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Genesis

Chapter 1

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²{At first after that,} the earth did not have {its present} form, and there was nothing {living} on it. It was {totally} dark, there was deep water {everywhere}, and God's Spirit was moving above the water. ³Then God said, "I command light to start shining!" And {immediately} light started shining. ⁴God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness {so that each had its own time}. ⁵He named the light Daytime, and the darkness he named Nighttime. Then evening came and {later} morning came, {and that was} {the end of} the first day.

⁶Then God said, "I command there to be a large space in the middle of the water, so that it divides the water into two separate places." ⁷That is how God made a large space and used it to separate the water that {was} below the space from the water that {was} above it. Everything happened {exactly} as he commanded, ⁸and he named the space Sky. Then evening came and {later} morning came, {and that was} {the end of} the second day.

⁹Then God said, "I command the water {that is} below the sky to gather in one place so that there is dry ground." And that is {exactly} what happened. ¹⁰Then God named the ground that had dried off Land, and he named the water which had gathered together Ocean. He saw that {what he had made was} good.

¹¹Then God said, "I command the land to produce {green} plants all over the earth, {including} {all kinds of} plants that have seeds {and} {all kinds of} fruit trees that produce their own kind of fruit with seeds inside." And that is {exactly} what happened: ¹²The land started producing {green} plants, {including} {all kinds of} plants that have their own kind of seeds and {all kinds of} trees that have their own kind of fruit with seeds inside. And God saw that {what he had made was} good. ¹³Then evening came and {later} morning came, {and that was} {the end of} the third day.

¹⁴Then God said, "I command there to be sources of light in the sky that separate the day{time} from the night{time}. They must show when seasons and days and years {begin and end}, ¹⁵and they must be lights in the sky that shine {light} on the earth." And that is {exactly} what happened. ¹⁶That is how God made the two bright lights, the brighter light to shine during the day{time}, and the weaker light to shine during the night{time}. {That is} also {when he made} the stars. ¹⁷He put those lights in the sky to shine light on the earth, ¹⁸to shine during the day{time} or during the night{time}, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that {everything was} good. ¹⁹Then evening came and {later} morning came, {and that was} {the end of} the fourth day.

²⁰Then God said, "I command the water to be full of large groups of living creatures, and I command there to be birds {that fly} in the sky above the earth." ²¹That is how God created the huge sea animals and all {the other} {kinds of} creatures that live all over the place in the water and have their own kind of young. That is also {how he created} all {the different kinds of} birds that have their own kind of young. God saw that {everything was} good. ²²Then he blessed them {all} by saying {to them}, "You {water animals} are to have many young so that you increase {greatly} {in number} and live all over the place in the water in the ocean. And {you} birds are to {also} increase {greatly} {in number} all over the earth." ²³Then evening came and {later} morning came, {and that was} {the end of} the fifth day.

²⁴Then God said, "I command the land to produce {every kind of} living animal that has its own kind of young, {including} domestic animals, animals that crawl and {all the other} living creatures on the earth that have their own kind of young." And that is {exactly} what happened. ²⁵That is how God made {every kind of} living animal on the earth that has its own kind of young, including {every kind of} domestic animal that bears its own kind of young, and every {kind of} animal that crawls on the ground that has its own kind of young. And God saw that {everything he had made was} good.

²⁶Then God said {to himself}, "Let us make human beings to be like us and act like us, and let us give them authority over the fish in the ocean, over the birds in the sky, over the domestic animals, and over the entire earth, including all the animals that live on the earth." ²⁷So God created human beings to be like himself, {yes,} he made them to be like himself, {and} he {also} created them to be male or female.

²⁸Then God blessed them by saying to them, "Have many children so that you {and your descendants} increase {greatly} {in number} and live all over the earth and take control of it. You have authority over the fish in the ocean, over the birds in the sky, and over all the {other} creatures that live on the earth." ²⁹Then he {also} said {to them}, "Listen, I am giving to you {as food} every {kind of} plant that produces seeds and grows anywhere on the earth, as well as every {kind of} tree that {produces} fruit with seeds inside it. {All of} them are yours to eat from. ³⁰In the same way, I give {every kind of} green plant for food to every {kind of} animal that lives on the earth, including every {kind of} bird {that flies} in the sky, and every {other} {kind of} animal that lives on the earth and breathes {air}." And that is how it was.

³¹Then God looked at everything that he had made, and he saw that it was {all} very good. Then evening came and {later} morning came, {and that was} {the end of} the sixth day.

Chapter 2

¹That is how God finished {creating} the heavens and the earth, including all the many things that are in them. ²By the seventh day he had finished his work that he had been doing, so he rested on that day from all the work that he had been doing. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and made it a holy day, because on that day he rested from all his work that he had been doing, creating {everything}.

⁴What follows tells {more details about} the history of what Yahweh {who is} God did when he created the heavens and the earth: During the time when he made the earth and the heavens, ⁵{for awhile} there were not yet any bushes {growing} in the fields on the earth, and there were not any {other} plants that had sprouted yet, because he had not {yet} sent rain to water the earth, and human beings did not exist {yet} to cultivate the ground.

