

# *The Book Of Genesis*

The Beginn of The World,  
Human History, Civilation  
And Salvation

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## The Historical Books

### GENESIS

Genesis means “beginnings” or “origin,” and it unfolds the record of the beginning of the world, of human history, of family, of civilization, of salvation. It is the story of God’s purpose and plan for his creation. As the book of beginnings, Genesis sets the stage for the entire Bible. It reveals the person and nature of God (Creator, Sustainer, Judge, Redeemer); the value and dignity of human beings (made in God’s image, saved by grace, used by God in the world); the tragedy and consequences of sin (the fall, separation from God, judgment); and the promise and assurance of salvation (covenant, forgiveness, promised Messiah).

God. That’s where Genesis begins. All at once we see him creating the world in a majestic display of power and purpose, culminating with a man and woman made like himself (Genesis 1:26-27). But before long sin entered the world, and Satan was unmasked. Bathed in innocence, creation was shattered by the fall (the willful disobedience of Adam and Eve). Fellowship with God was broken, and evil began weaving its destructive web. In rapid succession, we read how Adam and Eve were expelled from the beautiful garden, their first son turned murderer, and evil bred evil until God finally destroyed everyone on earth except a small family led by Noah, the only godly person left.

As we come to Abraham on the plains of Canaan, we discover the beginning of God’s covenant people and the broad strokes of his salvation plan: salvation comes by faith, Abraham’s descendants will be God’s people, and the Savior of the world will come through this chosen nation. The stories of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph that follow are more than interesting biographies. They emphasize the promises of God and the proof that he is faithful. The people we meet in Genesis are simple, ordinary people, yet through them, God did great things. These are vivid pictures of how God can and does use all kinds of people to accomplish his good purposes. . . even people like you and me.

Read Genesis and be encouraged. There is hope! No matter how dark the world situation seems God has a plan. No matter how insignificant or useless you feel, God loves you and wants to use you in his plan. No matter how sinful and separated from God you are, his salvation is available. Read Genesis. . . and hope!

## THE BLUEPRINT

### A. THE STORY OF CREATION (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [2] The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness. And the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface. [3] Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. [4] And God saw that it was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. [5] God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." Together these made up one day.

[6] And God said, "Let there be space between the waters, to separate water from water." [7] And so it was. God made this space to separate the waters above from the waters below. [8] And God called the space "sky." This happened on the second day.

[9] And God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky be gathered into one place so dry ground may appear." And so it was. [10] God named the dry ground "land" and the water "seas." And God saw that it was good. [11] Then God said, "Let the land burst forth with every sort of grass and seed-bearing plant. And let there be trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. The seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came." And so it was. [12] The land was filled with seed-bearing plants and trees, and their seeds produced plants and trees of like kind. And God saw that it was good. [13] This all happened on the third day.

[14] And God said, "Let bright lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. They will be signs to mark off the seasons, the days, and the years. [15] Let their light shine down upon the earth." And so it was. [16] For God made two great lights, the sun and the moon, to shine down upon the earth. The greater one, the sun, presides during the day; the lesser one, the moon, presides through the night. He also made the stars. [17] God set these lights in the heavens to light the earth, [18] to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. [19] This all happened on the fourth day.

[20] And God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind." [21] So God created great sea creatures and every sort of fish and every kind of bird. And God saw that it was good.

[22] Then God blessed them, saying, "Let the fish multiply and fill the oceans. Let the birds increase and fill the earth." [23] This all happened on the fifth day.

[24] And God said, "Let the earth bring forth every kind of animal—livestock, small animals, and wildlife." And so it was. [25] God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to reproduce more of its own kind. And God saw that it was good.

[26] Then God said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life—the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals."

[27] So God created people in his own image;  
God patterned them after himself;  
male and female he created them.

[28] God blessed them and told them, "Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters over the fish and birds and all the animals." [29] And God said, "Look! I have given you the seed-bearing plants throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. [30] And I have given all the grasses and other green plants to the animals and birds for their food." And so it was. [31] Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was excellent in every way. This all happened on the sixth day.

[2:1] So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. [2] On the seventh day, having finished his task, God rested from all his work. [3] And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from his work of creation.

God created the sky, seas, and land. He created the plants, animals, fish, and birds. But he created human beings in his own image. At times, others may treat us disrespectfully. But we can be certain of our dignity and worth because we have been created in the image of God.

## **B. THE STORY OF ADAM (Genesis 2:4-5:32)**

When Adam and Eve were created by God, they were without sin. But they became sinful when they disobeyed God and ate some fruit from the tree. Through Adam and Eve we learn about the destructive power of sin and its bitter consequences.

1. Adam and Eve
2. Cain and Abel
3. Adam's descendants

### **Genesis 2:4-5:32**

**This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.**

When the Lord God made the heavens and the earth, [5] there were no plants or grain growing on the earth, for the Lord God had not sent any rain. And no one was there to cultivate the soil. [6] But water came up out of the ground and watered all the land. [7] And the Lord God formed a man's body from the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. And the man became a living person.

[8] Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had created. [9] And the Lord God planted all sorts of trees in the garden—beautiful trees that produced delicious fruit. At the center of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

[10] A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. [11] One of these branches is the Pishon, which flows around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. [12] The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. [13] The second branch is the Gihon, which flows around the entire land of Cush. [14] The third branch is the Tigris, which flows to the east of Asshur. The fourth branch is the Euphrates.

[15] The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and care for it. [16] But the Lord God gave him this warning: "You may freely eat any fruit in the garden [17] except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die." [18] And the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him." [19] So the Lord God formed from the soil every kind of animal and bird. He brought them to Adam to see what he would call them, and Adam chose a name for each one. [20] He gave names to all the livestock, birds, and wild animals. But still there was no companion suitable for him. [21] So the Lord God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He took one of Adam's ribs and closed up the place from which he had taken it. [22] Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib and brought her to Adam.

[23] "At last!" Adam exclaimed. "She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken out of a man." [24] This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. [25] Now, although Adam and his wife were both naked, neither of them felt any shame.

[3:1] Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the creatures the Lord God had made. "Really?" he asked the woman. "Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?"

[2] "Of course we may eat it," the woman told him. [3] "It's only the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die."

[4] "You won't die!" the serpent hissed. [5] "God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil."

[6] The woman was convinced. The fruit looked so fresh and delicious, and it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. Then he ate it, too. [7] At that moment, their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they strung fig leaves together around their hips to cover themselves.

[8] Toward evening they heard the Lord God walking about in the garden, so they hid themselves among the trees. [9] The Lord God called to Adam, "Where are you?"

[10] He replied, "I heard you, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

[11] "Who told you that you were naked?" the Lord God asked. "Have you eaten the fruit I commanded you not to eat?" [12] "Yes," Adam admitted, "but it was the woman you gave me who brought me the fruit, and I ate it."

[13] Then the Lord God asked the woman, "How could you do such a thing?"

"The serpent tricked me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

[14] So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you will be punished. You are singled out from all the domestic and wild animals of the whole earth to be cursed. You will grovel in the dust as long as you live, crawling along on your belly. [15] From now on, you and the woman will be enemies, and your offspring and her offspring will be enemies. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

[16] Then he said to the woman, "You will bear children with intense pain and suffering. And though your desire will be for your husband, he will be your master."

[17] And to Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse on the ground. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

[18] It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. [19] All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return."

[20] Then Adam named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all people everywhere.

[21] And the Lord God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

[22] Then the Lord God said, "The people have become as we are, knowing everything, both good and evil. What if they eat the fruit of the tree of life? Then they will live forever!" [23] So

the Lord God banished Adam and his wife from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. [24] After banishing them from the garden, the Lord God stationed mighty angelic beings to the east of Eden. And a flaming sword flashed back and forth, guarding the way to the tree of life.

[4:1] Now Adam slept with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When the time came, she gave birth to Cain, and she said, "With the Lord's help, I have brought forth a man!" [2] Later she gave birth to a second son and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain was a farmer. [3] At harvest time Cain brought to the Lord a gift of his farm produce, [4] while Abel brought several choice lambs from the best of his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his offering, [5] but he did not accept Cain and his offering. This made Cain very angry and dejected.

[6] "Why are you so angry?" the Lord asked him. "Why do you look so dejected? [7] You will be accepted if you respond in the right way. But if you refuse to respond correctly, then watch out! Sin is waiting to attack and destroy you, and you must subdue it."

[8] Later Cain suggested to his brother, Abel, "Let's go out into the fields." And while they were there, Cain attacked and killed his brother.

[9] Afterward the Lord asked Cain, "Where is your brother? Where is Abel?"

"I don't know!" Cain retorted. "Am I supposed to keep track of him wherever he goes?"

[10] But the Lord said, "What have you done? Listen—your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! [11] You are hereby banished from the ground you have defiled with your brother's blood. [12] No longer will it yield abundant crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless fugitive on the earth, constantly wandering from place to place."

[13] Cain replied to the Lord, "My punishment is too great for me to bear! [14] You have banished me from my land and from your presence; you have made me a wandering fugitive. All who see me will try to kill me!"

[15] The Lord replied, "They will not kill you, for I will give seven times your punishment to anyone who does." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him.

[16] So Cain left the Lord's presence and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

[17] Then Cain's wife became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and they named him Enoch.

When Cain founded a city, he named it Enoch after his son.

[18] Enoch was the father of Irad.

Irada was the father of Mehujael.

Mehujael was the father of Methushael.

Methushael was the father of Lamech.

[19] Lamech married two women—Adah and Zillah. [20] Adah gave birth to a baby named Jubal. He became the first of the herdsmen who live in tents. [21] His brother's name was Jubal, the first musician—the inventor of the harp and flute. [22] To Lamech's other wife, Zillah, was born Tubal-cain. He was the first to work with metal, forging instruments of bronze and iron.

Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah.

[23] One day Lamech said to Adah and Zillah, "Listen to me, my wives. I have killed a youth who attacked and wounded me. [24] If anyone who kills Cain is to be punished seven times, anyone who takes revenge against me will be punished seventy-seven times!"

[25] Adam slept with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth, for she said, "God has granted me another son in place of Abel, the one Cain killed." [26] When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. It was during his lifetime that people first began to worship the Lord.

[5:1] This is the history of the descendants of Adam. When God created people, he made them in the likeness of God. [2] He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them "human."

[3] When Adam was 130 years old, his son Seth was born, and Seth was the very image of his father. [4] After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. [5] He died at the age of 930.

[6] When Seth was 105 years old, his son Enosh was born. [7] After the birth of Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters. [8] He died at the age of 912. [9] When Enosh was 90 years old, his son Kenan was born. [10] After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters. [11] He died at the age of 905. [12] When Kenan was 70 years old, his son Mahalalel was born. [13] After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters. [14] He died at the age of 910.

[15] When Mahalalel was 65 years old, his son Jared was born. [16] After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters. [17] He died at the age of 895. [18] When Jared was 162 years old, his son Enoch was born. [19] After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. [20] He died at the age of 962. [21] When Enoch was 65 years old, his son Methuselah was born. [22] After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived another 300 years in close fellowship with God, and he had other sons and daughters. [23] Enoch lived 365 years in all. [24] He enjoyed a close relationship with God throughout his life. Then suddenly, he disappeared because God took him.

[25] When Methuselah was 187 years old, his son Lamech was born. [26] After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. [27] He died at the age of 969.

[28] When Lamech was 182 years old, his son Noah was born. [29] Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, "He will bring us relief from the painful labor of farming this ground that the Lord has cursed." [30] After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. [31] He died at the age of 777.

[32] By the time Noah was 500 years old, he had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

## C. THE STORY OF NOAH (Genesis 6:1-11:32)

Noah was spared from the destruction of the flood because he obeyed God and built the ark. Just as God protected Noah and his family, he still protects those who are faithful to him today.

1. The flood
2. Repopulating the earth
3. The tower of Babel

### Genesis 6:1-11:32

When the human population began to grow rapidly on the earth, [2] the sons of God saw the beautiful women of the human race and took any they wanted as their wives. [3] Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, they will live no more than 120 years."

[4] In those days, and even afterward, giants lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with human women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes mentioned in legends of old.

[5] Now the Lord observed the extent of the people's wickedness, and he saw that all their thoughts were consistently and totally evil. [6] So the Lord was sorry he had ever made them. It broke his heart. [7] And the Lord said, "I will completely wipe out this human race that I have created. Yes, and I will destroy all the animals and birds, too. I am sorry I ever made them." [8] But Noah found favor with the Lord.

[9] This is the history of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless man living on earth at the time. He consistently followed God's will and enjoyed a close relationship with him. [10] Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

[11] Now the earth had become corrupt in God's sight, and it was filled with violence. [12] God observed all this corruption in the world, and he saw violence and depravity everywhere. [13] So God said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. Yes, I will wipe them all from the face of the earth!"

[14] "Make a boat from resinous wood and seal it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. [15] Make it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. [16] Construct an opening all the way around the boat, 18 inches below the roof. Then put three decks inside the boat—bottom, middle, and upper—and put a door in the side.

[17] "Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing. Everything on earth will die! [18] But I solemnly swear to keep you safe in the boat, with your wife and your sons and their wives. [19] Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. [20] Pairs of each kind of

bird and each kind of animal, large and small alike, will come to you to be kept alive. [21] And remember, take enough food for your family and for all the animals."  
[22] So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

[7:1] Finally, the day came when the Lord said to Noah, "Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I consider you alone to be righteous. [2] Take along seven pairs of each animal that I have approved for eating and for sacrifice, and take one pair of each of the others. [3] Then select seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that every kind of living creature will survive the flood. [4] One week from today I will begin forty days and forty nights of rain. And I will wipe from the earth all the living things I have created."

[5] So Noah did exactly as the Lord had commanded him. [6] He was 600 years old when the flood came, [7] and he went aboard the boat to escape—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. [8] With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and other small animals. [9] They came into the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. [10] One week later, the flood came and covered the earth.

[11] When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, the underground waters burst forth on the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. [12] The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights. [13] But Noah had gone into the boat that very day with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. [14] With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of breathing animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds and flying insects of every kind. [15] Two by two they came into the boat, [16] male and female, just as God had commanded. Then the Lord shut them in.

[17] For forty days the floods prevailed, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. [18] As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. [19] Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, [20] standing more than twenty-two feet above the highest peaks. [21] All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all kinds of small animals, and all the people. [22] Everything died that breathed and lived on dry land. [23] Every living thing on the earth was wiped out—people, animals both large and small, and birds. They were all destroyed, and only Noah was left alive, along with those who were with him in the boat. [24] And the water covered the earth for 150 days.

[8:1] But God remembered Noah and all the animals in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the waters, and the floods began to disappear. [2] The underground water sources ceased their gushing, and the torrential rains stopped. [3] So the flood gradually began to recede. After 150 days, [4] exactly five months from the time the flood began, the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. [5] Two and a half months later, as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks began to appear.

[6] After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat [7] and released a raven that flew back and forth until the earth was dry. [8] Then he sent out a dove to see if it

could find dry ground. [9] But the dove found no place to land because the water was still too high. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside.

[10] Seven days later, Noah released the dove again. [11] This time, toward evening, the bird returned to him with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Noah now knew that the water was almost gone. [12] A week later, he released the dove again, and this time it did not come back.

[13] Finally, when Noah was 601 years old, ten and a half months after the flood began, Noah lifted back the cover to look. The water was drying up. [14] Two more months went by, and at last the earth was dry! [15] Then God said to Noah, [16] "Leave the boat, all of you. [17] Release all the animals and birds so they can breed and reproduce in great numbers." [18] So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. [19] And all the various kinds of animals and birds came out, pair by pair.

[20] Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and sacrificed on it the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose. [21] And the Lord was pleased with the sacrifice and said to himself, "I will never again curse the earth, destroying all living things, even though people's thoughts and actions are bent toward evil from childhood. [22] As long as the earth remains, there will be springtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night."

[9:1] God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, "Multiply and fill the earth. [2] All the wild animals, large and small, and all the birds and fish will be afraid of you. I have placed them in your power. [3] I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. [4] But you must never eat animals that still have their lifeblood in them. [5] And murder is forbidden. Animals that kill people must die, and any person who murders must be killed. [6] Yes, you must execute anyone who murders another person, for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God's image. [7] Now you must have many children and repopulate the earth. Yes, multiply and fill the earth!"

[8] Then God told Noah and his sons, [9] "I am making a covenant with you and your descendants, [10] and with the animals you brought with you—all these birds and livestock and wild animals. [11] I solemnly promise never to send another flood to kill all living creatures and destroy the earth." [12] And God said, "I am giving you a sign as evidence of my eternal covenant with you and all living creatures. [13] I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my permanent promise to you and to all the earth. [14]

When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will be seen in the clouds, [15] and I will remember my covenant with you and with everything that lives. Never again will there be a flood that will destroy all life. [16] When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth." [17] Then God said to Noah, "Yes, this is the sign of my covenant with all the creatures of the earth."

[18] Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah, survived the Flood with their father. (Ham is the ancestor of the Canaanites.) [19] From these three sons of Noah came all the people now scattered across the earth.

[20] After the Flood, Noah became a farmer and planted a vineyard. [21] One day he became drunk on some wine he had made and lay naked in his tent. [22] Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. [23] Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, walked backward into the tent, and covered their father's naked body. As they did this, they looked the other way so they wouldn't see him naked. [24] When Noah woke up from his drunken stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done. [25] Then he cursed the descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham:

"A curse on the Canaanites!  
May they be the lowest of servants  
to the descendants of Shem and Japheth."

[26] Then Noah said,

"May Shem be blessed by the Lord my God;  
and may Canaan be his servant.  
[27] May God enlarge the territory of Japheth,  
and may he share the prosperity of Shem;  
and let Canaan be his servant."

[28] Noah lived another 350 years after the Flood. [29] He was 950 years old when he died.

[10:1] This is the history of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah. Many children were born to them after the Flood.

[2] The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

[3] The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

[4] The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim. [5] Their descendants became the seafaring peoples in various lands, each tribe with its own language.

[6] The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

[7] The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

[8] One of Cush's descendants was Nimrod, who became a heroic warrior. [9] He was a mighty hunter in the Lord's sight. His name became proverbial, and people would speak of someone as being "like Nimrod, a mighty hunter in the Lord's sight." [10] He built the foundation for his empire in the land of Babylonia, with the cities of Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh. [11] From there he extended his reign to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, [12] and Resen—the main city of the empire, located between Nineveh and Calah.

