from man.” It is interesting how the commentator, Matthew Henry, 1662 – 1714, wrote about this passage: “The woman is not made out of his head, to top him, not out of his feet to trample upon him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to protect, near to his heart to be his beloved.”

24 (It is because of this that a man leaves his father and his mother and unites with his wife and they become as one.) 25 The man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.<sup>39</sup>

<CHAPTER 3><sup>40</sup>

III. Man's Alienation from God 3:1 – 24

A. Temptation and Sin 3:1 – 8

<sup>1</sup> Now the serpent was more shrewd (*or, crafty*) than any other wild creature that had been made by the Lord God. The serpent said to the woman, "So he has actually said, 'You are not to eat of any of the trees of the garden?'"<sup>41</sup> <sup>2</sup> The woman then replied to the serpent, "We are allowed to eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, the exception God gave was 'You are not to eat of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, nor are you to touch it, lest you die.'"<sup>42</sup> <sup>4</sup> The serpent counteracts the woman, saying, "You will not die. <sup>5</sup> God is aware that if you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will become like God, knowing good and evil."<sup>43</sup> <sup>6</sup> When the woman learned that the tree was good for food, and that it was most pleasant to look at, and that it could fulfill the desire to become wise, she took of the fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.<sup>44</sup> <sup>7</sup> At that moment for both of them, their eyes were opened and they realized that they were naked;<sup>45</sup> and they sewed fig leaves together, making themselves loin cloths (*or, aprons*).

<sup>8</sup> They heard the sound of God walking in the garden at the breezy time of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence<sup>46</sup> of the Lord God in the garden.<sup>47</sup>

B. Discovery 3:9 – 13

<sup>9</sup> The Lord called to the man, saying, "Where are you?"<sup>48</sup> <sup>10</sup> The man said, "I heard your sound in the garden, and I hid myself for I was afraid and I was naked." <sup>11</sup> God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree I told you about, and commanded that you were not to eat?" <sup>12</sup> The man said, "The woman you gave me, to be with me, gave me some fruit<sup>49</sup> of the tree and I ate." <sup>13</sup> Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate."

C. The Curse 3:14 – 19

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<sup>39</sup> This implies a happy, carefree life without concerns of sex. Some scholars feel that verse 25 should be the first sentence of chapter 3.

<sup>40</sup> Cf.: ANET p.40bc.

<sup>41</sup> An exaggeration, which prompted a reply.

<sup>42</sup> Eve over-corrects the serpent.

<sup>43</sup> The meaning in Hebrew is ambiguous. The words are plural. It can be translated as above, thus ignoring the plurals. It could also be translated, "They will become like one of us." This likeness to God is to be achieved through submissiveness to God's will.

<sup>44</sup> The woman thinks in terms of two legitimate desires, and adds one that is not legitimate. The desire for wisdom was surely a dream for power, and thus not a legitimate desire. She listened to the creature rather than listening to the creator.

<sup>45</sup> The story teller points out that the result of eating comes quickly. Now they felt nakedness, as indecency and shame. The consciousness of sex has sprung to life in them.

<sup>46</sup> Literally: "face to face."

<sup>47</sup> God is not ready to abandon the object of God's creation, even when it fails.

<sup>48</sup> The story teller describes God as a man of substance who is strolling through his garden.

<sup>49</sup> In the Hebrew text "some fruit" is missing from the text.

14 The Lord said to the serpent:

“Because you have done this,  
you are cursed among all animals  
and among all wild creatures;  
You will only be able to crawl on your belly,  
and throughout your life  
you will eat dust.

15 I will cause contempt to reign  
between you and the woman and her offspring,  
he will strike your head,  
and you will strike his heel.”<sup>50</sup>

16 To the woman he said:

“I will make giving birth very painful,<sup>51</sup>  
your children will be born during extreme pain,  
Yet you will crave to have your husband,  
and he will master you.”<sup>52</sup>

17 To the man he said,

“Because you listened to the words of your wife  
and have eaten of the tree  
about which I had given the command  
that you were not to eat,  
the ground will be cursed because of you,  
and you will labor diligently  
all you life as you supply your food,  
18 Thorns and thistles will grow for you,  
and you will eat plants that grow in the field,  
19 Through the sweat of your brow  
you will be enabled to eat your food,  
until you return to the ground  
out of which you were taken.  
You are dust and you will return to dust.”<sup>53</sup>

*D. Expulsion from Eden 3:20 – 24*

20 [The man called his wife Eve<sup>54</sup> because she was the mother of all living.<sup>55</sup> 21  
The Lord God made garments of leather for the man and his wife, and clothed them.]

22 Then the Lord God said, “See, the man has become like one of us, knowing  
good and evil; and now he might stretch out his hand and also take the Tree of Life, and,  
having eaten of it would live forever.”<sup>23</sup> Therefore the Lord God exiled him from the  
Garden of Eden, and he had to till the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> The Lord God

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<sup>50</sup> The Hebrew word, translated as “strike” is “*shuph*.” Possibly it should be the Hebrew word “*shu'aph*” which means “to crush.” The two lines provide difficulty since the pronoun changes from female to male in the verse.

<sup>51</sup> Hebrew literally: “your sorrow and conception.”

<sup>52</sup> “To love and to cherish” will become “to desire and to dominate.”

<sup>53</sup> A reference to death and burial. Cf.: ANET p. 99d.

<sup>54</sup> The name, in Hebrew, resembles the word for “living.”

<sup>55</sup> Some scholars feel that verses 20 – 21 are a later interpolation.

drove the man to the east of the Garden of Eden and then placed a cherubim with a flaming sword which served to turn away anyone by guarding the tree of life.<sup>56</sup>

<CHAPTER 4>

IV. Beginnings of Civilization 4:1 - 26

A. Cain and Abel 4:1 – 16

<sup>1</sup> Adam had intercourse<sup>57</sup> with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, saying, “I have produced<sup>58</sup> a man with the help of the Lord.”<sup>59</sup> <sup>2</sup> She again<sup>60</sup> gave birth to Abel<sup>61</sup> who was a keeper of sheep. Cain<sup>62</sup> was a farmer, tilling the soil. <sup>3</sup> In the course of time Cain brought an offering (*or, gift of homage*) to the Lord from the harvest of his crops. <sup>4</sup> Abel brought an offering of the first born of his flocks, including their fat portions. The Lord had regard for Abel and his sacrifice, <sup>5</sup> but had no regard for the offering presented by Cain. Cain, therefore, was very angry and very sad (*or perplexed*). <sup>6</sup> The Lord said to Cain,

“Why are you angry,  
and why are you sad (*or. perplexed*)?  
<sup>7</sup> If you do well,  
you will surely be accepted, wont you?  
And if you do not do well,  
sin is lurking at the door,  
its desire is for you,  
but you must master it.”<sup>63</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cain said to his brother, Abel, “Let us go out to the field.”<sup>64</sup> When they were in the field Cain attacked his brother and killed him. <sup>9</sup> Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother?” Cain replied, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s guardian?”<sup>65</sup> <sup>10</sup> The Lord said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground. <sup>11</sup> You are now cursed from the ground which opened up its mouth to receive the blood of your brother from your hand. <sup>12</sup> When you till the ground, it will no longer yield abundantly for you, you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” <sup>13</sup> Cain responded, “My punishment is greater than I can bear! <sup>14</sup> You have driven me away from

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<sup>56</sup> The story ends with melancholy pessimism. The LXX has: “He drove the man and caused him to dwell to the east of the Garden of Eden and he stationed the cherubim and a flaming sword.”

<sup>57</sup> Hebrew: “*gada*.”

<sup>58</sup> Literally: “get” or “connected.”

<sup>59</sup> So: LXX and Vulgate. Literally: “with the Lord.” Cf.: ANET p. 42a.

<sup>60</sup> Literally: “And again.” Is this a way of saying Cain and Abel were twins? Some scholars feel this is the case.

<sup>61</sup> The name Abel means “son” if it comes from an Akkadian root word. If its source is a Hebrew root word it might mean “vanity” or “breath.”

<sup>62</sup> The name means “metal worker” or “smith.”

<sup>63</sup> Some scholars feel that the text is corrupt, making for a very difficult verse to translate. Why was Cain’s sacrifice not acceptable? Some scholars feel it was because there was no blood involved with the sacrifice. It was only a cereal sacrifice which was considered to be a lesser sacrifice. How did Cain discover that his sacrifice was not accepted? Scholars feel that as the sacrifice was being burned the smoke from Abel’s sacrifice rose up toward heaven while the smoke from Cain’s sacrifice hovered near the ground.

<sup>64</sup> The Hebrew is unclear in its meaning. This translation is based on the LXX, Syriac and Vulgate translations. The Hebrew text omits the words spoken by Cain.

<sup>65</sup> The Hebrew word can mean either “just keep an eye on” or “lie in wait for.”

the soil today, and I will be hidden from your face. I will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me will kill me.”<sup>15</sup> Then the Lord said to him, “Not so!<sup>66</sup> Whoever kills Cain will endure a seven-fold vengeance.” The Lord then put a mark on Cain, so that no one who saw him would kill him.<sup>16</sup> Cain then went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod<sup>67</sup> east of Eden.

*B. Cain’s Descendants 4:17 – 19*

<sup>17</sup> Cain had intercourse with his wife and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch, who build a city,<sup>68</sup> naming it Enoch after his son Enoch. <sup>18</sup> Enoch was the father of Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Lamech. <sup>19</sup> Lamech married two wives, the name of the one being Adah, and the name of the other was Zillah.

*C. The rise of Nomadism 4:20- 24.*

<sup>20</sup> Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the ancestor of those who live in tents and have livestock. <sup>21</sup> His brother’s name was Jubal, the ancestor of those who play the lyre and pipe. <sup>22</sup> Zillah gave birth to Tubal-cain, who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Lamech said to his wives:

“Adah and Zillah, listen to me;  
you wives of Lamech,  
listen to what I have to say:  
I have killed<sup>70</sup> a man for wounding me,  
a young man for striking me.

<sup>24</sup> If Cain is avenged seven-fold,  
Lamech will certainly be avenged seventy-seven fold.”

*D. Worship of the Lord 4:25 – 26*

<sup>25</sup> Adam’s wife again became pregnant and gave birth to a son whose name was Seth,<sup>71</sup> for she said, “God has granted me another child in place of Abel who had been killed by Cain. <sup>26</sup> Seth gave birth to a son named Enosh. It was at that time that people began to call on (*or, evoke*) the name of the Lord.

<CHAPTER 5>

*V. Descendants of Adam 5:1 – 28*

<sup>1</sup> This is a written account of the generations of Adam. When God created humans,<sup>72</sup> he made them in the likeness of God. <sup>2</sup> He created them as male and female and he blessed them and called them<sup>73</sup> “humankind” on the day they were created.

<sup>3</sup> After Adam had lived one hundred thirty years he became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.<sup>74</sup> <sup>4</sup> The life span of Adam after he became the father of Seth was eight hundred years; and he had other sons and

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<sup>66</sup> So: LXX, Syriac and Vulgate. Hebrew: “Therefore.”

<sup>67</sup> The word “Nod” means “Wandering.”

<sup>68</sup> The Hebrew word usually means “fortified city.”

<sup>69</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 488d.

<sup>70</sup> This can also be translated as “I will kill....”

<sup>71</sup> The name Seth means “granted.”

<sup>72</sup> Literally: “Adam.”

<sup>73</sup> Literally: “him.”

<sup>74</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 265c.

daughters. <sup>5</sup> The total years of Adam's life were nine-hundred thirty years at the time of his death. <sup>75</sup>

<sup>6</sup> After Seth had lived one hundred and five years, he became the father of Enosh. <sup>7</sup> The life span of Seth after he became the father of Enosh was eight hundred seven years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>8</sup> The total years of Seth's life were nine hundred twelve years at the time of his death.

<sup>9</sup> After Enosh had lived ninety years, he became the father of Kenan. <sup>10</sup> The life span of Enosh after he became the father of Enosh was eight hundred fifteen years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>11</sup> The total years of Enosh's life were nine hundred five years at the time of his death.

<sup>12</sup> After Kenan had lived seventy years, he became the father of Mahalalel. <sup>13</sup> The life span of Kenan after he became the father of Mahalalel was eight hundred forty years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>14</sup> The total years of Kenan's life were nine hundred ten years at the time of his death.

<sup>15</sup> After Mahalalel had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Jared. <sup>16</sup> The life span of Mahalalel after he became the father of Jared was eight hundred thirty years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>17</sup> The total years of Mahalalel's life were eight hundred ninety-five years at the time of his death.

<sup>18</sup> After Jared had lived one hundred sixty-two years, he became the father of Enoch. <sup>19</sup> The life span of Jared after he became the father of Enoch was eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>20</sup> The total years of Jared's life were nine hundred sixty-two years at the time of his death.

<sup>21</sup> After Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methuselah. <sup>22</sup> Enoch walked with God. After the birth of Methuselah for three hundred years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup> Thus the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. <sup>24</sup> Enoch walked with God, and then walked no more because God took him.

<sup>25</sup> After Methuselah had lived one hundred eighty-seven years, he became the father of Lamech. <sup>26</sup> The life span of Methuselah after he became the father of Lamech was seven hundred eighty-two years and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>27</sup> The total years of Methuselah's life were nine hundred sixty nine years at the time of his death.

<sup>28</sup> After Lamech had lived one hundred eighty-two years, he became the father of a son. <sup>29</sup> He named his son Noah, saying, "Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed is one who will bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands." <sup>30</sup> The life span of Lamech after becoming the father of Noah was five hundred ninety-five years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>31</sup> The total years of Lamech's life were seven hundred seventy-seven years at the time of his death.

<sup>32</sup> After Noah had lived five hundred years he became the father of Shim, Ham, an Japheth.

## <CHAPTER 6> <sup>76</sup>

### *VII Sons of God and Daughters of Men 6:1 – 4*

<sup>1</sup> There was an increase of people on the face of the ground, and they gave birth to daughters, <sup>77</sup> <sup>2</sup> and the sons of God saw that they were beautiful; and they married <sup>78</sup> in

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<sup>75</sup> Thee age numbers are possibly based on a Babylonian system of numbers. The numbers in the LXX and Samaritan Pentateuch differ

<sup>76</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 44abc.

accord with their desires. <sup>3</sup> Then the Lord said, “My spirit <sup>79</sup> will not reside <sup>80</sup> with humans forever, for they are human; their age will reach one hundred and twenty years.” <sup>81</sup> <sup>4</sup> The Nephilim <sup>82</sup> were on the earth in those days, and also in later times. When the sons of God married the daughters of humans who gave birth to their children, these became the heroes of the past, being warriors of renown.

### VIII. *The Flood 6:1 – 9:14*

#### A. *Making the Barge 1 – 22*

<sup>5</sup> The Lord saw that the wickedness of humanity on the earth was great, and that there was a great proneness <sup>83</sup> toward continuous evil thoughts. <sup>6</sup> The Lord realized that he had made humanity on the earth, and it pained him <sup>84</sup> within his inner being. <sup>7</sup> Then the Lord said, “I will wipe out this humanity which I have created: humans, animals, creeping things, and birds of the air, for I rue that I have made them.” <sup>8</sup> Noah, however, found favor in the sight of God.

<sup>9</sup> These are the generations of Noah who was righteous and blameless <sup>85</sup> (*or, exemplary*) in his generation. Noah walked with God. <sup>10</sup> Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup> The entire earth had become corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup> God saw the earth and it was evident that the earth had become corrupt, for all of humanity had corrupted itself to the point that that had become the way of life. <sup>86</sup>

<sup>13</sup> God said to Noah, “I have decided to make an end for all living things, for the earth is filled with violence. <sup>14</sup> You, however, are to make a barge <sup>87</sup> out of gopher wood <sup>88</sup> and you are to cover it, inside and outside with pitch. <sup>15</sup> You are to make it in this way: the length is to be three hundred cubits (*or, four hundred fifty feet*), and its width is to be fifty cubits (*or, seventy five feet*), and its height is to be thirty cubits (*or, forty five feet*). <sup>89</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 104c.

<sup>78</sup> Literally: “they took wives for themselves.”

<sup>79</sup> Literally: “breath.”

<sup>80</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. The point of this passage is quite cryptic. Are these the daughters of Cain? Who are the “sons of God?” Angels who married beneath their status? Scholars have suggested answers but no suggested answer has any great amount of followers.

<sup>81</sup> Some scholars feel that this verse is a later gloss.

<sup>82</sup> The word might mean “giants,” others, “People who are semi-divine.” In Numbers 13:13 they are usually described as “Mighty men.” The thought of them being the offspring of some demonic tyrant has been proposed. It can be agreed upon by scholars that the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. In Near Eastern Mythology there were people called “Gilgamesh” from which the concept of the “Nephilim” came into being.

<sup>83</sup> Within Hebrew faith there is a concept of the “yecer” which can be (*ha tov*) or, good, or the “yecer harah” which is an evil nature. Both are within humanity and it is the responsibility for humanity to control these “yecers.” Cf.: ANET p. 265d, 11a, 104c.

<sup>84</sup> Literally: “indignant rage.”

<sup>85</sup> This is the first time that righteous and blameless are used together in the Hebrew Scriptures.

<sup>86</sup> Cf.: ANET p.58a,105b.

<sup>87</sup> Literally: “box” or “chest.” Cf.: ANET p.93bd. 105bc.

<sup>88</sup> The variety of wood called “gopher wood” is unknown. The LXX has “square timbers.” Some translators use the word “cypress,” which in Hebrew is somewhat similar to “gopher wood.”

<sup>89</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 93bc.

16 You are to make a roof to cover the barge, and finish it to within one cubit above,<sup>90</sup> and a door is to be placed on the side of the barge, which is also to contain a lower, second and third deck.<sup>91</sup> 17 I, on my part, am going to bring a flood of water (*or, a deluge*)<sup>92</sup> on the earth that will destroy all living creatures under heaven in which there is the breath of life. Everything that is on the earth will die.<sup>93</sup> 18 I will establish my covenant with you,<sup>94</sup> and you are to come into the barge: you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives are all to be with you. 19 Two of every living genus of living creature is to enter the barge with you, to be kept alive. These are to be male and female.<sup>95</sup> 20 Two of every genus of birds, two of every genus of animals, two of every genus of creeping things,. Two of every genus of living creature are to come in to you and you are to keep them alive. 21 In addition take with you a supply of all the varieties of food that are eaten, storing them, for this is to serve as food for you and for all the creatures that are in the barge. 22 Noah did this, exactly as the Lord commanded.

#### <CHAPTER 7>

##### *B. The Flood Comes 7:1 – 24*

1 Then the Lord said to Noah, “Go out into the barge, you and your entire household, for I have witnessed that you are righteous before me in this generation. 2 Take seven pairs<sup>96</sup> of all clean animals, the male and its mate; 3 and seven pairs of birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their genus on the face of the earth. 4 In one week<sup>97</sup> I will send rain which will continue for forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made will be removed from the face of the earth.” 5 Noah did exactly as the Lord had commanded.

6 Noah was six hundred years old when the flood waters came on the earth. 7 Noah, his sons, his wife, and his daughters-in-law entered the barrage to escape the waters of the flood.<sup>98</sup> 8 Of the clean animals, and the animals that were not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, 9 two and two, male and female, went into the barge with Noah, as God had commanded. 10 After seven days the waters of the flood came over the earth.<sup>99</sup>

11 In the six-hundredth year of Noah's life in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month the springs in the depths of the earth opened and cloud bursts of rain poured down.<sup>100</sup> 12 (Rain fell on the earth steadily for forty days and forty nights.) 13 It

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<sup>90</sup> Some scholars feel that there was to be an overhanging roof. The one cubit is thought to possibly be an open space all around the barge which is protected by the overhanging roof. This would supply air for the inside of the barge.

<sup>91</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 93c, 105bc.

<sup>92</sup> Literally: “a celestial sea.”

<sup>93</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 9d.

<sup>94</sup> This is the first mention of a covenant in the Bible. Cf.: ANET p. 105c.

<sup>95</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 93bd, 105b.

<sup>96</sup> To have seven pairs provided enough that they could keep the genus of animals alive on the earth but also have some additional animals that could be used as sacrificial animals.

<sup>97</sup> Literally: “in seven days.”

<sup>98</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 94a, 153d.

<sup>99</sup> Some scholars change the order of the verses to make for a better read: 1 – 10, 12, 17, 22 -23, 6, 11, 13, 21, 24.

<sup>100</sup> Literally: “the windows of heaven opened.” “Floodgates of heaven” might be a good translation. Cf.: ANET p. 94a.



was on that very same day that Noah, his sons, his wife and his three daughters-in-law entered the barge,<sup>101</sup> 14 as did the wild animals, and livestock according to their genus. These were joined by creeping things and birds of all sorts, according to their genus. 15 They all went into the barge with Noah, two by two, of every genus of creature in which was the breath of life. 16 Those that entered were male and female of all living beings, entering as God had commanded Noah, and then the Lord shut every one in.

17 The flood on the earth continued for forty days; and as the water increased, the barge floated and rose high above the earth. 18 The water continued, increasing greatly on the earth, and the barge floated on the surface of the water.<sup>102</sup> 19 The waters increased so greatly on the earth that all the tall mountains of the earth were covered with water. 20 The water rose above the mountain tops, covering them with fifteen cubits (*or, twenty-one and a half feet*).<sup>103</sup> 21 All the creatures that moved on the earth: birds, livestock, wild animals, swarming creatures that swarm on the earth and all human beings; 22 all living creatures into whose nostrils was the breath of life, everything that lived on dry land, everything was dead. 23 All life on the face of the earth was blotted out. Only Noah survived along with those who were with him in the barge.<sup>104</sup> 24 The waves of water remained on the earth for one hundred fifty days.<sup>105</sup>

#### <CHAPTER 8>

##### *C. The Water Retreats 8:1 – 12*

1 God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock that were with him on the barge. God caused the wind to blow over the earth. and the water subsided; 2 the springs in the depths of the earth and the cloud bursts of rain from the heavens were held back.<sup>106</sup> 3 All the water began to recede from the earth, and at the end of one hundred fifty days the waters had abated, 4 so that in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month the barge came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.<sup>107</sup> 5 The water continued to diminish until the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.<sup>108</sup>

6 After forty days Noah opened the hatch of the ark which he had made,<sup>109</sup> 7 and sent a raven and it flew back and forth until the water on the ground had dried.<sup>110</sup> 8 Then he sent out one of the doves, to see if the water had subsided from the surface of the ground; 9 but the dove found no place for it to settle<sup>111</sup> and it returned to Noah in the barge, for the water was still on the face of the entire earth. So Noah put out his hand and took the dove back into the barge with him. 10 He waited another seven days and sent the dove out from the barge again.<sup>112</sup> 11 This time the dove came back to him in the evening,

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<sup>101</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 94a.

<sup>102</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 94b

<sup>103</sup> Some scholars feel this is a later informative gloss.

<sup>104</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 94c.

<sup>105</sup> Scholars are divided as to where verse 24 should be placed. Does it belong with chapter 7 or ought it to be the first verse of chapter 8. It seems fitting in either location.

<sup>106</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 94c.

<sup>107</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 94c.

<sup>108</sup> Some scholars rearrange the verses as follows: 1-5, 13 – 14, 6 – 12, 15 – 16, 22.

<sup>109</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 94d.

<sup>110</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 95a.

<sup>111</sup> Literally: “no place to rest its foot.”

<sup>112</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 94d.

having an freshly plucked olive leaf in its beak Then Noah knew that the water had subsided from the earth. <sup>12</sup> He then waited another seven days and sent the dove out again. She did not return to him any more.

*D. Noah's Sacrifice 8:13 – 22*

<sup>13</sup> In the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, on the first day of the first month the waters were dried from the earth, and Noah removed the hatch of the ark and looked out, and saw that the surface of the earth was getting dry. <sup>14</sup> In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month the earth was dry. <sup>15</sup> Then God said to Noah, <sup>16</sup> "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your daughters-in-law. <sup>17</sup> Bring every living creature that is with you: all birds, animals, and creeping things that creep on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." <sup>18</sup> So Noah came out of the barge with his sons, his wife and his daughters-in-law. <sup>19</sup> Every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, <sup>113</sup> -- everything that moves on the earth – went out of the barge, according to its genus.

<sup>20</sup> Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took one of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings to the Lord. <sup>114</sup> <sup>21</sup> When the Lord smelled the pleasing odor, the Lord said in his mind, "I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, for the proneness of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever destroy every living creature again, as I have done. <sup>115</sup>

<sup>22</sup> As long as the earth endures  
seed time and harvest, cold and heat  
summer and winter, day and night,  
will not cease." <sup>116</sup>

<CHAPTER 9>

*E. The Noachian Law 9:1 – 7*

<sup>1</sup> God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; replenish the earth. <sup>2</sup> The fear and dread of you will be on every animal of the earth, and on every bird of the air, and on everything that creeps on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea, for they are delivered into your hand. <sup>3</sup> Every moving thing that lives on the earth will be food for you; and just as surely as I have given green plants, so too I give you everything. <sup>4</sup> However, you are not to eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. <sup>5</sup> Your own life blood will surely require a reckoning, I will require it from every animal, and from human beings, each one for the blood of another, I will require a reckoning for human life.

<sup>6</sup> Whoever sheds the blood of a human being,  
by a human that person's blood will be shed,  
for it is by his own image  
that God made human kind. <sup>117</sup>

<sup>7</sup> And you, be fruitful and multiply, abound in the earth and multiply in it."

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<sup>113</sup> So: LXX. A portion of this list is omitted in Hebrew.

<sup>114</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 95a.

<sup>115</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 94c, 94a,d.

<sup>116</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 368b.

<sup>117</sup> The life of an animal can be taken for food. On the other hand, persons are not to be killed by another human.

*F. The Covenant with Noah 9:8 – 19*

8 Then God said to Noah and to the persons with him, 9 “I am establishing a covenant with you and with your descendants who will come after you, 10 and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, livestock, and all the animals of the earth that came out of the barge with you. <sup>118</sup> 11 I will establish my covenant with you, that all flesh will never again be cut off by the waters of a flood, for there never will be another flood to destroy the earth.” God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I am making with you, which will continue through all future generations.

13 I set my rainbow in the clouds  
over the earth, and this will be  
a sign of this covenant  
between me and you  
and every living creature  
of all flesh, that the waters  
will never again become a flood  
that will destroy all flesh.  
14 Whenever I cloud over the sky  
and the rainbow is seen in the clouds,  
15 I will remember my covenant  
between me and you,  
and every living creature of the flesh  
that is on the earth,  
that there will never be another flood  
that will destroy all flesh.  
16 When the rainbow is in the sky  
I will see it and remember  
the everlasting covenant  
between God and every living creature  
of all flesh that is living on the earth.”

17 God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established, between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

18 The sons of Noah who were with him on the barge were Shem, Ham and Japheth. Ham is the father of the Canaanites. 19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the entire earth had to develop.

*IX. The Last Days of Noah 9:20 – 25*

*A. Farmer and Vintner 9:20*

20 Noah was a man of the soil, being the first to plant a vineyard.

*B. The Curse of Canaan 9:21 – 25*

21 Noah drank his wine and became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent. 22 Ham, the father of the Canaanites saw <sup>119</sup> the nakedness of his father, and told it to his two brothers. 23 Then Shem and Japheth took a garment to cover the nakedness of their father and the two turned away and thus did not see their father’s nakedness. 24 When Noah

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<sup>118</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew adds: “every animal of the earth.”

<sup>119</sup> The Hebrew word (*ra'a*), which means “to look searchingly,” not a vague glimpse. This would be considered to be voyeurism.

woke up from his wine and realized what his youngest son had done to him, <sup>25</sup> he said,  
“Cursed be Canaan,  
he will be the lowest of slaves to his brothers.” <sup>120</sup>

*C. Blessing of Shem and Japheth 9:26 – 27*

<sup>26</sup> He also said,

“Blessed by the Lord my God, is Shem;  
and let Canaan be his slave.

<sup>27</sup> May God make space for Japheth, <sup>121</sup>  
and let him live in the tents of Shem,  
and let Canaan be his slave.”

*D. Noah’s Death 9:28 – 29*

<sup>28</sup> After the flood Noah lived three hundred fifty years. <sup>29</sup> Noah lived to be nine hundred fifty years of age, and he died.

<CHAPTER 10>

*X. The Descendants of Noah 10:1 – 32*

<sup>1</sup> These are the descendants of Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, whose children were born after the flood.

<sup>2</sup> The descendants of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. <sup>3</sup> The descendants of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. <sup>4</sup> The descendants of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim. <sup>122</sup> <sup>5</sup> The people who lived on the coastland descended from these. These are the descendants of Japheth <sup>123</sup> in their lands, with their own language, by their families, in their nations.

<sup>6</sup> The descendants of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. <sup>7</sup> The descendants of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. <sup>8</sup> Cush became the father of Nimrod; he was the first on earth to become a mighty warrior. <sup>9</sup> He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord.” <sup>10</sup> The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, and Accad, all of them in the land of Shinar. <sup>124</sup> <sup>11</sup> From that land he went into Assyria, and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, and <sup>12</sup> Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. <sup>13</sup> Egypt became the father of Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, <sup>14</sup> Pathrusim, Casluhim, and Caphtorim, from which the Philistines come.