⁶{During that time} mist came up from the earth and watered the entire surface of the ground. ⁷Then Yahweh {who is} God {took} {some} dirt from the ground {and} formed a man {out of it}. Then he blew his breath into the man's nostrils to make him live, so that the man became a living person.

⁸Now Yahweh God had planted a {large} garden in {the land of} Eden, {which was} in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹{There} Yahweh God had caused every {kind of} tree to grow from the ground that is beautiful to look at and {that grows fruit that} is good to eat. In the middle of the garden was the tree whose fruit makes people live {forever} and the tree whose fruit enables people to know {what is} good and {what is} evil.

¹⁰{There was} a river flowing out of {the land of} Eden that provided water for the garden. From there the river divided into four {smaller} rivers. ¹¹The name of the first {river} is {the} Pishon, which flows around through the entire region of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹²In fact, the gold from that region is {very} pure, and {fragrant} perfume and {valuable} onyx gemstones are {also} {found} there. ¹³The name of the second river is {the} Gihon, which flows around through the entire region of Cush. ¹⁴The name of the third river is {the} Tigris, which flows east of {the region of} Assyria, and {the name of} the fourth river is {the} Euphrates.

¹⁵After Yahweh God put the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and take care of it, ¹⁶⁻¹⁷But Yahweh said to him, "I will not permit you to eat the fruit of the tree that will enable you to know what actions are good to do and what actions are evil to do. If you eat any fruit from that tree, on the day you eat it you will surely die. But I will permit you to eat the fruit of any of the other trees in the park."

¹⁸Then Yahweh {who is} God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone, {so} I will create someone who will be a suitable companion for him to help him. ¹⁹Now Yahweh God had {previously} used {dirt} from the ground to form every {kind of} living creature {that lives} in the fields and every {kind of} bird {that flies} in the sky. So he brought {them all} to the man to hear what he would name them, and whatever the man called each {kind of} living

creature, that was its name. ²⁰So the man gave names to all the {different kinds of} livestock and to {all} the {different kinds of} birds {that fly} in the sky, and to all the {other} {different kinds of} living creatures {that live} in the fields, but none of them was suitable to be a companion to help him.

²¹So Yahweh God caused the man to sleep deeply. Then while the man was asleep, God took a rib {out of the man's body} and filled in the place where it had been with flesh {and healed it}. ²²Next Yahweh God made a woman from the rib which he had taken out of the man's body, and he took her to the man. ²³{When the man saw her,} he exclaimed, " Finally! Here is someone {like me} who has bones and flesh from me! I will call her 'woman,' because God took her from {the body of} a man." ²⁴Because of that, {when a man gets married,} he must leave {the home of} his father and mother, and he must unite with his wife, so that they become completely united.

²⁵{During that time} the man and his wife were both naked, but {yet} they were not ashamed {about it}.

Chapter 3

¹Now the snake was the craftiest of all the animals that Yahweh God had made. {One day} he asked the woman, "Did God really command you to not eat {fruit} from any of the trees in the garden?" ²The woman answered him, " {No,} {God said that} we may eat fruit from {any of} the trees in the garden, ³except fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden. He commanded {us} to not eat that fruit or even touch it, because if we do, we will die!" ⁴But the snake said to the woman, "{That's not true.} You will not die. ⁵Actually God knows that on the day that you eat {fruit} from that tree, you will understand new things, so that you will be like him because you will know {what is} good and {what is} evil." ⁶The woman saw that the tree's fruit looked good to eat and that the tree {itself} was {very} beautiful. She also wanted {to eat} the fruit so that it would make her wise. So she picked some of the fruit, and ate it. Then she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it {too}. ⁷Suddenly they both understood new things, and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed {some} fig {tree} leaves together and made clothes for themselves {to cover their nakedness}.

⁸{Late that afternoon} during the cool time of the day, the man and his wife heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden, but they hid from him among the trees in the garden. ⁹So Yahweh God called {out} to the man, " {Adam,} where are you?" ¹⁰The man replied, "I heard the sound of you {walking} in the garden, but I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid {from you}." ¹¹Then Yahweh God asked, " Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat {some fruit} from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" ¹²The man replied, "The woman whom you put here {to be} with me, she {is the one who} gave me some of that fruit, so I ate {it}." ¹³Then Yahweh God asked the woman, " What did you do?" The woman replied, "The snake tricked me, so I ate {some of the fruit}." ¹⁴So Yahweh God said to the snake, " Because you did that, I am cursing you more severely than all the livestock and all the animals in the fields! {As a result,} you must crawl on your belly and you must eat dust for as long as you live. ¹⁵Besides that, I will cause you and your descendants to be enemies with the woman and her descendants. {In fact,} her Descendant will crush your head, and you will bite his heel." ¹⁶{Then} God said to the woman, "I will greatly increase how much you suffer when you bear children, {yes,} you will suffer {much pain} when you give birth. But you will {still} desire {to be with} your husband, and he will rule over you." ¹⁷Then God said to Adam, " You did what your wife said and ate {fruit} from the tree that I commanded you not to eat {any fruit} from. Because of what you did, I have cursed the ground, {so that} for as long as you live, you will have to work {very} hard and suffer {to grow enough food} to eat. ¹⁸In fact, thorn plants and thistle plants {and other weeds} will grow {and make it difficult} for you to grow {enough} crops in your fields for food. ¹⁹{Yes,} you will have to {work hard and} sweat a lot in order to produce {enough} food {to eat}, until you {die and} become dust again, which I created you from. That's right, I created you out of dust, so dust is what you will become again {after you die}."