[13] Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, [14] Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Caphtorites, from whom the Philistines came. [15] Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites, [16] Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, [17] Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, [18] Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. [19] Eventually the territory of Canaan spread from Sidon to Gerar, near Gaza, and to Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha.

[20] These were the descendants of Ham, identified according to their tribes, languages, territories, and nations.

[21] Sons were also born to Shem, the older brother of Japheth. Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber. [22] The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

[23] The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

[24] Arphaxad was the father of Shelah, and Shelah was the father of Eber. [25] Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg—"division"—for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups and dispersed. His brother's name was Joktan.

[26] Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,

[27] Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, [28] Obal, Abimael, Sheba, [29] Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. [30] The descendants of Joktan lived in the area extending from Mesha toward the eastern hills of Sephar.

[31] These were the descendants of Shem, identified according to their tribes, languages, territories, and nations.

[32] These are the families that came from Noah's sons, listed nation by nation according to their lines of descent. The earth was populated with the people of these nations after the Flood.

[11:1] At one time the whole world spoke a single language and used the same words. [2] As the people migrated eastward, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia and settled there. [3] They began to talk about construction projects. "Come," they said, "let's make great piles of burnt brick and collect natural asphalt to use as mortar. [4] Let's build a great city with a tower that reaches to the skies—a monument to our greatness! This will bring us together and keep us from scattering all over the world."

[5] But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. [6] "Look!" he said. "If they can accomplish this when they have just begun to take advantage of their common language and political unity, just think of what they will do later. Nothing will be impossible for them! [7] Come, let's go down and give them different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other."

[8] In that way, the Lord scattered them all over the earth; and that ended the building of the city.  
[9] That is why the city was called Babel, because it was there that the Lord confused the people by giving them many languages, thus scattering them across the earth.

[10] This is the history of Shem's family.

When Shem was 100 years old, his son Arphaxad was born. This happened two years after the Flood. [11] After the birth of Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

[12] When Arphaxad was 35 years old, his son Shelah was born. [13] After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

[14] When Shelah was 30 years old, his son Eber was born. [15] After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

[16] When Eber was 34 years old, his son Peleg was born. [17] After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

[18] When Peleg was 30 years old, his son Reu was born. [19] After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

[20] When Reu was 32 years old, his son Serug was born. [21] After the birth of Serug, Reu lived another 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

[22] When Serug was 30 years old, his son Nahor was born. [23] After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived another 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

[24] When Nahor was 29 years old, his son Terah was born. [25] After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived another 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

[26] When Terah was 70 years old, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

[27] This is the history of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran had a son named Lot. [28] But while Haran was still young, he died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the place of his birth. He was survived by Terah, his father. [29] Meanwhile, Abram married Sarai, and his brother Nahor married Milcah, the daughter of their brother Haran. (Milcah had a sister named Iscah.) [30] Now Sarai was not able to have any children.

[31] Terah took his son Abram, his daughter-in-law Sarai, and his grandson Lot (his son Haran's child) and left Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But they stopped instead at the village of Haran and settled there. [32] Terah lived for 205 years and died while still at Haran.

## D. THE STORY OF ABRAHAM (Genesis 12:1-25:18)

Abraham was asked to leave his country, wander in Canaan, wait years for a son, and then sacrifice him as a burnt offering. Through these periods of sharp testing, Abraham remained faithful to God. His example teaches us what it means to live a life of faith.

1. God promises a nation to Abram
2. Abram and Lot
3. God promises a son to Abram
4. Sodom and Gomorrah
5. Birth and near sacrifice of Isaac
6. Isaac and Rebekah
7. Abraham dies

### Genesis 12:1-25:18

Then the Lord told Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. [2] I will cause you to become the father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I will make you a blessing to others. [3] I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you."

[4] So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. [5] He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people who had joined his household at Haran—and finally arrived in Canaan. [6] Traveling through Canaan, they came to a place near Shechem and set up camp beside the oak at Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites.

[7] Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "I am going to give this land to your offspring." And Abram built an altar there to commemorate the Lord's visit. [8] After that, Abram traveled southward and set up camp in the hill country between Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar and worshiped the Lord. [9] Then Abram traveled south by stages toward the Negev.

[10] At that time there was a severe famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to wait it out. [11] As he was approaching the borders of Egypt, Abram said to Sarai, "You are a very beautiful woman. [12] When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife. Let's kill him; then we can have her!' [13] But if you say you are my sister, then the Egyptians will treat me well because of their interest in you, and they will spare my life."

[14] And sure enough, when they arrived in Egypt, everyone spoke of her beauty. [15] When the palace officials saw her, they sang her praises to their king, the pharaoh, and she was taken into his harem. [16] Then Pharaoh gave Abram many gifts because of her—sheep, cattle, donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

[17] But the Lord sent a terrible plague upon Pharaoh's household because of Sarai, Abram's wife. [18] So Pharaoh called for Abram and accused him sharply. "What is this you have done to me?" he demanded. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? [19] Why were you willing to let me marry her, saying she was your sister? Here is your wife! Take her and be gone!" [20] Pharaoh then sent them out of the country under armed escort—Abram and his wife, with all their household and belongings.

[13:1] So they left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev—Abram with his wife and Lot and all that they owned, [2] for Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. [3] Then they continued traveling by stages toward Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where they had camped before. [4] This was the place where Abram had built the altar, and there he again worshiped the Lord.

[5] Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, was also very wealthy with sheep, cattle, and many tents. [6] But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. There were too many animals for the available pastureland. [7] So an argument broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.

[8] Then Abram talked it over with Lot. "This arguing between our herdsmen has got to stop," he said. "After all, we are close relatives! [9] I'll tell you what we'll do. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want that area over there, then I'll stay here. If you want to stay in this area, then I'll move on to another place."

[10] Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the Lord or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) [11] Lot chose that land for himself—the Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. [12] So while Abram stayed in the land of Canaan, Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom, among the cities of the plain. [13] The people of this area were unusually wicked and sinned greatly against the Lord.

[14] After Lot was gone, the Lord said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction. [15] I am going to give all this land to you and your offspring as a permanent possession. [16] And I am going to give you so many descendants that, like dust, they cannot be counted! [17] Take a walk in every direction and explore the new possessions I am giving you." [18] Then Abram moved his camp to the oak grove owned by Mamre, which is at Hebron. There he built an altar to the Lord.

[14:1] About this time war broke out in the region. King Amraphel of Babylonia, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim [2] fought against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (now called Zoar).

[3] The kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela formed an alliance and mobilized their armies in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea). [4] For twelve years they had all been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but now in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

[5] One year later, Kedorlaomer and his allies arrived. They conquered the Rephaites in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emites in the plain of Kiriathaim, [6] and the Horites in Mount Seir, as far as El-paran at the edge of the wilderness. [7] Then they swung around to En-mishpat (now called Kadesh) and destroyed the Amalekites, and also the Amorites living in Hazazon-tamar.

[8] But now the army of the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (now called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea [9] against King Kedorlaomer of Elam and the kings of Goiim, Babylonia, and Ellasar—four kings against five. [10] As it happened, the valley was filled with tar pits. And as the army of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some slipped into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains. [11] The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and began their long journey home, taking all the wealth and food with them.

[12] They also captured Lot—Abram's nephew who lived in Sodom—and took everything he owned. [13] One of the men who escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was camped at the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram's allies.

[14] When Abram learned that Lot had been captured, he called together the men born into his household, 318 of them in all. He chased after Kedorlaomer's army until he caught up with them in Dan. [15] There he divided his men and attacked during the night from several directions. Kedorlaomer's army fled, but Abram chased them to Hobah, north of Damascus. [16] Abram and his allies recovered everything—the goods that had been taken, Abram's nephew Lot with his possessions, and all the women and other captives.

[17] As Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and his allies, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). [18] Then Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought him bread and wine. [19] Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

[20] And blessed be God Most High,  
who has helped you conquer your enemies."

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered. [21] The king of Sodom told him, "Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered."

[22] Abram replied, "I have solemnly promised the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, [23] that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from you. Otherwise you might say, 'I am the one who made Abram rich!' [24] All I'll accept is what these young men of mine have already eaten. But give a share of the goods to my allies—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre."

[15:1] Afterward the Lord spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great."

[2] But Abram replied, "O Sovereign Lord, what good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since I don't have a son, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. [3] You have given me no children, so one of my servants will have to be my heir."

[4] Then the Lord said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own to inherit everything I am giving you." [5] Then the Lord brought Abram outside beneath the night sky and told him, "Look up into the heavens and count the stars if you can. Your descendants will be like that—too many to count!" [6] And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord declared him righteous because of his faith. [7] Then the Lord told him, "I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land."

[8] But Abram replied, "O Sovereign Lord, how can I be sure that you will give it to me?"

[9] Then the Lord told him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." [10] Abram took all these and killed them. He cut each one down the middle and laid the halves side by side. He did not, however, divide the birds in half. [11] Some vultures came down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away. [12] That evening, as the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep. He saw a terrifying vision of darkness and horror.

[13] Then the Lord told Abram, "You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, and they will be oppressed as slaves for four hundred years. [14] But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. [15] (But you will die in peace, at a ripe old age.) [16] After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, when the sin of the Amorites has run its course."

[17] As the sun went down and it became dark, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. [18] So the Lord made a covenant with Abram that day and said, "I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River— [19] the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, [20] Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, [21] Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites."

[16:1] But Sarai, Abram's wife, had no children. So Sarai took her servant, an Egyptian woman named Hagar, [2] and gave her to Abram so she could bear his children. "The Lord has kept me from having any children," Sarai said to Abram. "Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her." And Abram agreed. [3] So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram first arrived in the land of Canaan.)

[4] So Abram slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress Sarai with contempt. [5] Then Sarai said to Abram, "It's all your fault! Now this servant of mine is pregnant, and she despises me, though I myself gave her the privilege of sleeping with you. The Lord will make you pay for doing this to me!"

[6] Abram replied, "Since she is your servant, you may deal with her as you see fit." So Sarai treated her harshly, and Hagar ran away.

[7] The angel of the Lord found Hagar beside a desert spring along the road to Shur. [8] The angel said to her, "Hagar, Sarai's servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I am running away from my mistress," she replied.

[9] Then the angel of the Lord said, "Return to your mistress and submit to her authority." [10] The angel added, "I will give you more descendants than you can count." [11] And the angel also said, "You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard about your misery. [12] This son of yours will be a wild one—free and untamed as a wild donkey! He will be against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live at odds with the rest of his brothers."

[13] Thereafter, Hagar referred to the Lord, who had spoken to her, as "the God who sees me," for she said, "I have seen the One who sees me!" [14] Later that well was named Beer-lahairoi, and it can still be found between Kadesh and Bered.

[15] So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael. [16] Abram was eighty-six years old at that time.

[17:1] When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. [2] I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to make you into a mighty nation." [3] At this, Abram fell face down in the dust. Then God said to him, [4] "This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of not just one nation, but a multitude of nations! [5] What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram; now you will be known as Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations. [6] I will give you millions of descendants who will represent many nations. Kings will be among them!

[7] "I will continue this everlasting covenant between us, generation after generation. It will continue between me and your offspring forever. And I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. [8] Yes, I will give all this land of Canaan to you and to your offspring forever. And I will be their God.

[9] "Your part of the agreement," God told Abraham, "is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. [10] This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised; [11] the flesh of his foreskin must be cut off. This will be a sign that you and they have accepted this covenant.

[12] Every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth.

This applies not only to members of your family, but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. [13] All must be circumcised. Your bodies will thus bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. [14] Anyone who refuses to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for violating the covenant."

[15] Then God added, "Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai; from now on you will call her Sarah. [16] And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings will be among her descendants!"

[17] Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. "How could I become a father at the age of one hundred?" he wondered. "Besides, Sarah is ninety; how could she have a baby?" [18] And Abraham said to God, "Yes, may Ishmael enjoy your special blessing!"

[19] But God replied, "Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my everlasting covenant with him and his descendants. [20] As for Ishmael, I will bless him also, just as you have asked. I will cause him to multiply and become a great nation. Twelve princes will be among his descendants. [21] But my covenant is with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year."

[22] That ended the conversation, and God left Abraham. [23] On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and every other male in his household and circumcised them, cutting off their foreskins, exactly as God had told him. [24] Abraham was ninety-nine years old at that time, [25] and Ishmael his son was thirteen. [26] Both were circumcised the same day, [27] along with all the other men and boys of the household, whether they were born there or bought as servants.

[18:1] The Lord appeared again to Abraham while he was camped near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. One day about noon, as Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent, [2] he suddenly noticed three men standing nearby. He got up and ran to meet them, welcoming them by bowing low to the ground. [3] "My lord," he said, "if it pleases you, stop here for a while. [4] Rest in the shade of this tree while my servants get some water to wash your feet. [5] Let me prepare some food to refresh you. Please stay awhile before continuing on your journey." "All right," they said. "Do as you have said."

[6] So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to Sarah, "Quick! Get three measures of your best flour, and bake some bread." [7] Then Abraham ran out to the herd and chose a fat calf and told a servant to hurry and butcher it. [8] When the food was ready, he took some cheese curds and milk and the roasted meat, and he served it to the men. As they ate,

Abraham waited on them there beneath the trees.

[9] "Where is Sarah, your wife?" they asked him.

"In the tent," Abraham replied.

[10] Then one of them said, "About this time next year I will return, and your wife Sarah will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent nearby. [11] And since Abraham and Sarah were both very old, and Sarah was long past the age of having children, [12] she laughed silently to herself. "How could a worn-out woman like me have a baby?" she thought.

"And when my master—my husband—is also so old?"

[13] Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby?' [14] Is anything too hard for the Lord? About a year from now, just as I told you, I will return, and Sarah will have a son." [15] Sarah was afraid, so she denied that she had laughed. But he said, "That is not true. You did laugh."

[16] Then the men got up from their meal and started on toward Sodom. Abraham went with them part of the way.

[17] "Should I hide my plan from Abraham?" the Lord asked. [18] "For Abraham will become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. [19] I have singled him out so that he will direct his sons and their families to keep the way of the Lord and do what is right and just. Then I will do for him all that I have promised." [20] So the Lord told Abraham, "I have heard that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are extremely evil, and that everything they do is wicked. [21] I am going down to see whether or not these reports are true. Then I will know."

[22] The two other men went on toward Sodom, but the Lord remained with Abraham for a while. [23] Abraham approached him and said, "Will you destroy both innocent and guilty alike? [24] Suppose you find fifty innocent people there within the city—will you still destroy it, and not spare it for their sakes? [25] Surely you wouldn't do such a thing, destroying the innocent with the guilty. Why, you would be treating the innocent and the guilty exactly the same! Surely you wouldn't do that! Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?"

[26] And the Lord replied, "If I find fifty innocent people in Sodom, I will spare the entire city for their sake."

[27] Then Abraham spoke again. "Since I have begun, let me go on and speak further to my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes. [28] Suppose there are only forty-five? Will you destroy the city for lack of five?"

And the Lord said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five."

[29] Then Abraham pressed his request further. "Suppose there are only forty?"

And the Lord replied, "I will not destroy it if there are forty."

[30] "Please don't be angry, my Lord," Abraham pleaded. "Let me speak—suppose only thirty are found?"

And the Lord replied, "I will not destroy it if there are thirty."

[31] Then Abraham said, "Since I have dared to speak to the Lord, let me continue—suppose there are only twenty?"

And the Lord said, "Then I will not destroy it for the sake of the twenty."  
[32] Finally, Abraham said, "Lord, please do not get angry; I will speak but once more!  
Suppose only ten are found there?"

And the Lord said, "Then, for the sake of the ten, I will not destroy it."  
[33] The Lord went on his way when he had finished his conversation with Abraham, and  
Abraham returned to his tent.

[19:1] That evening the two angels came to the entrance of the city of Sodom, and Lot was  
sitting there as they arrived. When he saw them, he stood up to meet them. Then he welcomed  
them and bowed low to the ground. [2] "My lords," he said, "come to my home to wash your  
feet, and be my guests for the night. You may then get up in the morning as early as you like and  
be on your way again."

"Oh no," they said, "We'll just spend the night out here in the city square."  
[3] But Lot insisted, so at last they went home with him. He set a great feast before them,  
complete with fresh bread made without yeast. After the meal, [4] as they were preparing to  
retire for the night, all the men of Sodom, young and old, came from all over the city and  
surrounded the house. [5] They shouted to Lot, "Where are the men who came to spend the night  
with you? Bring them out so we can have sex with them."

[6] Lot stepped outside to talk to them, shutting the door behind him. [7] "Please, my  
brothers," he begged, "don't do such a wicked thing. [8] Look—I have two virgin daughters. Do  
with them as you wish, but leave these men alone, for they are under my protection."  
[9] "Stand back!" they shouted. "Who do you think you are? We let you settle among us, and  
now you are trying to tell us what to do! We'll treat you far worse than those other men!" And  
they lunged at Lot and began breaking down the door. [10] But the two angels reached out and  
pulled Lot in and bolted the door. [11] Then they blinded the men of Sodom so they couldn't find  
the doorway.

[12] "Do you have any other relatives here in the city?" the angels asked. "Get them out of this  
place—sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone else. [13] For we will destroy the city  
completely. The stench of the place has reached the Lord, and he has sent us to destroy it."

[14] So Lot rushed out to tell his daughters' fiancés, "Quick, get out of the city! The Lord is  
going to destroy it." But the young men thought he was only joking.

[15] At dawn the next morning the angels became insistent. "Hurry," they said to Lot. "Take  
your wife and your two daughters who are here. Get out of here right now, or you will be caught  
in the destruction of the city."

[16] When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two  
daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the Lord was merciful. [17] "Run for  
your lives!" the angels warned. "Do not stop anywhere in the valley. And don't look back!  
Escape to the mountains, or you will die."

[18] "Oh no, my lords, please," Lot begged. [19] "You have been so kind to me and saved my life, and you have granted me such mercy. But I cannot go to the mountains. Disaster would catch up to me there, and I would soon die. [20] See, there is a small village nearby. Please let me go there instead; don't you see how small it is? Then my life will be saved."