<sup>15</sup> Canaan became the father of Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, <sup>16</sup> and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, <sup>17</sup> the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, <sup>18</sup> the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. <sup>19</sup> The territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon, in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. <sup>20</sup> These are the descendants of Ham, by their families, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

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<sup>120</sup> Literally: “the slave of slaves.”

<sup>121</sup> There is a play on words in Hebrew with the words “space” and “Japheth.”

<sup>122</sup> So: some Hebrew manuscripts, Samaritan Pentateuch, and LXX. The MT has Dodanim.

<sup>123</sup> “These are the descendants of Japheth” is omitted in Hebrew.

<sup>124</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 164d.

21 To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born. 22 The descendants of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram. 23 The descendants of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. 24 Arpachshad became the father of Shelah, and Shelah became the father of Eber. 25 To Eber two sons were born: the name of the one was Peleg,<sup>125</sup> for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan. 26 Joktan became the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 27 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 28 Obal, Abimael, Sheba, 29 Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab; all of whom were descendants of Joktan. 30 The territory in which they lived extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar, the hill country of the east; 31 These are the descendants of Shem, by their families, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

32 These are the families of Noah's sons, according to their genealogies, in their nations; and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.

## <CHAPTER 11>

### *XI. The Confusion of Tongues 11:1 – 9*

1 The entire earth had one language and the same (*or, few*) words. 2 As they migrated toward the east they arrived at a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. 3 They talked to one another, saying, "Come, let us make bricks, and harden them in a kiln." <sup>126</sup> They had brick in place of stone, and bitumen for mortar. 4 Then they said, "Come, let us build a city for ourselves and a tower <sup>127</sup> with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves. <sup>128</sup> If we do not do this we will be scattered afar across the entire earth." <sup>129</sup> 5 The Lord came down to observe the city and the tower which these mortals had built. 6 The Lord said, "Look, they are one people, they all have the same language, and this is merely the beginning of what they will do. There is nothing that they will propose to do that will be impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down, and let us confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." 8 So it was that the Lord scattered them afar across the entire earth, and they halted the construction of the city. 9 Because of this that location was called Babel, <sup>130</sup> because the Lord confused the language which was used by all the population of the earth, and from there the Lord scattered them over the entire earth.

### *XII. Descendants of Shem 11:10 – 26*

<sup>10</sup> These are the descendants of Shem. When Shem was one hundred years old, <sup>131</sup> he became the father of Arpachshad, two years after the flood; <sup>11</sup> and Shem lived after the birth of Arpachshad five hundred years, and had other sons and daughters.

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<sup>125</sup> The name means "division."

<sup>126</sup> Literally: "burn them thoroughly."

<sup>127</sup> These towers were called "Ziggaratts." They possibly served, in that level area, as lookout towers, and the top level served as a sacred place for worship of their gods.

<sup>128</sup> During this time period one of the major names for God was "The Name." Now these people intended to, by building this high tower, to be called "the name."

<sup>129</sup> Literally: "scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

<sup>130</sup> In Hebrew "Babel" means "confuse."

<sup>131</sup> The ages in verses 10 – 20 do not agree with those in the Samaritan Pentateuch, the LXX, and the Book of Jubilees.

<sup>12</sup> When Arpachshad had lived thirty-five years, he became the father of Shelah, <sup>13</sup> and after the birth of Shelah, Arpachshad lived four hundred three years, and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>14</sup> When Shelah had lived thirty years, he became the father of Eber; <sup>15</sup> and after the birth of Eber, Shelah lived four hundred three years, and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>16</sup> When Eber had lived thirty-four years, he became the father of Peleg; <sup>17</sup> and after the birth of Peleg, Eber lived four hundred thirty years, and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>18</sup> When Peleg had lived thirty years, he became the father of Reu; <sup>19</sup> and after the birth of Reu, Peleg lived two hundred nine years, and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>20</sup> When Reu had lived thirty-two years, he became the father of Serug, <sup>21</sup> and after the birth of Serug, Reu lived two hundred seven years, and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>22</sup> When Serug had lived thirty years, he became the father of Nahor, <sup>23</sup> and after the birth of Nahor, Serug lived two hundred years, and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>24</sup> When Nahor had lived twenty-nine years, he became the father of Terah, <sup>25</sup> and after the birth of Terah, Nahor lived one hundred nineteen years, and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>26</sup> When Terah had lived seventy years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

### *XIII. Genealogy of Abraham 11:27 – 32*

<sup>27</sup> These are the descendants of Terah. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. <sup>28</sup> Haran died before his father Terah, in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans. <sup>132</sup> <sup>29</sup> Abram and Nahor married; the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah. She was the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah. <sup>133</sup> <sup>30</sup> Sarai was barren, and had no children.

<sup>31</sup> Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law, Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; but when they came to Haran, <sup>134</sup> they settled there. <sup>32</sup> Terah attained the age of two hundred five years, and Terah died in Haran.

### <CHAPTER 12>

#### *XIV. The Call of Abram 12:1 - 8*

<sup>1</sup> The Lord had said <sup>135</sup> to Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives, your parental home, and go to the land I will show you:

<sup>2</sup> So that I might make you a great nation,  
and I might bless you,  
and make your name great,

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<sup>132</sup> Ur of the Chaldeans was located south of Babylon, along the Euphrates River.

<sup>133</sup> Milcah, the daughter of Haran, who had married his niece.

<sup>134</sup> Haran was located in north-western Mesopotamia, about sixty miles east of Carchemish.

<sup>135</sup> So: literally.

so that you will become a blessing.  
3 I will bless those who bless you,  
and I will curse those who curse you,  
for in all the families of the earth  
you will be blessed.”

4 Then Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Abram took his wife Sari and his brother's son Lot and all his possessions that they had amassed, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set out to go into the land of Canaan. When they entered the land of Canaan 6 Abram traveled through the land to the place at Shechem <sup>136</sup> where there was a special oak tree, called the oak of Moreh. <sup>137</sup> At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 The Lord then appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to you and your descendants.” So Abram built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. <sup>138</sup> 8 From there he moved in stages to the hill country on the east of Bethel, <sup>139</sup> and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai <sup>140</sup> on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.

*XV. Abram in Egypt 12:9 – 13:1*

9 Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb. <sup>141</sup>  
10 There was a famine in the land. Because of this he went down to Egypt <sup>142</sup> to reside there as an alien, since the famine was severe in the land of Canaan. <sup>143</sup> 11 At about the time that he was entering Egypt he said to his wife Sarai, “I know what a beautiful woman you are! <sup>144</sup> 12 When the Egyptians see you they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 Please say you are my sister, so it might go well for me because of you, and that my life may be spared on your account.” <sup>145</sup> 14 When Abram entered Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. 15 When Pharaoh's officials saw her beauty they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken to Pharaoh's house. 16 It was because of her that Pharaoh dealt with Abram and he obtained sheep, oxen, male and female donkeys, male and female slaves, and camels.  
17 The Lord, however, afflicted Pharaoh and his house with serious disease because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18 Pharaoh then called Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, ‘She is my sister?’ so that I took her for my wife? Now then! Here is your wife, take her and be gone!” 20 Pharaoh then gave his men orders that they expel Abram and his wife

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<sup>136</sup> Shechem was located 27 miles north of Jerusalem.

<sup>137</sup> The name possibly means “treasure.” It was probably a pagan site at which one could receive oracles.

<sup>138</sup> It is worth noting that Abram built an altar. There were surely Canaanite altars, but he must have felt these were defiled and the Lord deserved an offering from a new altar, solely dedicated to the Lord.

<sup>139</sup> Bethel means “house of God.” Its former name had been Luz. It was located ten miles north of Jerusalem.

<sup>140</sup> Ai means “ruins.” It is mentioned in Joshua, as one of the first places attacked by the Israelites as they came into the Promised Land. It was located north west of Jericho.

<sup>141</sup> The Negeb is the semi-arid grazing land south of the city of Hebron and most of the Sinai Peninsula.

<sup>142</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 259.

<sup>143</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 251c.

<sup>144</sup> Sarai was 65 years old.

<sup>145</sup> At least one of the tribal nations in the Middle East (*the Harrians*), at that time, had a practice whereby the husbands could adopt their wives to be their sisters. This elevated the wife's social standing.

and all his possessions. **13:1** So Abram went up from Egypt, together with his wife and all that he possessed accompanied him into the Negeb.

<CHAPTER 13:2 – 18

*XVI. Abram and Lot 13:2 - 13*

<sup>2</sup> Now Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. <sup>3</sup> He journeyed by stages from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where he had formerly set up his tent, between Bethel and Ai, <sup>4</sup> at the place where he had made an altar, and there Abram invoked the name of the Lord. <sup>5</sup> Lot, who had accompanied Abram also had flocks, herds, and tents, <sup>6</sup> which were so great in number that the land was unable to support the flocks and herds of both Abram and Lot. It became impossible for them to remain together. <sup>7</sup> There were disputes between the herdsmen concerning pasture land for both Abram's and Lot's livestock. (At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were also living in that area.)

<sup>8</sup> Abram then spoke to Lot, saying, "Do not let disputes rise between you and me and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen. After all, we are related to one another." <sup>9</sup> The entire land is before us. Separate yourself from me. If you take the land to the left I will take the land to the right, or if you take the land to the right, I will take the land to the left." <sup>146</sup> <sup>10</sup> Lot looked in every direction and saw that the plain of the Jordan <sup>147</sup> was well watered and wherever he looked, it looked like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) <sup>11</sup> So Lot chose the plain of the Jordan valley for himself and he journeyed east. It was in this way that they parted company. <sup>12</sup> Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the plain and moved his tent toward Sodom. <sup>13</sup> (The people of Sodom were wicked and sinned greatly against the Lord.)

*C. Abram Settles in Hebron 13:14 – 18*

<sup>14</sup> The Lord said to Abram, after Lot separated from him, "Look up! Look around from the place where you are now. Look northward, and southward, eastward and westward. <sup>15</sup> I will give you all the land you see. It will be yours and your descendants forever. <sup>16</sup> I will make your descendants to be like the dust of the earth in number; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your descendants also can be counted. <sup>17</sup> Rise up. Walk the length and breadth of the land for I will give it to you." <sup>18</sup> So Abram moved his tent, and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the Lord.

<CHAPTER 14> <sup>148</sup>

*XVII. The War of the Kings 14:1 – 24*

<sup>1</sup> In the days of Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim, <sup>149</sup> <sup>2</sup> these kings engaged in war against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim,

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<sup>146</sup> Note the magnanimity of Abram. Lot gets first choice and chooses the best pasture land. He had tagged along with Abram, and now, surely, Abram felt he had been taken advantage of.

<sup>147</sup> This was the lower portion of the Jordan Rift.

<sup>148</sup> This chapter appears to be an ancient pericope that seems to have been inserted in the Hebrew text which appears to be from the Middle-Bronze age in the early second Millennium.

<sup>149</sup> In verses 1 – 4 the kings of the Dead Sea area rebel against the Eastern kings.



and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). <sup>3</sup> They drew up their battle lines in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Dead (*or, Salt*) Sea). <sup>4</sup> They had served Chedorlaomer, for twelve years, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

<sup>5</sup> In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were his allies came and subdued the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kinathaim, <sup>150</sup> <sup>6</sup> and the Horites in the hill country of Seir as far as Elparan on the edge of the wilderness; <sup>7</sup> then they turned back and came to Enmishpat (that is Kadesh), and subdued all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorians who lived in Hazazon-tamar.

<sup>8</sup> Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Amah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, (that is Zoar), went out and they drew up their battle lines and engaged in battle in the Valley of Siddim <sup>151</sup> <sup>9</sup> against King Chedorlaomer of Elalm, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar, four kings against five kings. <sup>10</sup> The Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country. <sup>11</sup> The invaders then seized all the wealth of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and left; <sup>12</sup> They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who lived in Sodom, and all his possessions, and departed.

<sup>13</sup> Then a survivor of the battle came, telling Abram the Hebrew, <sup>152</sup> who was living at the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother <sup>153</sup> of Eshcol and of Aner, who were allies of Abram, <sup>14</sup> and when Abram heard that his nephew had been taken captive, he mustered <sup>154</sup> three hundred eighteen men, all who had been born in his house, and trained in battle, going in pursuit as far as Dan. <sup>15</sup> He divided his forces against them under cover of darkness, and he and his servants routed the enemy and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. <sup>16</sup> He then brought back all the possessions, also bringing back his nephew Lot with all that he possessed, and the women and the people.

*B. Melchizedek 14:17 - 20*

<sup>17</sup> After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet Abram in the Valley of Shaveh (that is the King's Valley). <sup>155</sup> <sup>18</sup> King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of God Most High. <sup>156</sup> <sup>19</sup> He blessed Abram and said:

“Blessed be Aram by God Most High,  
maker of heaven and earth.  
who has delivered your enemies  
into your hand!”

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<sup>150</sup> In verses 5 – 7 the battle between the Dead Sea kings and the Eastern kings takes place. Cf.: ANET p. 149d

<sup>151</sup> In verses 8 – 12 the Dead Sea kings are being plundered by the eastern kings.

<sup>152</sup> The Hebrew word is in question. In verses 13 – 16 Abram and his allies now conquer the Eastern Kings. Cf.: ANET p. 328d.

<sup>153</sup> The Hebrew word may mean “relative” or “ally.”

<sup>154</sup> The Hebrew word “*hanikh*” is unclear in its meaning.

<sup>155</sup> The King of Salem and Melchizedek meet Abram.

<sup>156</sup> Hebrew: “*El Elyon*.”

C. Abram's Disinterestedness 14:20 – 24

<sup>20</sup> Abram gave Melchizedek one tenth of everything. <sup>157</sup> <sup>21</sup> The King of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people (*or, Return my people*), but you can have the possessions as your own." <sup>22</sup> Abram replied to the king of Sodom, "I have vowed <sup>158</sup> before the Lord God Most High, maker of heaven and earth, <sup>23</sup> that I would not take even a thread or a lace for a sandal or anything that is yours, lest you say, 'I have made Abram rich.' <sup>24</sup> I will take nothing, the one exception being what the young men ate, and the share of the men who went with me—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. Allow them to take their share."

<CHAPTER 15>

XVIII. The Covenant with Abram 15:1 – 21 <sup>159</sup>

<sup>1</sup> After these events the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

"Fear not Abram,  
I am your shield (*or, protector*), <sup>160</sup>  
your reward <sup>161</sup> will be great."

<sup>2</sup> But Abram said: "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I remain childless <sup>162</sup> and the heir of my house is Eleazer of Damascus?" <sup>163</sup> <sup>3</sup> Abram added, "You have given me no descendant and as a result a slave born in my house is to be my heir." <sup>164</sup> <sup>4</sup> The word of the Lord came to Abram: "That man will not be your heir; no one but your very own child which you conceived will be your heir." <sup>5</sup> The Lord then brought him outside, saying, "Look up toward heaven, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said, to him, "The same will be true of your descendants." <sup>6</sup> Abram believed the Lord and the Lord accredited it to him as righteousness.

<sup>7</sup> The Lord said to Abram, "I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." <sup>8</sup> Abram replied, "O Lord God, how can I be assured that I will possess it?" <sup>8</sup> The Lord God then said, "Bring me a three year old heifer, a three year old nanny goat, and a three year old ram, <sup>165</sup> a turtledove and a young pigeon." <sup>10</sup> Abram did exactly as the Lord God had said, and he split them in half, <sup>166</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Abram deals with Melchizedek and the King of Sodom.

<sup>158</sup> Literally: "I have lifted my hand."

<sup>159</sup> This chapter appears to be comprised of two parts: 1 - 6 the promise of an heir. 8 - 21 the promise is reassured through the establishment of a covenant between Abram and God. Up to this point Abram has been satisfied with an oral promise which was sufficient for a homeless man. Now, however, he needs the reassurance of the fact that he will have posterity.

<sup>160</sup> The Hebrew word "*magan*" implies that Abram needs protection.

<sup>161</sup> The Hebrew word would be used when one pays a mercenary.

<sup>162</sup> The Hebrew word is uncertain.

<sup>163</sup> Some scholars feel that "of Damascus" is a later gloss.

<sup>164</sup> Literally: "one who inherits my estate." The Targums and Vulgate have: "the one in charge of my house." It is known that among the Hurrians, one of the lesser tribes of the area, it was possible for a childless man to adopt an heir to ensure a proper burial, or rescue a loan by adopting the lender.

<sup>165</sup> A three year old animal was in the best condition, at the prime of life.

<sup>166</sup> Abram was not told to split the heifer, nanny goat and ram. He did it because he was aware that this was the ceremony for the establishment of a covenant. In Hebrew "to make a covenant" is: "cut a covenant." The word "cut" is always used in the establishment of a covenant. Abram knew—it was the request of the Lord that a covenant will be "cut."

laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. <sup>167</sup> 11 When birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12 As the sun was setting, an abnormally heavy sleep fell on Abram, and a terrifying darkness descended on him. 13 The Lord then spoke to Abram, saying, “You must definitely know this: your descendants will be aliens in a foreign land, and will be slaves there. They will suffer oppression for four hundred years; <sup>168</sup> 14 but I will bring my judgment on that nation in which they are enslaved, and thereafter they will come out with great possessions. 15 As for you personally,

You will go to your ancestors in peace,  
and you will be buried having attained old age. <sup>169</sup>

16 Your descendants will come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete. <sup>170</sup>

17 When the sun had gone down, and it had become dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between the pieces. <sup>171</sup> 18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “I will give this land to your descendants – from the river of Egypt (*or, the Nile*) <sup>172</sup> to the great river, the Euphrates. <sup>173</sup> 19 The land of the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites

#### <CHAPTER 16>

#### XIX. Abram and Hagar 15:1 – 16

#### a. Sarai’s Jealousy 16:1 – 6

1 Now Sarai, Abram’s wife did not have any children. She had an Egyptian <sup>174</sup> maid servant <sup>175</sup> whose name was Hagar. 2 Sarai said to Abram, “We are aware that the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my maid servant, it might be that though I am unable to have a family I can have <sup>176</sup> a family through her.” <sup>177</sup> Abram heeded Sarai’s request. 3. Abram, having lived in the land of Canaan for ten years, Sarai,

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<sup>167</sup> Both parties were to pass through between the split animals. This was a reminder that the same fate would be on both parties who are establishing a covenant, should they break their pledge. Cf. Jeremiah 34:18 for additional information.

<sup>168</sup> In actuality it was 430 years.

<sup>169</sup> Literally: “gray headed.”

<sup>170</sup> An Ugaritic text from about 1400 BCE says the Amorites degraded the god they worshiped and thereby degraded themselves in horrible atrocities and sexual promiscuity.

<sup>171</sup> Symbolically God passed between the split animals and through this act visibly declared that the covenant between Abram and the Lord was complete and accepted.

<sup>172</sup> There is no reference in the Hebrew Scriptures that the Israelites had possession of land as far west as the Nile.

<sup>173</sup> At the height of his rule David, Israel exerted influence in that northern region (II Samuel 8:1; I Chronicles 18:1) but did not possess it.

<sup>174</sup> Some scholars feel the word “Egyptian” is a later interpolation or gloss.

<sup>175</sup> The Hebrew word gives the thought that Hagar was not a slave but a personal servant.

<sup>176</sup> Literally: “build.” Build a family.

<sup>177</sup> This was not entirely unusual but was a custom for those who were barren. Cf.: Genesis 30:2: The story of Rachel being unable to have a child and she gave her husband her maid Bildah. Some of the people in Genesis 16 seem to seek to engineer their own fulfillment of the promise received by Abram. Somehow in the midst of the upset between Hagar and Sarai, Abram ends the entire time (which continues for a number of years) as a man of faith.

Abram's wife, took Hagar, her personal servant, giving her to her husband, as his secondary wife (*or, concubine*).<sup>4</sup> Having accepted her as his wife, she conceived; and when she was certain that she was pregnant, when she looked at Sarai, she looked at her former mistress with low esteem.<sup>178</sup> <sup>5</sup> Sarai then said to Abram, "May the wrong that has been done to me be your fault! I gave my servant girl into your arms, and since she realized that she was pregnant she has been looking at me with contempt."<sup>179</sup> May the Lord judge between you and me!"<sup>180</sup> <sup>6</sup> Abram replied to Sarai, saying: "Your maid servant is in your power. Do as you please to her." Sarai then treated Hagar harshly and Hagar ran away.<sup>181</sup>

### *B. Hagar Ran Away 16:7 - 10*

<sup>7</sup> The Lord's Messenger (*or, the angel of the Lord*) found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring being on the way to Shur.<sup>182</sup> <sup>8</sup> The Lord's Messenger said, "Hagar, maid servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?"<sup>183</sup> She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress, Sarai."<sup>9</sup> The Lord's Messenger said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit to her."<sup>10</sup> The Lord's Messenger said, "I will greatly multiply your descendants to the point that they will be unable to be counted because of the size of the multitude."<sup>11</sup> The Messenger of the Lord said to her,<sup>184</sup>

"Now you have conceived,  
and you will give birth to a son.  
You are to call his name Ishmael, (*God Hears*),  
For the Lord has taken heed of your affliction.  
<sup>12</sup> He will be a wild donkey of a man,<sup>185</sup>  
with his hand against everyone,  
and everyone's hand against him;  
and he will live at odds with his relatives."<sup>186</sup>

<sup>13</sup> So she named the Lord who spoke to her, "You are El-roy";<sup>187</sup> for she said, "Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?"<sup>188</sup> <sup>14</sup> It is because of this that the well was called Beer-lahai-roii;<sup>189</sup> which is between Kadesh and Bered.

<sup>15</sup> Hagar gave birth to Abram's son and Abram named his son, Ishmael, who Hagar bore. <sup>16</sup> Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, Ishmael.

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<sup>178</sup> In the Code of Hammurabi the first wife was protected from the contempt of the secondary wife by law.

<sup>179</sup> While the arrangement was well intended Sarai could not stand the arrogance.

<sup>180</sup> If Abram had not been there to hear Sarai's objection surely she would have blamed God.

<sup>181</sup> Hagar, like a sturdy Bedouin woman, took matters into her own hands. In the Hammurabi Code the first wife was not permitted to sell the secondary wife (*or, concubine*)

<sup>182</sup> Shur was a fortress town on the Israel – Egyptian border.

<sup>183</sup> This is the only time in Ancient Near Eastern literature and Hebrew Scripture that a Divine Being spoke to a woman.

<sup>184</sup> The comfort given by the Messenger of the Lord is less comfort and more bracing that she could stand Sarai's envy.

<sup>185</sup> This is a metaphor for the lifestyle of a person who is untrammelled by social convention.

<sup>186</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 416cd.

<sup>187</sup> The name means "The God of seeing" or "God who sees."

<sup>188</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. It might be translated: "You are the God who sees me, for he said, 'I have now seen the One who sees me.'" Literally: "have I even here seen after him, who sees me?"

<sup>189</sup> The name means "the well of the Living One who sees me."

## <CHAPTER 17

### XX. The Covenant of Circumcision 17:1 – 27

#### A. The Covenant 17:1 – 8

<sup>1</sup> When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; <sup>190</sup> walk before me and be blameless. <sup>2</sup> I will make my covenant between me and you, and I will cause your descendants to be very numerous.” <sup>3</sup> Out of reverence Abram then fell on his face; <sup>191</sup> and God said to him, <sup>4</sup> “Be assured: my covenant is with you and you will be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup> You will, from now on, no longer be called Abram, <sup>192</sup> but your name will be Abraham <sup>193</sup> for I will make you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>6</sup> I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of your descendants. Kings will be found among your descendants. <sup>7</sup> I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your descendants after you throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants, <sup>8</sup> and I will give you and your descendants the land in which you are now residing as an alien, the entire land of Canaan, for a perpetual possession; and I will be their God.” <sup>194</sup>

#### B. The Sign 17:9 – 14

<sup>9</sup> God said to Abraham, “As for you, you are to keep my covenant, you and your descendants throughout all generations. <sup>10</sup> This is my covenant, which you must keep, between me and you, and your descendants from generation to generation. Every male among you is to be circumcised. <sup>195</sup> <sup>11</sup> You are to circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and this will be a sign of the covenant that has been established between me and you. <sup>12</sup> Across all generations every male among you is to be circumcised when he is eight days old, including the slave who is born in your house, as well as those who are bought with money from a foreigner, who is not your descendant. <sup>13</sup> Both the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money must be circumcised. <sup>14</sup> Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

#### C. The Promise of a Son 17:15 – 20

<sup>15</sup> God said to Abraham, “Concerning your wife Sarah: <sup>196</sup> (you are not to call her Sarai,) for her name is to be Sarah. <sup>16</sup> and I ( God) will bless her, and through you she will give birth to a son, and I will bless her; she will be the ancestress of nations, and kings will be among her descendants.” <sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell on his face, <sup>197</sup> and laughed, saying to himself, “Can a child be born to a man who is one hundred years of age? Can

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<sup>190</sup> In Hebrew: “El Shaddai.” The LXX transliterates the name. The name could be translated as “*The Powerful*.” or “*The Strong One*.” Jerome, in the Vulgate translates it as “Deus omnipotens.”

<sup>191</sup> This was a posture of humility and prayer.

<sup>192</sup> Abram means: “exalted ancestor.”

<sup>193</sup> Abraham means “ancestor of a multitude.”

<sup>194</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 374a.

<sup>195</sup> Circumcision has been practiced in much of the Middle East, as a requirement of faith. Here it is designated as the sign of the covenant between God and humanity.

<sup>196</sup> Sarah (meaning “princess”) is the newer way of saying the name. Sarai was a more primitive way of saying the name.

<sup>197</sup> Cf.; footnote 191.

Sarah, who is ninety years of age bear a child?”<sup>198</sup> 18 Abraham said to God. “Oh that Ishmael might live in your sight.”<sup>199</sup> 19 God said, “No, but your wife, Sarah will give birth to your son, and you will call him Isaac,<sup>200</sup> I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for him and his descendants. 20 Now concerning Ishmael, I have heard you, and I will bless him, making him fruitful and exceedingly numerous: he will be the ancestor of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. 21 I, however, will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will give birth to in the next season.”<sup>201</sup>

22 When he had concluded speaking with Abraham God no longer was felt, by Abraham, to be in his immediate presence.

#### *D. God’s Command Fulfilled 17:23 – 27*

23 Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house or purchased with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s house and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had told him. 24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 His son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26 On that very same day both Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised, 27 as were all the men of Abraham’s house, slaves born in the house, and those bought from strangers with money – all were circumcised with Abraham.

### <CHAPTER 18>

#### *XXI. The Lord’s Visit to Hebron 18:1 – 33*

##### *A. Abraham’s Hospitality 18:1 – 8*

1 The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. 2 He looked up and saw three men<sup>202</sup> standing near him. When he saw them he ran from the tent door to meet them, bowing down to the ground. 3 He said, “My lords,<sup>203</sup> If I have found favor in your eyes, do not pass by your servant. 4 Let some water be brought that you might wash your feet, and rest under the tree, 5 while I get a bit of bread so that you will be able to refresh yourselves, and after that you can move on, since you have come to your servant.” They replied, “Do as you say.” 6 Abraham ran to the tent to Sarah and said, “Quickly prepare three measures of fine flour,<sup>204</sup> knead it, and make unleavened bread (*or, cakes*).” 7 Abraham then ran to the herd and took a tender and plump calf, and gave it to one of his servants who hurried to prepare it. 8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared and set these before them, and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

##### *B. Sarah Laughs 18:9 – 15*

9 They said to him, “Where is your wife, Sarah? He replied, “She is in the tent.” 10 The spokesman said, “I will definitely be returning to see you in spring, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son.” Sarah was listening by the tent door, and overheard him. 11 Now both Sarah and Abraham were old, well past the age when one has children, for Sarah’s

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<sup>198</sup> Abraham has concern about his wife and the promised son.

<sup>199</sup> Abraham’s words could be translated: “If only Ishmael might enjoy your special favor.”

<sup>200</sup> The name means “he laughs.”

<sup>201</sup> “In the next season implies: “within a year from now.”

<sup>202</sup> Of the three men the spokesman could be described as a theophany. The other two are described as “angels” but in this translation are called “Messengers of God.”

<sup>203</sup> This could also properly be translated as “my lord.”

<sup>204</sup> Three measures, a measure being, in Hebrew, a *seah*, the total being about 20 quarts of choice flour.

menstruation had ceased. <sup>12</sup> Because of this Sarah laughed subtly, saying to herself, “Now that I have grown old I should have pleasure with my husband and become pregnant?” <sup>13</sup> The Lord saw to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Now that I have grown old I should have pleasure with my husband and become pregnant?’” <sup>14</sup> Is anything too remarkable for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in the spring, and Sarah will have given birth to a son.” <sup>15</sup> Sarah denied that she had laughed, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. He responded, “Oh yes, you did laugh.”