²⁰Then Adam named his wife Eve {which means "living,"} because she would be the mother of everyone who would ever live. ²¹Then Yahweh God made {some} clothes out of {animal} skins for Adam and his wife, and he put the clothes on them.

²²Then Yahweh God said {to himself}, "Look! The man {and his wife} have become like one of us, so that they know {what is} good and {what is} evil. So now we must do something so that they do not also eat fruit from the tree that gives people {eternal} life, which will make them live forever!" ²³So Yahweh God expelled the man {and his wife} from the garden of Eden to work the ground which he had made them from. ²⁴After he expelled them, he stationed to the east {side} of the garden {some} {powerful} cherubim {angels} and a flaming sword that was swinging around in all directions to keep everyone away from the path to the tree whose fruit makes people live {forever}.

Chapter 4

¹Then Adam slept with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to {a son they named} Cain {which means "obtained"}, because she said, "Yahweh has enabled me to obtain a son!" ²Then Eve also gave birth to Cain's brother {whom they named} Abel. {When they grew up,} Abel became a shepherd, and Cain became a {crop} farmer. ³As time went by, one day Cain brought some of the crops {that he had grown} in his fields to Yahweh as an offering. ⁴Abel also made {an offering to Yahweh, but his was} some of the firstborn animals in his flocks, including some of their best parts. Yahweh was pleased with Abel and his offering. ⁵However he was not pleased with Cain or his offering. So Cain became extremely angry and he frowned his face. ⁶Then Yahweh asked Cain, " Why are you so angry? And why are you frowning? ⁷If you do {what is} right, I will accept you {and your offering}. But if you do not do {what is} right, then sin {is like a fierce animal that} is waiting outside your door {to attack you}. It wants {to control} you, but you must rule over it."

⁸But {after that,} Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field {together}." So they went out to the field, and while they were there, Cain attacked his brother and killed him.

⁹Later Yahweh asked Cain, " Where is your brother Abel?" Cain responded, "I do not know. Is it my job to take care of my brother?" ¹⁰Then Yahweh said {to him}, "You have done a terrible thing! I see your brother's blood on the ground, and I must punish you {for killing him}!" ¹¹So now I am cursing you {so that you will not be able to grow food} from the ground, which is where your brother's blood spilled out when you murdered him. ¹²Whenever you {try to} farm the ground, it will no longer produce good crops for you. {From now on,} you will be a fugitive who wanders around on the earth {without a permanent home}."

¹³Cain replied to Yahweh, "You are punishing me more {severely} than I can endure. ¹⁴Look! Today you have banished me from {farming} the ground. I will be far away from you, and I will be a homeless fugitive on the earth, so that whoever sees me will kill me!" ¹⁵Yahweh replied to him, " So then, {I will warn everyone that} I will take vengeance on whoever kills you {and punish him} seven times more {severely} {than I am punishing you}!" Then he put a mark on Cain to warn everyone who met him not to kill him. ¹⁶Then Cain left Yahweh's presence and lived in the land of Nod {which means "land of wandering"}, {which was} east of {the land of} Eden.

¹⁷Then Cain slept with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to {a son they named} Enoch. {At that time} Cain was building a city, so he named the city after his son Enoch. ¹⁸Later on {when Enoch grew up,} Enoch had {a son named} Irad. Then Irad had {a son named} Mehujael, then Mehujael had {a son named} Methushael, then Methushael had {a son named} Lamech.

¹⁹{When Lamech grew up,} he married two wives. His first wife's name was Adah, and his other wife's name was Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to {a son named} Jabal. He {grew up and} became the first of {all} those who live in tents and raise livestock {for a living}. ²¹His brother's name was Jubal. He became the first of all those who play harps and flutes.

²²{Lamech's other wife} Zillah also gave birth to {a son named} Tubal Cain. He {was the first of all those who} make all {kinds of} tools {and other things} out of bronze and iron. Tubal Cain had a sister {whose name was} Naamah.

²³{One day} Lamech bragged to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, listen to what I have to say. My wives, listen to this: I killed a man for wounding me! In fact, {I killed} the young man {just} because he bruised me. ²⁴God will avenge Cain seven times, but {I,} Lamech {avenge myself} 77 times!"