[21] "All right," the angel said, "I will grant your request. I will not destroy that little village. [22] But hurry! For I can do nothing until you are there." From that time on, that village was known as Zoar.

[23] The sun was rising as Lot reached the village. [24] Then the Lord rained down fire and burning sulfur from the heavens on Sodom and Gomorrah. [25] He utterly destroyed them, along with the other cities and villages of the plain, eliminating all life—people, plants, and animals alike. [26] But Lot's wife looked back as she was following along behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

[27] The next morning Abraham was up early and hurried out to the place where he had stood in the Lord's presence. [28] He looked out across the plain to Sodom and Gomorrah and saw columns of smoke and fumes, as from a furnace, rising from the cities there. [29] But God had listened to Abraham's request and kept Lot safe, removing him from the disaster that engulfed the cities on the plain.

[30] Afterward Lot left Zoar because he was afraid of the people there, and he went to live in a cave in the mountains with his two daughters. [31] One day the older daughter said to her sister, "There isn't a man anywhere in this entire area for us to marry. And our father will soon be too old to have children. [32] Come, let's get him drunk with wine, and then we will sleep with him. That way we will preserve our family line through our father." [33] So that night they got him drunk, and the older daughter went in and slept with her father. He was unaware of her lying down or getting up again.

[34] The next morning the older daughter said to her younger sister, "I slept with our father last night. Let's get him drunk with wine again tonight, and you go in and sleep with him. That way our family line will be preserved." [35] So that night they got him drunk again, and the younger daughter went in and slept with him. As before, he was unaware of her lying down or getting up again. [36] So both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father.

[37] When the older daughter gave birth to a son, she named him Moab. He became the ancestor of the nation now known as the Moabites. [38] When the younger daughter gave birth to a son, she named him Ben-ammi. He became the ancestor of the nation now known as the Ammonites.

[20:1] Now Abraham moved south to the Negev and settled for a while between Kadesh and Shur at a place called Gerar. [2] Abraham told people there that his wife, Sarah, was his sister.

So King Abimelech sent for her and had her brought to him at his palace.

[3] But one night God came to Abimelech in a dream and told him, "You are a dead man, for that woman you took is married."

[4] But Abimelech had not slept with her yet, so he said, "Lord, will you kill an innocent man?  
[5] Abraham told me, 'She is my sister,' and she herself said, 'Yes, he is my brother.' I acted in complete innocence!"

[6] "Yes, I know you are innocent," God replied. "That is why I kept you from sinning against me; I did not let you touch her. [7] Now return her to her husband, and he will pray for you, for he is a prophet. Then you will live. But if you don't return her to him, you can be sure that you and your entire household will die."

[8] Abimelech got up early the next morning and hastily called a meeting of all his servants. When he told them what had happened, great fear swept through the crowd. [9] Then Abimelech called for Abraham. "What is this you have done to us?" he demanded. "What have I done to you that deserves treatment like this, making me and my kingdom guilty of this great sin? This kind of thing should not be done! [10] Why have you done this to us?"

[11] "Well," Abraham said, "I figured this to be a godless place. I thought, 'They will want my wife and will kill me to get her.' [12] Besides, she is my sister—we both have the same father, though different mothers—and I married her. [13] When God sent me to travel far from my father's home, I told her, 'Wherever we go, have the kindness to say that you are my sister.' "

[14] Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen and servants—both men and women—and gave them to Abraham, and he returned his wife, Sarah, to him. [15] "Look over my kingdom, and choose a place where you would like to live," Abimelech told him.

[16] Then he turned to Sarah. "Look," he said, "I am giving your 'brother' a thousand pieces of silver to compensate for any embarrassment I may have caused you. This will settle any claim against me in this matter."

[17] Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and the other women of the household, so they could have children. [18] For the Lord had stricken all the women with infertility as a warning to Abimelech for having taken Abraham's wife.

[21:1] Then the Lord did exactly what he had promised. [2] Sarah became pregnant, and she gave a son to Abraham in his old age. It all happened at the time God had said it would. [3] And Abraham named his son Isaac. [4] Eight days after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded. [5] Abraham was one hundred years old at the time.

[6] And Sarah declared, "God has brought me laughter! All who hear about this will laugh with me. [7] For who would have dreamed that I would ever have a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!"

[8] As time went by and Isaac grew and was weaned, Abraham gave a big party to celebrate the happy occasion. [9] But Sarah saw Ishmael—the son of Abraham and her Egyptian servant Hagar—making fun of Isaac. [10] So she turned to Abraham and demanded, "Get rid of that servant and her son. He is not going to share the family inheritance with my son, Isaac. I won't have it!"

[11] This upset Abraham very much because Ishmael was his son. [12] But God told Abraham, "Do not be upset over the boy and your servant wife. Do just as Sarah says, for Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted. [13] But I will make a nation of the descendants of Hagar's son because he also is your son."

[14] So Abraham got up early the next morning, prepared food for the journey, and strapped a container of water to Hagar's shoulders. He sent her away with their son, and she walked out into the wilderness of Beersheba, wandering aimlessly. [15] When the water was gone, she left the boy in the shade of a bush. [16] Then she went and sat down by herself about a hundred yards away. "I don't want to watch the boy die," she said, as she burst into tears.

[17] Then God heard the boy's cries, and the angel of God called to Hagar from the sky, "Hagar, what's wrong? Do not be afraid! God has heard the boy's cries from the place where you laid him. [18] Go to him and comfort him, for I will make a great nation from his descendants."

[19] Then God opened Hagar's eyes, and she saw a well. She immediately filled her water container and gave the boy a drink. [20] And God was with the boy as he grew up in the wilderness of Paran. He became an expert archer, [21] and his mother arranged a marriage for him with a young woman from Egypt.

[22] About this time, Abimelech came with Phicol, his army commander, to visit Abraham. "It is clear that God helps you in everything you do," Abimelech said. [23] "Swear to me in God's name that you won't deceive me, my children, or my grandchildren. I have been loyal to you, so now swear that you will be loyal to me and to this country in which you are living."

[24] Abraham replied, "All right, I swear to it!" [25] Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well that Abimelech's servants had taken violently from Abraham's servants.

[26] "This is the first I've heard of it," Abimelech said. "And I have no idea who is responsible. Why didn't you say something about this before?"

[27] Then Abraham gave sheep and oxen to Abimelech, and they made a treaty. [28] But when Abraham took seven additional ewe lambs and set them off by themselves, [29] Abimelech asked, "Why are you doing that?"

[30] Abraham replied, "They are my gift to you as a public confirmation that I dug this well." [31] So ever since, that place has been known as Beersheba—"well of the oath"—because that was where they had sworn an oath. [32] After making their covenant, Abimelech left with Phicol, the commander of his army, and they returned home to the land of the Philistines. [33] Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and he worshiped the Lord, the Eternal God, at that place. [34] And Abraham lived in Philistine country for a long time.

[22:1] Later on God tested Abraham's faith and obedience. "Abraham!" God called. "Yes," he replied. "Here I am."

[2] "Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will point out to you."

[3] The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son Isaac. Then he chopped wood to build a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place where God had told him to go. [4] On the third day of the journey, Abraham saw the place in the distance. [5] "Stay here with the donkey," Abraham told the young men. "The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back."

[6] Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the knife and the fire. As the two of them went on together, [7] Isaac said, "Father?"  
"Yes, my son," Abraham replied.

"We have the wood and the fire," said the boy, "but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?"  
[8] "God will provide a lamb, my son," Abraham answered. And they both went on together.  
[9] When they arrived at the place where God had told Abraham to go, he built an altar and placed the wood on it. Then he tied Isaac up and laid him on the altar over the wood. [10] And Abraham took the knife and lifted it up to kill his son as a sacrifice to the Lord. [11] At that moment the angel of the Lord shouted to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"  
"Yes," he answered. "I'm listening."

[12] "Lay down the knife," the angel said. "Do not hurt the boy in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld even your beloved son from me."  
[13] Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering on the altar in place of his son. [14] Abraham named the place "The Lord Will Provide." This name has now become a proverb: "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

[15] Then the angel of the Lord called again to Abraham from heaven, [16] "This is what the Lord says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your beloved son, I swear by my own self that [17] I will bless you richly. I will multiply your descendants into countless millions, like the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. They will conquer their enemies, [18] and through your descendants, all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me." [19] Then they returned to Abraham's young men and traveled home again to Beersheba, where Abraham lived for quite some time.

[20] Soon after this, Abraham heard that Milcah, his brother Nahor's wife, had borne Nahor eight sons. [21] The oldest was named Uz, the next oldest was Buz, followed by Kemuel (the father of Aram), [22] Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel. [23] Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. [24] In addition to his eight sons from Milcah, Nahor had four other children from his concubine Reumah. Their names were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

[23:1] When Sarah was 127 years old, [2] she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her. [3] Then, leaving her body, he went to the Hittite elders and said, [4] "Here I am, a stranger in a foreign land, with no place to bury my wife. Please let me have a piece of land for a burial plot."

[5] The Hittites replied to Abraham, [6] "Certainly, for you are an honored prince among us. It will be a privilege to have you choose the finest of our tombs so you can bury her there."

[7] Then Abraham bowed low before them and said, [8] "Since this is how you feel, be so kind as to ask Ephron son of Zohar [9] to let me have the cave of Machpelah, down at the end of his field. I want to pay the full price, of course, whatever is publicly agreed upon, so I may have a permanent burial place for my family."

[10] Ephron was sitting there among the others, and he answered Abraham as the others listened, speaking publicly before all the elders of the town. [11] "No, sir," he said to Abraham, "please listen to me. I will give you the cave and the field. Here in the presence of my people, I give it to you. Go and bury your dead."

[12] Abraham bowed again to the people of the land, [13] and he replied to Ephron as everyone listened. "No, listen to me," he insisted. "I will buy it from you. Let me pay the full price for the field so I can bury my dead there."

[14] "Well," Ephron answered, [15] "the land is worth four hundred pieces of silver, but what is that between friends? Go ahead and bury your dead."

[16] So Abraham paid Ephron the amount he had suggested, four hundred pieces of silver, as was publicly agreed. [17] He bought the plot of land belonging to Ephron at Machpelah, near Mamre. This included the field, the cave that was in it, and all the trees nearby. [18] They became Abraham's permanent possession by the agreement made in the presence of the Hittite elders at the city gate. [19] So Abraham buried Sarah there in Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre, which is at Hebron. [20] The field and the cave were sold to Abraham by the Hittites as a permanent burial place.

[24:1] Abraham was now a very old man, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. [2] One day Abraham said to the man in charge of his household, who was his oldest servant, [3] "Swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not let my son marry one of these local Canaanite women. [4] Go instead to my homeland, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son Isaac."

[5] The servant asked, "But suppose I can't find a young woman who will travel so far from home? May I then take Isaac there to live among your relatives?"

[6] "No!" Abraham warned. "Be careful never to take my son there. [7] For the Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and my native land, solemnly promised to give this land to my offspring. He will send his angel ahead of you, and he will see to it that you find a young woman there to be my son's wife."

[8] If she is unwilling to come back with you, then you are free from this oath. But under no circumstances are you to take my son there."

[9] So the servant took a solemn oath that he would follow Abraham's instructions. [10] He loaded ten of Abraham's camels with gifts and set out, taking with him the best of everything his master owned. He traveled to Aram-naharaim and went to the village where Abraham's brother Nahor had settled. [11] There the servant made the camels kneel down beside a well just outside the village. It was evening, and the women were coming out to draw water.

[12] "O Lord, God of my master," he prayed. "Give me success and show kindness to my master, Abraham. Help me to accomplish the purpose of my journey. [13] See, here I am, standing beside this spring, and the young women of the village are coming out to draw water. [14] This is my request. I will ask one of them for a drink. If she says, 'Yes, certainly, and I will water your camels, too!'—let her be the one you have appointed as Isaac's wife. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."

[15] As he was still praying, a young woman named Rebekah arrived with a water jug on her shoulder. Her father was Bethuel, who was the son of Abraham's brother Nahor and his wife, Milcah. [16] Now Rebekah was very beautiful, and she was a virgin; no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came up again. [17] Running over to her, the servant asked, "Please give me a drink."

[18] "Certainly, sir," she said, and she quickly lowered the jug for him to drink. [19] When he had finished, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels, too, until they have had enough!" [20] So she quickly emptied the jug into the watering trough and ran down to the well again. She kept carrying water to the camels until they had finished drinking. [21] The servant watched her in silence, wondering whether or not she was the one the Lord intended him to meet. [22] Then at last, when the camels had finished drinking, he gave her a gold ring for her nose and two large gold bracelets for her wrists.

[23] "Whose daughter are you?" he asked. "Would your father have any room to put us up for the night?"

[24] "My father is Bethuel," she replied. "My grandparents are Nahor and Milcah. [25] Yes, we have plenty of straw and food for the camels, and we have a room for guests."

[26] The man fell down to the ground and worshiped the Lord. [27] "Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master, Abraham," he said. "The Lord has been so kind and faithful to Abraham, for he has led me straight to my master's relatives."

[28] The young woman ran home to tell her family about all that had happened. [29] Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban. [30] When he saw the nose-ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard her story, he rushed out to the spring, where the man was still standing beside his camels. Laban said to him, [31] "Come and stay with us, you who are blessed by the Lord. Why do you stand here outside the village when we have a room all ready for you and a place prepared for the camels!"

[32] So the man went home with Laban, and Laban unloaded the camels, gave him straw to bed them down, fed them, and provided water for the camel drivers to wash their feet. [33] Then supper was served. But Abraham's servant said, "I don't want to eat until I have told you why I have come."

"All right," Laban said, "tell us your mission."

[34] "I am Abraham's servant," he explained. [35] "And the Lord has blessed my master richly; he has become a great man. The Lord has given him flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, a fortune in silver and gold, and many servants and camels and donkeys. [36] When Sarah, my master's wife, was very old, she gave birth to my master's son, and my master has given him everything he owns.

[37] And my master made me swear that I would not let Isaac marry one of the local Canaanite women. [38] Instead, I was to come to his relatives here in this far-off land, to his father's home. I was told to bring back a young woman from here to marry his son.

[39] " 'But suppose I can't find a young woman willing to come back with me?' I asked him. [40] 'You will,' he told me, 'for the Lord, in whose presence I have walked, will send his angel with you and will make your mission successful. Yes, you must get a wife for my son from among my relatives, from my father's family. [41] But if you go to my relatives and they refuse to let her come, you will be free from your oath.'

[42] "So this afternoon when I came to the spring I prayed this prayer: 'O Lord, the God of my master, Abraham, if you are planning to make my mission a success, please guide me in a special way. [43] Here I am, standing beside this spring. I will say to some young woman who comes to draw water, "Please give me a drink of water!" [44] And she will reply, "Certainly! And I'll water your camels, too!" Lord, let her be the one you have selected to be the wife of my master's son.'

[45] "Before I had finished praying these words, I saw Rebekah coming along with her water jug on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water and filled the jug. So I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.' [46] She quickly lowered the jug from her shoulder so I could drink, and she said, 'Certainly, sir, and I will water your camels, too!' And she did. [47] When I asked her whose daughter she was, she told me, 'My father is Bethuel, the son of Nahor and his wife, Milcah.' So I gave her the ring and the bracelets.

[48] "Then I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord. I praised the Lord, the God of my master, Abraham, because he had led me along the right path to find a wife from the family of my master's relatives. [49] So tell me—will you or won't you show true kindness to my master? When you tell me, then I'll know what my next step should be, whether to move this way or that."

[50] Then Laban and Bethuel replied, "The Lord has obviously brought you here, so what can we say? [51] Here is Rebekah; take her and go. Yes, let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed."

[52] At this reply, Abraham's servant bowed to the ground and worshiped the Lord. [53] Then he brought out silver and gold jewelry and lovely clothing for Rebekah. He also gave valuable presents to her mother and brother. [54] Then they had supper, and the servant and the men with him stayed there overnight. But early the next morning, he said, "Send me back to my master."

[55] "But we want Rebekah to stay at least ten days," her brother and mother said. "Then she can go."

[56] But he said, "Don't hinder my return. The Lord has made my mission successful, and I want to report back to my master."

[57] "Well," they said, "we'll call Rebekah and ask her what she thinks." [58] So they called Rebekah. "Are you willing to go with this man?" they asked her. And she replied, "Yes, I will go."

[59] So they said good-bye to Rebekah and sent her away with Abraham's servant and his men. The woman who had been Rebekah's childhood nurse went along with her. [60] They blessed her with this blessing as she parted:

"Our sister, may you become  
the mother of many millions!  
May your descendants overcome  
all their enemies."

[61] Then Rebekah and her servants mounted the camels and left with Abraham's servant. [62] Meanwhile, Isaac, whose home was in the Negev, had returned from Beer-lahairoi. [63] One evening as he was taking a walk out in the fields, meditating, he looked up and saw the camels coming. [64] When Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac, she quickly dismounted.

[65] "Who is that man walking through the fields to meet us?" she asked the servant. And he replied, "It is my master." So Rebekah covered her face with her veil. [66] Then the servant told Isaac the whole story.

[67] And Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother's tent, and she became his wife. He loved her very much, and she was a special comfort to him after the death of his mother.

[25:1] Now Abraham married again. Keturah was his new wife, [2] and she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. [3] Jokshan's two sons were Sheba and Dedan. Dedan's descendants were the Asshurites, Letushites, and Leummites. [4] Midian's sons were Ephah, Ephher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. These were all descendants of Abraham through Keturah.

[5] Abraham left everything he owned to his son Isaac. [6] But before he died, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them off to the east, away from Isaac.

[7] Abraham lived for 175 years, [8] and he died at a ripe old age, joining his ancestors in death. [9] His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite.

[10] This was the field Abraham had purchased from the Hittites, where he had buried his wife Sarah. [11] After Abraham's death, God poured out rich blessings on Isaac, who settled near Beer-lahairoi in the Negev.

[12] This is the history of the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham through Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian servant. [13] Here is a list, by their names and clans, of Ishmael's descendants: The oldest was Nebaioth, followed by Kedar, Abdeel, Mibsam, [14] Mishma, Dumah, Massa, [15] Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah.