#### *C. Departure from Sodom 18:16 – 22*

<sup>16</sup> The men then set out, and in leaving looked toward Sodom, and Abraham walked with them to direct them on their way. <sup>17</sup> (The Lord said, “Should I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? <sup>18</sup> After all, Abraham is to become the father of a populous and powerful nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. <sup>205</sup> <sup>19</sup> No, for I have chosen <sup>206</sup> him that he might instruct his children, and his posterity to remain in the path of the Lord, by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring about all that he has promised Abraham.) <sup>20</sup> Then the Lord said “There is a great outcry <sup>207</sup> against Sodom and Gomorrah for their sins truly are grave. <sup>208</sup> <sup>21</sup> It is necessary that I go down to investigate whether what they have done is according to the outcry that has come to me, and if not -- that I am aware of it.”

<sup>22</sup> So the two men turned from where they were, going toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the Lord. <sup>209</sup>

#### *D. Abraham’s Intervention 18:23 - 33*

<sup>23</sup> Then Abraham approached the Lord and said, “Will you really sweep away the righteous along with the wicked? <sup>24</sup> Just suppose that there are fifty righteous within the city; will you destroy the entire city and not forgive it, for there are fifty righteous who reside in it? <sup>25</sup> You surely would do such a thing. Won’t the judge of the earth do what is just?” <sup>26</sup> The Lord said, “If I find fifty righteous in the city of Sodom, I will forgive the entire place for their sake.”

<sup>27</sup> Abraham then said, “Be assured, I have again taken on my self the privilege of speaking; I who am but dust and ashes. <sup>28</sup> Suppose that five of those fifty are lacking. Would you destroy the entire city and not forgive it for the lack of five?” <sup>28</sup> He said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five righteous.”

<sup>29</sup> Again he said to him, “Suppose forty were found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.”

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<sup>205</sup> Or: “all the nations of the earth will bless themselves by him.”

<sup>206</sup> Literally: “known.”

<sup>207</sup> There is a play on words in Hebrew which is impossible to translate.

<sup>208</sup> Their sin must be very heavy. Cf.: ANET p. 106bc. Some scholars feel differently about the story of the homosexuality that presumably took place in Sodom and Gomorrah. Their understanding, briefly can be summarized as follows:

1. Statistics: “To know” does not always refer to having sexual relations. One scholar declares that it is only used in that sense 15 times, but “to know” in its primary sense occurs more than nine hundred times.

2. Psychology: Observing that intercourse as a path to personal knowledge depends on sexual differentiation and complementation and not merely upon physical sexual experience as such.

3. Conjecture: Since both Lot and the host in Judges 19:22 were “*gerim*” i.e. sojourners, is it not possible that Lot had exceeded the rights of a “*ger*” by receiving two “foreigners” whose credentials, it seems, had not been examined.

<sup>209</sup> Another ancient tradition says: “While the Lord remained standing before Abraham.”

30 Then he said, “Oh, do not let the Lord be angry when I speak. Suppose thirty are found there.” He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty.”

31 He then said, “Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord: suppose twenty are found there.” He answered: “For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.”

32 Then he said, “Oh do not let the Lord be angry when I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.”

33 The Lord went his way when he had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

#### CHAPTER 19>

1 The two heavenly messengers of God <sup>210</sup> came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting at the gate <sup>211</sup> of Sodom, when he saw them, and hurried to meet them, bowing low, with his face toward the ground. 2 He said, “My lords, I beg you to turn aside and come to the house of your servant (*i.e. Lot*) and spend the night for there you will be able to wash your feet, and in the morning you will be able to rise early and go on your way.” <sup>212</sup> They answered, “No! We will spend the night in the city square.” 3 Lot however, strongly urged them, so they turned aside, going with him, and they entered his house. He made a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. 4 Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, to the last man, surrounded the house; 5 and they called to Lot: “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may be intimate <sup>213</sup> with them.” <sup>214</sup> 6 Lot went out the door to speak to them, shutting the door behind him, 7 saying, “I beg you, my friends, <sup>215</sup> do not act so wickedly. 8 Look! I have two daughters who are virgins; let me bring them out to you, and do with them what you please; only do nothing with these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.” <sup>216</sup> 9 The men called out, “Stand back!” and they said, “This fellow came here as an alien and now how dare he want to play judge. <sup>217</sup> Now we will deal even worse with you than with them!” They then pressed forward hard against Lot, and almost broke down the door. 10 The men inside reached out their hands and pulled Lot back into the house with them and shut the door. 11 They

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<sup>210</sup> Cf.: footnote 202.

<sup>211</sup> The gate of a city, in those days, was the location of the court of justice and the place where the city fathers enacted laws for the city. It is not known if Lot was one of those officials, but if not, by his presence he was at least implying that he hoped to achieve being one of the decision makers of the city of Sodom.

<sup>212</sup> The sin of Sodom was unnatural vice. Lot was aware of what remaining on he square all night would mean.

<sup>213</sup> Literally: “know them.”

<sup>214</sup> Sodom is guilty of two things: 1. Violation of guests. 2. Unnatural lust. The sin of Sodom as it seems about to occur is particularly heinous.

<sup>215</sup> Literally: “brothers.”

<sup>216</sup> The offer of Lot to bring out his virgin daughters and the permission to have them do whatever the men wanted is hardly the thinking of a father concerning his daughters. The question arises: Is Lot’s moral character such that he should be rescued from the fall of Sodom any more than the people who died in the calamity that befell Sodom.

<sup>217</sup> Literally: “he even wants to play judge.”



struck the men who were outside the door of the house with blindness,<sup>218</sup> both young and old, so that they were unable to find the door.

*C. God Destroys the Cities 19:12 – 24*

<sup>12</sup> The men then said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here: Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone else of your family in the city? Bring them to this location. <sup>13</sup> This must be done for we are going to destroy this place, because of the outcry against its citizens has become great before the Lord, and we have been sent by the Lord to destroy it.” <sup>14</sup> So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law who were pledged to marry Lot’s daughters, saying: “Up! Get out of this place; the Lord is about to destroy the city.” But his sons-in-law had the impression that he was jesting.

<sup>15</sup> When morning dawned the heavenly messengers urged Lot, saying: “Get up take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or else you will be consumed in the punishment that will befall this city.” <sup>16</sup> Lot, however, lingered; so the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by their hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and left him outside the city. <sup>17</sup> After they had brought them outside the city they <sup>219</sup> said, “Flee for your life! Do not look back! Do not stop anywhere on the plain! Flee to the hills! If you do not do this you will be consumed.” <sup>18</sup> Lot said to them, “Oh no, my lords, I, your servant, have found favor with you, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life; but I am unable to flee to the hills, for fear that disaster will overtake me and I will die. <sup>20</sup> Look! That city is near enough for me to flee to, and it is a little city. Let me escape there—it is a little one isn’t it?—and my life will be saved there.” <sup>21</sup> He said to him, “All right, I will also grant you this favor, and will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. <sup>22</sup> Hurry, escape there, for I can not do anything until you arrive there.” Therefore the city is called Zoar (*or, Little*). <sup>23</sup> The sun had risen on the earth when Lot entered Zoar.

<sup>24</sup> Then the Lord rained down fire and brimstone out of heaven on Sodom, <sup>25</sup> and he overthrew (*or, destroyed*) these cities, and the entire Plain, along with all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew in the ground. <sup>26</sup> (Lot’s wife, however, who was behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.)

<sup>27</sup> Abraham went out early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord, <sup>28</sup> and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward the land of the Plain, and saw the smoke of the land going up like the smoke of a furnace.

<sup>29</sup> It was in this way that the God destroyed the cities of the Plain. God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had settled.

*XXIII. Origin of Moab and Ammon 19:30- 38*

<sup>30</sup> Lot went up, leaving Zoar, and settled in the hills with his two daughters, for he was fearful to stay in Zoar, so he lived in a cave with his two daughters. <sup>31</sup> The firstborn of the daughters said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to

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<sup>218</sup> The Hebrew word is very unusual. It gives the thought of a dazzling light that caused the blindness, possibly like the experience of Paul on the way to Damascus. Lot has jeopardized his daughters, enraged the townsmen, and finally requires rescue from the people he intended to protect.

<sup>219</sup> Hebrew literally: “he.”

come in to us after the manner of the world.<sup>220</sup> <sup>32</sup> Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, so that we may preserve offspring through our father.” <sup>33</sup> So they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father: and he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. <sup>34</sup> On the next day the firstborn said to the younger, “Look, I lay with my father last night: let us also make him a drink wine tonight, that you may go in, and lie with him, so that we may preserve offspring through our father.” <sup>35</sup> So they made their father drink wine that night also, and the younger rose, and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. <sup>36</sup> It was in this manner that both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. <sup>37</sup> The firstborn gave birth to a son and named him Moab: <sup>221</sup> he is the ancestor of the Moabites to this day. <sup>38</sup> The younger daughter gave birth to a son and called his name Ben-ammi; <sup>222</sup> He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.

<CHAPTER 20>

XXIV. Abraham and Isaac 20:1 – 21:1

A. Abraham Leaves Hebron 20:1a

<sup>1</sup> Abraham left Hebron and journeyed toward the region of the Negeb, and settled between Kadesh and Shur.

B. Abraham at Gerar 20:1b – 18

Abraham resided in Gerar. <sup>2</sup> Abraham said of his wife Sarah, “She is my sister.” <sup>223</sup> Then Abimelech, king of Gerar took Sarah [*into his harem*]. <sup>3</sup> God came to Abimelech in a dream during the night and said to him, “Be assured: you are about to die because of the woman you have taken, for she is a married woman. <sup>4</sup> Abimelech had not approached her, so he said, “Lord, would you destroy an innocent man (*or, an innocent nation*)? <sup>5</sup> Did he not, himself, say to me, ‘She is my sister’? Also, she said herself, “He is my brother.” I did this out of simplicity and innocence.” <sup>6</sup> Then God said to him in the dream: “Yes, I know that you did this based on your understanding, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Because of this I would not permit you to touch her. <sup>7</sup> Now, however, you must return her to her husband, for he is a prophet, <sup>224</sup> and he will pray for you and you will live. However: if you do not return her to her husband, you and all that are yours will die.”

<sup>8</sup> Abimelech rose up early in the morning and called all his servants and told them the entire story and the men were all very fearful. <sup>9</sup> Then Abimelech sent for Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? In what way have I sinned against you that you should bring so much guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that never should be done.” <sup>10</sup> Abimelech continued, saying to Abraham, “What did you have on your mind that caused you to do this?” <sup>11</sup> Abraham said, “I did it because I thought: there is no understanding at all of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. <sup>12</sup> In fact, she is my sister, my father’s daughter, but not the daughter

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<sup>220</sup> Scholars are divided about the meaning of “there is not a man on earth.” Some feel the reference is to a matchmaker who would find the girls husbands. Others feel the reference is to eligible men who would find the girls who live in a cave.

<sup>221</sup> The name Moab means “from my father.”

<sup>222</sup> The name Ben-ammi means “son of my paternal kindred.”

<sup>223</sup> Abraham and Sarah had the same father but different mothers.

<sup>224</sup> In this sentence a “prophet” means no more than “a man of God.” This is the first time the word “prophet” is used in Hebrew Scriptures.

of my mother. <sup>13</sup> When God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do for me: at every place to which we come, say of me, he is my brother.'<sup>14</sup> Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen and male and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham, and he restored Sarah, Abraham's wife to him. <sup>15</sup> Abimelech said, 'My land is before you; settle where ever you feel would be pleasant.'<sup>16</sup> To Sarah he said: 'Look, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. This is for your public vindication (*or, exoneration*) before everyone who is with you. You are completely vindicated.'<sup>17</sup> Abraham then prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female slaves, so that they would be able to have children. <sup>18</sup> (The Lord had closed the wombs of all the females in the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.)

<CHAPTER 21>

*C. The Birth of Isaac 21:1 – 7*

<sup>1</sup> The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had promised. <sup>2</sup> Sarah conceived and gave birth to a son from Abraham in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup> Abraham named the child Sarah had given birth to, Isaac. <sup>4</sup> Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when the baby was eight days old, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup> Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born. <sup>6</sup> Sarah said, 'God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with <sup>225</sup> me.'<sup>7</sup> Then she added:

'Whoever would have said to Abraham,  
'Sarah will nurse a child,'  
yet I have given birth to his child in his old age.'

*XXV. Hagar and Ishmael 21:8 – 21*

*A. Sarah's Jealousy 21:8 – 10*

<sup>8</sup> The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. <sup>226</sup> <sup>9</sup> Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian who had given birth to Abraham's child, playing with her son Isaac. <sup>227</sup> <sup>10</sup> Then she said to Abraham, 'Get rid of this slave woman, along with her son, for the son of this slave woman is not to inherit along with my son Isaac.'<sup>228</sup>

*B. Expulsion of Hagar 2:11 – 14*

<sup>11</sup> Because of his son, this matter was very distressing to Abraham. <sup>12</sup> God said to Abraham, Do not become resentful because of the boy and because of your secondary wife. <sup>229</sup> What ever Sarah says to you, do Sarah's bidding, for it is through Isaac that your name will be continued. <sup>13</sup> As for the son of the slave woman, I will also make a nation of him, because he is your offspring. <sup>14</sup> So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin <sup>230</sup> of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and she and

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<sup>225</sup> The word could also correctly be translated "for me."

<sup>226</sup> An ancient book of instructions from Egypt says "your mother's breast in your mouth for three years." It is worthy of note that the name Ishmael is not mentioned in verses 8 – 21.

<sup>227</sup> So: LXX and Vulgate. The Hebrew text omits: "with her son Isaac."

<sup>228</sup> Some scholars feel that the Hebrew word for "playing" gives the thought of "mocking" as they played together. Some scholars also feel that Sarah had become insanely jealous.

<sup>229</sup> Literally: "slave woman" who was given Abraham by Sarah to be his concubine. The translation above softens the thought almost too much.

<sup>230</sup> The skin of an animal, tanned, carefully sewn together and made waterproof was the largest container that was available and readily carried for a water supply.

the child were sent away.<sup>231</sup> She departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

*C. God's Promise to Hagar 21:15 – 21*<sup>232</sup>

<sup>15</sup> When the water in the skin was gone Hagar placed her son under one of the bushes. <sup>16</sup> She then went about the distance of an arrow shot from a bow from him for she said, “Do not let me witness the death of my child.” As she sat opposite him, she wept.<sup>233</sup> <sup>17</sup> God heard the voice of the boy and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and asked her, “What is troubling you, Hagar? Do not be fearful. God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. <sup>18</sup> Come. Raise the boy up and hold his hand, for I will make a great nation for him.” <sup>19</sup> At that time God opened her eyes, and she saw a water well,<sup>234</sup> and she went, filling her skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

<sup>20</sup> God was with the boy, and he grew up, living in the desert wilderness and became an expert at archery. <sup>21</sup> He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

*XXVI. Abraham's Dispute with Abimelech 21:22 – 34*

<sup>22</sup> At that time Abimelech, along with Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham, “God is with you in all that you do, <sup>23</sup> therefore, here and now, make a vow in God's name that you will not deal falsely with me, or my children, or my posterity, for as I have dealt loyally with you, you will deal with me and with the land where you have lived as an alien.” <sup>24</sup> Abraham said. “I swear it.”<sup>235</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Whenever Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized, <sup>26</sup> Abimelech said, “I do not know who did this, you did not tell me, and I have not heard about it until today.” <sup>27</sup> So: Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a covenant. <sup>28</sup> Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs from the flock. <sup>29</sup> Abimelech said to Abraham, “What is the significance of these seven ewe lambs, that you have set apart?” <sup>30</sup> Abraham said, “These seven ewe lambs you are to accept from my hand, in order that you will be a witness for me that I dug this well.” <sup>31</sup> Because of this the well was called “Beer-sheba,”<sup>236</sup> because they had both sworn an oath there. <sup>32</sup> After they had made the covenant at Beer-sheba, Abimelech, along with Pichol, the commander of his army, left and returned to the land of the Philistines.<sup>237</sup> <sup>33</sup> Abraham planted a tamarisk tree<sup>238</sup> in Beer-sheba, and called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God. <sup>34</sup> Abraham resided as an alien for a long time in the land of the Philistines.

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<sup>231</sup> By this time Ishmael was perhaps 16 years old.

<sup>232</sup> The LXX text seems to be the better preserved text for verses 15 – 21.

<sup>233</sup> The LXX says: “the child began to sob.” The Hebrew text says, “She began to sob.”

<sup>234</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew: “wells.”

<sup>235</sup> This was the second encounter with Abimelech. The first encounter is chapter 20. The third encounter is in chapter 26:1 - 3

<sup>236</sup> The name means “well of the oath.”

<sup>237</sup> The Phillistines did not arrive until the 12<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. Abimeloch was on the scene much earlier than that. The editor should perhaps have written: The land which was later occupied by the Philistines.”

<sup>238</sup> This is a small tree that would serve as a landmark.

<CHAPTER 22>

XXVII. Testing of Abraham 22:1 – 19

<sup>1</sup> After these events God tested <sup>239</sup> Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham,” and Abraham replied, “Here I am.” <sup>2</sup> God said, “Please take your son, your favorite, and only son, and go to the land of Moriah, <sup>240</sup> and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains <sup>241</sup> which I will show you. <sup>3</sup> The next day Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey and took two of his young men, along with his son Isaac with him, carrying along wood to be used for the burnt offering, and set out to go to the distant place which God would show him. <sup>4</sup> On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. <sup>5</sup> Abraham told the two young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there, and we will worship and after that we will return to you.” <sup>6</sup> Abraham then gave the wood to his son Isaac to carry, <sup>242</sup> and he, himself, carried the fire(*pot*), and the knife. <sup>7</sup> Isaac said to his father, Abraham “My father,” and Abraham said, “Here I am, my son.” Isaac continued, saying, “We have the fire and we have the wood, but where is the lamb that is to be our burnt offering?” <sup>8</sup> Abraham said, “God will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son,” so the two of them walked on together. <sup>243</sup>

<sup>9</sup> When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood on the altar. <sup>244</sup> <sup>10</sup> Then Abraham reached out this hand with the knife in his hand, to kill (*or, slaughter*) his son. <sup>11</sup> The angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, saying, “Abraham, Abraham!” He replied, “Here I am.” <sup>12</sup> The angel said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy, do not do anything to him; for now I know that you revere God, since you have not withheld you son, your only son, from me.” <sup>13</sup> Abraham looked up and his eyes fell upon a ram <sup>245</sup> that was caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up instead of his son. <sup>14</sup> Abraham then called the place, “The Lord will provide;” <sup>246</sup> as it is still called today. “On the mount of the Lord it will be provided.” <sup>247</sup>

<sup>15</sup> [The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time, <sup>16</sup> saying, “I, myself, the Lord, have seen because you have done this and did not refuse, and withhold your son, your only son, <sup>248</sup> <sup>17</sup> I will most certainly bless you, and I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the gate of your enemies, <sup>18</sup> and by your

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<sup>239</sup> The word does not mean to entice to do wrong but is a test to see if Abraham proves to be willing. In our attempt to understand verses 1 – 19 possibly we should assume that what seems like foolishness on the part of God might be, for humans, unexplored wisdom.

<sup>240</sup> This was a name for the temple mount in what later came to be Jerusalem.

<sup>241</sup> The Hebrew word which is translated as “the mountains” is an anagram for the word Moriah. Mountains: “*hnrgrm*.” Moriah: “*hmrgn*.”

<sup>242</sup> Literally: “laid the wood on his son, Isaac.”

<sup>243</sup> There is a play on words in the names for God in verses 8, 12, and 13. “*Adonai yiren*” and “*El Olam*”

<sup>244</sup> This entire chapter is difficult to understand. We must realize that Abraham truly believed that this was what God wanted him to do and while he felt terrible about losing his only son who had been promised, this was what God expected of him.

<sup>245</sup> Some manuscripts of the MT, Samaritan Pentateuch, LXX and Syriac add: “behind him.”

<sup>246</sup> The name is often transliterated by translators. “*Jehovah Jireh*”.

<sup>247</sup> The last portion of this sentence has no real relation to the earlier part of the sentence, thus becoming a translation problem.

<sup>248</sup> Some scholars feel verses 15 – 18 are a later interpolation.

descendants all the nations of the earth will gain a blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.”] <sup>19</sup> So Abraham returned to the two young men and they traveled together to Beer-sheba, and Abraham lived in Beer-sheba.

*XXVII. Descendants of Nahor 21:20- 24*

<sup>20</sup> After all this Abraham was told, “Milcah has also given birth to children, to your brother Nahor: <sup>21</sup> Us the firstborn,. Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, <sup>22</sup> Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.” <sup>23</sup> Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. These are the eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother. <sup>34</sup> In addition his secondary wife (*or, concubine*), whose name was Reumah, gave birth to Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

<CHAPTER 23>

*XIX. The Burial of Sarah 23:1 – 29*

<sup>1</sup> Sarah lived to be one hundred twenty-seven years of age: <sup>249</sup> this was the length of her life. <sup>2</sup> Sarah died at Kiriath-arba <sup>250</sup> (which is Hebron) in the land of Canaan; and Abraham went in <sup>251</sup> to mourn for Sarah and to bewail her. <sup>3</sup> Abraham rose <sup>252</sup> up from beside his deceased wife <sup>253</sup> and said to the Hittites, <sup>254</sup> <sup>4</sup> “I am a resident alien and squatter among you; give me property among you for a place to bury, so that I can bury my wife in a location that is out of sight.” <sup>255</sup> <sup>5</sup> The Hittites responded to Abraham, saying, <sup>6</sup> “Listen to us, my lord, you are a mighty force among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places; none of us will withhold our burial places from you, or begrudge you from burying your dead.” <sup>7</sup> Abraham rose up and bowed to the Hittites, and the people of the land. <sup>256</sup> <sup>8</sup> He said to them, “If you are willing that I should be able to bury my dead out of my sight, listen to me, and agree with me <sup>257</sup> and aid in entreating Ephron the son of Zohar, so that he might give me the cave of Machpelah, <sup>258</sup> which he owns: it is at the end of the field. Let him give it to me, in your presence, for the full price, <sup>259</sup> to serve as a burial place.”

<sup>10</sup> Now Ephron was seated among the Hittites; and Ephron the Hittite replied to Abraham, within the hearing of the Hittites, all of whom were sitting at the gate of his city, <sup>11</sup> “No, my lord, listen to me; I will give the field and I will give you the cave that is in the field. I will do this in the presence of all my fellow townspeople, -- I will give (*or, sell*) it to you, to bury your dead.” <sup>260</sup> <sup>12</sup> Abraham then bowed down before the people of the land. <sup>13</sup> He said to Ephron in the hearing of all the people of the land, “If only you

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<sup>249</sup> Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age is mentioned. She died when Isaac was thirty-three years old, three years before he was married.

<sup>250</sup> The name means “city of four.”

<sup>251</sup> Did he go into Sarah’s tent to weep? Or: did he come from Beer-sheba to Hebron to weep?

<sup>252</sup> Perhaps he had been sitting on the ground, as was the custom for mourners.

<sup>253</sup> Literally: “his dead.”

<sup>254</sup> The Hittites were a tribe that came for central Asia Minor (Turkey) in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century BCE.

<sup>255</sup> As a nomad he had restricted rights.

<sup>256</sup> Later in Hebrew history “the people of the land” meant the common people. Whether, at this early date, that same thought was attached to the words, is not certain.

<sup>257</sup> This is a request to press someone into action, as is suggested by the speaker.

<sup>258</sup> The name means “double cave” or “split cave.” The site is covered by a mosque, Harem El.

<sup>259</sup> The price is not revealed this early in the negotiations. Ephron wanted a good price, so he offered to negotiate early in the consideration.

<sup>260</sup> Ephron knew that he had the upper hand and in due time gave an enlarged price.

would listen to me! I will give the price of the field; accept it from me, so that I can bury my dead there.”<sup>14</sup> Ephron then answered Abraham: <sup>15</sup> “My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver<sup>261</sup>—what is a trifle like that between you and me? Bury your dead.”<sup>16</sup> Abraham accepted Ephron’s price, and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron that he had asked for, in the presence of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weights that were current among the merchants.

<sup>17</sup> The field of Ephron in Machpelah, which was located to the east of Mamre, the field along with the cave that was in it and all the trees that were in the field through out the entire area, passed <sup>18</sup> to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the Hittites, in the presence of all who went in at the gate of his city. <sup>19</sup> After this Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. <sup>20</sup> The field and the cave that is in it passed from the Hittites into the possession of Abraham, as a burying place.

#### <CHAPTER 24>

##### XXX. *The Choice of a Wife for Isaac 24:1 – 67*

##### A. *Abraham’s Directions to His Servant 24:1 - 10*

<sup>1</sup> Now Abraham was old and well advanced in years and the Lord blessed Abraham in all things. <sup>262</sup> Abraham spoke to his servant, the senior servant of the household, who was in charge of the entire household, saying, “Put your hand under my thigh, <sup>263</sup> <sup>3</sup> and I will make you swear to the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not find a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, <sup>264</sup> among whom I live, <sup>4</sup> therefore you are to go to my country, and to my kindred and get a wife for Isaac.” <sup>5</sup> The servant <sup>265</sup> replied, “Possibly the woman might not be willing to follow me into this area. If so, must I take your son back to the land from which you came?” <sup>6</sup> Abraham said, “See to it that you do not take my son back there. <sup>7</sup> The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and made a vow with me, said ‘I will give this land to your offspring.’ He will most certainly send his angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there. <sup>8</sup> However, if the woman is not willing to follow you, you will be released from this oath of mine, <sup>266</sup> though you must not bring my son back there.” <sup>9</sup> So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master, Abraham, and swore to him concerning this request.

<sup>10</sup> The servant then took ten camels <sup>267</sup> from his master’s herd and departed, but he took a variety of choice gifts from his master, and he started out to go to Aramnaharaim, (*or, Mesopotamia*) to the city of Nahor. <sup>268</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> We do not know the price of land then, but four-hundred shekels seems high. Later, when David bought the temple area he paid fifty shekels for that land.

<sup>262</sup> Old age was considered to be a sign of God’s blessing. Some scholars insert 25:5 here.

<sup>263</sup> This was a euphemism for the genitalia. When facing impending death the patriarchs secured their last will being carried out at the source of life. Cf.: 47:29. The reason for the gesture is uncertain.

<sup>264</sup> Abraham wanted to secure a wife from what he felt were the blessed Semites, not the cursed Canaanites.

<sup>265</sup> The servant, Eleazar, is the quiet hero of this story.

<sup>266</sup> If she is unwilling she is unworthy.

<sup>267</sup> Some camels were domesticated but the use of camels did not become popular until the 12<sup>th</sup> Century BCE.

<sup>268</sup> The city of Nahor is also called Haran. It is named in the Mari Tablet (18<sup>th</sup> Century BCE). It was located east of the Balikh.

### *B. The Servant Meets Rebekah 24:11 – 27*

11 He made the camels kneel down outside the city, by the spring (*or, water well*). It was the time in the evening when women went out to the spring to draw water. 12 He said, “O Lord God of my master Abraham, please cause it happen before me today that you show steadfast love toward my master, Abraham. 13 I am standing here before this spring of water, and the daughters of the families in town will be coming to draw water. 14 Let the girl to whom I will say, ‘Please lower your jar that I might have a drink’ and she will reply, ‘Drink, and I will also water our camels’<sup>269</sup> – let her be the one you have designated to be for your servant Isaac. It is in this way that I will know that you have shown steadfast love toward my master.”<sup>270</sup>

15 Before he had finished speaking, there was Rebekah, who was the child of Bethuel, son of Milcah,<sup>271</sup> the wife of Abraham’s brother, coming out with her water jar on her shoulder. 16 She was very beautiful and old enough to be married and had not been intimate with a man. She had gone down to the spring, filled her water jar and come up. 17 The servant then ran to meet her and said, “Please, may I have a drink of water from your jar.” 18 She replied, “Drink, my lord,” and quickly lowered her water jar to her hand and permitted him to drink. 19 When he had finished drinking the water she said, “I will also draw water for your camels, until they have finished drinking.” 20 She quickly emptied her jar into the trough, and ran again to the spring to draw more water, until she had completed watering the camels. 21 The servant silently observed her to determine whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful.

22 When the camels had finished drinking the man took a gold nose ring, weighing a half shekel, and two gold bracelets (*or, arm bands*) weighing ten gold shekels, 23 and said, “Tell me, whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?” 24 She said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor.” 25 She then added, “We have an ample amount of straw and fodder, and a place to spend the night.” 26 The man bowed his head and worshiped the Lord; 27 and then said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the way to the house of relatives of my master.”

### *C. The Marriage is Arranged 24:28 – 60*

28 The girl then ran and told her mother’s household all that had happened. 29 Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban; and Laban ran out to the man who had remained at the spring.<sup>272</sup> 30 (Just after having seen his sister’s nose-ring and the bracelets on his sisters’ arms, and had heard the report that Rebekah gave, when she said, “This man spoke to me,”) he went to the man, who was standing by the camels at the spring. 31 He said, “Come, O blessed of the Lord! Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for your camels.” 32 So the man came into the house; and Laban unloaded the camels, and gave them straw and fodder. He also gave the man water to wash his feet, and sufficient water also for the men who were with him. 33 Food was then

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<sup>269</sup> Camels can drink up to 25 gallons at one time.