²⁵Then Adam slept with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son, and she named him Seth {which means " given ", because {she said}, " God has given me another child to replace Abel, whom Cain killed." ²⁶Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh.

During that time people began to worship {God} by using His name Yahweh.

Chapter 5

¹Here is the family record of Adam and his descendants: On the day when God created mankind, he made them to be like himself. ²He {also} created them {to be} male and female, and on the {same} day that he created them, he blessed them and named them "mankind."

³When Adam was 130 years old, he had a son who was like him in many ways, and he named him Seth. ⁴After Seth's birth, Adam lived {another} 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵So Adam lived a total of 930 years, {and} then he died.

⁶When Seth was 105 years old, he had {a son named} Enosh. ⁷After Enosh's birth, Seth lived {another} 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁸So Seth lived a total of 912 years, {and} then he died.

⁹When Enosh was 90 years old, he had {a son named} Kenan. ¹⁰After Kenan's birth, Enosh lived {another} 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹¹So Enosh lived a total of 905 years, {and} then he died.

¹²When Kenan was 70 years old, he had {a son named} Mahalalel. ¹³After Mahalalel's birth, Kenan lived {another} 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴So Kenan lived a total of 910 years, {and} then he died.

¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he had {a son named} Jared. ¹⁶After Jared's birth, Mahalalel lived {another} 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷So Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years, {and} then he died.

¹⁸When Jared was 162 years old, he had {a son named} Enoch. ¹⁹After Enoch's birth, Jared lived {another} 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁰So Jared lived a total of 962 years, {and} then he died.

²¹When Enoch was 65 years old, he had {a son named} Methuselah. ²²After Methuselah's birth, Enoch lived in a close relationship with God for {another} 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²³So Enoch lived a total of 365 years. ²⁴Then while he was living in a close relationship with God, {suddenly} he was no longer {on earth}, because God had taken him {away} {to be with him}.

²⁵When Methuselah was 187 years old, he had {a son named} Lamech. ²⁶After Lamech's birth, Methuselah lived {another} 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁷So Methuselah lived a total of 969 years, {and} then he died.

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, he had a son, ²⁹and he named him Noah {which means "rest,"} {because} he said, "This {son} will give us rest from the difficult work that we have to do because Yahweh has cursed the ground." ³⁰After Noah's birth, Lamech lived {another} 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ³¹So Lamech lived a total of 777 years, {and} then he died.

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

Chapter 6

¹Now it happened that people began to multiply {in number} all over the earth, and they were having daughters.

²{When those girls grew up,} the sons of God saw that they were beautiful, so they chose any of them that they wanted and married them. ³Then Yahweh said {to himself}, "My Spirit will not put up with mankind forever, because they are {very} corrupt. I will give them 120 years {to repent}."

⁴The Nephilim lived on the earth during that time and also later on. {That happened} when the sons of God slept with the daughters of mankind, and those women gave birth to children for them. Their children were {the Nephilim who were} the famous, mighty men who lived long ago.

⁵Yahweh saw that the people on the earth had become very evil, and that everything they thought about and desired was completely evil all the time. ⁶As a result, he regretted that he had made them {to live} on the earth, and his heart was filled with grief. ⁷So he said {to himself}, "I will completely destroy from the earth {all} the people whom I created. "{In fact, {I will destroy} {not only} {all} the people, but also {all} the animals, including the creatures that crawl {on the ground} and the birds {that fly} in the sky, because I am sorry that I {ever} made them." ⁸But Yahweh was pleased with Noah.

⁹Here is {more of} the history about Noah and his descendants: Noah was a man who did what was right. Out of all the people living at that time God considered him to be the only one who was blameless, and he lived in a close relationship with God. ¹⁰Eventually Noah had {his} three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

¹¹Now {the people on} the earth had become wicked according to God's standards, and all over the earth they were doing violent things. ¹²God saw how wicked {everyone on} the earth had become, because all the people on the earth * were {continually} behaving in evil ways. ¹³So he said to Noah, "I am going to destroy all people, because all over the earth they are doing violent things. In fact, I am going to destroy them and {everything else on} the earth {too}. ¹⁴{Therefore} {you must} build a {very} large boat for yourself {and your family} out of gopher wood. Build rooms inside the boat, and seal it inside and outside with tar {to keep water out}. ¹⁵You must make the boat 140 meters long, 23 meters wide and 14 meters high. ¹⁶Make a half-meter high opening below the roof {all the way around} at the top of the walls {to let light and air in}. Put a door in the side of the boat, and build three levels {on the inside}. ¹⁷Listen, I am going to bring a flood over the {whole} earth to destroy all the creatures under the sky that breathe {air}. {As a result,} every {living} thing that is {anywhere} on land will die! ¹⁸But I will make my covenant with you, so you must go into the boat and {take} your wife and your sons and their wives with you. ¹⁹You must also take into the boat pairs of every {kind of} living creature, including every {kind of} animal, to keep {them} alive with you. Make sure that there are male and female {pairs} {of each kind}. ²⁰Pairs of every kind of bird and every kind of animal, including every kind of creature that moves on the ground, will come to you so that you keep them alive {in the boat}. ²¹You must {also} gather all the different kinds of food that people and animals eat and store it {on the boat} with you, so that there will be {enough} food for you {and your family} and for {all} the animals." ²²So, that is what Noah did; he did everything exactly as God had commanded him {to do}.