[16] These twelve sons of Ishmael became the founders of twelve tribes that bore their names, listed according to the places they settled and camped. [17] Ishmael finally died at the age of 137 and joined his ancestors in death. [18] Ishmael's descendants were scattered across the country from Havilah to Shur, which is east of Egypt in the direction of Asshur. The clans descended from Ishmael camped close to one another.

## **E. THE STORY OF ISAAC (Genesis 25:19-28:9)**

Isaac did not demand his own way. He did not resist when he was about to be sacrificed, and he gladly accepted a wife chosen for him by others. Like Isaac, we must learn to put God's will ahead of our own.

1. Jacob and Esau
2. Isaac and Abimelech
3. Jacob gets Isaac's blessing

### **Genesis 25:19-28:9**

This is the history of the family of Isaac, the son of Abraham. [20] When Isaac was forty years old, he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan-aram and the sister of Laban. [21] Isaac pleaded with the Lord to give Rebekah a child because she was childless. So the Lord answered Isaac's prayer, and his wife became pregnant with twins. [22] But the two children struggled with each other in her womb. So she went to ask the Lord about it. "Why is this happening to me?" she asked.

[23] And the Lord told her, "The sons in your womb will become two rival nations. One nation will be stronger than the other; the descendants of your older son will serve the descendants of your younger son."

[24] And when the time came, the twins were born. [25] The first was very red at birth. He was covered with so much hair that one would think he was wearing a piece of clothing. So they called him Esau. [26] Then the other twin was born with his hand grasping Esau's heel. So they called him Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when the twins were born.

[27] As the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open fields, while Jacob was the kind of person who liked to stay at home. [28] Isaac loved Esau in particular because of the wild game he brought home, but Rebekah favored Jacob.

[29] One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau arrived home exhausted and hungry from a hunt. [30] Esau said to Jacob, "I'm starved! Give me some of that red stew you've made." (This was how Esau got his other name, Edom—"Red.")

[31] Jacob replied, "All right, but trade me your birthright for it."

[32] "Look, I'm dying of starvation!" said Esau. "What good is my birthright to me now?"

[33] So Jacob insisted, "Well then, swear to me right now that it is mine." So Esau swore an oath, thereby selling all his rights as the firstborn to his younger brother. [34] Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil stew. Esau ate and drank and went on about his business, indifferent to the fact that he had given up his birthright.

[26:1] Now a severe famine struck the land, as had happened before in Abraham's time. So Isaac moved to Gerar, where Abimelech, king of the Philistines, lived.

[2] The Lord appeared to him there and said, "Do not go to Egypt. [3] Do as I say, and stay here in this land. If you do, I will be with you and bless you. I will give all this land to you and your descendants, just as I solemnly promised Abraham, your father. [4] I will cause your descendants to become as numerous as the stars, and I will give them all these lands. And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed. [5] I will do this because Abraham listened to me and obeyed all my requirements, commands, regulations, and laws."

[6] So Isaac stayed in Gerar. [7] And when the men there asked him about Rebekah, he said, "She is my sister." He was afraid to admit that she was his wife. He thought they would kill him to get her, because she was very beautiful. [8] But some time later, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out a window and saw Isaac fondling Rebekah.

[9] Abimelech called for Isaac and exclaimed, "She is obviously your wife! Why did you say she was your sister?"

"Because I was afraid someone would kill me to get her from me," Isaac replied.

[10] "How could you treat us this way!" Abimelech exclaimed. "Someone might have taken your wife and slept with her, and you would have made us guilty of great sin." [11] Then Abimelech made a public proclamation: "Anyone who harms this man or his wife will die!"

[12] That year Isaac's crops were tremendous! He harvested a hundred times more grain than he planted, for the Lord blessed him. [13] He became a rich man, and his wealth only continued to grow.

[14] He acquired large flocks of sheep and goats, great herds of cattle, and many servants. Soon the Philistines became jealous of him, [15] and they filled up all of Isaac's wells with earth. These were the wells that had been dug by the servants of his father, Abraham.

[16] And Abimelech asked Isaac to leave the country. "Go somewhere else," he said, "for you have become too rich and powerful for us."

[17] So Isaac moved to the Gerar Valley and lived there instead. [18] He reopened the wells his father had dug, which the Philistines had filled in after Abraham's death. Isaac renamed them, using the names Abraham had given them.

[19] His shepherds also dug in the Gerar Valley and found a gushing spring.

[20] But then the local shepherds came and claimed the spring. "This is our water," they said, and they argued over it with Isaac's herdsmen. So Isaac named the well "Argument," because they had argued about it with him. [21] Isaac's men then dug another well, but again there was a fight over it. So Isaac named it "Opposition." [22] Abandoning that one, he dug another well, and the local people finally left him alone. So Isaac called it "Room Enough," for he said, "At last the Lord has made room for us, and we will be able to thrive."

[23] From there Isaac moved to Beersheba, [24] where the Lord appeared to him on the night of his arrival. "I am the God of your father, Abraham," he said. "Do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you. I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will do this because of my promise to Abraham, my servant." [25] Then Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the Lord. He set up his camp at that place, and his servants dug a well.

[26] One day Isaac had visitors from Gerar. King Abimelech arrived with his adviser, Ahuzzath, and also Phicol, his army commander. [27] "Why have you come?" Isaac asked them. "This is obviously no friendly visit, since you sent me from your land in a most unfriendly way."

[28] They replied, "We can plainly see that the Lord is with you. So we decided we should have a treaty, a covenant between us. [29] Swear that you will not harm us, just as we did not harm you. We have always treated you well, and we sent you away from us in peace. And now look how the Lord has blessed you!"

[30] So Isaac prepared a great feast for them, and they ate and drank in preparation for the treaty ceremony.

[31] Early the next morning, they each took a solemn oath of nonaggression. Then Isaac sent them home again in peace. [32] That very day Isaac's servants came and told him about a well they had dug. "We've found water!" they said. [33] So Isaac named the well "Oath," and from that time to this, the town that grew up there has been called Beersheba—"well of the oath."

[34] At the age of forty, Esau married a young woman named Judith, the daughter of Beerli the Hittite. He also married Basemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite. [35] But Esau's wives made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah.

[27:1] When Isaac was old and almost blind, he called for Esau, his older son, and said, "My son?"  
"Yes, Father?" Esau replied.

[2] "I am an old man now," Isaac said, "and I expect every day to be my last. [3] Take your bow and a quiver full of arrows out into the open country, and hunt some wild game for me. [4] Prepare it just the way I like it so it's savory and good, and bring it here for me to eat. Then I will pronounce the blessing that belongs to you, my firstborn son, before I die."

[5] But Rebekah overheard the conversation. So when Esau left to hunt for the wild game, [6] she said to her son Jacob, "I overheard your father asking Esau [7] to prepare him a delicious meal of wild game. He wants to bless Esau in the Lord's presence before he dies. [8] Now, my son, do exactly as I tell you. [9] Go out to the flocks and bring me two fine young goats. I'll prepare your father's favorite dish from them. [10] Take the food to your father; then he can eat it and bless you instead of Esau before he dies."

[11] "But Mother!" Jacob replied. "He won't be fooled that easily. Think how hairy Esau is and how smooth my skin is! [12] What if my father touches me? He'll see that I'm trying to trick him, and then he'll curse me instead of blessing me."

[13] "Let the curse fall on me, dear son," said Rebekah. "Just do what I tell you. Go out and get the goats."

[14] So Jacob followed his mother's instructions, bringing her the two goats. She took them and cooked a delicious meat dish, just the way Isaac liked it. [15] Then she took Esau's best clothes, which were there in the house, and dressed Jacob with them. [16] She made him a pair of gloves from the hairy skin of the young goats, and she fastened a strip of the goat's skin around his neck.

[17] Then she gave him the meat dish, with its rich aroma, and some freshly baked bread. [18] Jacob carried the platter of food to his father and said, "My father?"

"Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it—Esau or Jacob?"

[19] Jacob replied, "It's Esau, your older son. I've done as you told me. Here is the wild game, cooked the way you like it. Sit up and eat it so you can give me your blessing."

[20] Isaac asked, "How were you able to find it so quickly, my son?"

"Because the Lord your God put it in my path!" Jacob replied.

[21] Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come over here. I want to touch you to make sure you really are Esau." [22] So Jacob went over to his father, and Isaac touched him. "The voice is Jacob's, but the hands are Esau's," Isaac said to himself. [23] But he did not recognize Jacob because Jacob's hands felt hairy just like Esau's. So Isaac pronounced his blessing on Jacob. [24] "Are you really my son Esau?" he asked.

"Yes, of course," Jacob replied.

[25] Then Isaac said, "Now, my son, bring me the meat. I will eat it, and then I will give you my blessing." So Jacob took the food over to his father, and Isaac ate it. He also drank the wine that Jacob served him. Then Isaac said, [26] "Come here and kiss me, my son."

[27] So Jacob went over and kissed him. And when Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he was finally convinced, and he blessed his son. He said, "The smell of my son is the good smell of the open fields that the Lord has blessed. [28] May God always give you plenty of dew for healthy crops and good harvests of grain and wine. [29] May many nations become your servants. May you be the master of your brothers. May all your mother's sons bow low before you. All who curse you are cursed, and all who bless you are blessed."

[30] As soon as Isaac had blessed Jacob, and almost before Jacob had left his father, Esau returned from his hunting trip. [31] Esau prepared his father's favorite meat dish and brought it to him. Then he said, "I'm back, Father, and I have the wild game. Sit up and eat it so you can give me your blessing."

[32] But Isaac asked him, "Who are you?"

"Why, it's me, of course!" he replied. "It's Esau, your older son."

[33] Isaac began to tremble uncontrollably and said, "Then who was it that just served me wild game? I have already eaten it, and I blessed him with an irrevocable blessing before you came."

[34] When Esau understood, he let out a loud and bitter cry. "O my father, bless me, too!" he begged.

[35] But Isaac said, "Your brother was here, and he tricked me. He has carried away your blessing."

[36] Esau said bitterly, "No wonder his name is Jacob, for he has deceived me twice, first taking my birthright and now stealing my blessing. Oh, haven't you saved even one blessing for me?"

[37] Isaac said to Esau, "I have made Jacob your master and have declared that all his brothers will be his servants. I have guaranteed him an abundance of grain and wine—what is there left to give?"

[38] Esau pleaded, "Not one blessing left for me? O my father, bless me, too!" Then Esau broke down and wept.

[39] His father, Isaac, said to him, "You will live off the land and what it yields, [40] and you will live by your sword. You will serve your brother for a time, but then you will shake loose from him and be free."

[41] Esau hated Jacob because he had stolen his blessing, and he said to himself, "My father will soon be dead and gone. Then I will kill Jacob."

[42] But someone got wind of what Esau was planning and reported it to Rebekah. She sent for Jacob and told him, "Esau is threatening to kill you. [43] This is what you should do. Flee to your uncle Laban in Haran.

[44] Stay there with him until your brother's fury is spent. [45] When he forgets what you have done, I will send for you. Why should I lose both of you in one day?"

[46] Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I'm sick and tired of these local Hittite women. I'd rather die than see Jacob marry one of them."

[28:1] So Isaac called for Jacob, blessed him, and said, "Do not marry any of these Canaanite women. [2] Instead, go at once to Paddan-aram, to the house of your grandfather Bethuel, and marry one of your uncle Laban's daughters. [3] May God Almighty bless you and give you many children. And may your descendants become a great assembly of nations! [4] May God pass on to you and your descendants the blessings he promised to Abraham. May you own this land where we now are foreigners, for God gave it to Abraham."

[5] So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-aram to stay with his uncle Laban, his mother's brother, the son of Bethuel the Aramean.

[6] Esau heard that his father had blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-aram to find a wife, and that he had warned Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman. [7] He also knew that Jacob had obeyed his parents and gone to Paddan-aram.

[8] It was now very clear to Esau that his father despised the local Canaanite women. [9] So he visited his uncle Ishmael's family and married one of Ishmael's daughters, in addition to the wives he already had. His new wife's name was Mahalath. She was the sister of Nebaioth and the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son.

## F. THE STORY OF JACOB (Genesis 28:10-36:43)

Jacob did not give up easily. He faithfully served Laban for over 14 years. Later, he wrestled with God. Although Jacob made many mistakes, his hard work teaches us about living a life of service for our Lord.

1. Jacob starts a family
2. Jacob returns home

### Genesis 28:10-36:43

Meanwhile, Jacob left Beersheba and traveled toward Haran. [11] At sundown he arrived at a good place to set up camp and stopped there for the night. Jacob found a stone for a pillow and lay down to sleep. [12] As he slept, he dreamed of a stairway that reached from earth to heaven. And he saw the angels of God going up and down on it.

[13] At the top of the stairway stood the Lord, and he said, "I am the Lord, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of your father, Isaac. The ground you are lying on belongs to you. I will give it to you and your descendants. [14] Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will cover the land from east to west and from north to south. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants.

[15] What's more, I will be with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. I will someday bring you safely back to this land. I will be with you constantly until I have finished giving you everything I have promised."

[16] Then Jacob woke up and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I wasn't even aware of it." [17] He was afraid and said, "What an awesome place this is! It is none other than the house of God—the gateway to heaven!" [18] The next morning he got up very early. He took the stone he had used as a pillow and set it upright as a memorial pillar. Then he poured olive oil over it. [19] He named the place Bethel—"house of God"—though the name of the nearby village was Luz.

[20] Then Jacob made this vow: "If God will be with me and protect me on this journey and give me food and clothing, [21] and if he will bring me back safely to my father, then I will make the Lord my God. [22] This memorial pillar will become a place for worshiping God, and I will give God a tenth of everything he gives me."

[29:1] Jacob hurried on, finally arriving in the land of the east. [2] He saw in the distance three flocks of sheep lying in an open field beside a well, waiting to be watered. But a heavy stone covered the mouth of the well. [3] It was the custom there to wait for all the flocks to arrive before removing the stone. After watering them, the stone would be rolled back over the mouth of the well. [4] Jacob went over to the shepherds and asked them, "Where do you live?" "At Haran," they said.

[5] "Do you know a man there named Laban, the grandson of Nahor?"

"Yes, we do," they replied.  
[6] "How is he?" Jacob asked.

"He's well and prosperous. Look, here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."  
[7] "Why don't you water the flocks so they can get back to grazing?" Jacob asked. "They'll be hungry if you stop so early in the day."  
[8] "We don't roll away the stone and begin the watering until all the flocks and shepherds are here," they replied.

[9] As this conversation was going on, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherd. [10] And because she was his cousin, the daughter of his mother's brother, and because the sheep were his uncle's, Jacob went over to the well and rolled away the stone and watered his uncle's flock. [11] Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and tears came to his eyes. [12] He explained that he was her cousin on her father's side, her aunt Rebekah's son. So Rachel quickly ran and told her father, Laban.

[13] As soon as Laban heard about Jacob's arrival, he rushed out to meet him and greeted him warmly. Laban then brought him home, and Jacob told him his story. [14] "Just think, my very own flesh and blood!" Laban exclaimed.

After Jacob had been there about a month, [15] Laban said to him, "You shouldn't work for me without pay just because we are relatives. How much do you want?"

[16] Now Laban had two daughters: Leah, who was the oldest, and her younger sister, Rachel. [17] Leah had pretty eyes, but Rachel was beautiful in every way, with a lovely face and shapely figure. [18] Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he told her father, "I'll work for you seven years if you'll give me Rachel, your younger daughter, as my wife."

[19] "Agreed!" Laban replied. "I'd rather give her to you than to someone outside the family."

[20] So Jacob spent the next seven years working to pay for Rachel. But his love for her was so strong that it seemed to him but a few days. [21] Finally, the time came for him to marry her. "I have fulfilled my contract," Jacob said to Laban. "Now give me my wife so we can be married."

[22] So Laban invited everyone in the neighborhood to celebrate with Jacob at a wedding feast. [23] That night, when it was dark, Laban took Leah to Jacob, and he slept with her. [24] And Laban gave Leah a servant, Zilpah, to be her maid.

[25] But when Jacob woke up in the morning—it was Leah! "What sort of trick is this?" Jacob raged at Laban. "I worked seven years for Rachel. What do you mean by this trickery?"

[26] "It's not our custom to marry off a younger daughter ahead of the firstborn," Laban replied. [27] "Wait until the bridal week is over, and you can have Rachel, too—that is, if you promise to work another seven years for me."

[28] So Jacob agreed to work seven more years. A week after Jacob had married Leah, Laban gave him Rachel, too. [29] And Laban gave Rachel a servant, Bilhah, to be her maid. [30] So

Jacob slept with Rachel, too, and he loved her more than Leah. He then stayed and worked the additional seven years.

[31] But because Leah was unloved, the Lord let her have a child, while Rachel was childless. [32] So Leah became pregnant and had a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, "The Lord has noticed my misery, and now my husband will love me." [33] She soon became pregnant again and had another son. She named him Simeon, for she said, "The Lord heard that I was unloved and has given me another son." [34] Again she became pregnant and had a son. She named him Levi, for she said, "Surely now my husband will feel affection for me, since I have given him three sons!" [35] Once again she became pregnant and had a son. She named him Judah, for she said, "Now I will praise the Lord!" And then she stopped having children.

[30:1] When Rachel saw that she wasn't having any children, she became jealous of her sister. "Give me children, or I'll die!" she exclaimed to Jacob.

[2] Jacob flew into a rage. "Am I God?" he asked. "He is the only one able to give you children!"

[3] Then Rachel told him, "Sleep with my servant, Bilhah, and she will bear children for me."

[4] So Rachel gave him Bilhah to be his wife, and Jacob slept with her. [5] Bilhah became pregnant and presented him with a son. [6] Rachel named him Dan, for she said, "God has vindicated me! He has heard my request and given me a son." [7] Then Bilhah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son. [8] Rachel named him Naphtali, for she said, "I have had an intense struggle with my sister, and I am winning!"

[9] Meanwhile, Leah realized that she wasn't getting pregnant anymore, so she gave her servant, Zilpah, to Jacob to be his wife. [10] Soon Zilpah presented him with another son. [11] Leah named him Gad, for she said, "How fortunate I am!" [12] Then Zilpah produced a second son, [13] and Leah named him Asher, for she said, "What joy is mine! The other women will consider me happy indeed!"