<sup>270</sup> The Hebrew word “*hesed*” describes loyalty to a covenant relationship. The same word appears in verse 12.

<sup>271</sup> Rebekah is not the child of a concubine.

<sup>272</sup> It is Laban who makes the move. Either his father was incapacitated or was no longer alive. Cf. 24:53, 55. Laban is also gripped with greed, upon seeing the gifts given to his young sister.



set before him that he could eat, but he said, “I will not eat until I have told my errand.” Laban said, “Speak on.”

<sup>34</sup> So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. <sup>35</sup> The Lord has blessed my master greatly, and he has become wealthy. <sup>273</sup> The Lord has given him flocks, herds, male and female servants, camels and donkeys. <sup>36</sup> Sarah, my master’s wife, gave birth to a son when she was old, and he has given that son all that he has. <sup>37</sup> My master has made me swear, saying: ‘You must not take a wife from among the Canaanites in whose land I live; <sup>38</sup> but you must go to my father’s house, to my family, and get a wife for my son.’ <sup>39</sup> I said to my master, ‘Perhaps the woman will not follow me.’ <sup>40</sup> But he said to me, ‘The Lord before whom I walk, will send his angel with you and make your way successful. You will get a wife for my son from among my relatives, from my father’s house. <sup>41</sup> Then you will be released from my oath, when you arrive at my relatives; even if they would not give her to you; then you will be free from your oath.’

<sup>42</sup> “I came to the spring and said, ‘O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make the way I am traveling successful! <sup>43</sup> I am standing by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw water, to whom I will say ‘Please give me a drink of some water from your jar, <sup>44</sup> and she will say to me, ‘Drink and I will also draw water for your camels – let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master’s son.

<sup>45</sup> “Before I had finished my silent prayer, there was Rebekah coming out with her water jar on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew water. I said to her ‘Please let me drink.’ <sup>46</sup> She let her jar down from her shoulder very quickly and said, ‘Drink and I will also water your camels.’ So I drank, and she watered the camels. <sup>47</sup> Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She said, ‘I am the daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son, whom Milcah bore to him.’ So I placed a ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arm. <sup>48</sup> I then bowed my head and worshiped the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right way to obtain the daughter of my master’s relative for his son. <sup>49</sup> Now I trust you will deal loyally with my master. Tell me, and if not, tell me, so that I can turn either to the right or to the left.”

<sup>50</sup> Then Laban and Bethuel replied, “This matter comes from the Lord. To you we can only speak favorably. <sup>51</sup> Look. Rebekah is here in your presence. Take her and go, and have her be the wife of your master’s son, as the Lord has said.”

<sup>52</sup> Upon hearing these words, Abraham’s servant bowed himself to the ground before the Lord. <sup>53</sup> Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver and gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah: he also gave her brother and her mother costly ornaments. <sup>274</sup> <sup>54</sup> It was then that the servant and the men who were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there. When they rose in the morning the servant of Abraham said, “Send me back to my master.” <sup>55</sup> Her brother and mother said, “Permit the girl to remain with us for a while, at least for ten days. <sup>275</sup> Then, after that she can go.” <sup>56</sup> He, however, said to them, “Do not cause me to be delayed, for since my journey has been successful; let me go that I may return to my master.” <sup>57</sup> They said, “We will call the girl and ask her.” <sup>58</sup> They then called Rebekah, and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” She answered “I

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<sup>273</sup> The story is told very simply. There is no flattery, no pressure, the case is presented and the sequence of the oath God made is the dominant note.

<sup>274</sup> The gifts may have been the formal bride price. That would mean the clinching of the deal.

<sup>275</sup> This was customary. Cf.: Tobit 9:20. Literally: “days or ten.” The LXX has “a few days, say ten.”

will.”<sup>59</sup> So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse<sup>276</sup> along with Abraham’s servant and his men.<sup>60</sup> They blessed Rebekah and said to her;

“May you, our sister become  
thousands of myriads;  
may your offspring gain possession  
of the gates of their foes.”

*D. Isaac Marries Rebekah 24:61 - 67*

<sup>61</sup> Then Rebekah and her maids<sup>277</sup> rose and mounted the camels and followed the man. It was in this way that the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

<sup>62</sup> Now Isaac had come from the region of<sup>278</sup> Beer-lahai-roi,<sup>279</sup> and was settled in the Negeb. <sup>63</sup> Isaac went out in the evening to walk<sup>280</sup> in the field; and upon looking up he saw camels coming. <sup>64</sup> At that same time Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted<sup>281</sup> from the camel, <sup>65</sup> and said to the servant, “Who is the man over there who is walking in the field to meet us?” The servant said, “It is my master.” Rebekah then took her veil and covered herself.<sup>282</sup> <sup>66</sup> The servant told Isaac all the things he had done. <sup>67</sup> Then Isaac brought Rebekah to his mother Sarah’s tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. It was in this way that Isaac was consoled following his mother’s death.

<CHAPTER 25>

*XXXI. Sons of Keturah 25:1 -6*<sup>283</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Abraham took another wife whose name was Keturah. <sup>2</sup> She and Abraham had six children: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. <sup>3</sup> Jokshan was the father of Sheba, and Dedan. The sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. <sup>4</sup> The sons of Midian were Ephraim, Ephraim, Hanoth,<sup>284</sup> Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. <sup>5</sup> Abraham gave all his possessions to Isaac. <sup>6</sup> To the sons of his secondary wives (*or, concubines*) Abraham gave gifts, while he was still living, and he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country.

*XXXII. The Death of Abraham 25:7 – 11*

<sup>7</sup> This is the length of Abraham’s life: one hundred seventy-five years. <sup>8</sup> Abraham breathed his last and died, having arrived at a good old age, an old man, who attained a ripe old age, and he was gathered to his people. <sup>9</sup> His sons, Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah,<sup>285</sup> in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre, <sup>10</sup> the field that Abraham purchased from the Hittites. Abraham was buried there

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<sup>276</sup> Literally: “wet nurse.” She would have been the person who suckled Rebekah. Cf.: 35:8. A wet nurse would not only nurse the child but raise it and be its guardian, as an esteemed member of the family.

<sup>277</sup> Now we understand more clearly why 10 camels were used.

<sup>278</sup> So: Syriac. Literally: “from coming to.” The LXX has: “through the desert of.”

<sup>279</sup> The name means: “the well of the living one who sees me.”

<sup>280</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew word used here is uncertain. The Vulgate has: “in order to meditate.” The LXX is similar in its translation.

<sup>281</sup> Literally: “fall from her camel.”

<sup>282</sup> It was not customary for Israelite women to wear a veil at all times. It, however, was a badge of betrothal or marriage.

<sup>283</sup> Some scholars feel these verses are a later interpolation.

<sup>284</sup> Hanoth was also called Enoch.

<sup>285</sup> It is interesting that Ishmael also had part in the burial of his father, not just Isaac.

with his wife, Sarah. <sup>11</sup> Following the death of Abraham God blessed his son Isaac, and Isaac settled at Beer-lahai-roi.

*XXXIII. Descendants of Ishmael 25:12 – 18*

<sup>12</sup> These are the descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's son who was born to Sarah's Egyptian slave girl [*who became a secondary wife*] to Abraham. <sup>13</sup> These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn son of Ishmael, and Kedar, Adbeelm Nubsam, <sup>14</sup> Mishma, Dumah, Massa, <sup>15</sup> Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedeman. <sup>16</sup> These are the sons of Ishmael and these are the names by their villages and their encampments. <sup>17</sup> (This is the length of the life of Ishmael; one hundred thirty seven years, he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.) <sup>18</sup> They settled from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria; and settled down <sup>286</sup> along side (*or, opposite*) his people.

*XXXIV. Jacob and Esau I 25:19 – 34*

*A. Portents at Their Birth 25:19 - 26*

<sup>19</sup> These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham was the father of Isaac. <sup>20</sup> Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddann-aram, sister of Laban, the Aramean. <sup>21</sup> Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. <sup>22</sup> The children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is to be this way, why do I live?" <sup>287</sup> This resulted in her going to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> The Lord said to her:

"Two nations are in your womb,  
and two peoples born of you will be incompatible, (*or, divided*).  
the one will be stronger than the other,  
the elder will serve the younger."

<sup>24</sup> When the time arrived for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb, <sup>25</sup> The first one came out red, his entire body being covered as if he wore a hairy mantle, they named him Esau. <sup>25</sup> Afterward his brother was born, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; <sup>288</sup>so he was named Jacob. <sup>289</sup> Isaac was sixty years old when his wife gave birth to them.

<sup>27</sup> When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. <sup>28</sup> Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

<sup>29</sup> On one occasion Jacob was cooking a stew, <sup>290</sup> and when Esau came in from the field, he was famished. <sup>30</sup> Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!" (Because of this he was called Edom.) <sup>291</sup> <sup>31</sup> Jacob said, "First you must sell me your birthright." <sup>292</sup> <sup>32</sup> Esau said, "I am at death's door; what use is having a birthright

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<sup>286</sup> Literally: "he fell." This translation follows the LXX and the Vulgate.

<sup>287</sup> So: Syrian. The Hebrew meaning is obscure. The Hebrew seems to say: "they crushed one another."

<sup>288</sup> In Hebrew there is a play on words, based on the Hebrew word for "heel."

<sup>289</sup> The name means "He takes by the heel" or "he supplants." There is a play on words in Hebrew.

<sup>290</sup> The Hebrew root word is also the root word for "smelly stuff." Literally: "Please let me swallow of the red stuff – that red stuff= for I am famished."

<sup>291</sup> Edom means "red." This seems to be an explanatory gloss.

<sup>292</sup> In some Middle Eastern texts it was possible to sell, or transfer, one's birthright. This was not included in the Hebrew laws. Esau seems to deny the advantage of being the firstborn. He would get a double portion of the estate of his father, and Jacob would get one portion. In other words, the estate would be divided into three parts. The one who has the birthright, in this instance would get two parts, and the other one part.

to me?”<sup>33</sup> Jacob said, “Swear to me first.”<sup>293</sup> So Esau swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.<sup>34</sup> Jacob then gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose, going his own way. This is how much Esau despised his birthright.

<CHAPTER 26>

XXXI. Isaac, Rebekah, and Abimelech 26:1 – 33

A. Deception of Abimelech 26:1 - 4

<sup>1</sup> There was a famine in the land in addition to the famine that took place in the days of Abraham. Isaac went to Gerar,<sup>294</sup> to Abimelech king of the Philistines.<sup>295</sup> <sup>2</sup> The Lord appeared to him and said, [“Do not go down to Egypt, settle in the land I have shown you.”]<sup>296</sup> <sup>3</sup> Reside in this land as an alien and I will be with you to bless you, [for I will give all these lands to you and to your descendants, and I will carry out the oath I had made with your father Abraham. <sup>4</sup> I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in heaven and your descendants will receive this entire land, and all the nations will gain blessings for themselves through you. <sup>5</sup> This will take place because Abraham obeyed my voice and lived in obedience to my commandments, laws and teachings.”]

<sup>6</sup> So he lived in Gerar. <sup>7</sup> When the men of the place asked him about his wife he said, “She is my sister;” (for he felt afraid to say, “My wife,” thinking, “or else the men of this place might kill me for the sake of Rebekah, because she was shapely and beautiful in appearance.) <sup>8</sup> After he had been there for a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out of the window and saw Isaac joyfully fondling his wife Rebekah. <sup>9</sup> Abimelech called Isaac, and said, “She is your wife, isn’t she. Why did you call her your sister?” Isaac said to him, “Because I thought I might be slain because of her.” <sup>10</sup> Abimelech said, “What is this that you have done to us? One of the people here might easily have had sex with your wife and you would have caused great guilt to have incurred upon us.” <sup>11</sup> Abimelech then ordered an injunction on all the people, saying: “Whoever touches this man or his wife will be put to death.”<sup>297</sup>

B. Dispute Concerning the Wells 26:12 – 31

<sup>12</sup> Isaac sowed seed in the land and in that year he harvested one hundred fold<sup>298</sup> and the Lord blessed him. <sup>13</sup> Isaac became increasingly rich until he became exceedingly wealthy. <sup>14</sup> His possessions included flocks and herds, and a great household, so that he was envied by the Philistines. <sup>15</sup> (Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells that his father Abraham’s servants had dug, with earth.) <sup>16</sup> Abimelech then said to Isaac, “Be gone! Leave us, for you have become too powerful for us.”

<sup>17</sup> So Isaac moved from there and encamped in the wadi (*or, valley*) of Gerar and settled there. <sup>18</sup> Isaac then again dug the water wells that had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, for the Philistines had stopped them, following the death of Abraham, and he gave each of the wells that had been dug by his father, the same names <sup>19</sup> However, when Isaac’s servants dug in the valley they found a well with a spring (*or, running*) water. <sup>20</sup> The herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, “That

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<sup>293</sup> Literally: “today.”

<sup>294</sup> “To Gerar” is possibly an erroneous gloss.

<sup>295</sup> The Philistines came from Cyprus and other islands in the Aegean Sea at about 1175 BCE.

<sup>296</sup> Some scholars feel this is an interpolation, along with the designated portion of verses 3 – 5.

<sup>297</sup> After Isaac’s deception he receives special protection.

<sup>298</sup> Literally: “one hundred “Shearim.” The size of a “Shearim” is unknown, thus resulting in this translation.

water is ours.” He then called the name of the well Esek <sup>299</sup> because of the contention that had taken place. <sup>21</sup> They then dug another well but they did not quarrel over that well, so he called it Rehoboth, <sup>300</sup> saying, “Now the Lord has made room for us, and we will flourish in the land.”

<sup>23</sup> From there he went up to Beer-sheba. <sup>24</sup> The Lord appeared to him that same night, and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be fearful, for I am with you and I will bless you, causing your descendants to increase, for my servant Abraham’s sake. <sup>25</sup> So he built an altar there, and called on the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there. Then Isaac’s servants dug a well.

<sup>26</sup> Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, with his advisor <sup>301</sup> Ahuzzath, and Phicol the commander of his army. <sup>27</sup> Isaac said to them, “Why did you come to me, seeing you detest (*or, have been hostile to*) me, and exiled me from your presence?” <sup>28</sup> They said, “It is obvious to us that the Lord has been with you; so we have decided, that there should be an oath between you and us. Let us make a covenant (*or, treaty*) with you, <sup>29</sup> so that you will not harm us, just as we have not molested you and have done nothing but good to you and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the Lord.” <sup>30</sup> So he prepared a feast for them, and they ate and drank. <sup>31</sup> In the morning they rose early and exchanged oaths; and Isaac sent them on their way, and they departed from Isaac peacefully.

#### *C. Isaac at Beer-sheba 26:32 – 33*

<sup>32</sup> On that very same day Isaac’s servants came and told him about the well they had dug, and reported to him, “We have found water! <sup>33</sup> Isaac called it “Shibah;” <sup>302</sup> so therefore the name of the city came to be Beer-sheba, which is how it is still known to this day.

### *XXXVI. Jacob and Esau II 26:34 – 28:9*

#### *A. Esau’s Marriages 26:34 – 35*

<sup>34</sup> When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith, the daughter of Beon the Hittite, and Basemath, daughter of Elon the Hittite, <sup>35</sup> both of whom made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah. <sup>303</sup>

### <CHAPTER 27>

#### *B. Jacob Secures His Father’s Blessing 27:1 – 40*

<sup>1</sup> When Isaac was old, his eyes had become dim, so that he could not see. He called for his older son, Esau, and said to him, “My son,” and he replied, “Here I am..” <sup>2</sup> Isaac said, “See, I am old; I do not know when death will come. <sup>304</sup> <sup>3</sup> So now take your weapons: your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field, and hunt game for me. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> Meaning: “contention.”

<sup>300</sup> The meaning is “broad places” or “room.”

<sup>301</sup> Literally: “his friend.”

<sup>302</sup> The word resembles the word for “oath” or “seven.”

<sup>303</sup> Esau seems to desire to please his parents but can’t seem to understand how this is to be done. For example: His father came from Paddan-aram where his grandfather felt the best choice of a wife was to be found. The order was that Isaac should not marry any Canaanite. Esau follows that, but marries Hittite women instead of going back to the place where his brother would get his wives, Leah and Rachel. He seems to try but doesn’t understand, a sad situation, as we see in verse 35.

<sup>304</sup> Isaac was approximately eighty years old at that time.

Then prepare delicious food, <sup>305</sup> the kind of food I love, <sup>306</sup> and bring it to me to eat, so that I might give you my innermost blessing before I die.”

<sup>5</sup> Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau had gone out to the field to hunt for game and bring it, <sup>6</sup> Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “I overheard your father speak to your brother Esau. <sup>307</sup> <sup>7</sup> ‘Bring me game and prepare delicious food, that I might eat it and then bless you with God’s approval before I die. <sup>308</sup> <sup>8</sup> Now then: my son, obey my word just as I am commanding you, <sup>9</sup> Go out to the flock and bring two choice young goats so that I can prepare them as the delicious food your father loves, <sup>10</sup> and then you will bring it to your father, so that he may bless you before he dies.” <sup>11</sup> Jacob said to his mother, Rebekah, “Remember: my brother Esau is a hairy man but I have smooth skin. <sup>12</sup> My father might possibly feel me and I will appear to him as if I was mocking <sup>309</sup> him, and thus I will bring a curse on myself and not a blessing.” <sup>13</sup> His mother said to him, “If that is the case your sin will rest on me, not on you. Do as I say, go fetch the young goats for me.” <sup>14</sup> Then Jacob went to get the two goats, and bring them to his mother who then prepared the delicious food that his father loved. <sup>310</sup> <sup>15</sup> Then Rebekah took the best garments belonging to her older son Esau, which happened to be in her house, and then put them on Jacob, her younger son, <sup>16</sup> and she put the skin of the young goats on Jacob’s hands and on the nape of his neck <sup>17</sup>. Then she handed him bread and the delicious food she had prepared, which Isaac loved to eat to her son Jacob.

<sup>18</sup> Jacob went in to his father, saying, “My father,” and Isaac replied, “Here I am, but who are you, my son?” <sup>19</sup> Jacob said to his father, “I am your firstborn son, Esau. I have done as you told me. Now, please sit up, and eat of my game, so that I might be blessed by you.” <sup>20</sup> Isaac, however, said, “How is it that you have found the game so quickly, my son?” He replied, “It is because the Lord, your God, granted me success.” <sup>21</sup> Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come close, for I want to feel you, for then I will know whether or not you really are my son Esau.” <sup>22</sup> Jacob then went up to his father Isaac, who felt of him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob but the hands are the hands of Esau.” <sup>23</sup> He did not recognize Jacob because his hands were hairy, like his brother Esau’s, so Isaac blessed him. <sup>24</sup> He said, “Are you really my son Esau?” He answered, “I am.” <sup>25</sup> Then he said, “Bring the delicious food that I can eat my son’s game, and bless you” So he brought the food to him that he might eat, and he ate and drank. <sup>26</sup> Then his father said, “Come near that I can kiss you, my son.” <sup>27</sup> So he came near and kissed him, and Isaac smelled the garment’s odor and blessed him, saying:

“Ah, the smell of my son  
is like the smell of the field  
that the Lord blessed.

<sup>28</sup> May God provide the dew of heaven,  
and the earth’s riches,

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<sup>305</sup> The Hebrew word, which can also be translated as “savory food,” occurs six times in this passage.

<sup>306</sup> The Hebrew word is unusual, not the word generally used for “love.” It is a much stronger word than “like.”

<sup>307</sup> Note the wording in verses 5 and 6. “His son” and “her son.” This made for rivalry and evidenced parental favoritism.

<sup>308</sup> The last portion of this sentence is translated literally.

<sup>309</sup> In Hebrew this is a rare word. It is also used in II Chronicles 36:10.

<sup>310</sup> It is to be noticed that Isaac is described as “your (*Isaac’s*) father,” not as “Rebekah’s husband.”

and grain and will be yours.<sup>311</sup>  
29 Let people serve you,  
and nations bow down to you.  
Be lord over your brothers,  
and may your mother's sons  
bow down to you.  
Cursed is everyone who curses you,"

30 As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had hardly gone out of the presence of his father's house, his brother Esau returned from the hunt.<sup>31</sup> He also prepared the delicious food, and brought it to his father. He said to his father: "Please sit up, father, and eat of the game that I, your son, have prepared, so that you may bless me."<sup>32</sup> His father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" He said, "I am your firstborn son, Esau."<sup>33</sup> Isaac then began to tremble violently and said "Who was it then that hunted game and brought me some, and I ate all of it, just before you came, and I have blessed him? – yes, and he will be blessed!"<sup>34</sup> When Esau heard what his father said, he cried out with a loud and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Father, bless me, me also."<sup>35</sup> Isaac said, "Your brother came, deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing."<sup>36</sup> Esau said, "He is correctly named Jacob<sup>312</sup> for he has supplanted me twice. He took my birthright, and now he has taken my blessing." Then Esau said, "Have you reserved a blessing for me?"<sup>37</sup> Isaac answered Esau, "I have already made him your lord and I have given him all his brothers as his servants, and with grain and wine: I have sustained him. What is there that I can do for you, my son?"<sup>38</sup> Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, father, Father! Bless me, me also!" Esau cried aloud and wailed.

39 His father Isaac then responded:  
"See, away from the fatness of  
the earth will be your home,  
and away from the dew of  
heaven on high.  
40 You will survive by your sword,  
and you will serve your brother,  
but when you break loose<sup>313</sup>  
you will break his yoke from your neck."

*C. Esau's Hatred Toward Jacob 27:41 – 45*

41 Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing which his father blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are drawing near; then I will kill my brother Jacob."<sup>42</sup> But the words of older son were reported to Rebekah: so she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, "Your brother Esau is consoling himself by planning to kill you.<sup>43</sup> Now therefore, my son, obey my voice! Flee immediately to my brother Laban in Haran.<sup>44</sup> Remain with him for a time, until Esau's anger against you has subsided, and he forgets what you have done to him. At that time I will send [*a message*] and bring you back from there.<sup>314</sup> Why should I lose both of you in one day?"

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<sup>311</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 136d.

<sup>312</sup> The name Jacob means "He supplants," or "He takes by the heel." Cf.: ANET p. 136d.

<sup>313</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain.

<sup>314</sup> She does not realize that it will take twenty years until Jacob can return. Rebekah died without seeing her son again. In a sense she is the victim of her own duplicity.

*D. Jacob Leaves for Paddan-aram 27:46 – 28:5*

<sup>46</sup> Rebekah then spoke to Isaac, “I am weary of my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these,<sup>315</sup> women<sup>316</sup> of the land, of what good will my life be to me?”

<CHAPTER 28>

<sup>1</sup> Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him: “You are not to marry one of the Canaanite women.<sup>317</sup> <sup>2</sup> Go to Paddan-aram<sup>318</sup> immediately to the house of Bethuel, your uncle,<sup>319</sup> and take a wife from one of the daughters of your uncle<sup>320</sup> Laban <sup>3</sup> God Almighty<sup>321</sup> will bless you that your children will be numerous, comprising a community.<sup>322</sup> <sup>4</sup> May he grant you and your descendants with the blessing of Abraham, that you may come into possession of the land you are now residing in as an alien – the land that God gave to Abraham.” <sup>5</sup> It was in this manner that Isaac sent Jacob away; and he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob’s and Esau’s mother.

*E. Esau’s third Marriage 28:6 – 9*

<sup>6</sup> Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he charged him, “You are not to marry one of the Canaanite women.” <sup>7</sup> and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Paddan-aram. <sup>8</sup> When Esau realized that the Canaanite women did not please his father Isaac, <sup>9</sup> Esau went to Ishmael, and took a wife in addition to the wives he already had; Mahalath, the daughter of his grandfather’s son, Ishmael, the sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he already had.<sup>323</sup>

*XXXVII. Jacob at Bethel 28:10 – 22*

<sup>10</sup> Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. <sup>11</sup> He came to a certain place.<sup>324</sup> and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, using it as his pillow,<sup>325</sup> he put it under his head and laid down to sleep in that place. <sup>12</sup> He dreamed that there was a stairway placed on the earth, the top of which reached to

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<sup>315</sup> Apparently it is a reference to the wives of Esau. Cf.: 26:35.

<sup>316</sup> Literally singular. Women of the land would be a slur against the women, assuming that they are “common.”

<sup>317</sup> Such a blessing normally would be given when facing death. It is in keeping with the blessing by Abraham.

<sup>318</sup> Paddan-aram means “the plains of Aram.” This was a district to the east of Haran where Abraham’s brother had settled, and was Rebekah’s home territory.

<sup>319</sup> Literally: “your mother’s father.”

<sup>320</sup> Literally: “your mother’s brother.”

<sup>321</sup> “El Shaddi”

<sup>322</sup> The Hebrew expression “become a company of peoples” is a new expression, at this point in Hebrew history.

<sup>323</sup> Esau wanted to obey his father and be a good son but he didn’t seem to know how to do it. The example here: Don’t marry a Canaanite woman. Jacob was sent to Paddan-aram to find a wife from the same background as his father and grandfather. All he recalled was “no Canaanite” and he married a daughter of Ishmael, who Abraham had exiled. Cf.: Psalm 83:6.

<sup>324</sup> In Hebrew the expression is used to describe a well known place which had the sense of “a sanctuary” about it.

<sup>325</sup> If a person waned dreams and visions, (in that day) they felt one should sleep with one’s head against a sacred stone.



heaven; and angels were ascending and descending on it.<sup>326</sup> 13 Amazingly, the Lord stood above (*or, beside*) it, and said, “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac: the land on which you are lie will be given to you and your descendants by me. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread far and wide, to the west and to the east, to the north and the south, and all the families of the earth will be blessed by you and your descendants. 15 Be assured that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I will have fulfilled the promise of what I promised I would do for you.” 16 Jacob then woke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place – and I did not realize it! 17 He was fearful, and said, “How awesome this place is! This is positively the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

18 Jacob rose early in the morning and took the stone which had served as his pillow, setting it up as a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.. 19 He called the place Bethel (*or, House of God*), but in the past the name of the city there was called Luz. 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, 21 so that I will again return to my father’s house in peace, then he Lords swill be my God, 22 and this stone which I have set up as a pillar, will be God’s house, and of all that you give me I will surely give one tenth to you.”

#### <CHAPTER 29>

#### XXXVIII. *Jacob at Paddan-aram 29:1 – 31:55*

##### *A. Jacob’s Meeting with Rachel 29:1 – 14*

1 Then Jacob resumed his journey,<sup>327</sup> and came to the land of the people of the east. 2 As he looked around, he saw a well in the field and three flocks of sheep lying there beside it; for that well was the source of water for flocks. The stone on the well’s mouth was large, thick and flat. 3 When the flocks were all gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, and then place the stone back on the mouth of the well.

4. Jacob said to them, “My brothers, where are you from?” They answered, “We are from Haran.” 5 He said to them, “Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor?” They said, “We do.” 6 He said to them, “Is he well?” “Yes.” They answered, “and here is his daughter, Rachel, coming with the sheep. 7 He said, “Look, it is broad daylight, this is not the time for the flocks to be gathered together. Water the sheep and then take them back and pasture them again.” 8 They replied, saying: “We cannot remove the stone on the well until all the flocks have been gathered together, and then the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; and we can water the sheep.”

9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep; (for she was the shepherdess). 10 Now when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his uncle<sup>328</sup> Laban, and the sheep of his uncle Laban, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the well’s mouth, and watered the flock of his uncle Laben. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and

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<sup>326</sup> Now you see the reason for not using the word “ladder.” With the up and down movement a ladder would hardly be satisfactory. In Egyptian and Hittite literature there was a stairway so gods and humans could move up and down to and from the earth and heaven.

<sup>327</sup> Literally: “lifted up his feet.”

<sup>328</sup> Literally: “his mother’s brother.”

wept aloud. <sup>12</sup> Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative, and that he was Rebekah's son; and she ran and told her father.

<sup>13</sup> When Laban heard the news about his nephew,<sup>329</sup> Jacob, he ran to meet him, and embraced and kissed him, bringing him to his house. Jacob told Laban all that had transpired;<sup>330</sup> <sup>14</sup> and Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and flesh!" And Jacob stayed with Laban for a month.

*B. Jacob's Marriage 29:15 - 30*

<sup>15</sup> Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what do you want your wages to be?" <sup>331</sup> <sup>16</sup> Laban had two daughters; the name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger daughter was Rachel. <sup>17</sup> Leah's eyes were unclear <sup>332</sup> and Rachel was shapely and beautiful. <sup>18</sup> Jacob loved Rachel: so he said, "I will serve you seven years <sup>333</sup> for your younger daughter, Rachel. <sup>19</sup> Laban said, "It is better if I give her to you than to give her to any other man. <sup>334</sup> Stay with me." <sup>20</sup> So Jacob worked for seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him as but a few days because of the love he had for Rachel.