Chapter 7

¹Then {after they had finished building the boat,} Yahweh commanded Noah, "You and your entire family must go into the boat, because I have seen that you are the {only} one among the people living today who is living rightly according to my standards. ²Take with you seven male and female pairs of every {kind of} pure animal, and a male and female pair of {every kind of} impure animal, ³{and} also seven male and female pairs of {every kind of} bird {that flies} in the sky, so that {later} their offspring live all over the earth. ⁴{You must do that,} because seven days from today I will cause it to rain {all} over the earth for forty days and forty nights. In that way, I will completely destroy from the earth every living creature that I have made." ⁵Then Noah did everything {exactly} as Yahweh had commanded him {to do}.

⁶Noah was 600 years old when the floodwaters covered the earth. ⁷{That is when} he and his wife and his sons and their wives went together into the boat so that they would not die in the flood. ⁸{Also,} {every kind of} pure animal and {every kind of} impure animal and {every kind of} bird, {including} every {kind of creature} that moves on land, ⁹came in pairs to Noah {and went} into the boat. {They were} male and female {pairs}, just as God had commanded him {to take along}.

¹⁰So it happened that after seven days, water started to flood the earth. ¹¹When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month {of the year}, on that {very} day all the springs in the deep ocean started pouring out water. {God also caused} the water in the sky to start pouring down, as if he had opened {huge} floodgates {in the sky}, ¹²so that it rained {continuously} all over the earth for forty days and forty nights.

¹³{So it was that} on the same day {that the flood started}, Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, along with his wife and his sons' three wives {all} went into the boat. ¹⁴They had with them every kind of living creature, including every kind of livestock and every {other} kind of creature that lives on the land, and every kind of bird {and} everything {else} that flies. ¹⁵Pairs of every {kind of} living thing that breathes {air} came to Noah {and went} into the boat. ¹⁶Those animals were male and female {pairs} from every {kind of} living thing; they went {into the boat} just as God had commanded Noah. Then {after they were all inside,} Yahweh closed the door {of the boat} behind them.

¹⁷For forty days {and forty nights} the flood kept getting deeper and deeper {all} over the earth, and as the water rose, it lifted up the boat so that it floated {on the water} above the ground. ¹⁸So the floodwaters continued to rise and get much deeper {all} over the earth, while the boat floated {safely} on the surface of the water. ¹⁹Eventually the water became so deep on the earth that {even} all the highest mountains everywhere under the sky were covered {with water}. ²⁰{In fact,} the water rose {about} seven meters above {the highest mountain tops}, so that they were {completely} covered. ²¹Then all the creatures that lived on the earth died, including {all} the birds, and the livestock, and the {other} living creatures, including every {kind of} creature that lived in large groups on the earth, and all people. ²²Every living creature that breathed air and lived on dry land died. ²³That is how Yahweh completely destroyed all the living creatures that lived on the earth, including {all} people and livestock and {all the other} creatures that live {on the land} and also the birds {that fly} in the sky. Yes, he completely destroyed everything {that lived} on the earth, so that the only ones who were still alive were Noah and his family and the animals that were with them in the boat. ²⁴The water continued to cover the {entire} earth for 150 days.

Chapter 8

¹But God did not forget Noah {and his family} and all the animals, including all the livestock, that {were} with them in the boat, and he caused a wind to blow over {the water that was covering} the earth, so that the water {started to} go down. ²{He also caused} the springs in the deep {ocean} to stop {gushing}, and {he caused} the water to stop pouring from the sky, so that it stopped raining. ³Then the water steadily went down from {the surface of} the land, and after the 150 days {had passed,} the water had gone down ⁴so {much} that on the seventeenth day of the seventh month {of the year}, the boat came to rest on {one of} the mountains in the Ararat mountain range. ⁵Then the floodwaters continued to go down until on the first {day} of the tenth month {of the year}, the peaks of the {surrounding} mountains became visible {above the water}.

⁶After forty {more} days {had passed}, Noah opened a window in the boat that he had made, ⁷and he released a raven, which kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up {more} from the land. ⁸Meanwhile Noah {also} released a dove to find out if the water had gone down from the surface of the ground. ⁹But water was {still} covering the entire earth, so the dove did not find anywhere to land and rest. Then it returned to Noah in the boat, and Noah reached out, caught it and brought it {back} into the boat. ¹⁰Noah waited another seven days, then he released the dove from the boat again. ¹¹That evening the dove returned to him, and he saw that {it had} a fresh green olive {tree} leaf in its beak! That's how Noah realized that the water had gone down {further} from the land.

¹²Then he waited seven more days and he released the dove {again}, but {this time} it did not come back to him again.