[14] One day during the wheat harvest, Reuben found some mandrakes growing in a field and brought the roots to his mother, Leah. Rachel begged Leah to give some of them to her. [15] But Leah angrily replied, "Wasn't it enough that you stole my husband? Now will you steal my son's mandrake roots, too?"

Rachel said, "I will let him sleep with you tonight in exchange for the mandrake roots."

[16] So that evening, as Jacob was coming home from the fields, Leah went out to meet him. "You must sleep with me tonight!" she said. "I have paid for you with some mandrake roots my son has found." So Jacob slept with her. [17] And God answered her prayers. She became pregnant again and gave birth to her fifth son. [18] She named him Issachar, for she said, "God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband as a wife." [19] Then she became pregnant again and had a sixth son. [20] She named him Zebulun, for she said, "God has given me good gifts for my husband. Now he will honor me, for I have given him six sons."

[21] Later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

[22] Then God remembered Rachel's plight and answered her prayers by giving her a child. [23] She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. "God has removed my shame," she said. [24] And she named him Joseph, for she said, "May the Lord give me yet another son."

[25] Soon after Joseph was born to Rachel, Jacob said to Laban, "I want to go back home. [26] Let me take my wives and children, for I have earned them from you, and let me be on my way. You know I have fully paid for them with my service to you."

[27] "Please don't leave me," Laban replied, "for I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me because you are here. [28] How much do I owe you? Whatever it is, I'll pay it." [29] Jacob replied, "You know how faithfully I've served you through these many years, and how your flocks and herds have grown. [30] You had little indeed before I came, and your wealth has increased enormously. The Lord has blessed you from everything I do! But now, what about me? When should I provide for my own family?"

[31] "What wages do you want?" Laban asked again.

Jacob replied, "Don't give me anything at all. Just do one thing, and I'll go back to work for you. [32] Let me go out among your flocks today and remove all the sheep and goats that are speckled or spotted, along with all the dark-colored sheep. Give them to me as my wages. [33] This will make it easy for you to see whether or not I have been honest. If you find in my flock any white sheep or goats that are not speckled, you will know that I have stolen them from you."

[34] "All right," Laban replied. "It will be as you have said." [35] But that very day Laban went out and removed all the male goats that were speckled and spotted, the females that were speckled and spotted with any white patches, and all the dark-colored sheep. He placed them in the care of his sons, [36] and they took them three days' distance from where Jacob was.

Meanwhile, Jacob stayed and cared for Laban's flock.

[37] Now Jacob took fresh shoots from poplar, almond, and plane trees and peeled off strips of the bark to make white streaks on them. [38] Then he set up these peeled branches beside the watering troughs so Laban's flocks would see them as they came to drink, for that was when they mated. [39] So when the flocks mated in front of the white-streaked branches, all of their offspring were streaked, speckled, and spotted. [40] Jacob added them to his own flock, thus separating the lambs from Laban's flock. Then at mating time, he turned the flocks toward the streaked and dark-colored rams in Laban's flock.

This is how he built his flock from Laban's. [41] Whenever the stronger females were ready to mate, Jacob set up the peeled branches in front of them. [42] But he didn't do this with the weaker ones, so the weaker lambs belonged to Laban, and the stronger ones were Jacob's. [43] As a result, Jacob's flocks increased rapidly, and he became very wealthy, with many servants, camels, and donkeys.

[31:1] But Jacob soon learned that Laban's sons were beginning to grumble. "Jacob has robbed our father!" they said. "All his wealth has been gained at our father's expense." [2] And Jacob began to notice a considerable cooling in Laban's attitude toward him.

[3] Then the Lord said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your father and grandfather and to your relatives there, and I will be with you."

[4] Jacob called Rachel and Leah out to the field where he was watching the flocks, [5] so he could talk things over with them. "Your father has turned against me and is not treating me like he used to," he told them. "But the God of my father has been with me. [6] You know how hard I have worked for your father, [7] but he has tricked me, breaking his wage agreement with me again and again. But God has not allowed him to do me any harm.

[8] For if he said the speckled animals were mine, the whole flock began to produce speckled lambs. And when he changed his mind and said I could have the streaked ones, then all the lambs were born streaked. [9] In this way, God has made me wealthy at your father's expense. [10] During the mating season, I had a dream and saw that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled, and spotted. [11] Then in my dream, the angel of God said to me, 'Jacob!' And I replied, 'Yes, I'm listening!' [12] The angel said, 'Look, and you will see that only the streaked, speckled, and spotted males are mating with the females of your flock. For I have seen all that Laban has done to you. [13] I am the God you met at Bethel, the place where you anointed the pillar of stone and made a vow to serve me. Now leave this country and return to the land you came from.' "

[14] Rachel and Leah said, "That's fine with us! There's nothing for us here—none of our father's wealth will come to us anyway. [15] He has reduced our rights to those of foreign women. He sold us, and what he received for us has disappeared. [16] The riches God has given you from our father are legally ours and our children's to begin with. So go ahead and do whatever God has told you."

[17] So Jacob put his wives and children on camels. [18] He drove the flocks in front of him—all the livestock he had acquired at Paddan-aram—and set out on his journey to the land of Canaan, where his father, Isaac, lived. [19] At the time they left, Laban was some distance away, shearing his sheep. Rachel stole her father's household gods and took them with her. [20] They set out secretly and never told Laban they were leaving. [21] Jacob took all his possessions with him and crossed the Euphrates River, heading for the territory of Gilead.

[22] Laban didn't learn of their flight for three days. [23] But when he did, he gathered a group of his relatives and set out in hot pursuit. He caught up with them seven days later in the hill country of Gilead. [24] But the previous night God had appeared to Laban in a dream. "Be careful about what you say to Jacob!" he was told.

[25] So when Laban caught up with Jacob as he was camped in the hill country of Gilead, he set up his camp not far from Jacob's. [26] "What do you mean by sneaking off like this?" Laban demanded. "Are my daughters prisoners, the plunder of war, that you have stolen them away like this? [27] Why did you slip away secretly? I would have given you a farewell party, with joyful singing accompanied by tambourines and harps. [28] Why didn't you let me kiss my daughters and grandchildren and tell them good-bye? You have acted very foolishly! [29] I could destroy you, but the God of your father appeared to me last night and told me, 'Be careful about what you say to Jacob!' [30] I know you feel you must go, and you long intensely for your childhood home, but why have you stolen my household gods?"

[31] "I rushed away because I was afraid," Jacob answered. "I said to myself, 'He'll take his daughters from me by force.' [32] But as for your household gods, let the person who has taken them die! If you find anything that belongs to you, I swear before all these relatives of ours, I will give it back without question." But Jacob didn't know that Rachel had taken them.

[33] Laban went first into Jacob's tent to search there, then into Leah's, and then he searched the tents of the two concubines, but he didn't find the gods. Finally, he went into Rachel's tent. [34] Rachel had taken the household gods and had stuffed them into her camel saddle, and now she was sitting on them. So although Laban searched all the tents, he couldn't find them. [35] "Forgive my not getting up, Father," Rachel explained. "I'm having my monthly period." So despite his thorough search, Laban didn't find them.

[36] Then Jacob became very angry. "What did you find?" he demanded of Laban. "What is my crime? You have chased me as though I were a criminal. [37] You have searched through everything I own. Now show me what you have found that belongs to you! Set it out here in front of us, before our relatives, for all to see. Let them decide who is the real owner!

[38] "Twenty years I have been with you, and all that time I cared for your sheep and goats so they produced healthy offspring. In all those years I never touched a single ram of yours for food. [39] If any were attacked and killed by wild animals, did I show them to you and ask you to reduce the count of your flock? No, I took the loss! You made me pay for every animal stolen from the flocks, whether the loss was my fault or not.

[40] I worked for you through the scorching heat of the day and through cold and sleepless nights. [41] Yes, twenty years—fourteen of them earning your two daughters, and six years to get the flock. And you have reduced my wages ten times! [42] In fact, except for the grace of God—the God of my grandfather Abraham, the awe-inspiring God of my father, Isaac—you would have sent me off without a penny to my name. But God has seen your cruelty and my hard work. That is why he appeared to you last night and vindicated me."

[43] Then Laban replied to Jacob, "These women are my daughters, and these children are my grandchildren, and these flocks and all that you have—all are mine. But what can I do now to my own daughters and grandchildren? [44] Come now, and we will make a peace treaty, you and I, and we will live by its terms."

[45] So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a monument. [46] He also told his men to gather stones and pile them up in a heap. Jacob and Laban then sat down beside the pile of stones to share a meal. [47] They named it "Witness Pile," which is Jegar-sahadutha in Laban's language and Galeed in Jacob's.

[48] "This pile of stones will stand as a witness to remind us of our agreement," Laban said. [49] This place was also called Mizpah, for Laban said, "May the Lord keep watch between us to make sure that we keep this treaty when we are out of each other's sight. [50] I won't know about it if you are harsh to my daughters or if you take other wives, but God will see it. [51] This heap of stones and this pillar [52] stand between us as a witness of our vows. I will not cross this line

to harm you, and you will not cross it to harm me. [53] I call on the God of our ancestors—the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of my grandfather Nahor—to punish either one of us who harms the other."

So Jacob took an oath before the awesome God of his father, Isaac, to respect the boundary line. [54] Then Jacob presented a sacrifice to God and invited everyone to a feast. Afterward they spent the night there in the hills. [55] Laban got up early the next morning, and he kissed his daughters and grandchildren and blessed them. Then he returned home.

[32:1] As Jacob and his household started on their way again, angels of God came to meet him. [2] When Jacob saw them, he exclaimed, "This is God's camp!" So he named the place Mahanaim.

[3] Jacob now sent messengers to his brother, Esau, in Edom, the land of Seir. [4] He told them, "Give this message to my master Esau: 'Humble greetings from your servant Jacob! I have been living with Uncle Laban until recently, [5] and now I own oxen, donkeys, sheep, goats, and many servants, both men and women. I have sent these messengers to inform you of my coming, hoping that you will be friendly to us.' "

[6] The messengers returned with the news that Esau was on his way to meet Jacob—with an army of four hundred men! [7] Jacob was terrified at the news. He divided his household, along with the flocks and herds and camels, into two camps. [8] He thought, "If Esau attacks one group, perhaps the other can escape."

[9] Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my grandfather Abraham and my father, Isaac—O Lord, you told me to return to my land and to my relatives, and you promised to treat me kindly. [10] I am not worthy of all the faithfulness and unfailing love you have shown to me, your servant. When I left home, I owned nothing except a walking stick, and now my household fills two camps! [11] O Lord, please rescue me from my brother, Esau. I am afraid that he is coming to kill me, along with my wives and children. [12] But you promised to treat me kindly and to multiply my descendants until they become as numerous as the sands along the seashore—too many to count."

[13] Jacob stayed where he was for the night and prepared a present for Esau: [14] two hundred female goats, twenty male goats, two hundred ewes, twenty rams, [15] thirty female camels with their young, forty cows, ten bulls, twenty female donkeys, and ten male donkeys. [16] He told his servants to lead them on ahead, each group of animals by itself, separated by a distance in between.

[17] He gave these instructions to the men leading the first group: "When you meet Esau, he will ask, 'Where are you going? Whose servants are you? Whose animals are these?' [18] You should reply, 'These belong to your servant Jacob. They are a present for his master Esau! He is coming right behind us.' "

[19] Jacob gave the same instructions to each of the herdsmen and told them, "You are all to say the same thing to Esau when you see him. [20] And be sure to say, 'Your servant Jacob is right behind us.' "Jacob's plan was to appease Esau with the presents before meeting him face to face." Perhaps," Jacob hoped, "he will be friendly to us." [21] So the presents were sent on ahead, and Jacob spent that night in the camp.

[22] But during the night Jacob got up and sent his two wives, two concubines, and eleven sons across the Jabbok River. [23] After they were on the other side, he sent over all his possessions. [24] This left Jacob all alone in the camp, and a man came and wrestled with him until dawn. [25] When the man saw that he couldn't win the match, he struck Jacob's hip and knocked it out of joint at the socket. [26] Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is dawn."

But Jacob panted, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

[27] "What is your name?" the man asked.

He replied, "Jacob."

[28] "Your name will no longer be Jacob," the man told him. "It is now Israel, because you have struggled with both God and men and have won."

[29] "What is your name?" Jacob asked him.

"Why do you ask?" the man replied. Then he blessed Jacob there.

[30] Jacob named the place Peniel—"face of God"—for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared." [31] The sun rose as he left Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. [32] That is why even today the people of Israel don't eat meat from near the hip, in memory of what happened that night.

[33:1] Then, in the distance, Jacob saw Esau coming with his four hundred men. [2] Jacob now arranged his family into a column, with his two concubines and their children at the front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. [3] Then Jacob went on ahead. As he approached his brother, he bowed low seven times before him. [4] Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him affectionately and kissed him. Both of them were in tears.

[5] Then Esau looked at the women and children and asked, "Who are these people with you?"

"These are the children God has graciously given to me," Jacob replied. [6] Then the concubines came forward with their children and bowed low before him. [7] Next Leah came with her children, and they bowed down. Finally, Rachel and Joseph came and made their bows.

[8] "And what were all the flocks and herds I met as I came?" Esau asked.

Jacob replied, "They are gifts, my lord, to ensure your goodwill."

[9] "Brother, I have plenty," Esau answered. "Keep what you have."

[10] "No, please accept them," Jacob said, "for what a relief it is to see your friendly smile. It is like seeing the smile of God! [11] Please take my gifts, for God has been very generous to me. I have more than enough." Jacob continued to insist, so Esau finally accepted them.

[12] "Well, let's be going," Esau said. "I will stay with you and lead the way."

[13] But Jacob replied, "You can see, my lord that some of the children are very young, and the flocks and herds have their young, too. If they are driven too hard, they may die. [14] So go on ahead of us. We will follow at our own pace and meet you at Seir."

[15] "Well," Esau said, "at least let me leave some of my men to guide and protect you."  
"There is no reason for you to be so kind to me," Jacob insisted.

[16] So Esau started back to Seir that same day. [17] Meanwhile, Jacob and his household traveled on to Succoth. There he built himself a house and made shelters for his flocks and herds. That is why the place was named Succoth. [18] Then they arrived safely at Shechem, in Canaan, and they set up camp just outside the town.

[19] Jacob bought the land he camped on from the family of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of silver. [20] And there he built an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

[34:1] One day Dinah, Leah's daughter, went to visit some of the young women who lived in the area. [2] But when the local prince, Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, saw her, he took her and raped her. [3] But Shechem's love for Dinah was strong, and he tried to win her affection. [4] He even spoke to his father about it. "Get this girl for me," he demanded. "I want to marry her."

[5] Word soon reached Jacob that his daughter had been defiled, but his sons were out in the fields herding cattle so he did nothing until they returned.

[6] Meanwhile, Hamor, Shechem's father, came out to discuss the matter with Jacob. [7] He arrived just as Jacob's sons were coming in from the fields. They were shocked and furious that their sister had been raped. Shechem had done a disgraceful thing against Jacob's family, a thing that should never have been done.

[8] Hamor told Jacob and his sons, "My son Shechem is truly in love with your daughter, and he longs for her to be his wife. Please let him marry her. [9] We invite you to let your daughters marry our sons, and we will give our daughters as wives for your young men. [10] And you may live among us; the land is open to you! Settle here and trade with us. You are free to acquire property among us."

[11] Then Shechem addressed Dinah's father and brothers. "Please be kind to me, and let me have her as my wife," he begged. "I will give whatever you require. [12] No matter what dowry or gift you demand, I will pay it—only give me the girl as my wife."

[13] But Dinah's brothers deceived Shechem and Hamor because of what Shechem had done to their sister. [14] They said to them, "We couldn't possibly allow this, because you aren't circumcised. It would be a disgrace for her to marry a man like you!

[15] But here is a solution. If every man among you will be circumcised like we are, [16] we will intermarry with you and live here and unite with you to become one people. [17] Otherwise we will take her and be on our way."

[18] Hamor and Shechem gladly agreed, [19] and Shechem lost no time in acting on this request, for he wanted Dinah desperately. Shechem was a highly respected member of his family, [20] and he appeared with his father before the town leaders to present this proposal. [21]

"Those men are our friends," they said. "Let's invite them to live here among us and ply their trade. For the land is large enough to hold them, and we can intermarry with them. [22] But they will consider staying here only on one condition. Every one of us men must be circumcised, just as they are. [23] But if we do this, all their flocks and possessions will become ours. Come, let's agree to this so they will settle here among us."

[24] So all the men agreed and were circumcised. [25] But three days later, when their wounds were still sore, two of Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi, took their swords, entered the town without opposition, and slaughtered every man there, [26] including Hamor and Shechem. They rescued Dinah from Shechem's house and returned to their camp. [27] Then all of Jacob's sons plundered the town because their sister had been defiled there.

[28] They seized all the flocks and herds and donkeys—everything they could lay their hands on, both inside the town and outside in the fields. [29] They also took all the women and children and wealth of every kind.

[30] Afterward Jacob said to Levi and Simeon, "You have made me stink among all the people of this land—among all the Canaanites and Perizzites. We are so few that they will come and crush us. We will all be killed!"

[31] "Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?" they retorted angrily.

[35:1] God said to Jacob, "Now move on to Bethel and settle there. Build an altar there to worship me—the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother, Esau."

[2] So Jacob told everyone in his household, "Destroy your idols, wash yourselves, and put on clean clothing. [3] We are now going to Bethel, where I will build an altar to the God who answered my prayers when I was in distress. He has stayed with me wherever I have gone."

[4] So they gave Jacob all their idols and their earrings, and he buried them beneath the tree near Shechem.

[5] When they set out again, terror from God came over the people in all the towns of that area, and no one attacked them. [6] Finally, they arrived at Luz (now called Bethel) in Canaan. [7] Jacob built an altar there and named it El-bethel, because God had appeared to him there at Bethel when he was fleeing from Esau.

[8] Soon after this, Rebekah's old nurse, Deborah, died. She was buried beneath the oak tree in the valley below Bethel. Ever since, the tree has been called the "Oak of Weeping."