<sup>21</sup> Then Jacob said to Laban: "Give me my wife, <sup>335</sup> that I may be married, for I have completed my time, and have worked for you for seven years. <sup>22</sup> Laban gathered together all the people <sup>336</sup> of the place and made a feast. <sup>337</sup><sup>23</sup> In the evening he took his daughter Leah, and brought her to Jacob. <sup>338</sup> <sup>24</sup> When morning came, it was Leah! Jacob said to Laban, "What is this that you have done to me? We had agreed that I would serve you for Rachel. Why have you deceived me?" <sup>25</sup> Laban said, "It is not done that way in this country. One never gives the younger daughter first, always the firstborn. <sup>339</sup> <sup>27</sup> Complete the week of marriage festivities for this marriage, and we <sup>340</sup> will give you the second one, for another seven years labor. <sup>28</sup> Jacob then completed his week of marriage

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<sup>329</sup> Literally: "his sister's son.:"

<sup>330</sup> Literally: "all these things."

<sup>331</sup> Laban no doubt expected a negative answer. It was common in those days for young men to work for room and board. This time both Laban and Jacob met their match. It does seem strange that Isaac would send his son away with no tangible wealth. Therefore Jacob was virtually forced to earn some payment for his labors. He had left his family to escape the wrath of his brother, Esau, but in the process he came to find a wife.

<sup>332</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain. Her eyes were weak: either in vision or color. Translators have used words like, "soft, a lack of sparkle, clouded, or, as the NRSV says: "Leah's eyes were lovely, and Rachel was graceful and beautiful."

<sup>333</sup> Jacob suggested seven years, which might have been longer than Laban might have anticipated, but he did not want to miss this opportunity, since he did not have money for the bridal price.

<sup>334</sup> Laban did not exactly say "yes."

<sup>335</sup> Jacob did not exactly say "Rachel."

<sup>336</sup> Literally: "men."

<sup>337</sup> This would have been a drinking feast.

<sup>338</sup> The custom was that the bride be brought to the bridegroom in the darkness, veiled, following the celebration. It is of interest that Jacob took advantage of his father's blindness, and now in the darkness Laban takes advantage of Jacob .

<sup>339</sup> As Leah gave birth to children, she was the mother of the priestly tribe, (the mother of Levi) and the royal tribe, (Judah). She always felt unloved, and one assumes she felt that in her husband's way of treating her.

<sup>340</sup> The word "we" comes from the Hebrew text. The LXX, Samaritan Pentateuch, Targum and Vulgate have "I."

festivities with Leah, and then Laban gave Rachel to Jacob as his wife. <sup>341</sup> 29 (Laban gave his maid Bildah <sup>342</sup> to his daughter Rachel, to be her maid.) <sup>30</sup> Jacob then carried out the week of marriage celebration with Rachel. He loved Rachel more than Leah. He served Laban for another seven years.

*E. Jacob's Family 29:31 – 30:24*

<sup>31</sup> When the Lord saw that Leah was hated <sup>343</sup> he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. <sup>32</sup> Leah conceived and gave birth to a son, and she named him Reuben, <sup>344</sup> and said, "Because the Lord has looked upon my harsh treatment: surely now my husband will love me." <sup>33</sup> She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the Lord has heard <sup>345</sup> that I am hated, he has given me this son also," and she named him Simeon. <sup>346</sup> She conceived again and gave birth to a son, saying, "Now this time my husband will embrace me, because I have given birth to his three sons," therefore he was named Levi. <sup>347</sup> <sup>35</sup> She conceived again and gave birth to a son, saying, "This time I will praise the Lord;" therefore she named him Judah; then she ceased having children.

<CHAPTER 30>

<sup>1</sup> When Rachel realized that she was not able to give birth to her husband Jacob's children, she envied her sister, <sup>348</sup> and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I will die!" <sup>2</sup> Jacob was incensed with Rachel and said, "Am I to take the place of God, who has denied you of being able to have children?" <sup>3</sup> She then said, "Here is my maid, Bildah, take her as your secondary wife. <sup>349</sup> that she may give birth to children that I can hold on my knees, and that I can have children through her." <sup>4</sup> So Rachel gave Bildah to Jacob as his secondary wife. <sup>5</sup> Bildah conceived and gave birth to a son. <sup>6</sup> Then Rachel said, "God has judged me, and having heard my voice he has given me a son, and she called his name Dan. <sup>350</sup> <sup>7</sup> Rachel's maid conceived again and gave birth to a second son. <sup>8</sup> Rachel then said, "I have wrestled with God <sup>351</sup> and have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed." So she named him Naphtali. <sup>352</sup>

<sup>9</sup> When Leah saw that she her childbearing time had ceased, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a secondary wife. <sup>10</sup> Leah's maid Zilpah then conceived and gave birth to Jacob's son. <sup>10</sup> Leah said, "Good fortune!" so she named him Gad. <sup>353</sup> <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Later in Hebrew history it was forbidden for a man to marry sisters but a man could marry a second sister following the death of the first sister. Cf.: Leviticus 18:18.

<sup>342</sup> The name means "care free."

<sup>343</sup> So: literally.

<sup>344</sup> The name means: "See. A son."

<sup>345</sup> Hebrew: "shama."

<sup>346</sup> The name might mean "hyena or wolf."

<sup>347</sup> The name might possibly mean "serpent."

<sup>348</sup> Rachel's envy was rooted in social understanding. Society said that as a barren woman she could not gain respect. Only those who gave birth deserved respect. Each of the sisters wanted what the other had. Leah wanted a loving husband, and Rachel wanted children.

<sup>349</sup> The intent was that Rachel would have children through Bildah. Rachel could think of these children as her own.

<sup>350</sup> The name means "he judged."

<sup>351</sup> Literally: "struggles of God."

<sup>352</sup> The meaning is uncertain.

<sup>353</sup> The name means "fortune."

Leah's maid again conceived and gave birth to her second son by Jacob. <sup>13</sup> Leah said, "I am happy! The women will call me happy;" so she named him Asher. <sup>354</sup>

<sup>14</sup> During the time of the wheat harvest Reuben found some love apples <sup>355</sup> and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel then said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's love apples." <sup>15</sup> Leah then replied to Rachel, "Is it a small matter that you took my husband from me? Would you also take away my son's love apples?" Rachel said, "Then you may have intercourse with him tonight, if you give me your son's love apples." <sup>16</sup> When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him, and said, "You must come to me tonight, for I have definitely hired you with my son's love apples." So they spent that night together. <sup>356</sup> <sup>17</sup> God was concerned about Leah, and she conceived and gave birth to a fifth son from Jacob. <sup>18</sup> Leah said, "God has given me my hire because I gave my maid to my husband," so she named him Issachar. <sup>357</sup> <sup>19</sup> Leah conceived again and gave birth to a sixth son from Jacob. <sup>20</sup> Then Leah said, "God has presented me with a precious gift (*or a goodly dowry*)! Now my husband will love me, because I have borne him six sons," so she named the boy Zebulun. <sup>358</sup> <sup>21</sup> Some time later that she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah. <sup>359</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Then God remembered Rachel, and God was attentive toward her and opened her womb. <sup>23</sup> She became pregnant and said, "God has removed my disgrace!" <sup>24</sup> She named him Joseph, <sup>360</sup> saying, "May the Lord add to me another son!"

*D. Jacob Outwits Laban 30:25 – 43 (?)*

<sup>25</sup> When Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may return to my own home and country. <sup>26</sup> Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you and let me go: for you are well aware of the service I have given you." <sup>27</sup> Laban replied, "If you will permit me to say so, I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me because of you. <sup>28</sup> Now name your wage and I will give it." <sup>29</sup> Jacob said to him, "You yourself know that I have served you, and how your livestock has fared with me. <sup>30</sup> You had little when I came, and it has increased abundantly, for the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned. Now, however, my question is: when will I be able to provide for my own household?" <sup>31</sup> Laban replied, "What should I give you?" Jacob said, "You will not give me anything; provided you will do this for me, I will continue feeding your flock and keeping it; <sup>32</sup> but let me pass through <sup>361</sup> all of your flock, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep, and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these will be my wages. <sup>362</sup> <sup>33</sup> My

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<sup>354</sup> The name means "Happy."

<sup>355</sup> Literally: "mandrakes." These were considered to be an aphrodisiac. In that day they felt eating mandrakes was a way to guarantee conception.

<sup>356</sup> Both Leah and Rachel have deficiencies. Leah needs the love of her husband, and Rachel feels the need of having children. This is the fourth 'commercial exchange' on the part of Jacob. 1. The exchange of the birthright of Esau to Jacob. 2. The exchange, providing Jacob with the blessing for the older son. 3. Getting Leah as his wife instead of Rachel, as he had expected. 4. Being exchanged by Rachel, for sex, so Rachel could get Leah's love apples.

<sup>357</sup> The name means: "man of hire."

<sup>358</sup> The meaning is uncertain. Scholars feel it comes from a Persian source.

<sup>359</sup> This prepares us for chapter 34.

<sup>360</sup> That is: "he adds."

<sup>361</sup> LXX: "remove."

<sup>362</sup> The second half of this verse is not in the LXX. Normally sheep were white, goats were black or brown.

honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered as having been stolen.”<sup>34</sup> Laban said, “Good! I will accept what you have said.”<sup>35</sup> On that day Laban removed the male goats that were striped and spotted and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white on it, and every lamb that was black, and put them in charge of his sons,<sup>36</sup> and located them on pasture land that was a three day journey from the land to be used by Jacob to pasture the rest of Laban’s flock.

<sup>37</sup> Then Jacob cut rods of poplar, almond and plane, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the rods. <sup>38</sup> He placed the rods he had peeled in front of the flocks, in the troughs at the watering places where they came to drink. <sup>39</sup> Now the flocks bred in front of the rods, and as a result the flocks produced young that were striped, speckled and spotted. <sup>40</sup> Jacob separated the lambs,<sup>363</sup> [turning the faces of the flocks toward the striped and completely black animals in the flock of Laban.]<sup>364</sup> He put his own droves apart, and he did not put them with Laban’s flock. <sup>41</sup> Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding Jacob laid the rods in the troughs before the eyes of the flock, that they might breed among the rods, <sup>42</sup> but when the more feeble of the flock were breeding he did not lay the rods there; so the feebler belonged to Laban and the stronger were Jacob’s.<sup>365</sup> <sup>43</sup> It was in this way that Jacob became exceedingly rich and had large flocks and male and female slaves, and camels and donkeys.<sup>366</sup>

#### <CHAPTER 31>

##### *E. Jacob’s Decision to Return 31:1 – 16*

<sup>1</sup> Now Jacob heard that Laban’s sons were saying, “Jacob has taken all that was our father’s; he has gained wealth from what belonged to our father.”<sup>367</sup> <sup>2</sup> Jacob realized (*or, saw*) that Laban did not regard him as favorably<sup>368</sup> as he had previously. <sup>3</sup> Then the Lord said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your ancestors and to your relatives, and I will be with you.” <sup>4</sup> Jacob then called Rachel and Leah to come into the field where his flock was,<sup>369</sup> <sup>5</sup> and he told them, “I see that your father does not regard me as he did previously. The God of my father has been with me. <sup>6</sup> You are aware that I have served your father to the best of my ability; <sup>7</sup> yet your father has cheated me<sup>370</sup> and changed my wages time and again,<sup>371</sup> but God did not permit him to harm me. <sup>8</sup> If he said, ‘The speckled will be your wages’ then all the flock gave birth to offspring that were speckled; and if he said, ‘The striped will be your wages,’ then all the flock gave birth to offspring

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<sup>363</sup> This was presumably based on shepherding lore.

<sup>364</sup> Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

<sup>365</sup> There was surely some success in selective breeding but in 31:9 – 12 it is said that God intervened.

<sup>366</sup> One scholar says that in the three trees there is a toxic substance used in the ancient word to hasten the onset of the estrus cycle and so hasten the animals to readiness to copulate. There is no proof given for that claim. Jacob fulfilled his marriage requirements: 14 years: and worked 6 years for his flocks, thus living in the region of Paddan-aram for 20 years.

<sup>367</sup> The sons were taking umbrage at Jacob’s success.

<sup>368</sup> Literally: “his face was not with him.”

<sup>369</sup> Jacob seems to be in control now. He seems not to be an indentured servant of Laban any longer.

<sup>370</sup> Literally: “made a fool of me.”

<sup>371</sup> Literally: “ten times.”

that were striped. <sup>9</sup> In this way God has taken away the livestock of your father; and given them to me.

<sup>10</sup> "During the mating of the flock I once had a dream in which I looked, and saw that the male goats that mounted the females of the flock were striped, speckled and mottled. <sup>11</sup> The angel of God then spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob,' and I replied, 'Here I am,' <sup>12</sup> and the angel said, 'Look around you, see all the goats that mount the females of the flock, that are striped, speckled, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. <sup>13</sup> I am the God of Bethel, <sup>372</sup> where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now it is time for you to leave this land and return to the land of your birth.'" <sup>14</sup> Rachel and Leah replied, "Is there any portion in our father's house that is to be left to us? <sup>373</sup> <sup>15</sup> Are we not regarded by him as foreigners (*or, strangers*)? He has sold us, and he has been using the money [*that should have been given to us*] that is our share. <sup>16</sup> All of the property that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children: now then: do whatever God has told you."

#### F. Jacob's Flight from Laban 31:17 – 43

<sup>17</sup> Jacob rose and had his sons and daughters mount camels; <sup>18</sup> and he drove away all his livestock which he had acquired, taking all the property he had gained, -- everything that had become his possession while he was in Paddan-aram, and began going to his father who lived in the land of Canaan.

<sup>19</sup> Laban had gone to shear sheep, <sup>374</sup> and Rachel stole her father's teraphim (*or, household gods*). <sup>375</sup> <sup>20</sup> Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean, <sup>376</sup> in that he did not inform him that he had intended to flee. <sup>21</sup> Jacob fled with everything he had, crossing the Euphrates River, and moving in the direction of the hill country of Gilead. <sup>377</sup>

<sup>22</sup> On the third day Laban was informed that Jacob had fled. <sup>23</sup> So he took his relatives with him and pursued Jacob for seven days until he caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead. <sup>24</sup> (In the meantime God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night, saying to him, "Be careful that you do not say a word to Jacob, either good or bad.")

<sup>25</sup> Laban overtook <sup>378</sup> Jacob. Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country of Gilead. <sup>26</sup> Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done? You have deceived me, carrying away my daughters as if they had been captured by use of a sword. <sup>379</sup> <sup>27</sup> Why did you flee secretly and deceive me and not inform me? I would have sent you away with mirth

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<sup>372</sup> The LXX and Samaritan Pentateuch have "the God who appeared to you at Bethel."

<sup>373</sup> The bridal price was to be divided between the father and the daughters. Since in this case there was no money exchanged, and thus the daughters received nothing, they could say that they were sold. The same regulation as was in effect here was also outlined in the Nuzi tablets ca. 1500 BCE.

<sup>374</sup> This was a joyous time, with feasting and wine, along with the actual sheering. The entire family would be invited to join in. In this case Jacob and his family had apparently not been invited.

<sup>375</sup> While these teraphim were household gods, it is necessary to understand that in that day many people had the concept of local gods: the gods of the land in question. While there certainly prayers offered to these household gods, one of their supreme responsibilities of a teraphim was that they served their owners as the proof of ownership of the property. Thus they were the equivalent of the deed or title to the property.

<sup>376</sup> The writer points out the extent of the estrangement: "Laban the Aramean."

<sup>377</sup> This area was a very fertile plane in Trans-Jordan.

<sup>378</sup> The Hebrew word "taqa" might carry an implication that just hostility is possible.

<sup>379</sup> Is this a challenge for a battle that Laban cannot carry out? :Laban seems to feel that his daughters are on his side, but he sees no evidence of it. His speech is hypercritical of Jacob. Cf.: ANET [. 220b.

and songs, with tambourines and lyres (*or, zithers*).<sup>380</sup> 28 Why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and daughters farewell? You have done a very foolish thing. 29 It is within my power to do you harm; but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, ‘Be careful that you do not say a word to Jacob, either good or bad.’ 30 Even though you had to go because you were homesick for your parental home, why did you steal my property (*or, my household gods*)?”<sup>381</sup> 31 Jacob replied to Laban, “It was because I was fearful, for I thought you would surely take your daughters from me by force. 32 However: anyone who is found by you to have any of your property (*or, household gods*) will not live. Point out, in the presence of those that are gathered here what I have that is yours, what I have taken that belongs to you, and take it back.” (Jacob was unaware that Rachel had stolen the teraphim (*or household, gods*).<sup>382</sup>

33 Laban then went into Jacob’s tent and into Leah’s tent, and into the tent of the two maids, but he did not find his teraphim. Then he entered Rachel’s tent. 34 Now, Rachel had taken the teraphim (*or, household gods*) and put them under her camel saddle, and sat on them. 35 She said to her father, “Please do not be angry, my lord, but I and unable to rise in your presence for I am menstruating.”<sup>383</sup> So he searched but did not find anything.

36 Then Jacob spoke up, being irate, and took up his grievance, saying to Laban, “What is my crime? What is my sin?”<sup>384</sup> Why have you hotly pursued me? 37 Even though you have rummaged through all my goods, what have you found in all this that is yours? Place it here in front of my relatives and your relatives, so that we may decide between you and me! 38 I have been with you for twenty years: your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried,<sup>385</sup> and I have not eaten a single ram from your flock. 39 Whatever had been killed by wild animals: I bore the loss myself; and you required that I do this, whether it was stolen by day or night. 40 This is what my life was like: by day I was consumed by the heat, and at night I was so cold that I was unable to sleep. 41 For these twenty years that I have been a part of your household I served you for fourteen years for your two daughters, and for six years for your flock, and you changed my wages many times.<sup>386</sup> 42 If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the God who caused Isaac to tremble in awe,<sup>387</sup> had not been on my side, you would surely have sent me away with nothing. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night!”

43 Laban then answered, saying, “The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, everything you see is mine! But, what can I do today about these daughters of mine, or about the children that were born to them?”

#### *G. Jacob and Laban Make a Covenant 31:44 – 55*

44 Come, let us make a covenant (*or, a non-aggressive treaty*), you and I, and let us make a witness of this covenant between us.” 45 So Jacob took a stone, setting it up as a pillar. 46 Jacob then said to his relatives, “Gather stones and make a cairn, and they ate

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<sup>380</sup> The reference is to a small instrument having from six to twelve strings.

<sup>381</sup> Had Jacob not escaped, Laban would surely have tried to make Jacob an indentured servant.

<sup>382</sup> Cf.: footnote 375.

<sup>383</sup> Later, in Leviticus 25:19 – 30 she could have said, “I am unclean.”

<sup>384</sup> The Hebrew word used here means literally: “miss the mark.”

<sup>385</sup> This was due to Jacob’s skillful and constant shepherding.

<sup>386</sup> Instead of receiving recognition or a reward for his skill and concern, he was cheated time and again..

<sup>387</sup> The exact meaning is uncertain.

there beside the cairn. <sup>47</sup> Laban called it Jegarsahadutha; <sup>388</sup> but Jacob called it Galeed. <sup>389</sup> <sup>48</sup> Laban said, “This cairn is a witness between you and me today.” Therefore he called it Galeed, <sup>49</sup> and he called the pillar Mizpah, <sup>390</sup> for he said, “The Lord watch between you and me. when we are absent one from the other. <sup>391</sup> If you mistreat my daughters, or, if you take additional wives, <sup>392</sup> though no one is observing, remember that God is the witness between you and me.”

<sup>51</sup> Then Laban said to Jacob, “See the cairn and see this pillar, which I have set between you and me. <sup>393</sup> <sup>52</sup> This cairn is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this cairn to you, and you will not pass beyond this cairn to me, with any intent to do any harm. <sup>53</sup> May the God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor – the God of their ancestor – judge between us.” So Jacob vowed, by the God of his father, who made Isaac to tremble in awe, <sup>54</sup> and Jacob offered a sacrifice on the height and called all his relatives to eat bread and they lingered there in the hill country the entire night.

<sup>55</sup> [H. 32:1] Early the next morning Laban rose, and having kissed his grandchildren, and his daughters, he blessed them. Then he departed on his way home.

#### <CHAPTER 32>

#### XXXIX. *Jacob and Esau III 32:1 – 33:16*

#### A. *Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau 32:1 - 23*

<sup>1</sup> [H. 2] Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. <sup>2</sup> [H. 3] and when Jacob encountered them he said, “This is God’s camp.” <sup>394</sup> So he called that place Mahanaim. <sup>395</sup>

<sup>3</sup> [H. 4] Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother Esau in the land of Seir. <sup>396</sup> <sup>4</sup> [H. 5] in the country of Edom, instructing them to say, “I have been staying with Laban [*for twenty six years*] until now. <sup>5</sup> [H. 6] I have oxen donkeys, flocks male and female slaves, and I am sending to tell you, my lord, in order that I might gain your favor.”

<sup>6</sup> [H. 7] The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We met your brother Esau and he is coming to meet you, accompanied by four hundred men.” <sup>7</sup> [H. 8] Jacob became very frightened and anxious, and he divided the people that were accompanying him, along with dividing the flocks, herds, and camels into two companies, <sup>8</sup> [H. 9] thinking, “If Esau comes to the one company and destroys it, then the second company is left and will escape.”

<sup>9</sup> [H. 10] Jacob prayed, “O God of my ancestor Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, O Lord who said to me ‘Return to your country and to your ancestors, and I will do you good.’ <sup>10</sup> [H. 11] I am unworthy of even the smallest portion of steadfast love that you

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<sup>388</sup> The name is “The heap of witness” in Aramaic.

<sup>389</sup> The Hebrew word has the same meaning as the Aramaic word.

<sup>390</sup> Mizpah means “watch tower.”

<sup>391</sup> The Mizpah benediction is often used as an expression of unity. In actuality, it is an expression of mistrust between Laban and Isaac, and the plea that God can keep the peace.

<sup>392</sup> In the Nuzi Tablets it says: “If Wullu takes another wife he will forfeit his possessions to Nashue (his father-in-law).” Cf.: ANET p. 201a.

<sup>393</sup> Cf.: v. 45. Jacob set up the pillar, not Laban.

<sup>394</sup> The angels came to meet him. Jacob did not need to search for, or pray that they would be present. Whether one can read any significance in that is not clear.

<sup>395</sup> The name means, “two armies.”

<sup>396</sup> Esau had dispossessed the Horites who had lived in Seir and this had become his homeland.



have shown me, your servant, for I crossed the Jordan with only a staff, and now I have two companies. <sup>11</sup> [H. 12] Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, the hand of Esau, for I am fearful of him, for he might come and kill us all, the mothers with their children. <sup>12</sup> [H. 13] Yet you have said, ‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted because of its number.’” <sup>397</sup>

<sup>13</sup> [H. 14] So he spent the night there, and from what he had with him he assembled a present for his brother Esau, <sup>14</sup> [H. 15] two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, <sup>15</sup> [H. 16] thirty milk camels, and their young, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. <sup>16</sup> [H. 17] These he delivered into the hands of his servants, <sup>398</sup> every drove by itself, and said to his servants, ‘Pass on in front of me. Keep every drove by itself, having a space between each drove.’ <sup>17</sup> [H. 18] He gave instructions to his most reliable servant, saying: “When my brother Esau meets you, and asks, ‘To whom do you belong? Where are you going? Whose are those who are ahead of you?’ <sup>18</sup> [H. 19] You are to say, ‘They belong to your servant, Jacob. These are a gift to be given to my lord, Esau; and moreover, Jacob is behind us.’” <sup>19</sup> [H. 20] He gave the same instructions to the second and third droves as well as all the droves that followed. “You will say the same to Esau when you meet him, <sup>20</sup> [H. 21] and you are to say, “Moreover, your servant Jacob is behind us.”” (For Jacob thought, “I might be able to pacify <sup>399</sup> him with gifts that are preceding me, and then I will see him in person; and it is possible that he will accept me.” <sup>21</sup> [H. 22] This was the reasoning of Jacob as the gifts passed on ahead of him; and he himself spent the night in the camp.)

<sup>22</sup> [H. 23] That same night Jacob got up and took his two wives, and his two secondary wives and crossed the ford of the river Jabbok. <sup>400</sup> <sup>23</sup> [H. 24] Taking them, he sent them across the river Jabbok along with all of his possessions.

#### *B. Jacob Wrestles at the Jabbok 32:24 – 32*

<sup>24</sup> [H. 25] Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. <sup>25</sup> [H. 26] When the man realized that he was unable to pin Jacob down he wrenched Jacob’s hip socket so that his hip was dislocated. <sup>26</sup> [H. 27] Then he said, “Let me go, for the new day is dawning.” Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” <sup>27</sup> [H. 28] So the man said to Jacob, “What is your name?” and he answered, “Jacob.” <sup>28</sup> [H. 29] The man then said, “You will no longer be called Jacob, but you will be called Israel, <sup>401</sup> for you have struggled with divine and human beings and have prevailed.” <sup>29</sup> [H. 30] Jacob then asked him, “Please tell me your name.” He replied, “Why is it that you ask my name? (or, “*You must not say my name*),”” and the man blessed Jacob. <sup>402</sup> <sup>30</sup> [H. 31] So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, <sup>403</sup> and said, “I have seen God face to face and yet I am alive (or, *my life is preserved*). <sup>31</sup> [H. 32] Just then the sun rose, and he passed Penuel, limping

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<sup>397</sup> Jacob had hopes that magnanimous gifts and diplomacy would pacify his brother. He suddenly senses that this is not the solution and turns to God for help.

<sup>398</sup> 550 animals is a very large gift in hope of appeasing Esau’s anger.

<sup>399</sup> Literally: “cover his face.”

<sup>400</sup> The river Jabbok now is named Nahr el Zerzqa.

<sup>401</sup> Literally: “not as Jacob will you be called.” The meaning is “God wrestles.”

<sup>402</sup> Some scholars feel that instead of a blessing the man said farewell, or took leave of Jacob.

<sup>403</sup> The name means “the face of God.”

because of his hip. <sup>32</sup> [H. 33] Because of this, to this day the Israelites do not eat the thigh muscle (*or, the sciatic nerve*) that is on the hip socket at the thigh muscle. <sup>404</sup>

<CHAPTER 33>

*C. Jacob's Meeting With Esau 33:1 – 16*

<sup>1</sup> Jacob looked up and saw <sup>405</sup> that Esau was coming with four hundred men, so he divided his children among Leah, Rachel, and his two secondary wives [*Zilpah and Bildah*]. <sup>2</sup> He aligned the family as follows: the secondary wives along with their children in front, then Leah and her children, followed by Rachel and Joseph last of all. <sup>3</sup> He, himself, went before them, touching his head to the ground in a prostrate position, seven times until he approached his brother. <sup>406</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him as he wept. <sup>5</sup> When Esau saw the women and children, he asked, “Who are these with you?” Jacob replied, “These are the children God <sup>407</sup> graciously gave your servant.” <sup>6</sup> Then the secondary wives drew near, and they all bowed down. <sup>7</sup> Leah and her children then drew near and bowed down, and finally Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down. <sup>8</sup> Esau said, “What do you mean by all this company that I have met?” Jacob said, “To find favor with my lord.” <sup>9</sup> Esau said, “I have enough, my brother; <sup>408</sup> keep what you have for yourself.” <sup>10</sup> Jacob said, “No, please, if I find favor with you, accept my attempt to show homage through these gifts, for truly, just to see your face is like seeing the face of God – since you have received me with such favor. <sup>11</sup> Please accept my gift that is being brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have sufficient for my wants.” So Jacob urged Esau, and Esau took what had been offered. <sup>409</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Then Esau said, “Let us break camp and begin our travels. I will go with you.” <sup>13</sup> Jacob said to him, “But my lord, you know that the children are frail and the flocks and herds are suckling their young. These are a concern to me for if they are overdriven for one day all the flocks will die. <sup>14</sup> Let my lord move on ahead of his servant, and I will proceed slowly, based on the pace of the cattle that are before me, and on the pace of the children, until I meet my lord in Seir.” <sup>410</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Then Esau said, “Let me leave some of the people who are with me to assist you,” but Jacob said, “Why should my lord be so kind toward me?” <sup>16</sup> Esau then returned that same day on his way to Seir.

*XL. Jacob and His Family 33:17 – 35:20*

*A. Jacob Comes to Shechem 33:17 – 20*

<sup>17</sup> Jacob, however, journeyed to Succoth <sup>411</sup> and built himself a house, and made shelters (*or, corrals*), for his livestock, therefore the name of the place was Succoth. <sup>18</sup> Jacob came safely to the city of Succoth, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram: and he camped before the city. <sup>19</sup> He brought a plot of land from the sons

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<sup>404</sup> There is no further reference of this in the Hebrew Scriptures. A reference is found in Rabbinic Judaism: Pesuhim 22a 83b.

<sup>405</sup> Literally: “lifted up his eyes and saw.”

<sup>406</sup> The prostrating himself was a sign that before his brother he felt himself to be a vassal.

<sup>407</sup> The name for God that is used here is “Elohim.”

<sup>408</sup> Note the change from “my lord” to “my brother.”

<sup>409</sup> Esau perhaps accepts the gift as payment for the wrong done to him.

<sup>410</sup> Jacob seems to be taking advantage of a possible excuse.