¹³So it was, when {Noah was} 601 years old, on the first {day} of the first month {of the year}, the water had {almost} dried up from the land. Then Noah removed {part of} the roof of the boat and looked around, and he saw that the surface of the ground was {almost} dry. ¹⁴Then by the twenty-seventh day of the second month {of the year}, the land had dried off.

¹⁵Then God commanded Noah, ¹⁶"Come out of the boat, together with your wife, your sons and your sons' wives. ¹⁷Bring out all the living creatures that are with you, all of them, including the birds, the livestock and every {other} animal that moves on land, so that they can live all over the earth, {yes,} so that they can have many young and increase {in numbers} {all} over the earth." ¹⁸So Noah came out {of the boat}, along with his wife and his sons and their wives. ¹⁹Every living creature, {including} all the animals that crawl and all the birds, {and} everything {else} that lives on land {also} came out of the boat in groups of their own kind.

²⁰Then Noah made an altar {out of stones} {to offer sacrifices} to Yahweh, and he chose some of every {kind of} clean animal and every {kind of} clean bird, and {killed them and} burned {their bodies} on the altar as an offering {to Yahweh} {to worship him}. ²¹Yahweh smelled the aroma {of the offerings} and was pleased, and he thought to himself, " Never again will I curse the ground because of mankind's sin, {even} though the desires of their hearts {are} evil from the time they are children. And never again will I destroy every living creature the way I {just} did. ²²As long as the earth {still} exists, {each year} there will always be a season to plant seeds and a season to harvest {crops}, as well as cold weather and hot weather, summer and winter, and day and night."

Chapter 9

¹Then God blessed Noah and his sons by saying to them, "Have many children so that you {and your descendants} will become numerous and live all over the earth. ²Every living creature on the earth will be afraid and terrified of you, including every bird {that flies} in the sky, {along} with every creature that moves on the ground, and all the fish in the sea. I have put them {all} under your authority. ³{From now on} every creature that is alive and moves is yours {to eat} as food. In the same way that {I provided you} green plants {for food}, {now} I provide you everything {for food}. ⁴However you must never eat meat that still has its blood {in it} which made it live. {First drain the blood out.} ⁵Also, if {one of} you murders anyone, I definitely require that he must die. {In fact,} if any animal {kills a human being}, I require that it must die. {That's true} also for human beings; if anyone {murders} another person, I require that he must die. ⁶{That's right,} you must put to death anyone who murders a human being, because God made human beings to be like himself.

⁷" Now {as for} you, have many children so that you {and your descendants} will become numerous. Spread out all over the earth and become numerous everywhere."

⁸Then God said to Noah and his sons, ⁹"Listen {carefully} to me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, including the birds, the livestock, and all the {other} living creatures on the earth {that are} with you. {That includes} all {those} that came out of the ark, and every living creature {that will ever live} on the earth. ¹¹My covenant that I'm establishing with you is that never again will all living things die from a flood. "That's right, never again will I use a flood to destroy {everything on} the earth."

¹²Then God continued, " This is what I will use to show {everyone} that I have made this covenant between me and you and every living creature that is with you, as well as all people and animals that will ever live: ¹³I will put my rainbow in the clouds to remind {everyone} that I have made this covenant between me and {everything that lives on} the earth. ¹⁴So whenever I cause clouds to form {in the sky} above the earth and a rainbow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵then I will think of {and keep} my covenant that I have established between me and you and every living creature, {yes,} with all people and animals, that never again will I use a flood to destroy all living things. ¹⁶Yes,

whenever a rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and keep the covenant that never ends between me and every living creature, {yes,} with all people and animals that live on the earth."

¹⁷Then God concluded by saying to Noah, "That is what I will do to remind {everyone} that I have made this covenant between me and everything that lives on the earth."

¹⁸Noah's sons who came out of the ark {after the flood} were Shem, Ham and Japheth; Ham was the father of {a son named} Canaan. ¹⁹It was the descendants of Noah's three sons who populated the entire earth {again}.

²⁰After awhile, Noah, who was a farmer, planted {some} grape vines {and made wine from the grapes}. ²¹Then {one day} he drank {too much of} the wine, so that he became drunk and was {lying} naked inside his tent. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked, and he went outside and told his two brothers {about it}.

²³However Shem and Japheth took a robe, and held it {between them} at shoulder level and walked backward {into the tent} and covered their father's naked body {with it}. {As they did that,} they kept their faces turned away so that they would not see him naked.

²⁴Later Noah woke up from being drunk, and he found out that his youngest son {Ham} had dishonored him. ²⁵So he exclaimed {about him}, " I {ask God to} curse {Ham's son} Canaan! He will be the lowest servant for Ham's brothers." ²⁶Then Noah said, "Praise Yahweh, {who is} the God who takes care of Shem! May God cause Canaan to be Shem's servant. ²⁷I {also} ask God to give Japheth much land, and enable him to live together {in peace} with Shem. May God {also} cause Canaan to be Japheth's servant."

²⁸From {the time that} the flood {began}, Noah lived {another} 350 years, ²⁹so that he lived a total of 950 years before he died.