[9] God appeared to Jacob once again when he arrived at Bethel after traveling from Paddan-aram. God blessed him [10] and said, "Your name is no longer Jacob; you will now be called Israel." [11] Then God said, "I am God Almighty. Multiply and fill the earth!

Become a great nation, even many nations. Kings will be among your descendants! [12] And I will pass on to you the land I gave to Abraham and Isaac. Yes, I will give it to you and your descendants." [13] Then God went up from the place where he had spoken to Jacob.

[14] Jacob set up a stone pillar to mark the place where God had spoken to him. He then poured wine over it as an offering to God and anointed the pillar with olive oil. [15] Jacob called the place Bethel—"house of God"—because God had spoken to him there.

[16] Leaving Bethel, they traveled on toward Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). But Rachel's pains of childbirth began while they were still some distance away. [17] After a very hard delivery, the midwife finally exclaimed, "Don't be afraid—you have another son!" [18] Rachel was about to die, but with her last breath she named him Ben-oni; the baby's father, however, called him Benjamin. [19] So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).

[20] Jacob set up a stone monument over her grave, and it can be seen there to this day. [21] Jacob then traveled on and camped beyond the tower of Eder. [22] While he was there, Reuben slept with Bilhah, his father's concubine, and someone told Jacob about it.

These are the names of the twelve sons of Jacob:

[23] The sons of Leah were Reuben (Jacob's oldest son), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

[24] The sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

[25] The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant, were Dan and Naphtali.

[26] The sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant, were Gad and Asher.

These were the sons born to Jacob at Paddan-aram.

[27] So Jacob came home to his father Isaac in Mamre, which is near Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron), where Abraham had also lived. [28] Isaac lived for 180 years, [29] and he died at a ripe old age, joining his ancestors in death. Then his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him.

[36:1] This is the history of the descendants of Esau (also known as Edom). [2] Esau married two young women from Canaan: Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite; and Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite. [3] He also married his cousin Basemath, who was the daughter of Ishmael and the sister of Nebaioth. [4] Esau and Adah had a son named Eliphaz. Esau and Basemath had a son named Reuel.

[5] Esau and Oholibamah had sons named Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. All these sons were born to Esau in the land of Canaan.

[6] Then Esau took his wives, children, household servants, cattle, and flocks—all the wealth he had gained in the land of Canaan—and moved away from his brother, Jacob. [7] There was not enough land to support them both because of all their cattle and livestock. [8] So Esau (also known as Edom) settled in the hill country of Seir.

[9] This is a list of Esau's descendants, the Edomites, who lived in the hill country of Seir.

[10] Among Esau's sons were Eliphaz, the son of Esau's wife Adah; and Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath.

[11] The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. [12] Eliphaz had another son named Amalek, born to Timna, his concubine. These were all grandchildren of Esau's wife Adah.

[13] The sons of Reuel were Namath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were all grandchildren of Esau's wife Basemath.

[14] Esau also had sons through Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon. Their names were Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

[15] Esau's children and grandchildren became the leaders of different clans.

The sons of Esau's oldest son, Eliphaz, became the leaders of the clans of Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, [16] Korah, Gatam, and Amalek. These clans in the land of Edom were descended from Eliphaz, the son of Esau and Adah.

[17] The sons of Esau's son Reuel became the leaders of the clans of Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These clans in the land of Edom were descended from Reuel, the son of Esau and Basemath.

[18] The sons of Esau and his wife Oholibamah became the leaders of the clans of Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the clans descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah.

[19] These are all the clans descended from Esau (also known as Edom).

[20] These are the names of the tribes that descended from Seir the Horite, one of the families native to the land of Seir: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, [21] Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These were the Horite clans, the descendants of Seir, who lived in the land of Edom.

[22] The sons of Lotan were Hori and Heman. Lotan's sister was named Timna.

[23] The sons of Shobal were Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

[24] The sons of Zibeon were Aiah and Anah. This is the Anah who discovered the hot springs in the wilderness while he was grazing his father's donkeys.

[25] The son of Anah was Dishon, and Oholibamah was his daughter.

[26] The sons of Dishon were Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran.

[27] The sons of Ezer were Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.

[28] The sons of Dishan were Uz and Aran.

[29] So the leaders of the Horite clans were Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, [30] Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. The Horite clans are named after their clan leaders, who lived in the land of Seir.

[31] These are the kings who ruled in Edom before there were kings in Israel:

[32] Bela son of Beor, who ruled from his city of Dinhabah.

[33] When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah became king.

[34] When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites became king.

[35] When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad became king and ruled from the city of Avith. He was the one who destroyed the Midianite army in the land of Moab.

[36] When Hadad died, Samlah from the city of Masrekah became king.

[37] When Samlah died, Shaul from the city of Rehoboth on the Euphrates River became king.

[38] When Shaul died, Baal-hanan son of Acbor became king.

[39] When Baal-hanan died, Hadad became king and ruled from the city of Pau. Hadad's wife was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred and granddaughter of Mezahab.

[40] These are the leaders of the clans of Esau, who lived in the places named for them:

Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, [41] Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, [42] Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, [43] Magdiel, and Iram. These are the names of the clans of Esau, the ancestor of the Edomites, each clan giving its name to the area it occupied.

## G. THE STORY OF JOSEPH (Genesis 37:1-50:26)

Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and unjustly thrown into prison by his master. Through the life of Joseph, we learn that suffering, no matter how unfair, can develop strong character in us.

1. Joseph is sold into slavery
2. Judah and Tamar
3. Joseph is thrown into jail
4. Joseph is placed in charge of Egypt
5. Joseph and his brothers meet in Egypt
6. Jacob's family moves to Egypt
7. Jacob and Joseph die in Egypt

### Genesis 37:1-50:26

So Jacob settled again in the land of Canaan, where his father had lived.

[2] This is the history of Jacob's family. When Joseph was seventeen years old, he often tended his father's flocks with his half-brothers, the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. But Joseph reported to his father some of the bad things his brothers were doing. [3] Now Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day he gave Joseph a special gift—a beautiful robe. [4] But his brothers hated Joseph because of their father's partiality. They couldn't say a kind word to him.

[5] One night Joseph had a dream and promptly reported the details to his brothers, causing them to hate him even more. [6] "Listen to this dream," he announced. [7] "We were out in the field tying up bundles of grain. My bundle stood up, and then your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before it!"

[8] "So you are going to be our king, are you?" his brothers taunted. And they hated him all the more for his dream and what he had said.

[9] Then Joseph had another dream and told his brothers about it. "Listen to this dream," he said. "The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed low before me!"

[10] This time he told his father as well as his brothers, and his father rebuked him. "What do you mean?" his father asked. "Will your mother, your brothers, and I actually come and bow before you?" [11] But while his brothers were jealous of Joseph, his father gave it some thought and wondered what it all meant.

[12] Soon after this, Joseph's brothers went to pasture their father's flocks at Shechem. [13] When they had been gone for some time, Jacob said to Joseph, "Your brothers are over at Shechem with the flocks. I'm going to send you to them."

"I'm ready to go," Joseph replied.

[14] "Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are getting along," Jacob said. "Then come back and bring me word." So Jacob sent him on his way, and Joseph traveled to Shechem from his home in the valley of Hebron.

[15] When he arrived there, a man noticed him wandering around the countryside. "What are you looking for?" he asked.

[16] "For my brothers and their flocks," Joseph replied. "Have you seen them?"

[17] "Yes," the man told him, "but they are no longer here. I heard your brothers say they were going to Dothan." So Joseph followed his brothers to Dothan and found them there.

[18] When Joseph's brothers saw him coming, they recognized him in the distance and made plans to kill him. [19] "Here comes that dreamer!" they exclaimed. [20] "Come on, let's kill him and throw him into a deep pit. We can tell our father that a wild animal has eaten him. Then we'll see what becomes of all his dreams!"

[21] But Reuben came to Joseph's rescue. "Let's not kill him," he said. [22] "Why should we shed his blood? Let's just throw him alive into this pit here. That way he will die without our having to touch him." Reuben was secretly planning to help Joseph escape, and then he would bring him back to his father.

[23] So when Joseph arrived, they pulled off his beautiful robe [24] and threw him into the pit. This pit was normally used to store water, but it was empty at the time. [25] Then, just as they were sitting down to eat, they noticed a caravan of camels in the distance coming toward them. It was a group of Ishmaelite traders taking spices, balm, and myrrh from Gilead to Egypt.

[26] Judah said to the others, "What can we gain by killing our brother? That would just give us a guilty conscience. [27] Let's sell Joseph to those Ishmaelite traders. Let's not be responsible for his death; after all, he is our brother!" And his brothers agreed.

[28] So when the traders came by, his brothers pulled Joseph out of the pit and sold him for twenty pieces of silver, and the Ishmaelite traders took him along to Egypt.

[29] Some time later, Reuben returned to get Joseph out of the pit. When he discovered that Joseph was missing, he tore his clothes in anguish and frustration. [30] Then he went back to his brothers and lamented, "The boy is gone! What can I do now?"

[31] Then Joseph's brothers killed a goat and dipped the robe in its blood. [32] They took the beautiful robe to their father and asked him to identify it. "We found this in the field," they told him. "It's Joseph's robe, isn't it?"

[33] Their father recognized it at once. "Yes," he said, "it is my son's robe. A wild animal has attacked and eaten him. Surely Joseph has been torn in pieces!" [34] Then Jacob tore his clothes and put on sackcloth. He mourned deeply for his son for many days. [35] His family all tried to comfort him, but it was no use. "I will die in mourning for my son," he would say, and then begin to weep.

[36] Meanwhile, in Egypt, the traders sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar was captain of the palace guard.

[38:1] About this time, Judah left home and moved to Adullam, where he visited a man named Hirah. [2] There he met a Canaanite woman, the daughter of Shua, and he married her. [3] She became pregnant and had a son, and Judah named the boy Er. [4] Then Judah's wife had another son, and she named him Onan. [5] And when she had a third son, she named him Shelah. At the time of Shelah's birth, they were living at Kezib.

[6] When his oldest son, Er, grew up, Judah arranged his marriage to a young woman named Tamar. [7] But Er was a wicked man in the Lord's sight, so the Lord took his life. [8] Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "You must marry Tamar, as our law requires of the brother of a man who has died. Her first son from you will be your brother's heir."

[9] But Onan was not willing to have a child who would not be his own heir. So whenever he had intercourse with Tamar, he spilled the semen on the ground to keep her from having a baby who would belong to his brother. [10] But the Lord considered it a wicked thing for Onan to deny a child to his dead brother. So the Lord took Onan's life, too.

[11] Then Judah told Tamar, his daughter-in-law, not to marry again at that time but to return to her parents' home. She was to remain a widow until his youngest son, Shelah, was old enough to marry her. (But Judah didn't really intend to do this because he was afraid Shelah would also die, like his two brothers.) So Tamar went home to her parents.

[12] In the course of time Judah's wife died. After the time of mourning was over, Judah and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went to Timnah to supervise the shearing of his sheep. [13] Someone told Tamar that her father-in-law had left for the sheep-shearing at Timnah. [14] Tamar was aware that Shelah had grown up, but they had not called her to come and marry him. So she changed out of her widow's clothing and covered herself with a veil to disguise herself. Then she sat beside the road at the entrance to the village of Enaim, which is on the way to Timnah. [15] Judah noticed her as he went by and thought she was a prostitute, since her face was veiled. [16] So he stopped and propositioned her to sleep with him, not realizing that she was his own daughter-in-law.

"How much will you pay me?" Tamar asked.

[17] "I'll send you a young goat from my flock," Judah promised.

"What pledge will you give me so I can be sure you will send it?" she asked.

[18] "Well, what do you want?" he inquired.

She replied, "I want your identification seal, your cord, and the walking stick you are carrying." So Judah gave these items to her. She then let him sleep with her, and she became pregnant. [19] Afterward she went home, took off her veil, and put on her widow's clothing as usual.

[20] Judah asked his friend Hirah the Adullamite to take the young goat back to her and to pick up the pledges he had given her, but Hirah couldn't find her. [21] So he asked the men who lived there, "Where can I find the prostitute who was sitting beside the road at the entrance to the village?"

"We've never had a prostitute here," they replied. [22] So Hirah returned to Judah and told him that he couldn't find her anywhere and that the men of the village had claimed they didn't have a prostitute there.

[23] "Then let her keep the pledges!" Judah exclaimed. "We tried our best to send her the goat. We'd be the laughingstock of the village if we went back again."

[24] About three months later, word reached Judah that Tamar, his daughter-in-law, was pregnant as a result of prostitution. "Bring her out and burn her!" Judah shouted.

[25] But as they were taking her out to kill her, she sent this message to her father-in-law: "The man who owns this identification seal and walking stick is the father of my child. Do you recognize them?"

[26] Judah admitted that they were his and said, "She is more in the right than I am, because I didn't keep my promise to let her marry my son Shelah." But Judah never slept with Tamar again.

[27] In due season the time of Tamar's delivery arrived, and she had twin sons. [28] As they were being born, one of them reached out his hand, and the midwife tied a scarlet thread around the wrist of the child who appeared first, saying, "This one came out first." [29] But then he drew back his hand, and the other baby was actually the first to be born. "What!" the midwife exclaimed. "How did you break out first?" And ever after, he was called Perez. [30] Then the baby with the scarlet thread on his wrist was born, and he was named Zerah.

[39:1] Now when Joseph arrived in Egypt with the Ishmaelite traders, he was purchased by Potiphar, a member of the personal staff of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar was the captain of the palace guard.

[2] The Lord was with Joseph and blessed him greatly as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. [3] Potiphar noticed this and realized that the Lord was with Joseph, giving him success in everything he did. [4] So Joseph naturally became quite a favorite with him. Potiphar soon put Joseph in charge of his entire household and entrusted him with all his business dealings. [5] From the day Joseph was put in charge, the Lord began to bless Potiphar for Joseph's sake. All his household affairs began to run smoothly, and his crops and livestock flourished. [6] So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn't have a worry in the world, except to decide what he wanted to eat!

Now Joseph was a very handsome and well-built young man. [7] And about this time, Potiphar's wife began to desire him and invited him to sleep with her. [8] But Joseph refused. "Look," he told her, "my master trusts me with everything in his entire household.

[9] No one here has more authority than I do! He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I ever do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God."

[10] She kept putting pressure on him day after day, but he refused to sleep with her, and he kept out of her way as much as possible. [11] One day, however, no one else was around when he was doing his work inside the house. [12] She came and grabbed him by his shirt, demanding, "Sleep with me!" Joseph tore himself away, but as he did, his shirt came off. She was left holding it as he ran from the house.

[13] When she saw that she had his shirt and that he had fled, [14] she began screaming. Soon all the men around the place came running. "My husband has brought this Hebrew slave here to insult us!" she sobbed. "He tried to rape me, but I screamed. [15] When he heard my loud cries, he ran and left his shirt behind with me."

[16] She kept the shirt with her, and when her husband came home that night, [17] she told him her story. "That Hebrew slave you've had around here tried to make a fool of me," she said. [18] "I was saved only by my screams. He ran out, leaving his shirt behind!"

[19] After hearing his wife's story, Potiphar was furious! [20] He took Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king's prisoners were held. [21] But the Lord was with Joseph there, too, and he granted Joseph favor with the chief jailer. [22] Before long, the jailer put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. [23] The chief jailer had no more worries after that, because Joseph took care of everything. The Lord was with him, making everything run smoothly and successfully.

[40:1] Some time later, Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer and chief baker offended him. [2] Pharaoh became very angry with these officials, [3] and he put them in the prison where Joseph was, in the palace of Potiphar, the captain of the guard. [4] They remained in prison for quite some time, and Potiphar assigned Joseph to take care of them.

[5] One night the cup-bearer and the baker each had a dream, and each dream had its own meaning. [6] The next morning Joseph noticed the dejected look on their faces. [7] "Why do you look so worried today?" he asked.

[8] And they replied, "We both had dreams last night, but there is no one here to tell us what they mean."

"Interpreting dreams is God's business," Joseph replied. "Tell me what you saw."

[9] The cup-bearer told his dream first. "In my dream," he said, "I saw a vine in front of me. [10] It had three branches that began to bud and blossom, and soon there were clusters of ripe grapes. [11] I was holding Pharaoh's wine cup in my hand, so I took the grapes and squeezed the juice into it. Then I placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

[12] "I know what the dream means," Joseph said. "The three branches mean three days.

[13] Within three days Pharaoh will take you out of prison and return you to your position as his chief cup-bearer. [14] And please have some pity on me when you are back in his favor. Mention me to Pharaoh, and ask him to let me out of here. [15] For I was kidnapped from my homeland, the land of the Hebrews, and now I'm here in jail, but I did nothing to deserve it."

[16] When the chief baker saw that the first dream had such a good meaning, he told his dream to Joseph, too. "In my dream," he said, "there were three baskets of pastries on my head. [17] In the top basket were all kinds of bakery goods for Pharaoh, but the birds came and ate them."

[18] "I'll tell you what it means," Joseph told him. "The three baskets mean three days. [19] Three days from now Pharaoh will cut off your head and impale your body on a pole. Then birds will come and peck away at your flesh."

[20] Pharaoh's birthday came three days later, and he gave a banquet for all his officials and household staff. He sent for his chief cup-bearer and chief baker, and they were brought to him from the prison. [21] He then restored the chief cup-bearer to his former position, [22] but he sentenced the chief baker to be impaled on a pole, just as Joseph had predicted. [23] Pharaoh's cup-bearer, however, promptly forgot all about Joseph, never giving him another thought.

[41:1] Two years later, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing on the bank of the Nile River. [2] In his dream, seven fat, healthy-looking cows suddenly came up out of the river and began grazing along its bank. [3] Then seven other cows came up from the river, but these were very ugly and gaunt. These cows went over and stood beside the fat cows. [4] Then the thin, ugly cows ate the fat ones! At this point in the dream, Pharaoh woke up.

[5] Soon he fell asleep again and had a second dream. This time he saw seven heads of grain on one stalk, with every kernel well-formed and plump. [6] Then suddenly, seven more heads appeared on the stalk, but these were shriveled and withered by the east wind. [7] And these thin heads swallowed up the seven plump, well-formed heads! Then Pharaoh woke up again and realized it was a dream.