<sup>411</sup> The meaning is “booths.”

of Hamor, <sup>412</sup> Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. <sup>413</sup> It was here that he pitched his tent, <sup>20</sup> and here he built an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel. <sup>414</sup>

<CHAPTER 34>

*B. Seduction of Dinah 34:1 – 31*

<sup>1</sup> Now Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob, went out to visit the women of the region. <sup>2</sup> When Shechem, son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the region <sup>415</sup> saw her he seized and raped her. <sup>416</sup> <sup>3</sup> His soul was drawn to Dinah, daughter of Jacob; he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her. <sup>4</sup> Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me <sup>417</sup> this girl, <sup>418</sup> that she can be my wife." <sup>419</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Now Jacob heard that Shechem had defiled his daughter Dinah; but his sons were with his cattle herds in the field, so Jacob was silent, doing nothing until his sons came. <sup>6</sup> Hamor, the father of Shechem went out to speak to him. <sup>7</sup> The sons of Jacob came in from the field when they learned of it, and the men were distressed and very angry, because he had committed an outrageous act <sup>420</sup> in Israel by having sex with Jacob's daughter, for such action marked an outrageous attitude.

<sup>8</sup> Hamor spoke to them, saying, "The heart of my son Shechem longs for your daughter, please give her to him in marriage. <sup>9</sup> Permit intermarriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. <sup>10</sup> You will be living in peace among us and the land will be open to you; live and trade in it, and get property in it. <sup>11</sup> Shechem also told her father and her brothers, "Let me find favor with you, and whatever you ask of me I will grant. <sup>421</sup> <sup>12</sup> Make the marriage present and gift as high as you like, and I will give whatever you ask me; only give me the girl to be my wife." <sup>422</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The sons of Jacob replied to Shechem and his father Hamor in a deceitful manner because Shechem had defiled their sister Dinah. <sup>14</sup> They said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to someone who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us. <sup>15</sup> We have one condition in order to give our consent: that you become as we are – that every male among you be circumcised. <sup>16</sup> Then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves, and we will live among you and

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<sup>412</sup> Cf.: Judges 9:28.

<sup>413</sup> The Hebrew says "100 quesitas," a unit of unknown value.

<sup>414</sup> The name means "God, the God of Israel." They must have stayed for a long time, since in chapter 34 Dinah is a young adult. Her birth is mentioned in chapter 30:21.

<sup>415</sup> Shechem was from an aristocratic family. Cf.: Joshua 24:32; Judges 9:8. He, as a prince, was the ruler of an area.

<sup>416</sup> This was an improper and imprudent act. It was not normal for a woman to go into an alien city unchaperoned.

<sup>417</sup> The word used here in Hebrew is the same word that is translated "seized" in verse 3.

<sup>418</sup> The Hebrew word would accurately be translated as "female child."

<sup>419</sup> Shechem feels he must right the wrong. Cf.: Deuteronomy 22:28 – 30. While the word "seized" is used in verse 2, Dinah seems still to be in the house of Shechem. Was it consensual? Scholars wonder.

<sup>420</sup> The word translated as "outrageous act" is a cognate of the word "fool" in Hebrew. The implication is that such acts of sexual immorality were senseless, and immoral. Deuteronomy 22:12; Judges 20:6; II Samuel 13:12 – 13; Jeremiah 2:9; Judges 19:23 – 24; Joshua 7:15.

<sup>421</sup> Literally: "What ever you say to me I will give."

<sup>422</sup> The bridegroom was expected to pay a sum to the father of the bride at the time of the proposal. The father of the bride was expected to give a portion of that amount to his daughter as she establishes her own home. Shechem seems to say, make it as high as you want, intending to make the offer irresistible.

we will become one people. 17 But if you will not listen to us and become circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone.”<sup>423</sup>

18 These words pleased Hamor’s son Shechem. 19 The young man did not delay to do the thing, because he was delighted with Jacob’s daughter. Now he considered himself to be the most respected person in the family. 20 So Hamar and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city,<sup>424</sup> and spoke to the men of their city, saying: 21 “These people are friendly with us; let us permit them to live on the land and trade in it, for the land is sufficiently large for them; let us take their daughters in marriage, and let us give them our daughters. 22 There is only one condition we must accept so that they will agree to live among us, to become one people; that every male among us be circumcised as they are circumcised. 23 Their livestock and their property will surely become ours. Let us just agree with them, and they will live among us.” 24 All who went out of the city listened acceptably to Hamor and his son Shechem, and every male was circumcised – every one who went in or out of the gate of the city.

25 On the third day, when they were sore, two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, took their swords and attacked the city unawares, and killed all the males. 26 They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem’s house, and went away. 27 The other sons of Jacob then plundered the city, because their sister Dinah had been defiled. 28 They took their flocks, their herds, their donkeys, and whatever was in the city and the field. 29 All their wealth, all their small children, all their wives, and all their chattels, were taken as booty.<sup>425</sup> 30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have brought trouble on me by making me a stench among the inhabitants of this land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. My numbers (*or, my warriors*) are few and if they unite themselves against me I will be destroyed, both I and my household.” 31 Their answer was, “Should our sister be treated like a prostitute?”

#### <CHAPTER 35>

##### *C. Jacob’s Return to Bethel 35:1 – 15*

1 God said to Jacob, “Rise, go up to Bethel,<sup>426</sup> and settle there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau. 2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him,<sup>427</sup> “Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your clothing. 3 Let us then go to Bethel together, and there I will make an altar to the God who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone.” 4 They then gave Jacob all their foreign gods that they had, and the earrings<sup>428</sup> that were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak that was near Shechem.

5 As they journeyed, a terror from God fell on the cities that were round about them, so that no one pursued them.<sup>429</sup> 6 Jacob came to Luz (that is Bethel) which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who accompanied him, 7 and he built an altar

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<sup>423</sup> In some tribes (not Israelite) circumcision was an initiation into a marriageable status, so it would not have been an unusual request.

<sup>424</sup> This was where public business was transacted.

<sup>425</sup> Some scholars place 35:24 here. Others change the order of verses to be: 34:1 – 19; 25, 26, 30, 31.

<sup>426</sup> Bethel is 1000 feet higher in altitude than Shechem.

<sup>427</sup> Jacob had a vow to fulfill. 28:20 – 22.

<sup>428</sup> Ear rings were a distinguishing mark of the Ishmaelites.

<sup>429</sup> Is this a superlative or does it express the source of fear?

there, because it was there that the God of Bethel had revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother. <sup>8</sup> Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, <sup>430</sup> died and she was buried under an oak tree below Bethel, so the name of it was called Allon-bacuth. <sup>431</sup>

<sup>9</sup> God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and God blessed him. <sup>10</sup> God said to him,

“Your name is Jacob  
no longer will you be called Jacob,  
but Israel will be your name.” <sup>432</sup>

So his name was changed to Israel.

<sup>11</sup> God said to him:  
“I am God Almighty (*or, El Shaddai*);  
Be fertile and increase,  
for a nation, a company of nations,  
will come from you.  
Kings will spring from you.” <sup>433</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac  
I will give to you,  
and I will assign this land to you  
and to your descendants.”

<sup>13</sup> Then God parted from him at the place where he had spoken with him. <sup>14</sup> Jacob set up a pillar and poured a libation (*or, drink offering*) on it and poured oil on it. <sup>15</sup> Jacob called the place where God had spoken with him Bethel.

#### *D. The Birth of Benjamin 35:16 – 22a*

<sup>16</sup> They then journeyed from Bethel; and when they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel began to be in labor, and the labor became increasingly difficult. <sup>17</sup> While she was in this difficult labor her midwife said to her, “Do not be afraid; for now you will have another son.” <sup>18</sup> Just as she breathed her last (for she died) she named her child Benoni, <sup>434</sup> but his father called him Benjamin. <sup>435</sup> <sup>19</sup> Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem), <sup>20</sup> and Jacob set up a pillar at her grave; it is the pillar of Rachel's tomb, which is there to this day. <sup>21</sup> Israel journeyed on, and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. <sup>436</sup>

<sup>22</sup> While Israel lived in that land Reuben engaged in sex with Bilhah, his father's secondary wife; and Israel heard of it. <sup>437</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> Cf.: 29:59.

<sup>431</sup> “The oak of weeping.” It seems out of place that Rebekah's nurse should be traveling with Israel. This passage is thought by some scholars to be an interpolation.

<sup>432</sup> To give a new name to a person after his death of his mother was a sign of respect for the mother.

<sup>433</sup> Literally: “from your loins.”

<sup>434</sup> The name means “Son of my sorrow.”

<sup>435</sup> Benjamin means “Son of the right hand.” The Mari documents would have it mean “Son of the south.”

<sup>436</sup> The name means “the watchtower of the flock.”

<sup>437</sup> Some scholars feel Reuben's act was motivated more by politics than by sexual desire. Thus Bildah would be defiled and she, as the secondary wife, could not claim that she was the chief wife and Leah would remain “wife number one” and Reuben would be certain of the right of being the firstborn. Later the Mosaic law prohibited incest, but exacted no penalty.

*F. Sons of Jacob 35:22b - 26*

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. <sup>23</sup> The sons of Leah: Reuben (Jacob's firstborn), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. <sup>24</sup> The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. <sup>25</sup> The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and Naphtali. <sup>26</sup> The sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.

*XLI. The Death of Isaac 35:27 - 29*

<sup>27</sup> Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had resided as aliens. <sup>28</sup> Now the age of Isaac was one hundred eighty years. <sup>29</sup> Isaac breathed his last, and joined his ancestors, after a long and satisfying life. His sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

<CHAPTR 36>

*XLII. Descendants of Esau 36:1 – 43 <sup>438</sup>*

*A. The Edomites 36:1 – 19*

<sup>1</sup> These are the descendants of Esau (that is, Edom). <sup>2</sup> Esau took two wives from the Canaanites: Adah daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah daughter of Anah son <sup>439</sup> of Zibeon the Hivite, <sup>3</sup> and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebaioth. <sup>4</sup> Adah gave birth to Esau's son Eliphaz. Basemath gave birth to Reuel; <sup>5</sup> and Oholibamah gave birth to Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

<sup>6</sup> Then Esau took his wives, sons and daughters, and all the members of his household, his cattle and other livestock, and all the property he acquired in the land of Canaan, and he moved to a land some distance from his brother Jacob. <sup>7</sup> Their possessions were too great for them to live together, and the land where they were living could not support them because of their livestock. <sup>8</sup> So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir: Esau is Edom.

<sup>9</sup> These are the descendants of Esau, ancestor of the Edomites, in the hill country of Seir. <sup>10</sup> These are the names of Esau's sons. Eliphaz son of Adah the wife of Esau; Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath.. <sup>11</sup> The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. <sup>12</sup> (Timna was a secondary wife of Eliphaz, Esau's son; she bore Amalek to Eliphaz.) These were the sons of Adah, Esau's wife. <sup>13</sup> These were the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the sons of Esau's wife, Basemath. <sup>14</sup> These were the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah son <sup>440</sup> of Zibeon: she bore to Esau Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

<sup>15</sup> These were the clans <sup>441</sup> of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz the firstborn of Esau: the clans Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, <sup>16</sup> Korah, Gatam, and Amalek, these are the clans of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; they are the sons of Adah. <sup>17</sup> These are the sons of Esau's son Reuel: the clans Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah; these are the clans of Reuel in the land of Edom: they are the sons of Esau's wife Basemath. <sup>18</sup> These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah, the clans Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the

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<sup>438</sup> There seem to be some errors in this list when compared with the other passages in Genesis. The lists may have suffered from transmission.

<sup>439</sup> So: LXX & Syriac. Hebrew: "daughter."

<sup>440</sup> See the footnote above.

<sup>441</sup> Clans, or Chiefs. The same holds true for verses 15 – 19.

clansborn to Esa's wife Oholibanah, the daughter of Anah. <sup>19</sup> These are the sons of Eau (that is Edom)and these are their clans.

*B. Horites 36:20 – 30*

<sup>20</sup> These are the sons of Seir the Horite, <sup>442</sup> the inhabitants of the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, <sup>21</sup> Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan: these are the clans of the Horites, the sons of Seir in the land of Edom. <sup>22</sup> The sons of Lotan were Hori and Heman; and Lotan's sister was Timna. <sup>23</sup> These are the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. <sup>24</sup> These are the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anan; he is the Anan who found the hot springs <sup>443</sup> in the wilderness, as he pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon. <sup>25</sup> These are the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah daughter of Anah. <sup>26</sup> These are the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. <sup>27</sup> These are the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan. <sup>28</sup> These are the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. <sup>29</sup> These are the clans of the Horites: the clans Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, <sup>30</sup> Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan; these are the clans of the Horites, clan by clan in the land of Seir.

*C. The Kings of Edom 36:31 – 43*

<sup>31</sup> These are the kings that reined in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the Israelites. <sup>32</sup> Bela son of Beor reigned in Edom, the name of his city being Dinhabah. <sup>444</sup> <sup>33</sup> Bela died, and Jobab son of Zerah of Bozrah succeeded him as king. <sup>34</sup> Jodab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites succeeded him as king. <sup>35</sup> Husham died and Hadad son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, succeeded him as king, the name of his city being Avith. <sup>36</sup> Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah succeeded him as king. <sup>445</sup> <sup>37</sup> Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth on the Euphrates succeeded him as king. <sup>38</sup> Shaul died and Baal-hanan son of Achbor succeeded him as king. <sup>39</sup> Baal-hanan son of Achbor died, and Hadar succeeded him as king, <sup>446</sup> the name of his city being Pau; his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, daughter of Mezahab.

<sup>40</sup> These are the names of the clans of Esau, according to their families and their localities by names: the clans Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, <sup>41</sup> Oholibnamah, Elah, Pinon, <sup>42</sup> Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, <sup>43</sup> Magdiel, and Iram, these are the clans of Edom (that is, Esau, the father of Edom), according to their settlements in the land that they held.

<CHAPTER 37>

*XLIII. Joseph Comes to Egypt 37:1 – 36* <sup>447</sup>

*A. Joseph Hatd by His Brothers 37:1 - 11*

<sup>1</sup> Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, in the land of Canaan. <sup>2</sup> This is the story of the family of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was assisting in shepherding the flock with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's secondary wives. Joseph had given

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<sup>442</sup> The Horites were non-Semitic people from the highlands of Mesopotamia. They spread over the Middle East in the 15 – 14 centuries BCE. Hivite may be a copyist error. They also went by the name Hurrians.

<sup>443</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain. The Targum in a different reference speaks of mules: crossing a horse and a donkey. The Vulgate and Syriac have "hot springs."

<sup>444</sup> Bela is possibly the king mentioned in Numbers 22:5.

<sup>445</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 229a.

<sup>446</sup> There is a record of king Hadar. He reigned about 100 years prior to the monarchy in Israel.

<sup>447</sup> The events of this story were not infrequent and are known to have occurred in the desert near Hebron.

his father bad reports about them.<sup>448</sup> 3 Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children,<sup>449</sup> because he was the son of his old age. He had a long ornamental robe with sleeves made for his son.<sup>450</sup> 4 When his brothers became aware that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not so much as greet him peaceably.

5 Joseph had a dream,<sup>451</sup> and when he told it to his brothers,<sup>452</sup> they hated him even more. 6 He told them, “Listen to the dream I have dreamt: 7 We were binding sheaves in the field and my sheaf stood erect, and your sheaves gathered around it, bowing down to my sheaf.” 8 His brothers said to him, “Do you really think that you will reign over us? Or do you really believe that you will have dominion over us?” So his brothers hated him even more, because of his dreams.<sup>453</sup> 9 Then he dreamed another dream. “The sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to my star.” 10 When he told this to his father and his brothers,<sup>454</sup> his father rebuked him, saying, “What sort of dream is this that you have had? Will we really come — I and your mother and your brothers — and bow down to the ground before you?” 11 So his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in his mind.

#### *B. Joseph is Sold into Slavery 37:12 – 28*

12 His brothers went to pasture their father’s flocks near Shechem. 13 Israel said to Joseph, “Your brothers are pasturing the flock near Shechem, aren’t they? I will send you to them.” Joseph replied, “Here I am.” 14 Israel said, “Go to your brothers now, and see if they and the flock are well. Bring me a report.”

So Joseph was sent from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. 15 A man found him walking in the fields and asked, “What are you looking for?” 16 “I am looking for my brothers,” he replied. “Please tell me where they are pasturing the flock.” 17 The man said “They have gone away, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’”<sup>455</sup> So Joseph went to find his brothers and found them at Dothan. 18 They spotted him coming from a distance, and before he came near they had already conspired to kill him. 19 They said to one another, “Here comes the dreamer! 20 Lets kill him and throw him into one of the pits.<sup>456</sup> Then we can say that a wild animal devoured him. We will see what will become of his dreams.” 21 Reuben,<sup>457</sup> when he heard of this, delivered him out of their hands by saying, “We must not take his life.” 22 Reuben said, “Do not shed any blood: throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him “He said this that he might rescue him from their hands and restore him to his father. 23 When Joseph arrived at his brothers they stripped him of his long ornamental robe with sleeves that he

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<sup>448</sup> The brothers would be Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

<sup>449</sup> Israel had apparently learned nothing about favoritism from earlier experiences. Paternal favoritism provokes family discord and deception.

<sup>450</sup> So: LXX and Vulgate. The Hebrew has been unclear. Recent studies of ancient Hebrew literature have given the translation above. The “coat of many colors” was a guess on the part of earlier translators. The understanding these days is that this was a ceremonial robe with ornaments.

<sup>451</sup> Dreams were thought to be common means of divine communication and prediction.

<sup>452</sup> LXX adds: “and his father.”

<sup>453</sup> Literally: “for his words.”

<sup>454</sup> “And his brothers” is missing in the LXX.

<sup>455</sup> The location is modern Tell Dotha.

<sup>456</sup> While some pits were natural formations, many cisterns had been dug by herdsmen as a source of water for the animals. These cisterns would be from six to twenty feet deep, the purpose being to collect rain water.

<sup>457</sup> Some scholars feel the name should be that of Judah. There is no manuscript evidence, however.



was wearing, <sup>24</sup> and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty: there was no water in it.

<sup>25</sup> After that they sat down to eat; and as they looked up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites <sup>458</sup> coming from Gilead, with camels, carrying gum, balm, and resin (*or, sweet resin, medical resin and fragrant resin*) to Egypt. <sup>26</sup> Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup> We should sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him for he is our brother, our own flesh." His brothers agreed. <sup>28</sup> When some Midianite traders passed by they pulled Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit and sold them to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt. <sup>459</sup>

*C.. Jacob's Grief 27:29 – 36*

<sup>29</sup> When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes. <sup>30</sup> He returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone; What can I do now?" <sup>31</sup> Then they took Joseph's robe, and having killed a goat, they dipped Joseph's robe into the goat's blood. <sup>32</sup> They then sent the long ornamental robe with sleeves to their father, and they said, "We found this. See whether this is your son's robe or not." <sup>33</sup> Jacob recognized the robe and said, "It is my son's robe! A wild animal has devoured him. Without a doubt Joseph has been torn to pieces." <sup>34</sup> Joseph then tore his garments, and wore sackcloth on his loins, mourning his son for many days. <sup>35</sup> All his sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted, saying, "No! I will go to my grave, <sup>460</sup> to my son, in mourning." It was in this way that Jacob bewailed the loss of his son Joseph. <sup>36</sup> In the meantime the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, <sup>461</sup> one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard. <sup>462</sup>

<CHAPTER 38>

*XLIV. Judah and Tamar 38:1 – 30* <sup>463</sup>

*A. Tamar, Er, and Onan 38:1 – 11*

<sup>1</sup> It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and settled near a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah. <sup>464</sup> <sup>2</sup> There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua: <sup>465</sup> and he married her, and they were intimate. <sup>3</sup> She conceived and gave birth to a son, and she called his name Er. <sup>4</sup> She conceived again and gave birth to another son, calling him Onan. <sup>5</sup> She gave birth to another son,

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<sup>458</sup> The names Ishmaelites and Midianites are used interchangeably. One deals with nationality, the other with occupation. There were regular caravans going from Gilead, the source of balm, to Egypt where there was a demand for various kinds of balm.

<sup>459</sup> In the time of Pharaoh Amenemhet III (1800 BCE) there are documents concerning the sale of Asiatic slaves. A papyrus from 1740 BCE tells of 95 slaves, 37 of which were Asian. It was not a rarity in Palestine to have children kidnapped by caravans and taken to Egypt for sale.

<sup>460</sup> Literally: "to Sheol." Sheol meant "the underworld" or "the grave." The grief that was combined with the understanding of Sheol was that it would be a place of separation from God.

<sup>461</sup> The name Potiphar means "he whom Ra (the sun god) has given."

<sup>462</sup> The Hebrew word used is a form of the word "butcher." Some scholars feel Potiphar's job was "to be the chief butcher of those who opposed Pharaoh."

<sup>463</sup> Scholars have tried to understand why this story is located here, an apparent interruption in the story of Joseph. There have not been any suitable conclusions.

<sup>464</sup> Scholars feel the location of Judah's residence was about 3 miles southwest of Bethlehem.

<sup>465</sup> Shua also goes by the name Bath-shua.

naming him Shelah. (She <sup>466</sup> was in Chezib when he was born.) <sup>6</sup> Judah took a wife for Er, his firstborn; her name was Tamar. <sup>7</sup> Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord caused his death. <sup>8</sup> Judah then said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her. Raise an offspring for your brother."<sup>467</sup> <sup>9</sup> Since Onan knew that the offspring would not be his, when ever he had sex with his brother's wife, he let his semen go to waste at the time of his ejaculation, lest he cause her to conceive and provide an offspring for his brother, <sup>468</sup> <sup>9</sup> since Onan knew that the offspring would not be his, he made certain that his semen would be wasted at the time of ejaculation when having sex with his brother's wife, so that he would not provide an offspring for his brother. <sup>10</sup> What he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord also took his life. <sup>11</sup> Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law, Tamar, "Return to your father's house until Shelah is grown (for he was afraid that he would die also.) So Tamar went to live in her father's house [*as a widow*].

*B. Tamar: Relations with Judah 38:12 – 23*

<sup>12</sup> After a long time the wife of Judah, Shua died, and when the time of mourning had passed, <sup>469</sup> he went up to Timnah <sup>470</sup> to his sheepshearers, <sup>471</sup> he and his friend, Hirah the Adullamite. <sup>11</sup> When Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep," <sup>14</sup> she took off her widow's clothes <sup>472</sup> put on a veil, perfumed herself, <sup>473</sup> and wrapped herself up, and sat down at the entrance to Enaim, <sup>474</sup> which is on the road to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah was grown up and she had not been given to him in marriage. <sup>15</sup> When Judah saw her he assumed she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. <sup>16</sup> He went over to her at the road side, and said, "Come, let me have sex with you." (not knowing that she was his daughter-in-law). She said, "What will you give me for having sex with you?" <sup>17</sup> He answered, "I will send you a young goat from my flock." She said, "Only if you give me a deposit (*or, pledge*) to guarantee that you will send it." <sup>18</sup> He said, "What guarantee (*or, pledge*) do you want me to give you?" She replied "Your signet and your cord, <sup>475</sup> and the staff that is in your hand." So he gave them to her, and had sex with her and she became pregnant by him. <sup>19</sup> Then she went away, and taking off her veil she again put on the garments of widowhood.

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<sup>466</sup> Hebrew: "he."

<sup>467</sup> The Levirate Marriage Law demanded that if a woman becomes a widow, having no sons, it was the responsibility of the closest relative to take her as his wife and cause her to give birth to a son. This would continue the inheritance procedure, and, in this case her son would be the oldest child in the family and thus receive a double portion of the blessing and inheritance. For Onan, this meant that if this took place, his son, should he have a son with his wife, would be the second grandson of the family and would then receive half as much as if Tamar would not have any son. If he were to father a son with Tamar he would be depriving his own son, from his wife, of the important blessing and half of the inheritance. While the levirate marriage law had not been declared at this point it apparently was being practiced. Cf. Deuteronomy 25:3, and Ruth for an example of the carrying out of the law.

<sup>468</sup> He wanted the pleasure of sex but did not want the responsibility.

<sup>469</sup> Literally: "when Judah was comforted."

<sup>470</sup> The location of Timnah was perhaps Tell el-Barashi, 2 miles south west of Beth-shemesh.

<sup>471</sup> Sheep shearing was a festive time, with a great time of drinking, feasting and revelry.

<sup>472</sup> A widow wore mourning garments for the rest of her life. Cf. Judith 8:5; 10:3; II Samuel 14:2.

<sup>473</sup> Some scholars feel this should be translated, "put on makeup." If she did not want to reveal her face, which was the case, makeup would not be helpful, while perfume might.

<sup>474</sup> It is mentioned in Joshua 15:34. It apparently was an open place along the road to Timnah.

<sup>475</sup> The signet was not a ring but a seal that was hung around the neck, part of the dress of any man of substance. Thus it was a symbol of rank.

20 When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite, to recover the guarantee (*or, pledge*) from the woman he was unable to find her. 21 He asked the townspeople, “Where is the cult prostitute who was at Enaim by the wayside?” They said, “No prostitute has been there.” 22 So he returned to Judah, and said, “I have not found her; moreover the townspeople said, ‘No prostitute has been there.’” 23 Judah replied, “Let her keep the things as her own, otherwise we will be ridiculed, you see, I sent the young goat, and you could not find her.”

*C. Tamar is Exonerated 38:24 – 30*

24 About three months later Judah was told, “Tamar, your daughter-in-law, is guilty of prostitution and as a result she is now pregnant.” Judah said, “Bring her out and have her be burned.”<sup>476</sup> 25 As she was being brought out she said to her father-in-law, “It was the owner of these that made me pregnant.” Then she added, “Take these please, look to see whose these are: the signet, the rope and the staff.” 26 Then Judah acknowledged, and said, “She is righteous, not I, since I did not give my son Shelah to her.” He never was intimate with her again.

27 When the time came for her delivery, she was pregnant with twins. 28 While she was in labor one put out his hand; and the midwife tied a crimson thread on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.” 28 Just then he drew his hand back and out came his brother, and she said, “What a breach you have made for yourself!” Therefore she called his name Perez (*meaning Breach*).<sup>30</sup> After that his brother was born with the crimson thread on his hand; and he was named Zerah (*meaning Brightness*).

<CHAPTER 39>

*XLV. Joseph in Egypt 39:1 – 41:47*

*A. Joseph Cast into Prison 39:1 – 23*<sup>477</sup>

1 Joseph was taken down to Egypt. [Potiphar, an officer<sup>478</sup> of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard,]<sup>479</sup> an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him to Egypt.. 2 The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man in the house of his Egyptian master. 3 His master realized that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord caused all that he did to prosper.<sup>480</sup> 4 Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him; and thus came to be made the overseer of his house and put him in charge of everything he had. 5 From the time that he made Joseph the overseer in his house, and over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake, and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had: his house and field. 6 He therefore left all that he had in Joseph’s charge; and with Joseph there, he had no need to pay attention to anything, other than the food that he ate.

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<sup>476</sup> The Hammurabic Code 153 said “Death for incest with a mother is the only time for severe punishment.” Within Judaism stoning, not burning, was the rule. Cf. Leviticus 20:14; 21:9.

<sup>477</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 23c.

<sup>478</sup> Literally: “eunuch.” It could also mean courtier. This could imply that he was made to be a eunuch or that he had a high official position. Both meanings were used at that time in the Middle East.

<sup>479</sup> Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

<sup>480</sup> Egyptian records show that, as a general rule, Asian slaves were preferred to Egyptian slaves, for they provided more personal attention.

Now Joseph was handsome in both face and figure. <sup>7</sup> After some time had passed his master's wife looked admiringly <sup>481</sup> at Joseph, and said, "Come to bed with me." <sup>482</sup> <sup>8</sup> Joseph refused, saying to his master's wife, "Look: With me here my master has no concern about anything in the house and he has put everything that he has into my hands. <sup>9</sup> He is not greater in this house than I, nor has he held back anything from me except you, yourself, because you are his wife. How could I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" <sup>10</sup> Even though she coaxed Joseph every day, he would not consent to lie beside her or to be with her. <sup>11</sup> However, one day, when he went into the house to do his work, and while no one else was in the house, <sup>12</sup> she caught hold of his garment, saying, "Come to bed with me!" He, however, left his garment in her hand and fled <sup>483</sup> out of the house. <sup>484</sup> <sup>13</sup> When she saw that he had fled outside, leaving his garment in her hand, <sup>14</sup> she called the members of her household and told them, "See! My husband <sup>485</sup> has brought this Hebrew among us to insult us! He came in to me to fondle <sup>486</sup> me, and I cried out, and he left his garment beside me, fleeing outside." <sup>16</sup> She then kept the garment by her until his master came home, <sup>17</sup> and she told the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us came in to me to fondle me; <sup>18</sup> but as soon as I raised my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me, and ran outside."

<sup>19</sup> When his master heard what his wife who was saying, 'This is how your servant treated me.' <sup>487</sup> he became enraged. <sup>20</sup> Joseph's master took him and put in into the prison <sup>488</sup> where the king's prisoners were confined; and he remained in prison there. <sup>21</sup> However, the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love; he gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailor. <sup>22</sup> The chief jailor gave all the prisoners into Joseph's care, and what ever was done there, he was the one who did it. <sup>23</sup> The chief jailor did not pay heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because the Lord was with him and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.