Chapter 10

¹This is the record of {the names of} Noah's sons Shem, Ham and Japheth, and the descendants whom they had after the flood.

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

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

⁴Javan's sons were Elishah and Tarshish, {and he was the ancestor of} the Kittites and the Dodanites.

⁵From Japheth's descendants came the people groups who lived {in regions} near the {Mediterranean} Sea. They spread out into their own territories, and each {group} spoke its own language. They each had their own families, which {grew and} became their own people groups. "

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

⁷Cush's sons were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtecah. And Raamah's sons were Sheba and Dedan.

⁸Cush {also} had {a son named} Nimrod, who was the first {person} to be a powerful {ruler} on the earth. ⁹He was {also} a great hunter whom Yahweh blessed. That's why people say {about other great men}, " {That man is} like Nimrod, a great hunter whom Yahweh blessed." ¹⁰Nimrod started ruling as king {over} {the cities of} Babel, Erech, Akkad and Calneh, {which were} {all} {located} in the region of Shinar. ¹¹From there he went to {the region of} Assyria where he built {the cities of} Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah ¹²and Resen, {which is located} between {the cities of} Nineveh and the great city of Calah.

¹³Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, ¹⁴Pathrusites, Casluhites and Caphtorites. The Philistines descended from the Casluhites.

¹⁵Canaan had Sidon {who was} his firstborn {son}. {He was} also {the ancestor of} the Hittites, ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites. Later those families {that descended} from Canaan spread out, ¹⁹so that the territory where the Canaanites lived reached from {the city of} Sidon {in the north} all the way {south} toward {the city of} Gerar to {the city of} Gaza, then as far {east} as {the cities of} Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, all the way to {the city of} Lasha.

²⁰Those {people} are Ham's descendants and each one had his own family. Each family {grew and} became its own people group that spoke its own language and lived in its own territory.

²¹Shem also had {some} sons. He was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber, and his older brother was Japheth. ²²Shem's sons were Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud and Aram.

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

²⁴Arpachshad had {a son named} Shelah, then Shelah had {a son named} Eber. ²⁵Then Eber had two sons: the name of the first was Peleg {which means "division"}, because during his lifetime {the people on} the earth divided {into separate groups} {and spread out everywhere}. Peleg's {younger} brother's name was Joktan. ²⁶Joktan had {sons named} Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. Those were all Joktan's sons. ³⁰The region where they {and their descendants} lived reached from {the city of} Mesha {in the west} all the way to {the city of} Sephar {and} the hill country in the east.

³¹Those {people} are Shem's descendants and each one had his own family. Each family {grew and} became its own people group that spoke its own language and lived in its own territory.

³²{All} those family groups descended from Noah's sons. Each family group had its own descendants and became its own people group. In fact, after the flood {all} the people groups on the earth descended from them and spread out everywhere.

Chapter 11

¹Now {at first,} all {the people on} the earth spoke the same language, so that everyone understood each other's words. ²As time passed, they moved from the east, and came to a wide, flat valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³Then they urged each other, "Come on, let's {work together and} make bricks {from clay} and harden them with fire." They used bricks {to build with} instead of stone, and they used tar {between the bricks} instead of mortar. ⁴Then they said {to each other}, "Come on, let's build a city for ourselves that has a {high} tower that reaches up to heaven, so that we make ourselves famous, and so that we do not spread out all over the earth."

⁵But {one day} Yahweh came down {from heaven} and looked at the city and the tower that the people were building. ⁶Then he said, "Look, they are one people {group} and they all speak the same language. This is {only} the beginning of what they can do {together}. Soon nothing that they plan {to do} will be impossible for them. ⁷{So} let's go down there {now} and mix up their language, so that they are not able to understand what they say to each other." ⁸That is how Yahweh caused the people to leave from there and spread out all over the earth, so that they stopped building the city {and the tower}. ⁹That is why the name of the city is Babel {which means "mixed up"}, because that is where Yahweh mixed up the language that everyone on the earth shared, and {in that way} he made them spread out from there all over the earth.

¹⁰This is the record of Shem's descendants:

Two years after the flood {began}, when Shem was 100 years old, he had {a son named} Arpachshad. ¹¹After Arpachshad was born, Shem lived {another} 500 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arpachshad was 35 years old, he had {a son named} Shelah. ¹³After Shelah was born, Arpachshad lived {another} 403 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴When Shelah was 30 years old, he had {a son named} Eber. ¹⁵After Eber was born, Shelah lived {another} 403 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber was 34 years old, he had {a son named} Peleg. ¹⁷After Peleg was born, Eber lived {another} 430 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg was 30 years old, he had {a son named} Reu. ¹⁹After Reu was born, Peleg lived {another} 209 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu was 32 years old, he had {a son named} Serug. ²¹After Serug was born, Reu lived {another} 207 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

²²When Serug was 30 years old, he had {a son named} Nahor. ²³After Nahor was born, Serug lived {another} 200 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

²⁴When Nahor was 29 years old, he had {a son named} Terah. ²⁵After Terah was born, Nahor lived {another} 119 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

²⁶After Terah was 70 years old, he had {sons named} Abram, Nahor and Haran.