[8] The next morning, as he thought about it, Pharaoh became very concerned as to what the dreams might mean. So he called for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt and told them about his dreams, but not one of them could suggest what they meant. [9] Then the king's cup-bearer spoke up. "Today I have been reminded of my failure," he said. [10] "Some time ago, you were angry with the chief baker and me, and you imprisoned us in the palace of the captain of the guard. [11] One night the chief baker and I each had a dream, and each dream had a meaning. [12] We told the dreams to a young Hebrew man who was a servant of the captain of the guard. He told us what each of our dreams meant, [13] and everything happened just as he said it would. I was restored to my position as cup-bearer, and the chief baker was executed and impaled on a pole."

[14] Pharaoh sent for Joseph at once, and he was brought hastily from the dungeon. After a quick shave and change of clothes, he went in and stood in Pharaoh's presence. [15] "I had a dream last night," Pharaoh told him, "and none of these men can tell me what it means. But I have heard that you can interpret dreams, and that is why I have called for you."

[16] "It is beyond my power to do this," Joseph replied. "But God will tell you what it means and will set you at ease."

[17] So Pharaoh told him the dream. "I was standing on the bank of the Nile River," he said.

[18] "Suddenly, seven fat, healthy-looking cows came up out of the river and began grazing along its bank. [19] But then seven other cows came up from the river. They were very thin and gaunt—in fact, I've never seen such ugly animals in all the land of Egypt. [20] These thin, ugly cows ate up the seven fat ones that had come out of the river first, [21] but afterward they were still as ugly and gaunt as before! Then I woke up.

[22] "A little later I had another dream. This time there were seven heads of grain on one stalk, and all seven heads were plump and full. [23] Then out of the same stalk came seven withered heads, shriveled by the east wind. [24] And the withered heads swallowed up the plump ones! I told these dreams to my magicians, but not one of them could tell me what they mean."

[25] "Both dreams mean the same thing," Joseph told Pharaoh. "God was telling you what he is about to do. [26] The seven fat cows and the seven plump heads of grain both represent seven years of prosperity. [27] The seven thin, ugly cows and the seven withered heads of grain represent seven years of famine.

[28] This will happen just as I have described it, for God has shown you what he is about to do. [29] The next seven years will be a period of great prosperity throughout the land of Egypt. [30] But afterward there will be seven years of famine so great that all the prosperity will be forgotten and wiped out. Famine will destroy the land. [31] This famine will be so terrible that even the memory of the good years will be erased. [32] As for having the dream twice, it means that the matter has been decreed by God and that he will make these events happen soon.

[33] "My suggestion is that you find the wisest man in Egypt and put him in charge of a nationwide program. [34] Let Pharaoh appoint officials over the land, and let them collect one-fifth of all the crops during the seven good years. [35] Have them gather all the food and grain of these good years into the royal storehouses, and store it away so there will be food in the cities.

[36] That way there will be enough to eat when the seven years of famine come. Otherwise disaster will surely strike the land, and all the people will die."

[37] Joseph's suggestions were well received by Pharaoh and his advisers. [38] As they discussed who should be appointed for the job, Pharaoh said, "Who could do it better than Joseph? For he is a man who is obviously filled with the spirit of God." [39] Turning to Joseph, Pharaoh said, "Since God has revealed the meaning of the dreams to you, you are the wisest man in the land! [40] I hereby appoint you to direct this project. You will manage my household and organize all my people. Only I will have a rank higher than yours."

[41] And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the entire land of Egypt." [42] Then Pharaoh placed his own signet ring on Joseph's finger as a symbol of his authority. He dressed him in beautiful clothing and placed the royal gold chain about his neck.

[43] Pharaoh also gave Joseph the chariot of his second-in-command, and wherever he went the command was shouted, "Kneel down!" So Joseph was put in charge of all Egypt. [44] And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am the king, but no one will move a hand or a foot in the entire land of Egypt without your approval."

[45] Pharaoh renamed him Zaphenath-paneah and gave him a wife—a young woman named Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of Heliopolis. So Joseph took charge of the entire land of Egypt. [46] He was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. And when Joseph left Pharaoh's presence, he made a tour of inspection throughout the land.

[47] And sure enough, for the next seven years there were bumper crops everywhere. [48] During those years, Joseph took a portion of all the crops grown in Egypt and stored them for the government in nearby cities. [49] After seven years, the granaries were filled to overflowing. There was so much grain, like sand on the seashore, that the people could not keep track of the amount.

[50] During this time, before the arrival of the first of the famine years, two sons were born to Joseph and his wife, Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of Heliopolis. [51] Joseph named his older son Manasseh, for he said, "God has made me forget all my troubles and the family of my father." [52] Joseph named his second son Ephraim, for he said, "God has made me fruitful in this land of my suffering."

[53] At last the seven years of plenty came to an end. [54] Then the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had predicted. There were crop failures in all the surrounding countries, too, but in Egypt there was plenty of grain in the storehouses. [55] Throughout the land of Egypt the people began to starve. They pleaded with Pharaoh for food, and he told them, "Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you." [56] So with severe famine everywhere in the land, Joseph opened up the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians. [57] And people from surrounding lands also came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph because the famine was severe throughout the world.

[42:1] When Jacob heard that there was grain available in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why are you standing around looking at one another? [2] I have heard there is grain in Egypt. Go down and buy some for us before we all starve to death." [3] So Joseph's ten older brothers went down to Egypt to buy grain. [4] Jacob wouldn't let Joseph's younger brother, Benjamin, go with them, however, for fear some harm might come to him. [5] So Jacob's sons arrived in Egypt along with others to buy food, for the famine had reached Canaan as well.

[6] Since Joseph was governor of all Egypt and in charge of the sale of the grain, it was to him that his brothers came. They bowed low before him, with their faces to the ground. [7] Joseph recognized them instantly, but he pretended to be a stranger. "Where are you from?" he demanded roughly.

"From the land of Canaan," they replied. "We have come to buy grain."

[8] Joseph's brothers didn't recognize him, but Joseph recognized them. [9] And he remembered the dreams he had had many years before. He said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see how vulnerable our land has become."

[10] "No, my lord!" they exclaimed. "We have come to buy food. [11] We are all brothers and honest men, sir! We are not spies!"

[12] "Yes, you are!" he insisted. "You have come to discover how vulnerable the famine has made us."

[13] "Sir," they said, "there are twelve of us brothers, and our father is in the land of Canaan. Our youngest brother is there with our father, and one of our brothers is no longer with us."

[14] But Joseph insisted, "As I said, you are spies! [15] This is how I will test your story. I swear by the life of Pharaoh that you will not leave Egypt unless your youngest brother comes here. [16] One of you go and get your brother! I'll keep the rest of you here, bound in prison. Then we'll find out whether or not your story is true. If it turns out that you don't have a younger brother, then I'll know you are spies."

[17] So he put them all in prison for three days. [18] On the third day Joseph said to them, "I am a God-fearing man. If you do as I say, you will live. [19] We'll see how honorable you really are. Only one of you will remain in the prison. The rest of you may go on home with grain for your families. [20] But bring your youngest brother back to me. In this way, I will know whether or not you are telling me the truth. If you are, I will spare you." To this they agreed.

[21] Speaking among themselves, they said, "This has all happened because of what we did to Joseph long ago. We saw his terror and anguish and heard his pleadings, but we wouldn't listen. That's why this trouble has come upon us."

[22] "Didn't I tell you not to do it?" Reuben asked. "But you wouldn't listen. And now we are going to die because we murdered him."

[23] Of course, they didn't know that Joseph understood them as he was standing there, for he had been speaking to them through an interpreter. [24] Now he left the room and found a place where he could weep. Returning, he talked some more with them. He then chose Simeon from among them and had him tied up right before their eyes.

[25] Joseph then ordered his servants to fill the men's sacks with grain, but he also gave secret instructions to return each brother's payment at the top of his sack. He also gave them provisions for their journey. [26] So they loaded up their donkeys with the grain and started for home.

[27] But when they stopped for the night and one of them opened his sack to get some grain to feed the donkeys, he found his money in the sack. [28] "Look!" he exclaimed to his brothers. "My money is here in my sack!" They were filled with terror and said to each other, "What has God done to us?" [29] So they came to their father, Jacob, in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened.

[30] "The man who is ruler over the land spoke very roughly to us," they told him. "He took us for spies. [31] But we said, 'We are honest men, not spies. [32] We are twelve brothers, sons of one father; one brother has disappeared, and the youngest is with our father in the land of Canaan.' [33] Then the man, the ruler of the land, told us, '

This is the way I will find out if you are honest men. Leave one of your brothers here with me, and take grain for your families and go on home. [34] But bring your youngest brother back to me. Then I will know that you are honest men and not spies. If you prove to be what you say, then I will give you back your brother, and you may come as often as you like to buy grain.' "

[35] As they emptied out the sacks, there at the top of each one was the bag of money paid for the grain. Terror gripped them, as it did their father. [36] Jacob exclaimed, "You have deprived me of my children! Joseph has disappeared, Simeon is gone, and now you want to take Benjamin, too. Everything is going against me!"

[37] Then Reuben said to his father, "You may kill my two sons if I don't bring Benjamin back to you. I'll be responsible for him."

[38] But Jacob replied, "My son will not go down with you, for his brother Joseph is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children. If anything should happen to him, you would bring my gray head down to the grave in deep sorrow."

[43:1] But there was no relief from the terrible famine throughout the land. [2] When the grain they had brought from Egypt was almost gone, Jacob said to his sons, "Go again and buy us a little food."

[3] But Judah said, "The man wasn't joking when he warned that we couldn't see him again unless Benjamin came along. [4] If you let him come with us, we will go down and buy some food. [5] But if you don't let Benjamin go, we may as well stay at home. Remember that the man said, 'You won't be allowed to come and see me unless your brother is with you.' "

[6] "Why did you ever tell him you had another brother?" Jacob moaned. "Why did you have to treat me with such cruelty?"

[7] "But the man specifically asked us about our family," they replied. "He wanted to know whether our father was still living, and he asked us if we had another brother so we told him. How could we have known he would say, 'Bring me your brother?'"

[8] Judah said to his father, "Send the boy with me, and we will be on our way. Otherwise we will all die of starvation—and not only we, but you and our little ones. [9] I personally guarantee his safety. If I don't bring him back to you, then let me bear the blame forever. [10] For we could have gone and returned twice by this time if you had let him come without delay."

[11] So their father, Jacob, finally said to them, "If it can't be avoided, then at least do this. Fill your bags with the best products of the land. Take them to the man as gifts—balm, honey, spices, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. [12] Take double the money that you found in your sacks, as it was probably someone's mistake. [13] Then take your brother and go back to the man. [14] May God Almighty give you mercy as you go before the man, that he might release Simeon and return Benjamin. And if I must bear the anguish of their deaths, then so be it."

[15] So they took Benjamin and the gifts and double the money and hurried to Egypt, where they presented themselves to Joseph. [16] When Joseph saw that Benjamin was with them, he said to the manager of his household, "These men will eat with me this noon."

Take them inside and prepare a big feast."

[17] So the man did as he was told and took them to Joseph's palace.

[18] They were badly frightened when they saw where they were being taken. "It's because of the money returned to us in our sacks," they said. "He plans to pretend that we stole it. Then he will seize us as slaves and take our donkeys."

[19] As the brothers arrived at the entrance to the palace, they went over to the man in charge of Joseph's household. [20] They said to him, "Sir, after our first trip to Egypt to buy food, [21] as we were returning home, we stopped for the night and opened our sacks. The money we had used to pay for the grain was there in our sacks. Here it is; we have brought it back again. [22] We also have additional money to buy more grain. We have no idea how the money got into our sacks."

[23] "Relax. Don't worry about it," the household manager told them. "Your God, the God of your ancestors, must have put it there. We collected your money all right." Then he released Simeon and brought him out to them.

[24] The brothers were then led into the palace and given water to wash their feet and food for their donkeys. [25] They were told they would be eating there, so they prepared their gifts for Joseph's arrival at noon.

[26] When Joseph came, they gave him their gifts and bowed low before him. [27] He asked them how they had been getting along, and then he said, "How is your father—the old man you spoke about? Is he still alive?"

[28] "Yes," they replied. "He is alive and well." Then they bowed again before him.

[29] Looking at his brother Benjamin, Joseph asked, "Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about? May God be gracious to you, my son." [30] Then Joseph made a hasty exit because he was overcome with emotion for his brother and wanted to cry. Going into his private room, he wept there. [31] Then he washed his face and came out, keeping himself under control. "Bring on the food!" he ordered.

[32] Joseph ate by himself, and his brothers were served at a separate table. The Egyptians sat at their own table because Egyptians despise Hebrews and refuse to eat with them. [33] Joseph told each of his brothers where to sit, and to their amazement, he seated them in the order of their ages, from oldest to youngest. [34] Their food was served to them from Joseph's own table. He gave the largest serving to Benjamin—five times as much as to any of the others. So they all feasted and drank freely with him.

[44:1] When his brothers were ready to leave, Joseph gave these instructions to the man in charge of his household: "Fill each of their sacks with as much grain as they can carry, and put each man's money back into his sack. [2] Then put my personal silver cup at the top of the youngest brother's sack, along with his grain money." So the household manager did as he was told.

[3] The brothers were up at dawn and set out on their journey with their loaded donkeys. [4] But when they were barely out of the city, Joseph said to his household manager, "Chase after them and stop them. Ask them, 'Why have you repaid an act of kindness with such evil?' [5] What do you mean by stealing my master's personal silver drinking cup, which he uses to predict the future? What a wicked thing you have done!"

[6] So the man caught up with them and spoke to them in the way he had been instructed. [7] "What are you talking about?" the brothers responded. "What kind of people do you think we are, that you accuse us of such a terrible thing? [8] Didn't we bring back the money we found in our sacks? Why would we steal silver or gold from your master's house? [9] If you find his cup with any one of us, let that one die. And all the rest of us will be your master's slaves forever." [10] "Fair enough," the man replied, "except that only the one who stole it will be a slave. The rest of you may go free."

[11] They quickly took their sacks from the backs of their donkeys and opened them. [12] Joseph's servant began searching the oldest brother's sack, going on down the line to the youngest. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack! [13] At this, they tore their clothing in despair, loaded the donkeys again, and returned to the city. [14] Joseph was still at home when Judah and his brothers arrived, and they fell to the ground before him.

[15] "What were you trying to do?" Joseph demanded. "Didn't you know that a man such as I would know who stole it?"

[16] And Judah said, "Oh, my lord, what can we say to you? How can we plead? How can we prove our innocence? God is punishing us for our sins. My lord, we have all returned to be your slaves—we and our brother who had your cup in his sack."

[17] "No," Joseph said. "Only the man who stole the cup will be my slave. The rest of you may go home to your father."

[18] Then Judah stepped forward and said, "My lord, let me say just this one word to you. Be patient with me for a moment, for I know you could have me killed in an instant, as though you were Pharaoh himself.

[19] "You asked us, my lord, if we had a father or a brother. [20] We said, 'Yes, we have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, his youngest son. His brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him very much.' [21] And you said to us, 'Bring him here so I can see him.' [22] But we said to you, 'My lord, the boy cannot leave his father, for his father would die.' [23] But you told us, 'You may not see me again unless your youngest brother is with you.' [24] So we returned to our father and told him what you had said. [25] And when he said, 'Go back again and buy us a little food,' [26] we replied, 'We can't unless you let our youngest brother go with us. We won't be allowed to see the man in charge of the grain unless our youngest brother is with us.' [27] Then my father said to us, 'You know that my wife had two sons, [28] and that one of them went away and never returned—doubtless torn to pieces by some wild animal. I have never seen him since.

[29] If you take away his brother from me, too, and any harm comes to him, you would bring my gray head down to the grave in deep sorrow.'

[30] "And now, my lord, I cannot go back to my father without the boy. Our father's life is bound up in the boy's life. [31] When he sees that the boy is not with us, our father will die. We will be responsible for bringing his gray head down to the grave in sorrow. [32] My lord, I made a pledge to my father that I would take care of the boy. I told him, 'If I don't bring him back to you, I will bear the blame forever.' [33] Please, my lord, let me stay here as a slave instead of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers. [34] For how can I return to my father if the boy is not with me? I cannot bear to see what this would do to him."

[45:1] Joseph could stand it no longer. "Out, all of you!" he cried out to his attendants. He wanted to be alone with his brothers when he told them who he was. [2] Then he broke down and wept aloud. His sobs could be heard throughout the palace, and the news was quickly carried to Pharaoh's palace.

[3] "I am Joseph!" he said to his brothers. "Is my father still alive?" But his brothers were speechless! They were stunned to realize that Joseph was standing there in front of them. [4] "Come over here," he said. So they came closer. And he said again, "I am Joseph, your brother whom you sold into Egypt. [5] But don't be angry with yourselves that you did this to me, for God did it. He sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives. [6] These two years of famine will grow to seven, during which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. [7] God has sent me here to keep you and your families alive so that you will become a great nation. [8] Yes, it was God who sent me here, not you! And he has made me a counselor to Pharaoh—manager of his entire household and ruler over all Egypt.

[9] "Hurry, return to my father and tell him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me master over all the land of Egypt. Come down to me right away! [10] You will live in the land of Goshen so you can be near me with all your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all that you have. [11] I will take care of you there, for there are still five years of famine ahead of us. Otherwise you and your household will come to utter poverty.' "

[12] Then Joseph said, "You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that I really am Joseph! [13] Tell my father how I am honored here in Egypt. Tell him about everything you have seen, and bring him to me quickly." [14] Weeping with joy, he embraced Benjamin, and Benjamin also began to weep. [15] Then Joseph kissed each of his brothers and wept over them, and then they began talking freely with him.

[16] The news soon reached Pharaoh: "Joseph's brothers have come!" Pharaoh was very happy to hear this and so were his officials.

[17] Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers to load their pack animals and return quickly to their homes in Canaan.

[18] Tell them to bring your father and all of their families, and to come here to Egypt to live. Tell them, 'Pharaoh will assign to you the very best territory in the land of Egypt. You will live off the fat of the land!' [19] And tell your brothers to take wagons from Egypt to carry their wives and little ones and to bring your father here. [20] Don't worry about your belongings, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours."