<CHAPTER 40> <sup>489</sup>

B. Interpreter of Dreams 40:1 – 23

<sup>1</sup> Some time <sup>490</sup> after this the chief cup bearer of the king of Egypt and the baker had offended <sup>491</sup> their lord the king of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cup bearer and the chief baker, <sup>3</sup> and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. <sup>4</sup> The captain of the guard had Joseph be responsible [*among others*] for these two, and he waited on them, and they

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<sup>481</sup> Literally: 'lifted up her eyes.' In the Hammurabic Code the expression "lifted up her eyes" meant "to look with desire."

<sup>482</sup> So literally in Hebrew. It is two words: "sikbu immi." Cf.: ANET p. 164, 25.

<sup>483</sup> Literally: "ran out."

<sup>484</sup> Her blunt nature in trying to force Joseph is unique in scripture.

<sup>485</sup> Literally: "he."

<sup>486</sup> Literally: "insult." The word "insult" had a meaning of "to fondle" and conveyed the sense of aggressiveness. This word is also used in verse 17.

<sup>487</sup> Death surely was the only penalty Joseph could expect.

<sup>488</sup> The LXX uses the word "fortress." The Hebrew word "soher" is a rather unusual word which signifies a round structure.

<sup>489</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 495c.

<sup>490</sup> Scholars feel that it had been ten years that Joseph had been in slavery in Egypt at this point in the story.

<sup>491</sup> Literally: "offended against." "Gave offence to..." might be a good translation.

remained in custody for some time. <sup>5</sup> One night both, the chief cup bearer and the chief baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in prison, each had a dream, each dream having its own meaning. <sup>6</sup> When Joseph came to them in the morning, and saw them, they were upset. <sup>7</sup> So he asked these officers of Pharaoh who were in custody in his master's house, "Why do you look so downcast today?" <sup>8</sup> They said to him, "We both had dreams and there is no one to interpret them."<sup>492</sup> Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations come from God? Please tell me."

<sup>9</sup> The chief cup bearer then told Joseph his dream, saying: "In my dream there was a vine before me, <sup>10</sup> and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms appeared and the clusters ripened into grapes. <sup>11</sup> Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand." <sup>12</sup> Then Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation: the three branches are three days; <sup>13</sup> within three days Pharaoh will pardon you, <sup>493</sup> and restore you to your position, and you will place Pharaoh's cup into his hand, as you did in the past as the chief cup bearer. <sup>14</sup> But please remember me when all is well for you. I ask you to do a kindness for me by mentioning me to Pharaoh, and in that way get me out of this place. <sup>494</sup> <sup>15</sup> The fact is that I was kidnapped and taken from the land of the Hebrews; and here also I have done nothing that I should have been put in the dungeon."

<sup>16</sup> When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream: there were three woven cake baskets <sup>495</sup> on my head. <sup>17</sup> In the uppermost basket were all sorts of baked goods <sup>496</sup> for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head." <sup>18</sup> Joseph answered, "This is the interpretation: the three baskets are three days. <sup>19</sup> Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head – from you – and you will be impaled on a post, <sup>497</sup> and the birds will eat your flesh from you"

<sup>20</sup> On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, <sup>498</sup> he made a feast for all his servants, and lifted up the head of the chief cup bearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. <sup>21</sup> He restored the chief cup bearer to his post as cup bearer, and he placed the cup into Pharaoh's hand, <sup>22</sup> but the chief baker he had impaled on a post just as Joseph had interpreted to them. <sup>23</sup> However, the chief cup bearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

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<sup>492</sup> Since they were in prison they could not contact a professional interpreter of dreams, which they would have done if they were not incarcerated. At that time it was felt that all dreams had significance in prophecies or warnings, and therefore it was important to know what lay before them, as represented in their dreams.

<sup>493</sup> Literally: "raise your head."

<sup>494</sup> The LXX has: "prison." Hebrew literally has "house."

<sup>495</sup> The Hebrew word is a hapax legomenon. The etymology might give the thought of "white" or of "woven." The translation is an attempt to translate.

<sup>496</sup> An ancient Egyptian account speaks of 38 varieties of cake and 57 varieties of bread, along with descriptions of each different item. It presents an idea of the professional standards of bakers who would bake for Pharaoh.

<sup>497</sup> Translators often say "hanged" but hanging was not the custom in Egypt. Decapitation and impaling were used more often at that time.

<sup>498</sup> There are no records of celebrations of birthdays for Pharaohs. There are festivities for the anniversary of the Pharaoh's reign. At those events there was also a release of a prisoner.

C. Jacob's Rise to Power 41:1 – 57

1 Two years later Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile. 2 Seven handsome and sturdy cows came out of the Nile, <sup>500</sup> and they grazed on the reed grass. <sup>501</sup> 3 Then seven other cows that were gaunt and thin came up out of the Nile after them and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. 4 The seven gaunt and thin <sup>502</sup> cows ate the seven handsome and sturdy cows. Then Pharaoh awoke. 5 Pharaoh fell asleep again and he dreamed a second time. This time seven heads of grain which were good and plump were growing <sup>503</sup> on one stalk! 6 Close behind them grew seven heads of grain which were gaunt and thin (*or, thin and blighted*) because of the east wind, which sprouted after them. 7 The seven gaunt and thin heads of grain swallowed the heads of grain that were good and plump. 8 Pharaoh awoke, and it was a dream. 8 In the morning his spirit <sup>504</sup> was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians <sup>505</sup> of Egypt, and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh. <sup>506</sup>

9 The chief cup bearer said to Pharaoh, “I must make mention of my offences: 10 When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, chief baker and me; he imprisoned us in the house of the captain of the guard. 11 We dreamed on the same night, each having a dream with its own meaning. 12 A young Hebrew was with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. When we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each based on our individual dreams. 13 Everything happened exactly as he had interpreted these dreams to us: I was restored to my position, and the chief baker was impaled.”

14 Pharaoh sent word to Joseph and he was rushed out <sup>507</sup> of the dungeon, and shaved himself, <sup>508</sup> and changed his clothing. Then he came into the presence of Pharaoh. 15 Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream and I have no one who can interpret it. I have heard that you are able, upon hearing a dream, to interpret it.” 16 Joseph said, “Not I, God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.” 17 Pharaoh then said, “In my dream I was standing along the edge of the Nile, 18 and seven cows, handsome and sturdy came up out of the Nile and fed on the reed grass. 19 Then seven other cows, gaunt and thin (*or, thin and blighted*), came up after them. <sup>509</sup> I have never seen such ugly cows in my entire life, here in the land of Egypt, 20 but after they had eaten the seven cows that were handsome and sturdy no one would have known that they had done so, for they were still as ugly as

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<sup>499</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 495c.

<sup>500</sup> Cows would stand in the water to cool off and to escape insects.

<sup>501</sup> The word is an Egyptian loan word, presumably meaning “papyrus.”

<sup>502</sup> The same Hebrew words are used in verses 6 & 7.

<sup>503</sup> Literally: “came up.” A single head, consisting of several grains is normal, but here there were seven heads on one stalk.

<sup>504</sup> Hebrew: “ruach.”

<sup>505</sup> This is an Egyptian loan word.

<sup>506</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 30a, 215d.

<sup>507</sup> The words that are used are staccato like, implying that there is a change in social status. Cf.: ANET p. 22b.

<sup>508</sup> Egyptians normally were clean shaven. Semites usually had beards.

<sup>509</sup> Literally: “came into their midst.”

before. Then I awoke. <sup>22</sup> I went to sleep again <sup>510</sup> and in my dream I saw seven heads of grain which were good and plump, growing on one stalk, and seven heads of grain that were gaunt and thin, (*or, thin and blighted*) by the east wind, which sprouted after them. <sup>24</sup> and the thin heads of grain swallowed up the good heads. But when I told it to the magicians, there was no one who could explain it to me.”

<sup>25</sup> Then Joseph said, “These dreams of Pharaoh are one. Herein God is revealing to Pharaoh what is about to happen <sup>26</sup> The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years. <sup>27</sup> The seven lean and ugly cows are seven years and the seven empty heads of grain that are blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine. <sup>511</sup> <sup>28</sup> It is as I told Pharaoh, God has shown Pharaoh what is about to take place. <sup>29</sup> There will be seven years of bumper crops, with great and abundant harvests throughout the land of Egypt, <sup>30</sup> but following them there will be seven years of famine, resulting in the forgetting of the years of abundance in Egypt as the land is ravished by famine. <sup>31</sup> Plenty will no longer be known in the land because of the famine that will follow, for it will be horribly difficult. <sup>32</sup> The fact that Pharaoh’s dream is doubled means that this has been determined by God and it will soon take place.

<sup>33</sup> Now therefore, Pharaoh must urgently select a man who is discerning and wise and appoint him to be over the land. <sup>512</sup> <sup>34</sup> Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land, and take one-fifth <sup>513</sup> of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven years of abundant harvests. <sup>35</sup> Let them gather all the food in those years of abundant harvests that are coming and store that grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. <sup>36</sup> That food must be held in reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that will take place in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish because of the famine. <sup>514</sup>

<sup>37</sup> This proposal seemed good <sup>515</sup> to Pharaoh and his advisors. <sup>38</sup> Pharaoh said to his officials, “Can we find anyone else like this – one who has within him the spirit <sup>516</sup> of God?” <sup>39</sup> So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is only one direction we can take for there is no one else who is as discerning as you. <sup>40</sup> You will be over my house, <sup>517</sup> and all my people and they will show homage and keep your commands, the only exception being with regard to the throne where I will be greater than you.” <sup>518</sup> <sup>41</sup> Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See! I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” <sup>42</sup> Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring <sup>519</sup> from his finger, and place it on Joseph’s finger; he dressed him in garments of fine linen, <sup>520</sup> and placed a gold collar (*or, chain*)

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<sup>510</sup> So: LXX and Syriac. The Hebrew text omits “I went to sleep again.”

<sup>511</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 31c.

<sup>512</sup> In the Hebrew Scriptures disaster often comes as a judgment from God. Not so here: for the Lord is the one who helps in the light of the coming disaster.

<sup>513</sup> The exact meaning of the Hebrew word is unclear. “Organize the land” might be the meaning of the Hebrew word. One-fifth seems like a suitable amount to be stored.

<sup>514</sup> Literally: “the land may not be cut off.”

<sup>515</sup> Literally: “was good in the eyes of Pharaoh.”

<sup>516</sup> Hebrew: “ruach.”

<sup>517</sup> The Hebrew is unclear. So: LXX.

<sup>518</sup> The Hyksos Pharaohs ruled from 1720 – 1555 BCE and were pro-Semitic rulers. Scholars debate whether this Pharaoh was Hyksos. Some scholars feel the painting in the tomb of Sethos I (1300 BCE) symbolizes Joseph. Other scholars feel Joseph was on the scene 400 years later.

<sup>519</sup> The signet ring was used in sealing documents.

<sup>520</sup> Egypt was noted for its fine linen.

<sup>521</sup> and made him ride in the chariot used by Pharaoh's second-in-command and they cried out, announcing him, and saying, "Bow the knee!" <sup>522</sup> Joseph was sent all over Egypt in this manner. <sup>44</sup> Moreover Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one is permitted to lift up hand or foot in the land of Egypt." <sup>45</sup> Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenathpaneah; <sup>523</sup> and he gave him Asenath <sup>524</sup> daughter of Potiphara, <sup>525</sup> priest of On. <sup>526</sup> So Joseph traveled over the entire land of Egypt.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. <sup>47</sup> During the seven fruitful years the earth produced abundantly. <sup>527</sup> <sup>48</sup> He gathered up all the food in those seven years <sup>528</sup> when there were outstanding crops, and stored food in every city, which came from the fields surrounding the city. <sup>49</sup> Joseph stored up such great amounts of grain – like the sand of the sea, -- that he ceased measuring it for it was impossible to measure.

<sup>50</sup> Prior to the arrival of the years of famine Joseph and his wife Asenath the daughter of Potiphara, priest of On, had two sons. <sup>51</sup> Joseph named the first-born Manasseh, <sup>529</sup> for, he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and my entire father's house." <sup>52</sup> The second son he named Ephraim, <sup>530</sup> for he said, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my misfortunes."

<sup>53</sup> The seven years of plentiful crops in Egypt came to an end, <sup>54</sup> and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. The famine struck every country, but throughout the land of Egypt there was bread. <sup>55</sup> When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people pleaded with Pharaoh for bread. "Go to Joseph, whatever he says to you, do it." <sup>56</sup> Since the famine had spread over the entire land Joseph opened the storehouses, <sup>531</sup> and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was very severe in Egypt. <sup>57</sup> Moreover, people from all over the world came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain because the famine became severe throughout the world. <sup>532</sup>

#### <CHAPTER 42>

#### XLVI. Joseph and His Brothers in Egypt 42:1 – 28

##### A. Joseph's Brothers Come to Egypt 42:1 - 6

<sup>1</sup> When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt he said to his sons, "Why do you keep looking at one another? <sup>533</sup> <sup>2</sup> I have heard <sup>534</sup> that there is grain in Egypt; Go

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<sup>521</sup> A gold collar (or, chain) would be a recognition of eminent service. Cf.: ANET p. 22a, 213a.

<sup>522</sup> The meaning is not definite. 'abrek' is possibly of ancient Egyptian origin. It is a cognate of the Hebrew word for "knee." The Vulgate reads: "ut genuflecterent."

<sup>523</sup> The meaning is unclear. Possibly "God speaks and lives."

<sup>524</sup> Her name means "she belongs to the goddess Neith.

<sup>525</sup> The name is a form of Potiphar. Cf.: ANET p. 213a.

<sup>526</sup> In Greek: "Helipolis." It was located 7 miles NW of Cairo, and the location of a temple in honor of Ra, the sun god. The high priest here was considered, during the worship of Ra, to be the most important priest.

<sup>527</sup> So: LXX. "Abundantly" is omitted in Hebrew.

<sup>528</sup> Literally: "the seven years that were in the land of Egypt."

<sup>529</sup> The name means: "to forget."

<sup>530</sup> The name means: "to be fruitful."

<sup>531</sup> So: LXX and Vulgate. Hebrew: "opened all that was in (or among) them." Cf.: ANET p. 32a.

<sup>532</sup> There was famine in Israel because there was no rain. There was famine in Egypt because the Nile River did not flood. Usually these famines which took place for different reasons did not come in the same year. This case, however, was an exception. Cf.: ANET p. 251c.

<sup>533</sup> This appears to be a sign of a dysfunctional family.



down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die<sup>0</sup>”<sup>3</sup> So then Joseph’s brothers went down to buy grain.<sup>535</sup> <sup>4</sup> Jacob did send Benjamin, Joseph’s brother with his brothers, for he was fearful that he might meet with disaster. <sup>5</sup> It was in this way that Israel’s sons came to be with other people who had come to Egypt to purchase grain, due to the famine which was in the land of Canaan.<sup>536</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Now Joseph was the governor<sup>537</sup> over the land: he was the one who dispensed grain to other people in Egypt, and Joseph’s brothers came and bowed themselves with their faces to the ground before him.

### *B. Joseph’s Treatment of His Brothers 42:7 – 44:34*

#### *1. Joseph’s Brothers Go to Prison 42:7 - 17*

<sup>7</sup> When Joseph saw his brothers he recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke to them harshly, saying, “Where do you come from?” They answered, “From Canaan to buy food.” <sup>8</sup> Although Joseph had recognized them, they did not recognize him. <sup>9</sup> Joseph also recalled the dreams he had about them. He said to them, “You have come to pry into our affairs to learn where we are unprotected.”<sup>538</sup> <sup>10</sup> They responded, “No, my lord. We, your servants, have come to buy food. <sup>11</sup> We are all sons of the same man, we are honest men and we have never been spies.” <sup>12</sup> Joseph said to them, “No, you have come to see the barrenness<sup>539</sup> of the land.” <sup>13</sup> They said, “We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man who lives in the land of Canaan, the youngest, however, is with our father, and another is deceased.”<sup>540</sup> <sup>14</sup> Joseph said to them, “It is all just as I have said, you are spies! <sup>15</sup> This will be a test for you: as surely as Pharaoh is alive, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here! <sup>16</sup> Send one of your number and have him bring your brother while the rest of you remain in prison, for in this way the truth of your words will be tested, whether you are really honest or if you are spies. Just as certainly as Pharaoh is alive – you are spies!” <sup>17</sup> He then held them in detention in the guard house for three days

#### *2. The Order Concerning Benjamin 42:18 – 25*

<sup>18</sup> On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I am in awe of God.”<sup>541</sup> <sup>19</sup> If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be detained here where you are confined. The rest of you can go and carry grain for the famine of your household, <sup>20</sup> but you must bring your youngest brother to me. This is the only way you can prove that your words can truly be verified, and then you will not die.” They agreed to do as they were instructed. <sup>21</sup> Then they said to one another, “It is regrettable, now we are receiving retribution for what we did to our brother: we saw his anguish when he pleaded with us, but we would not listen. This is why this anguish has come to rest on us!” <sup>22</sup> Then Reuben responded, “I told you, didn’t I, not to wrong the boy, but you wouldn’t listen. Now is the time of reckoning! We are guilty of his blood.” <sup>23</sup> They did not know that Joseph understood them, since he spoke through an interpreter. <sup>24</sup> Joseph turned away from them

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<sup>534</sup> Literally: “saw.”

<sup>535</sup> Ten men go, no doubt so their trip might be carried out safely.

<sup>536</sup> At this point national identity did not mean much, since all were equally needy.

<sup>537</sup> The Hebrew word is strange, not the word that was ordinarily for the office that Joseph occupied.

<sup>538</sup> KJV: “to see the nakedness of the land.”

<sup>539</sup> Literally: “nakedness.”

<sup>540</sup> Literally: “is no more.”

<sup>541</sup> Literally: “fear.”

and wept. Having returned he spoke to them. Then he selected Simeon <sup>542</sup> and had him in full view of them. <sup>25</sup> Joseph then gave orders that their bags should be filled with grain, and that the money of each man be returned, being placed at the each sack. He also ordered that provisions be given them for their journey. This was done for them.

### 3. *The Brothers Return to Canaan 42:26 – 38*

<sup>26</sup> They loaded their donkeys with the sacks of grain and left for home. <sup>27</sup> When one of them opened his sack to give grain to his donkey at a caravansary (*or, lodging place*) he saw that the money was at the top of the sack. <sup>28</sup> “My money has been put back into my sack: here it is in my sack!” At this they became filled with fear and trembling and said to one another “What is this that God has done to us?” <sup>543</sup>

<sup>29</sup> When hem came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him everything that had happened to them, saying:. <sup>30</sup> “The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly to us, and accused us of spying on the land. <sup>544</sup> <sup>31</sup> We, however, said to him, ‘We are honest men, we have never been spies. <sup>32</sup> We are twelve brothers, sons of the same father in the land of Canaan.’ <sup>33</sup> Then this man who is the lord of the land, said to us, ‘How am I to have proof that you are honest men? Let one of you brothers with me, take the grain for the famine in your homes, and go your way. <sup>34</sup> Bring your youngest brother to me, and I will then know that you are not spies but honest men. Then I will release your brother and you can trade in this land.’”

<sup>35</sup> As they were emptying their sacks they found that in each one’s sack was his bag of money. When they, and their father, saw their bundles of money, they were shocked. <sup>36</sup> Their father Jacob said to them “I am the one you have bereaved of children: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and now you say you need to take Benjamin. Why has all this happened to me?” <sup>37</sup> Rueben then said to his father, “You may kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you.” <sup>38</sup> But Joseph said, “My son will not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should come to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.” <sup>545</sup>

## <CHAPTER 43>

### 4. *The Brother’s Second Journey to Egypt 43:1- 15*

<sup>1</sup> Now the famine was severe in the land. <sup>2</sup> When the grain they had brought from Egypt had been eaten their father said to them, “Go again to buy some food for us.” <sup>3</sup> Judah said to him, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You will not see my face <sup>546</sup> unless your brother is with you.’ <sup>4</sup> If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and bring you food, <sup>5</sup> but if you will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, ‘You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.’” <sup>547</sup> <sup>6</sup> Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?” <sup>7</sup> They replied, “The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our family and we simply answered his questions, for he asked, “Is your father still alive? Have you another

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<sup>542</sup> Simeon was the second oldest of the brothers.

<sup>543</sup> The brothers are befuddled. Some scholars say they sense punishment. Others feel it must have been a message of redemption for them. Why is the money there? What is the purpose behind this action?

<sup>544</sup> The LXX adds here: “and put us in custody.”

<sup>545</sup> Literally: “to Sheol.” Some scholars place verse 38 following 43:1.

<sup>546</sup> Literally: “Do not see my face unless.”

<sup>547</sup> Joseph’s word is final in Egypt. Jacob’s word is final in Canaan.

brother? What we told him was straight forward answers to these questions. How could we know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down.’”<sup>8</sup> Then Judah said to his father Israel, “Send the boy<sup>548</sup> with me, and let us be on our way, so that we will be able to live, and not die – not you and we but also our children. <sup>9</sup> I, myself will be responsible (*or, surety*) for him.<sup>549</sup> You can hold me responsible for bringing him back to you and have him stand before you, but if I fail, let me bear the blame forever. <sup>10</sup> If we had not dawdled [*by all this discussion*] we could have gone over and back twice.”<sup>550</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Their father, Israel then said to them, “It must happen. Do it, go. Take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry a present for the man, -- a bit of balm, some honey, gum, resin, pistachio nuts, and almonds. <sup>12</sup> Take double the amount of money with you. Carry the money that was returned on the top of your sacks with you; for possibly it was an oversight. <sup>12</sup> Take your brother also, and go on your way, back to the man. <sup>13</sup> May God Almighty<sup>551</sup> cause the man to be merciful toward you, so that he will send your brother, Benjamin, back to me. As for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved!”<sup>15</sup> So the men took the present, along with Benjamin. They then went on their way to Egypt and appeared before Joseph.

*5/ Joseph’s Meeting with Benjamin 43:16 – 34*

<sup>16</sup> When Joseph saw Benjamin with them,<sup>552</sup> he said to the steward of his house, “Bring the men into the house and butcher an animal and prepare a meal, for these men will have a meal with me at noon.”<sup>17</sup> The house steward did as Joseph had told him, and brought the men into Joseph’s house. <sup>18</sup> The men, however, were fearful, because they were brought into Joseph’s house, and said, “It is because of the money that was replaced in our sacks the first time. That is why we have been brought in, so they will have the opportunity to attack us and seize us as slaves and seize our donkeys. <sup>19</sup> So they went to the steward of Joseph’s house, at the entrance of the house. <sup>20</sup> They said, “Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food; <sup>21</sup> and when we came to the place where we stayed over the night, on the way home, each one of us found our money in the top of the sack, the total amount was there. So: we have brought it back with us. <sup>22</sup> We have brought money with us to pay for the purchases we will make now. We do not know who put the money into our sacks.”<sup>23</sup> He replied, “Be assured, you have nothing to fear, your God, the God of your father must have placed the money in your sacks. I have received your full payment for your previous purchase.”<sup>553</sup> [Then he brought Simeon out to them.]<sup>554</sup> <sup>24</sup> When the steward had brought the men into Joseph’s house and given them water that they might wash their feet, and when he had given fodder to the donkeys, <sup>25</sup> they prepared the presents, for Joseph was soon to come into the room, for they understood that they would be eating there.

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<sup>548</sup> Benjamin was possibly 20 years old. Joseph was 38.

<sup>549</sup> Literally: “I will become surety for him.”

<sup>550</sup> Reuben in 42:37 offered to care for Benjamin, but is rejected by Jacob. Now Judah has found favor with his father. Reuben offered his sons’ lives should he not bring Benjamin back. Judah offered his reputation.

<sup>551</sup> “El Shaddai.”

<sup>552</sup> In Hebrew the mention of the name “Benjamin” is awkward in verse 16. Some scholars feel that it is a later gloss. The assumption is that the sentence should read, “Now when Joseph saw them.” The MT has the name Benjamin, even though it seems grammatically awkward.

<sup>553</sup> Literally: “has come to me.”

<sup>554</sup> Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

26 When Joseph came into the house they brought in the presents which they had brought from home, and presented them to him, bowing down to the ground before him. 27 He inquired about their welfare, and asked, “Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? <sup>555</sup> Is he still alive?” 28 They said, “Your servant, our father, is well, he is still alive.” Then they did obeisance, bowing with their faces to the ground. 29 As he looked up he saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, and said, “Is this your youngest brother of whom you had spoken to me? May God be gracious to you, my son.” 30 It was then that Joseph, on the verge of tears, retired to his private room for he broke down in tears, weeping for his brother. 31 He then washed his face, and came out, having controlled his tears, and said, “Serve the meal.” 32 They served him by himself, and then his brothers and finally the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians were not permitted to eat with the Hebrews, for that was an abomination to the Egyptians. <sup>556</sup> 33 When they were seated before him, [*at his instructions*], with the men seated according to their age, from the oldest to the youngest according to his youth, the men stared at each other in astonishment. <sup>557</sup> 34 Additional portions were given from Joseph’s table, to Benjamin, whose portion came to be five times larger than any of the others. So they drank and were merry with him.” <sup>558</sup>

#### <CHAPTER 44>

##### 6. Benjamin in Jeopardy 44:1 – 34

1 He then instructed his house steward “Fill the sacks with grain, <sup>559</sup> as much as they can carry, place their purchase money in the top of the sacks, 2 and put my goblet <sup>560</sup> in the top of the sack of the youngest, along with the purchase money for his grain.” The house steward did as Joseph had said. 3 At first light of day the brothers were allowed to take their donkeys and set out. 4 When they had gone only a short distance from the city Joseph said to his house steward, “Go, follow after the men, and when you catch up with them you are to say, ‘Why have you returned evil for good? Why have you stolen my silver goblet? <sup>561</sup> 5. Don’t you realize that my lord drinks from the goblet and that he uses it to discover God’s plans? <sup>562</sup> You have done a wicked thing!’”

6 When he overtook them, he repeated the words Joseph had given him to say to them. 7 They said, “Why does my lord speak such words as these to us. It would never occur to us to do anything like that! 8 Look! The money that we found upon our return to the land of Canaan, which was on the top of our sacks, we brought back to you. Why would we steal silver or gold from the house of your lord? 9 In the event that it should be found in the possession of any one of us, that person ought to die, and in addition should that be true we will all become your slaves.” 10 He said, “As you say: the one in whose possession the goblet is found will become the slave of my lord, but the rest of you will be permitted to go free.” 11 Then each one quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and

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<sup>555</sup> The question about the welfare of Jacob implies that some time had elapsed between these verses.

<sup>556</sup> This was a taboo based on the Egyptian notion that they had ethnic and cultural superiority.

<sup>557</sup> The Hebrew has a difficult way of saying they were seated in accordance with their age, from the oldest to the youngest.

<sup>558</sup> Literally: “drank and got drunk.”

<sup>559</sup> Literally: “food.”

<sup>560</sup> The Hebrew word designates a large cup.

<sup>561</sup> This question appears in the LXX. It does not appear in the Hebrew text.

<sup>562</sup> Literally: “to divine.”

each one opened his sack. <sup>12</sup> He searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the goblet was found in Benjamin's sack. <sup>13</sup> They tore their clothes in anguish, <sup>563</sup> and then each man again loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city.

<sup>14</sup> Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there. They fell down to the ground before him. <sup>564</sup> <sup>15</sup> Joseph said to him, "What did you do now? Don't you realize that a man in my position can learn things through divination?" <sup>16</sup> Judah said, "What is there that we can say to my lord? What can we plead to clear ourselves? God has uncovered the guilt of your servants: here we are then, we and the one in whose possession the cup was found; we are my lord's slaves." <sup>17</sup> Joseph, however, said, "This would be impossible for me to do. <sup>565</sup> It will only be the man in whose possession my goblet is found who is to be my slave, but as for the rest of you, you are free to go home to your father."

<sup>18</sup> Judah then approached Joseph and said, "O my lord, let your servant please speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not become angry with your servant for you are like Pharaoh himself. <sup>19</sup> My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father and a brother?' <sup>20</sup> When we answered my lord, we said, 'We have a father, and old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children and his father loves him.' <sup>21</sup> You then said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, so that I may see him.' <sup>566</sup> <sup>22</sup> We said to my lord, 'The boy can't leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die. <sup>23</sup> You then told us, your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will never see me again.' <sup>24</sup> When we returned to your servant, our father, we told him what you, my lord, had said. <sup>25</sup> When our father said, 'Go again by us a little grain,' <sup>26</sup> we said, "We cannot go down if our youngest brother accompanies us, then we will go down, for we cannot show our faces to the man <sup>567</sup> unless our youngest brother is with us.' <sup>27</sup> Then your servant, my father, said to us, 'You know that my wife gave birth to my two sons; <sup>28</sup> one left me, and I said, 'Surely he has been torn into pieces, and I have never seen him since. <sup>29</sup> If you also take this one from me, and he experiences any harm, you will bring your servant, our father down, and the grey hairs of his head will go down into Sheol. <sup>30</sup> Now therefore, when I come to your servant, my father, and the boy is not with us, then, since his life is bound up in the boy's life, <sup>31</sup> when he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die; and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant, our father, with sorrow to Sheol. <sup>32</sup> Your servant had become surety to the boy for my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then will bear all the shame in the sight of my father for my entire life.' <sup>33</sup> Now therefore please let your servant remain as a slave to my lord in place of the boy; and let the boy go back with his brothers. <sup>34</sup> How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I fear to see the suffering that would come upon my father."