[21] So the sons of Jacob did as they were told. Joseph gave those wagons, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he supplied them with provisions for the journey. [22] And he gave each of them new clothes—but to Benjamin he gave five changes of clothes and three hundred pieces of silver! [23] He sent his father ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten donkeys loaded with grain and all kinds of other food to be eaten on his journey. [24] So he sent his brothers off, and as they left, he called after them, "Don't quarrel along the way!" [25] And they left Egypt and returned to their father, Jacob, in the land of Canaan.

[26] "Joseph is still alive!" they told him. "And he is ruler over all the land of Egypt!" Jacob was stunned at the news—he couldn't believe it. [27] But when they had given him Joseph's messages, and when he saw the wagons loaded with the food sent by Joseph, his spirit revived. [28] Then Jacob said, "It must be true! My son Joseph is alive! I will go and see him before I die."

[46:1] So Jacob set out for Egypt with all his possessions. And when he came to Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father, Isaac. [2] During the night God spoke to him in a vision. "Jacob! Jacob!" he called.

"Here I am," Jacob replied.

[3] "I am God," the voice said, "the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will see to it that you become a great nation there. [4] I will go with you down to Egypt, and I will bring your descendants back again. But you will die in Egypt with Joseph at your side."

[5] So Jacob left Beersheba, and his sons brought him to Egypt. They carried their little ones and wives in the wagons Pharaoh had provided for them. [6] They brought their livestock, too, and all the belongings they had acquired in the land of Canaan. Jacob and his entire family arrived in Egypt— [7] sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters—all his descendants.

[8] These are the names of the Israelites, the descendants of Jacob, who went with him to Egypt:

Reuben was Jacob's oldest son. [9] The sons of Reuben were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

[10] The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul. (Shaul's mother was a Canaanite woman.)

[11] The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

[12] The sons of Judah were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. (But Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan.) The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

[13] The sons of Issachar were Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron.

[14] The sons of Zebulun were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

[15] These are the sons of Jacob who were born to Leah in Paddan-aram, along with their sister, Dinah. In all, Jacob's descendants through Leah numbered thirty-three.

[16] The sons of Gad were Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

[17] The sons of Asher were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah. Their sister was named Serah. Beriah's sons were Heber and Malkiel.

[18] These sixteen were descendants of Jacob through Zilpah, the servant given to Leah by her father, Laban.

[19] The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

[20] Joseph's sons, born in the land of Egypt, were Manasseh and Ephraim. Their mother was Asenath, daughter of Potiphera, priest of Heliopolis.

[21] Benjamin's sons were Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

[22] These fourteen were the descendants of Jacob and his wife Rachel.

[23] The son of Dan was Hushim.

[24] The sons of Naphtali were Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

[25] These seven were the descendants of Jacob through Bilhah, the servant given to Rachel by her father, Laban.

[26] So the total number of Jacob's direct descendants who went with him to Egypt, not counting his sons' wives, was sixty-six. [27] Joseph also had two sons who had been born in Egypt. So altogether, there were seventy members of Jacob's family in the land of Egypt.

[28] Jacob sent Judah on ahead to meet Joseph and get directions to the land of Goshen. And when they all arrived there, [29] Joseph prepared his chariot and traveled to Goshen to meet his father. As soon as Joseph arrived, he embraced his father and wept on his shoulder for a long time. [30] Then Jacob said to Joseph, "Now let me die, for I have seen you with my own eyes and know you are still alive."

[31] And Joseph said to his brothers and to all their households, "I'll go and tell Pharaoh that you have all come from the land of Canaan to join me. [32] And I will tell him, 'These men are shepherds and livestock breeders. They have brought with them their flocks and herds and everything they own.' [33] So when Pharaoh calls for you and asks you about your occupation, [34] tell him, 'We have been livestock breeders from our youth, as our ancestors have been for many generations.' When you tell him this, he will let you live here in the land of Goshen, for shepherds are despised in the land of Egypt."

[47:1] So Joseph went to see Pharaoh and said, "My father and my brothers are here from Canaan. They came with all their flocks and herds and possessions, and they are now in the land of Goshen."

[2] Joseph took five of his brothers with him and presented them to Pharaoh. [3] Pharaoh asked them, "What is your occupation?"

And they replied, "We are shepherds like our ancestors. [4] We have come to live here in Egypt, for there is no pasture for our flocks in Canaan. The famine is very severe there. We request permission to live in the land of Goshen."

[5] And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Now that your family has joined you here, [6] choose any place you like for them to live. Give them the best land of Egypt—the land of Goshen will be fine. And if any of them have special skills, put them in charge of my livestock, too."

[7] Then Joseph brought his father, Jacob, and presented him to Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. [8] "How old are you?" Pharaoh asked him.

[9] Jacob replied, "I have lived for 130 hard years, but I am still not nearly as old as many of my ancestors." [10] Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh again before he left.

[11] So Joseph assigned the best land of Egypt—the land of Rameses—to his father and brothers, just as Pharaoh had commanded. [12] And Joseph furnished food to his father and brothers in amounts appropriate to the number of their dependents.

[13] Meanwhile, the famine became worse and worse, and the crops continued to fail throughout Egypt and Canaan. [14] Joseph collected all the money in Egypt and Canaan in exchange for grain, and he brought the money to Pharaoh's treasure-house. [15] When the people of Egypt and Canaan ran out of money, they came to Joseph crying again for food. "Our money is gone," they said, "but give us bread. Why should we die?"

[16] "Well, then," Joseph replied, "since your money is gone, give me your livestock. I will give you food in exchange." [17] So they gave their livestock to Joseph in exchange for food. Soon all the horses, flocks, herds, and donkeys of Egypt were in Pharaoh's possession. But at least they were able to purchase food for that year.

[18] The next year they came again and said, "Our money is gone, and our livestock are yours. We have nothing left but our bodies and land. [19] Why should we die before your very eyes? Buy us and our land in exchange for food; we will then become servants to Pharaoh. Just give us grain so that our lives may be saved and so the land will not become empty and desolate."

[20] So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. All the Egyptians sold him their fields because the famine was so severe, and their land then belonged to Pharaoh. [21] Thus, all the people of Egypt became servants to Pharaoh. [22] The only land he didn't buy was that belonging to the priests, for they were assigned food from Pharaoh and didn't need to sell their land.

[23] Then Joseph said to the people, "See, I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh. I will provide you with seed, so you can plant the fields. [24] Then when you harvest it, a fifth of your crop will belong to Pharaoh. Keep four-fifths for yourselves, and use it to plant the next year's crop and to feed yourselves, your households, and your little ones."

[25] "You have saved our lives!" they exclaimed. "May it please you, sir, to let us be Pharaoh's servants." [26] Joseph then made it a law throughout the land of Egypt—and it is still the law—that Pharaoh should receive one-fifth of all the crops grown on his land. But since Pharaoh had not taken over the priests' land, they were exempt from this payment.

[27] So the people of Israel settled in the land of Goshen in Egypt. And before long, they began to prosper there, and their population grew rapidly.

[28] Jacob lived for seventeen years after his arrival in Egypt, so he was 147 years old when he died. [29] As the time of his death drew near, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If you are pleased with me, swear most solemnly that you will honor this, my last request: Do not bury me in Egypt. [30] When I am dead, take me out of Egypt and bury me beside my ancestors." So Joseph promised that he would. [31] "Swear that you will do it," Jacob insisted. So Joseph gave his oath, and Jacob bowed in worship as he leaned on his staff.

[48:1] One day not long after this, word came to Joseph that his father was failing rapidly. So Joseph went to visit him, and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. [2] When Jacob heard that Joseph had arrived, he gathered his strength and sat up in bed to greet him.

[3] Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me. [4] He said to me, 'I will make you a multitude of nations, and I will give this land of Canaan to you and your descendants as an everlasting possession.'

[5] Now I am adopting as my own sons these two boys of yours, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born here in the land of Egypt before I arrived. They will inherit from me just as Reuben and Simeon will. [6] But the children born to you in the future will be your own. The land they inherit will be within the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh. [7] As I was returning from Paddan, Rachel died in the land of Canaan. We were still on the way, just a short distance from Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). So with great sorrow I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath."

[8] Then Jacob looked over at the two boys. "Are these your sons?" he asked.

[9] "Yes," Joseph told him, "these are the sons God has given me here in Egypt."

And Jacob said, "Bring them over to me, and I will bless them."

[10] Now Jacob was half blind because of his age and could hardly see. So Joseph brought the boys close to him, and Jacob kissed and embraced them. [11] Then Jacob said to Joseph, "I never thought I would see you again, but now God has let me see your children, too."

[12] Joseph took the boys from their grandfather's knees, and he bowed low to him. [13] Then he positioned the boys so Ephraim was at Jacob's left hand and Manasseh was at his right hand.

[14] But Jacob crossed his arms as he reached out to lay his hands on the boys' heads. So his right hand was on the head of Ephraim, the younger boy, and his left hand was on the head of Manasseh, the older.

[15] Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May God, the God before whom my grandfather Abraham and my father, Isaac, walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life, [16] and the angel who has kept me from all harm—may he bless these boys. May they preserve my name and the names of my grandfather Abraham and my father, Isaac. And may they become a mighty nation."

[17] But Joseph was upset when he saw that his father had laid his right hand on Ephraim's head. So he lifted it to place it on Manasseh's head instead. [18] "No, Father," he said, "this one over here is older. Put your right hand on his head."

[19] But his father refused. "I know what I'm doing, my son," he said. "Manasseh, too, will become a great people, but his younger brother will become even greater. His descendants will become a multitude of nations!" [20] So Jacob blessed the boys that day with this blessing: "The people of Israel will use your names to bless each other. They will say, 'May God make you as prosperous as Ephraim and Manasseh.' "In this way, Jacob put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

[21] Then Jacob said to Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to Canaan, the land of your ancestors. [22] And I give you an extra portion beyond what I have given your brothers—the portion that I took from the Amorites with my sword and bow."

[49:1] Then Jacob called together all his sons and said, "Gather around me, and I will tell you what is going to happen to you in the days to come.

[2] "Come and listen, O sons of Jacob;  
listen to Israel, your father.

[3] "Reuben, you are my oldest son,  
the child of my vigorous youth.

You are first on the list in rank and honor.

[4] But you are as unruly as the waves of the sea,  
and you will be first no longer.  
For you slept with one of my wives;  
you dishonored me in my own bed.

[5] "Simeon and Levi are two of a kind—  
men of violence.

[6] O my soul, stay away from them.  
May I never be a party to their wicked plans.  
For in their anger they murdered men,  
and they crippled oxen just for sport.

[7] Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;  
cursed be their wrath, for it is cruel.  
Therefore, I will scatter their descendants  
throughout the nation of Israel.

[8] "Judah, your brothers will praise you.  
You will defeat your enemies.  
All your relatives will bow before you.

[9] Judah is a young lion  
that has finished eating its prey.  
Like a lion he crouches and lies down;  
like a lioness—who will dare to rouse him?  
[10] The scepter will not depart from Judah,  
nor the ruler's staff from his descendants,  
until the coming of the one to whom it belongs,  
the one whom all nations will obey.  
[11] He ties his foal to a grapevine,

the colt of his donkey to a choice vine.  
He washes his clothes in wine  
because his harvest is so plentiful.  
[12] His eyes are darker than wine,  
and his teeth are whiter than milk.

[13] "Zebulun will settle on the shores of the sea  
and will be a harbor for ships;  
his borders will extend to Sidon.

[14] "Issachar is a strong beast of burden,  
resting among the sheepfolds.  
[15] When he sees how good the countryside is,  
how pleasant the land,  
he will bend his shoulder to the task  
and submit to forced labor.

[16] "Dan will govern his people  
like any other tribe in Israel.  
[17] He will be a snake beside the road,  
a poisonous viper along the path,  
that bites the horse's heels  
so the rider is thrown off.  
[18] I trust in you for salvation, O Lord!

[19] "Gad will be plundered by marauding bands,  
but he will turn and plunder them.

[20] "Asher will produce rich foods,  
food fit for kings.

[21] "Naphtali is a deer let loose,  
producing magnificent fawns.

[22] "Joseph is a fruitful tree,  
a fruitful tree beside a fountain.  
His branches reach over the wall.  
[23] He has been attacked by archers,  
who shot at him and harassed him.

[24] But his bow remained strong,  
and his arms were strengthened  
by the Mighty One of Jacob,  
the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel.

[25] May the God of your ancestors help you;  
may the Almighty bless you  
with the blessings of the heavens above,  
blessings of the earth beneath,  
and blessings of the breasts and womb.

[26] May the blessings of your ancestors  
be greater than the blessings of the eternal mountains,  
reaching to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills.  
These blessings will fall on the head of Joseph,  
who is a prince among his brothers.

[27] "Benjamin is a wolf that prowls.  
He devours his enemies in the morning,  
and in the evening he divides the plunder."

[28] These are the twelve tribes of Israel, and these are the blessings with which Jacob blessed his twelve sons. Each received a blessing that was appropriate to him.

[29] Then Jacob told them, "Soon I will die. Bury me with my father and grandfather in the cave in Ephron's field. [30] This is the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite for a permanent burial place. [31] There Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried. There Isaac and his wife, Rebekah, are buried. And there I buried Leah. [32] It is the cave that my grandfather Abraham bought from the Hittites." [33] Then when Jacob had finished this charge to his sons, he lay back in the bed, breathed his last, and died.

[50:1] Joseph threw himself on his father and wept over him and kissed him. [2] Then Joseph told his morticians to embalm the body. [3] The embalming process took forty days, and there was a period of national mourning for seventy days. [4] When the period of mourning was over, Joseph approached Pharaoh's advisers and asked them to speak to Pharaoh on his behalf. [5] He told them, "Tell Pharaoh that my father made me swear an oath. He said to me, 'I am about to die; take my body back to the land of Canaan, and bury me in our family's burial cave.' Now I need to go and bury my father. After his burial is complete, I will return without delay."

[6] Pharaoh agreed to Joseph's request. "Go and bury your father, as you promised," he said. [7] So Joseph went, with a great number of Pharaoh's counselors and advisers—all the senior officers of Egypt. [8] Joseph also took his brothers and the entire household of Jacob. But they left their little children and flocks and herds in the land of Goshen. [9] So a great number of chariots, cavalry, and people accompanied Joseph.

[10] When they arrived at the threshing floor of Atad, near the Jordan Riv

er, they held a very great and solemn funeral, with a seven-day period of mourning for Joseph's father. [11] The local residents, the Canaanites, renamed the place Abel-mizraim, for they said, "This is a place of very deep mourning for these Egyptians." [12] So Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them. [13] They carried his body to the land of Canaan and buried it there in the cave of Machpelah. This is the cave that Abraham had bought for a permanent burial place in the field of Ephron the Hittite, near Mamre.

[14] Then Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had accompanied him to his father's funeral. [15] But now that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers became afraid. "Now Joseph will pay us back for all the evil we did to him," they said. [16] So they sent this message to Joseph: "Before your father died, he instructed us [17] to say to you: 'Forgive your brothers for the great evil they did to you.' So we, the servants of the God of your father, beg you to forgive us." When Joseph received the message, he broke down and wept. [18] Then his brothers came and bowed low before him. "We are your slaves," they said.

[19] But Joseph told them, "Don't be afraid of me. Am I God, to judge and punish you? [20] As far as I am concerned, God turned into good what you meant for evil. He brought me to the high position I have today so I could save the lives of many people. [21] No, don't be afraid. Indeed, I myself will take care of you and your families." And he spoke very kindly to them, reassuring them.

[22] So Joseph and his brothers and their families continued to live in Egypt. Joseph was 110 years old when he died. [23] He lived to see three generations of descendants of his son Ephraim and the children of Manasseh's son Makir, who were treated as if they were his own.

[24] "Soon I will die," Joseph told his brothers, "but God will surely come for you, to lead you out of this land of Egypt. He will bring you back to the land he vowed to give to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

[25] Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath, and he said, "When God comes to lead us back to Canaan, you must take my body back with you." [26] So Joseph died at the age of 110. They embalmed him, and his body was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

## **MEGATHEMES**

### **THEME: Beginnings**

**EXPLANATION:** Genesis explains the beginning of many important realities: the universe, earth, people, sin, and God's plan of salvation.

**IMPORTANCE:** Genesis teaches us that the earth is well made and good. Mankind is special to God and unique. God creates and sustains all life.

### **THEME: Disobedience**

**EXPLANATION:** People are always facing great choices. Disobedience occurs when people choose not to follow God's plan of living.

**IMPORTANCE:** Genesis explains why men are evil: they choose to do wrong. Even great Bible heroes failed God and disobeyed.

### **THEME: Sin**

**EXPLANATION:** Sin ruins people's lives. It happens when we disobey God.

**IMPORTANCE:** Living God's way makes life productive and fulfilling.

### **THEME: Promises**

**EXPLANATION:** God makes promises to help and protect mankind. This kind of promise is called a "covenant."

**IMPORTANCE:** God kept his promises then, and he keeps them now. He promises to love us, accept us, and forgive us.

### **THEME: Obedience**

**EXPLANATION:** The opposite of sin is obedience. Obeying God restores our relationship to him.

**IMPORTANCE:** The only way to enjoy the benefits of God's promises is to obey him.

**THEME: Prosperity**

**EXPLANATION:** Prosperity is deeper than mere material wealth. True prosperity and fulfillment come as a result of obeying God.

**IMPORTANCE:** When people obey God, they find peace with him, with others, and with themselves.

**THEME: Israel**

**EXPLANATION:** God started the nation of Israel in order to have a dedicated people who would (1) keep his ways alive in the world, (2) proclaim to the world what he is really like, and (3) prepare the world for the birth of Christ.

**IMPORTANCE:** God is looking for people today to follow him. We are to proclaim God's truth and love to all nations, not just our own. We must be faithful to carry out the mission God has given us.

**TIMELINE**

Creation  
Noah undated  
Abram born 2166 B.C. (2000 B.C.)  
Abram enters Canaan 2091 (1925)  
Isaac born 2066 (1900)  
Jacob and Esau born 2006 (1840)  
Jacob flees to Haran 1929 (1764)  
Joseph born 1915 (1750)  
Joseph sold into slavery 1898 (1733)  
Joseph rules Egypt 1885 (1720)  
Joseph dies 1805 (1640)

**Rev. 3:20**

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

**To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:**

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print