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<sup>563</sup> Now they finally show affection for their father and their brother.

<sup>564</sup> The Hebrew word translated as "fell down" gives the thought of desperation. This was not reverence.

<sup>565</sup> Literally: "Far be it from me that I should do so."

<sup>566</sup> Literally: "set my eyes on him."

<sup>567</sup> Literally: "see the man's face."

<CHAPTER 45>

*C. Joseph Reveals His Identity 45:1 – 28*

<sup>1</sup> Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, “Have everyone withdraw from me,” So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. <sup>2</sup> He wept aloud, so that the <sup>568</sup> Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. <sup>3</sup> Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?” But his brothers were unable to answer him, being dumfounded at his presence.

<sup>4</sup> Then Joseph said to his brother, “Come closer to me,” and they came closer. He said, “I am your brother, Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup> Now: do not reproach yourselves, or be angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve your lives. <sup>569</sup> <sup>6</sup> This famine has been in the land for two years, <sup>570</sup> and there will be five more years without plowing or harvest. <sup>7</sup> God has sent me before you to make sure that you would remain as a remnant <sup>571</sup> on earth, keeping many alive, as survivors. <sup>572</sup> <sup>8</sup> Thus it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me to be like a father to Pharaoh, and the lord over his entire house and the ruler over the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> Now hurry and go to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph declares: God has made him the lord of all of Egypt; come to me and do not delay. <sup>10</sup> You will be able to settle in the land of Goshen, <sup>573</sup> and you will be near me, and you and your descendants, <sup>574</sup> as well as your flocks, herds, and all that you possess. <sup>11</sup> I will provide for you here, since there are five more years of famine ahead of us, and by coming here you and your household and all that you possess will not come into poverty. <sup>12</sup> You can be assured, along with my brother Benjamin, <sup>575</sup> that I am giving you this message.’ <sup>13</sup> You must inform my father of all of my splendor in Egypt and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.” <sup>14</sup> Then he embraced his brothers fervently, as he wept. Benjamin also wept while he embraced his brother Joseph. <sup>15</sup> He kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

<sup>16</sup> When Pharaoh’s household heard the report <sup>576</sup> that Joseph’s brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. <sup>577</sup> <sup>17</sup> Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers ‘Do this: load your animals and go back to the land of Canaan. <sup>18</sup> Take your father and your households and come to me, so that I may give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you may enjoy the fat of the land.’ <sup>19</sup> It is important that you give these instructions: ‘Do this! Take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones, and

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<sup>568</sup> LXX: “all the.”

<sup>569</sup> On the one side there is human mishandling and the working of nature, and on the other side obedience to the perfect will of God.

<sup>570</sup> Joseph is now 39 years old.

<sup>571</sup> God was making sure that there would be a remnant of those who were of the Hebrew faith. The concept of the ‘holy remnant’ of faithful believers who live lives of faith is found over and over in the Bible.

<sup>572</sup> So: literally. Some translate the word as “deliverance.”

<sup>573</sup> The Hyksos kings, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE favored the region of Goshen. This is inconsistent with 47:65. The phrase is possibly a gloss.

<sup>574</sup> Literally: “children’s children.”

<sup>575</sup> Literally: “now your eyes, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you.”

<sup>576</sup> Literally: “the voice was heard in Pharaoh’s house”

<sup>577</sup> Literally: “It was good in the eyes of Pharaoh.”

wives, and bring your father, and come. <sup>20</sup> Do not be concerned about your belongings, for the best of the land of Egypt will be yours.”

<sup>21</sup> The sons of Israel did as they were directed, and Joseph gave them wagons according to the instruction of Pharaoh, <sup>578</sup> and he gave them provisions for their journey. <sup>22</sup> He gave each one of them a set of garments, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver <sup>579</sup> and five sets of garments. <sup>23</sup> To his father he sent the following: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread and provisions for his father on his journey. <sup>24</sup> He then sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he gave them this admonition: “Do not quarrel (*or, be agitated*) along the way.”

<sup>25</sup> So the brothers went up, out of Egypt, to the land of Canaan to their father, Jacob. <sup>26</sup> They told him, “Joseph is still alive, and he is the man who rules over Egypt.” Jacob was stunned by the news, <sup>580</sup> for he did not believe them. <sup>27</sup> When they told him all the words Joseph had spoken to them, and saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob revived, <sup>28</sup> and Israel said, “Enough! My son, Joseph, is still alive. I must go to see him.”

#### <CHAPTER 46>

#### XLVI. *Jacob in Egypt* 46:1 – 48:22

##### A. *Jacob Comes to Egypt* 46:1 - 7

<sup>1</sup> So Israel undertook his journey with all that he possessed and came to Beer-sheba where he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. <sup>2</sup> God spoke to Israel in visions during the night, saying, “Jacob, Jacob.” He answered, “Here I am.” <sup>3</sup> Then he said, “I am God, the God of your father: do not be fearful about going down to Egypt, for I will cause you to become a great nation there. <sup>4</sup> I will personally go down to Egypt with you and I will also bring you up again; and Joseph’s own hand will close your eyes.” <sup>581</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Then Jacob set out from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives in wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. <sup>582</sup> <sup>6</sup> The also took their livestock and all their goods that they had acquired in the land of Canaan as they came to Egypt. Jacob was accompanied by all his offspring: <sup>7</sup> his sons, his sons’ sons, his daughters, and his sons’ daughters; all his offspring accompanied him, and they were brought into Egypt.

##### B. *Jacob’s Family* 46:8 – 27

<sup>8</sup> These are the names of the Israelites, Jacob and his offspring, who came to Egypt. Reuben, Jacob’s first born, <sup>9</sup> and the children of Reuben, Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. <sup>10</sup> The children of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shual (*or, Saul*), his son from a Canaanite woman. <sup>11</sup> The children of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. <sup>12</sup> The children of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan, and the children of Perez were Hezron, and Hamul. <sup>13</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> Literally: “according to the mouth of Pharaoh.”

<sup>579</sup> This amounted to about seven and one half pounds of silver. C.: ANET p. 21c.

<sup>580</sup> Or: “Jacob’s heart nearly failed, and he did not believe them.”

<sup>581</sup> Jacob had felt a horrible end had befallen Joseph, (*Genesis 37:33*) but now God says his son will be with him, as he dies. In Judaism, at that time, it was the responsibility of the oldest son to close the eyes of the deceased. This became a time honored practice. Literally: “set his hands upon your eyes.”

<sup>582</sup> The people of Israel usually transported people and goods on the backs of donkeys. The Egyptians used carts and wagons.

The children of Issachar: Tola, Puvah, Jashub,<sup>583</sup> and Shimron.<sup>14</sup> The children of Zebulon: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel,<sup>15</sup> these being the children of Jacob that were born to Leah in Paddan-aram, together with their daughter Dinah; in all his sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three.

<sup>16</sup> The children of Gad: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.<sup>17</sup> The children of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. The children of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel,<sup>18</sup> (these are the children of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah and these she gave birth to Jacob, sixteen persons.

<sup>19</sup> The children of Jacob's wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.<sup>20</sup> To Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim whom Asenath daughter of Potiphara priest of On, bore to him.<sup>584</sup> <sup>21</sup> The children of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.<sup>22</sup> These are the children of Rachel, who were born to Jacob – fourteen persons in all.

<sup>23</sup> The children of Dan: Hashum.<sup>585</sup> <sup>24</sup> The children of Naphtali: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, an Shillem.<sup>23</sup> These are the children of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, and these she bore to Jacob – seven persons in all.

<sup>26</sup> All these persons belonged to Jacob who came to Egypt were his own offspring, not including the wives of his sons were sixty-six persons in all.<sup>27</sup> The children of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy.

#### *C. Jacob Settles in Goshen 46:28 – 47:12*

<sup>28</sup> He sent Judah ahead to Joseph, to lead the way<sup>586</sup> before him, into the land of Goshen. When they arrived in the land of Goshen,<sup>29</sup> Joseph made his chariot ready<sup>587</sup> and went up to meet his father Israel in Goshen. He presented himself to him and weeping, embraced him for some time.<sup>30</sup> Israel said to Joseph, “Now I can die, having seen for myself that you are still alive.”<sup>31</sup> Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, “I will go up and report to Pharaoh, saying, ‘My brothers and my father's household, who had resided in the land of Canaan have come to see me.<sup>32</sup> The men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they possess.’<sup>33</sup> When Pharaoh calls you, and says, ‘What is your occupation?’<sup>34</sup> you are to say, ‘Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our ancestors’ – in order that you may settle in the land of Goshen, because all shepherds are abhorrent to the Egyptians.’

#### <CHAPTER 47>

<sup>1</sup> So Joseph went and told Pharaoh, “My father and my brothers, and their flocks and herds and all of their possessions have come from the land of Canaan. Presently they are in the land of Goshen.”<sup>588</sup> <sup>2</sup> He took five of his brothers<sup>589</sup> and presented them to Pharaoh.<sup>3</sup> Pharaoh said to his brothers, “What is your occupation?”<sup>4</sup> They responded,

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<sup>583</sup> Cf.: Numbers 26:24; I Chronicles 7:1. Hebrew: “Job.”

<sup>584</sup> The LXX adds five sons grandsons.

<sup>585</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew: “Hashim.”

<sup>586</sup> Samaritan Pentateuch: “to appear before him.”

<sup>587</sup> Literally: “hitched his chariot.” Cf.: ANET p. 259b.

<sup>588</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 259b.

<sup>589</sup> Literally: “from the extremity of his brothers he took five.”



“We have come to be resident aliens in the land, for there is no pasture for the flocks of your servants because of the famine which is severe in the land of Canaan. We request that you will permit us to settle in the land of Goshen.”<sup>5</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Your father and your brothers have come to you. <sup>6</sup> The land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best portion of the land; let them live in the land of Goshen, and if you know any that are capable men among them, put them in charge of my livestock.”

<sup>7</sup> Joseph then brought his father Jacob, and presented him to Pharaoh. <sup>8</sup> Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How many years have you lived?”<sup>590</sup> <sup>9</sup> Joseph said to Pharaoh, “I have been on life’s journey for one hundred thirty years. These years of my life have been brief in comparison with the lifetimes of my ancestors during their long pilgrimage.” <sup>10</sup> Jacob then blessed Pharaoh, and went away from the presence of Pharaoh. <sup>11</sup> Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers in the land of Egypt, in the best part of the land of Egypt, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had instructed (*or, commanded*). <sup>12</sup> Joseph provided his father and his brothers, and the entire family household with food, based on the number of people that were their dependants.<sup>591</sup>

*D. Joseph’s Agrarian Policy 47:13 – 26*

<sup>13</sup> There was no food in the land; for the famine was severe. The land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. <sup>14</sup> Joseph collected all the money that was circulating in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, in exchange for the grain<sup>592</sup> that they had bought; and Joseph brought the money to Pharaoh’s house. <sup>15</sup> When the supply of money was exhausted in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, the people cried out, “Give us food: why should we die before you?<sup>593</sup> Our money is gone!” <sup>16</sup> Joseph answered: “Hand over your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock.” <sup>17</sup> Then they brought their livestock to Joseph and Joseph gave them food in exchange for horses, flocks, herds, and donkeys. That year he supplied food in exchange for all their livestock. <sup>18</sup> At the end of that year they came again, in need for the coming year, and said to him, “We cannot hide from my lord that our money and our livestock herds are now my lord’s. There is nothing left with the exception of our bodies and our land. <sup>19</sup> Should we die in your presence? Should we lose our lives and our land? Buy us and our land in exchange for food. We, with our land, will become slaves of Pharaoh. Just give us seed, so that we may live and not die, and that the land will not become desolate.”

<sup>20</sup> So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. All the Egyptians sold their fields, and became the slaves of Pharaoh, and the land also was now in Pharaoh’s possession. <sup>21</sup> As for the people, he made slaves of them,<sup>594</sup> from one end of Egypt to the other. <sup>22</sup> The only land he did not buy was that owned by the priests since they had a fixed allowance from Pharaoh. Therefore they did not sell their lands.<sup>595</sup> <sup>23</sup> Then Joseph said to the people: “Now that I have purchased all the land for Pharaoh today, here is seed that is

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<sup>590</sup> Literally: “how many are the days of your years?”

<sup>591</sup> Literally: “mouths.”

<sup>592</sup> This would have been threshed grain to be used for food, not for seeding.

<sup>593</sup> Literally: “before your eyes.”

<sup>594</sup> So: Samaritan Pentateuch. Hebrew: “He removed them to the cities.”

<sup>595</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 21c.

to be sown on the land. <sup>24</sup> At the time of harvest you must give one fifth of the harvest <sup>596</sup> to Pharaoh. You are permitted to keep four-fifths, as food for yourselves, and your households, and as a food supply for your little ones.” <sup>25</sup> The people said, “You have saved our lives, may it please my lord, we will be slaves to Pharaoh.” <sup>26</sup> So Pharaoh made a statute concerning the land of Egypt which is still standing, concerning the land of Egypt, and it declares that Pharaoh receives one fifth. It was only the land of the priests that remained the same.

*E. Jacob’s Last Words to Joseph 47:27 – 48:22*

<sup>27</sup> Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt; in the territory of Goshen; and they gained possessions in it, for it was fruitful and their possessions increased exceedingly. <sup>28</sup> Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years, so the days of Jacob: the years of his life were one hundred forty-seven years.

<sup>29</sup> When the time of Jacob’s death drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “If I have found favor with you, put your hand under my thigh, and promise to deal loyally and truly with me. Do not bury me in the land of Egypt. <sup>30</sup> When I join my ancestors, in death, carry me out of Egypt and bury me in the burial place of my ancestors. Joseph then replied, “I will do exactly as you say.” <sup>31</sup> He then said, “Swear to me;” and Joseph swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself on the head of his bed. <sup>597</sup>

<CHAPTER 48>

<sup>1</sup> After these things Joseph was told, <sup>598</sup> “Your father is ill.” So he and his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim went to see his father Jacob. <sup>599</sup> <sup>2</sup> When Jacob was told, “Your son Joseph has come to you,” he rallied all his strength and sat up in bed. <sup>3</sup> Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz <sup>600</sup> in the land of Canaan, and he blessed me, <sup>4</sup> and he said to me, ‘I am going to make you fruitful and increase your numbers, I will make of you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for a perpetual holding.’ <sup>5</sup> Therefore your two sons who were born to you in the land of Egypt prior to my coming to Egypt, Ephraim and Manasseh, are to be reckoned as mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are. <sup>6</sup> These sons that were born to you are yours, but they will be recorded with matters of inheritance, under the names of their uncles. <sup>601</sup> <sup>7</sup> This is because when I came from Paddan [-aram], <sup>602</sup> regrettably, Rachel died along the way in the land of Canaan, while there was still some distance to go to arrive at Ephrath and I buried her on the way to Ephrath,’ (that is, Bethlehem).

<sup>8</sup> When Israel saw Joseph’s sons, he said, “Whose are these?” <sup>603</sup> <sup>9</sup> Joseph replied to his father, “These are my sons, for God has given them to me here [*in Egypt*].” Joseph said, “Please bring them here to me, that I may bless them.” <sup>10</sup> Now Israel’s eyes were

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<sup>596</sup> The amount they were to pay was less than the usual amount in the Middle East at that time. Elsewhere people had to pay one third to the land owner.

<sup>597</sup> Israel was no doubt feeble. The action he took was a symbol of prostration. The LXX reads: “he leaned on his staff.”

<sup>598</sup> So: LXX, Samaritan Pentateuch and Vulgate.

<sup>599</sup> The sons were about 20 years old.

<sup>600</sup> Luz was an ancient name for “Bethel.”

<sup>601</sup> Literally: “brothers.”

<sup>602</sup> The location is north of the Euphrates River.

<sup>603</sup> The LXX adds “with relationship to you.”

dim as the result of his age, and he could barely <sup>604</sup> see. Joseph brought them near him and he kissed them and embraced them. <sup>11</sup> Israel said to Joseph, “I did not expect to see your face, and now God has permitted me to also see your children.”<sup>12</sup> Then Joseph removed them from his father’s knees, <sup>605</sup> and he bowed himself with his face to the ground. <sup>13</sup> Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand, toward Israel’s left, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel’s right, and brought them near to him. <sup>14</sup> But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, by crossing his hands, for Manasseh was the first born. <sup>606</sup> <sup>15</sup> He blessed Joseph <sup>607</sup> and said:

“The God before whom my ancestors Abraham and Isaac walked;  
the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day  
<sup>16</sup> the angel who has redeemed me from all harm, bless the boys,  
and through them let my name be perpetuated,  
and the name of my ancestors, Abraham and Isaac.  
Let them grow into a multitude on the earth.”

<sup>17</sup> When Joseph saw that his father had laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, this displeased him, so he took back his father’s hand intending to remove it from the head of Ephraim and place it on the head of Manasseh, <sup>18</sup> Joseph said to his father, “Not that way, my father! Since this one is the firstborn you should place your right hand on his head.” <sup>19</sup> His father, however, refused, saying, “I know, my son, I know; he will also become a people; and he also will be great. But his younger brother will be greater than he, and his offspring will become a multitude of nations.” <sup>20</sup> So he blessed them that day, saying:

“By you <sup>608</sup> Israel will invoke blessings, saying,  
‘God will make you like Ephraim,  
and like Manasseh.’”

So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh. <sup>21</sup> Then Israel said to Joseph, “I am about to die, but God will be with you and will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your ancestors. <sup>609</sup> <sup>22</sup> I now give to you one portion <sup>610</sup> more than your brothers, the portion that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow.”

#### <CHAPTER 49>

#### *XLVII. Jacob Blesses His Sons and Dies 49:1 – 53*

##### *A. The Blessing of Jacob 49:1 – 28*

<sup>1</sup> Then Jacob called his sons, saying, “Gather around, that I may tell you what will happen to you in the days to come.

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<sup>604</sup> Literally: “not.”

<sup>605</sup> Literally: “his knees.” The presence of the sons of Joseph at his father’s knees has a greater significance than simply being close. This is a part of the ceremony of adoption. Jacob has adopted the two sons of Joseph. Thus, as in v. 4, they and their descendants become heirs of tribal lands upon the arrival of the people of Israel in the land of Canaan.

<sup>606</sup> Joseph attempted to stage the blessing by carefully placing the sons in such a way that the blessing would go to Manasseh but Jacob seems to know better.

<sup>607</sup> So: MT. LXX has “them.”

<sup>608</sup> The Hebrew word is singular.

<sup>609</sup> Some scholars feel that verses 21 – 22 are impossible to translate.

<sup>610</sup> Literally, possibly: “a mountain slope.” It is a play on words in Hebrew.

2 Assemble and hear, O sons of Jacob,  
listen to Israel, your father.

3 **Reuben**, you are my firstborn,  
my might and the first fruits of my vigor,  
exceeding in rank and exceeding in power (*or, honor*).

4 You are as unstable as water: you will not be preeminent any longer  
because you <sup>611</sup> went to your father's bed <sup>612</sup>  
and you defiled it –going up to my couch! <sup>613</sup>

5 **Simeon** and Levi are brothers:  
weapons of vengeance with their swords. <sup>614</sup>

6 May I never come into their council;  
may I not be joined to their company –  
for in their anger they slaughtered men;  
and as a whim they hamstrung oxen. <sup>615</sup>

7 Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce,  
and their wrath, which is relentless.  
I will apportion them in Jacob,  
and scatter them in Israel.

8 **Judah**, your brothers will praise you,  
your hand will be on the nape of the neck of your enemies..  
Your fathers and sons will bow down before you.

9 Judah is a lion's whelp;  
for you, my son, have gone up from the prey.  
He crouches down <sup>616</sup> and stretches out like a lion,  
like a lioness – who dares to disturb him?

10 The scepter will not depart from Judah,  
nor the ruler's staff, from between his feet,  
until it comes to whom it belongs. <sup>617</sup>  
and the obedience of the people belongs to him.

11 He tethers his young donkey to the vine,  
and his donkey colt to the choice vine.  
He washes his clothing in wine,  
and his robe in the blood of grapes,

12 his eyes are darker than wine,  
and his teeth are whiter than milk.

13 **Zebulun** will settle along the shore of the sea,  
for he will be a haven for ships,

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<sup>611</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew: "he."

<sup>612</sup> Cf.: Genesis 35:22.

<sup>613</sup> Literally: "You profaned my couch; he took possession of." The couch would be the couch of Jacob's secondary wife.

<sup>614</sup> The Hebrew word for "swords" is not the usual word that would be used in Hebrew. Thus some scholars feel this is a gloss.

<sup>615</sup> Cf.: Genesis 34:28. To hamstring is to cut one tendon in the leg of an ox, making walking difficult.

<sup>616</sup> Lions crouch down to rest, not to attack.

<sup>617</sup> This line is a questionable translation. Possible other translations might be "until Shiloh comes" or "until he comes to Shiloh. The above translation is based on the Syriac. The Hebrew is unclear.

and his border will be at Sidon.

14 **Issachar** is a strong donkey,  
lying down between the sheepfolds,<sup>618</sup>

15 he recognized that a resting place was good,  
and that the land was pleasant,  
so he bowed his shoulders to the burden,<sup>619</sup>  
and became a slave (*or, serf*), doing forced labor.

16 **Dan** will judge his people  
as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 **Dan** will be a snake<sup>620</sup> along the roadside,  
a viper in the path,  
that will bite the heels of the horse,  
so the rider falls backward.<sup>621</sup>

18 [I wait for your salvation, O God!] <sup>622</sup>

19 **Gad** will be raided by raiders  
but he will raid at their heels.

20 **Asher**'s food will be rich,  
and he will provide royal delicacies.

21 **Naphtali** is a doe that is released,  
that gives birth to lovely fawns (*or, utters beautiful words*).<sup>623</sup>

22 **Joseph** is a fruitful bough (*or, is a wild donkey*),  
a fruitful bough located by a spring;  
his branches climb over the wall.<sup>624</sup>

23 The archers fiercely attacked him,  
shooting and attacking him powerfully,

24 Yet his bow stayed taut,  
his arms were made firm (*or, steady*),<sup>625</sup>  
by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob,  
by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel.

25 by the God of your father, who will help you,  
by the Almighty who will bless you  
with blessings from heaven above.  
blessings of the deep that lies beneath,  
blessings of the breasts and of the womb.<sup>626</sup>

26 The blessings of your father  
are more powerful than the blessings of the eternal mountains,<sup>627</sup>

<sup>618</sup> Some translators interpret the Hebrew word to be; "among the saddlebags."

<sup>619</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 21a.

<sup>620</sup> There are 33 different species of snakes found in Israel. 20 of these snakes are poisonous.

<sup>621</sup> The reference is to the kind of warfare by which the Danites gained power.

<sup>622</sup> Many scholars feel this verse is either a gloss or a later interpolation.

<sup>623</sup> The Hebrew is very unclear. The LXX is no help, seemingly having using a different recension.

<sup>624</sup> The Hebrew is uncertain.

<sup>625</sup> Literally: "his arms were like trunks."

<sup>626</sup> In Hebrew the words are out of order, but they sound better, when spoken aloud.

the bounties (*or, desirable things*) of the everlasting hills,  
may they abide on the head of Joseph,  
on the brow of the one who was set apart from his brothers.<sup>628</sup>

27 **Benjamin** is a ravenous wolf,<sup>629</sup>  
in the morning devouring his prey,  
and in the evening dividing the spoil.”

28 These are all of the tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each one a blessing that was personally suitable.

*B. Jacob's Death 49:29 - 33*

29 He then charged them, saying, “I am soon to be joining my ancestors. Bury me with my ancestors in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 in the cave in the field at Machpelah, near Mamre, in the land of Canaan, in the field that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite, as a burial site. 31 There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried; there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried; and there I buried my wife, Leah – 32 the field and the cave that is in the field was purchased from the Hittites.” 33 When Jacob ended this charge to his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed,<sup>630</sup> breathed his last, and was gathered to his ancestors.

<CHAPTER 50>

*XLIX. Burial of Jacob 50:1 - 21*

1 Then Joseph threw himself on his father's face and wept over him and kissed him. 2 Joseph ordered the physicians in his service to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel: 3 They spent forty days in the process for this was the required time to complete the embalming. The Egyptians mourned for him for seventy days.<sup>631</sup>

4 When the days of weeping for Jacob had passed Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh. “If I have gained your respect I would like to speak to you, O Pharaoh, on my behalf 5 My father had me swear, when he said to me, ‘I am about to die. You are to bury me in the tomb I had hewn out for myself in Canaan. It is there that you are to bury me.’ Now therefore, please permit me to go, and bury my father. Following that I will return” 6 Pharaoh replied, “Go up, and bury you're your father since he has made you swear that you will do it.”

7 Joseph then went up to bury his father. He was accompanied by all the senior officials of Pharaoh, the officers of his household, and all the senior officers of the land of Egypt, 8 as well as all the households of Joseph and his brothers, along with his father's household. Only their children,<sup>632</sup> their flocks, and herds, were left in the land of Goshen. 9 Both chariots and charioteers went up with him. It was a huge group of travelers. 10

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<sup>627</sup> So: LXX. The Hebrew is uncertain.

<sup>628</sup> The Hebrew is uncertain.

<sup>629</sup> Literally: “a wolf who tears prey.”

<sup>630</sup> The Hebrew word for “bed” is different from the usual word that is used for “bed.” There seems to be no significant reason for the change in wording.

<sup>631</sup> At the height in the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1 to 2 centuries after Jacob's death) the embalming process lasted for seventy days. The time of mourning in Egypt because of Jacob's death was 2 days less than the time of mourning for a Pharaoh. Within Judaism the length of the mourning period was thirty days. The purpose, for Egyptians, to be embalmed was to help them in the afterlife. This was not the reason for Jacob's being embalmed, however. His body was to be transported to Canaan. Cf.: ANET p. 20d.

<sup>632</sup> Another source adds: “and their mothers.”

When they arrived at the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, <sup>633</sup> they held a very great and sorrowful lamentation; and Joseph instituted a time of mourning for his father, which lasted for seven days. <sup>634</sup> <sup>11</sup>When those who lived in Canaan saw the mourning on the threshing floor of Atad, they said, “This is a solemn ceremony on the part of the Egyptians.” Because of this they named the place Abel-mizraim. <sup>635</sup> (It is beyond the Jordan.) <sup>12</sup> This is what his sons did for him, as he had instructed them. <sup>13</sup> They carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, the field near Mamre, which Abraham bought as a burial site from Ephron the Hittite. <sup>14</sup> After Joseph had buried his father, he returned to Egypt accompanied by his brothers who had gone up with Joseph to bury their father.

<sup>15</sup> As the brothers realized that their father was dead they said, “What if Joseph still holds a grudge against us and tries to repay us for all the evil we did to him?” <sup>16</sup> So they sent a message to Joseph that said, “Your father gave us this command before he died: <sup>17</sup> “Tell Joseph ‘I beg you to forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrongfulness of your brothers.’ Now therefore, please forgive the crime we, your servants <sup>636</sup> of the God of your father, did.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. <sup>18</sup> Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid! Am I in place of God? <sup>20</sup> Even though it was your intention to harm me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a huge number of people, as he is doing today. <sup>21</sup> Therefore do not be fearful. I will personally provide for you and your children.” It was in this way that he reassured them, for he spoke in a kindly way.

#### *L. Death of Joseph 50:22 – 26*

<sup>22</sup> So Joseph lived in Egypt, he and his father’s household; and Joseph live for one hundred ten years. <sup>637</sup> <sup>23</sup> Joseph saw Ephraim’s children of the third generation; the children of Machir, son of Manasseh were also held on Joseph’s knees.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph then said to his brothers: “I am about to die; but God will surely come to you, and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” <sup>25</sup> Joseph made the Israelites swear, saying, “When God comes to you, you are to carry my bones from here.” <sup>638</sup> <sup>26</sup> Joseph died, being one hundred ten years old; he was embalmed and placed in a sarcophagus in Egypt. <sup>639</sup>

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<sup>633</sup> Why they went east of the Jordan is not understood. Apparently there was political unrest south west of Hebron, so they took the longer route and came to the place of burial from the east.

<sup>634</sup> This time of mourning was in addition to the time of mourning in Egypt which lasted 70 days.

<sup>635</sup> The name means “this is the mourning (*or, meadow*) of Egypt.

<sup>636</sup> This word could be translated also, correctly, as “slaves.” Notice that they add – “of the God of your father.” Was this a genuine feeling or just an attempt to sway Joseph’s opinion of them?

<sup>637</sup> This age was regarded in ancient Egypt as an ideal age.

<sup>638</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 21a.

<sup>639</sup> Outwardly Joseph was an Egyptian. Inwardly he was an Israelite. Cf.: ANET p. 414d.