²⁷Here is the history about Terah and his descendants: Terah's sons were Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran's son was named Lot. ²⁸While his father was still alive, Haran died in the land where he was born, in {the city of} Ur where the Chaldeans lived. ²⁹Then Abram and Nahor each married a wife. Abram's wife was named Sarai, and Nahor's wife was Milcah. Milcah and {her sister} Iscah were the daughters of {Nahor's brother} Haran. ³⁰But Sarai was not able to become pregnant, {so} she did not have any children.

³¹Then Terah took his son Abram, and his grandson Lot, who was Haran's son, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, who was Abram's wife, and they {all} left from {the city of} Ur where the Chaldeans lived to go to the land of Canaan. But when they arrived at {the city of} Haran, they decided to live there {instead}. ³²Then {many years later} when Terah was 205 years old, he died {there} in {the city of} Haran.

Chapter 12

¹{One day} Yahweh commanded Abram, "You must leave behind your homeland and your relatives, including your father's family, {and move} to the land that I will guide you to. ²I will make you {and your descendants} become an important people group, and I will bless you {all}. I will make you important {and well-known}, and you {and your descendants} will bless {many people}. ³I will bless everyone who blesses you, but I will curse anyone who curses you. I will use you {and your descendants} to bless all the people on the earth."

⁴So Abram left {the city of Haran} just as Yahweh had commanded him {to do}, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left from there. ⁵He took {with him} his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot and everything that they owned, including servants {and everything else} they had acquired in {the city of} Haran, and they {all} started traveling to the land of Canaan. When they arrived there, ⁶they traveled through the land as far as the city of Shechem, to Moreh's oak tree. At that time the Canaanites were {still living} in that land, ⁷but Yahweh appeared to Abram and said {to him}, "I will give this land to your descendants." So Abram built an altar {out of stones} in that place {and burned sacrifices on it} to Yahweh, because Yahweh had appeared to him {there}.

⁸From {the city of} Shechem, Abram {and his family} moved {south} to the hill country that was east of {the town of} Bethel. They set up their tents between Bethel to the west and {the town of} Ai to the east. There Abram built another altar {and burned sacrifices on it} to Yahweh, and he addressed Yahweh by his name as he worshiped him.

⁹Then Abram {and his family} moved from place to place {southward} until they reached the Negev {Desert}.

¹⁰Now there was a famine in the Negev {Desert}, so Abram {and his family} headed {further} south toward {the country of} Egypt to live there for a while, because the famine was {so} severe. ¹¹Just before they arrived in Egypt, Abram said to his wife Sarai, "Please listen {to me}, I know that you are a very beautiful woman. ¹²When the people in Egypt see you {with me}, they will say that you are my wife. Then they will kill me and let you live {so that they can take you}. ¹³{So} please tell people that you are my sister, so that they will treat me well because of you and let me live."

¹⁴That's {exactly} what happened: When Abram {and his family} arrived in {the country of} Egypt, the people there saw that Sarai was very beautiful. ¹⁵When the {Egyptian} king's officials spotted her, they highly recommended her to the king. So he had them bring her to his palace {to be one of his wives}. ¹⁶The king thought that Abram was Sarai's brother, so he treated him well. He gave him {many} sheep and cattle, as well as men and women servants, male and female donkeys, and camels.

¹⁷But since the king had taken Abram's wife Sarai, Yahweh afflicted the king and his family with severe illnesses. ¹⁸So the king summoned Abram {before him} and said {to him}, " You have treated me very badly! You should have told me that Sarai is your wife! ¹⁹You should not have said that she is your sister, so that I ended up taking her to be my wife! So now, here is your wife. Take her and leave {my country}!" ²⁰Then the king ordered {some of} his soldiers to make sure that Abram left, so they forced him to leave {the country}, along with his wife and everything that he owned.

Chapter 13

¹Then Abram left {the country of} Egypt {and traveled} {back} to the Negev {Desert}. {He took} with him his wife and everything that they owned, and also {his nephew} Lot. ²{By that time} Abram had become very rich so that he owned {many} livestock and {much} silver and gold. ³From the Negev {Desert} he {and his family} traveled from place to place {northward} {until they came} to {the town of} Bethel, to the place where he had lived in tents before, between {the towns of} Bethel and Ai. ⁴That is the {same} place where he had previously built an altar. There {again} he {sacrificed animals on the altar and} worshiped Yahweh by name.

⁵Now Lot, who was traveling with {his uncle} Abram, also had {many} sheep and cattle and {many} tents. ⁶In fact, they {both} owned so many livestock that they could not live in the same area. There was not enough land to provide enough food and water for all their animals. ⁷As a result, the men who took care of Abram's livestock and the men who took care of Lot's livestock started to argue with each other. Besides that, the Canaanites and the Perizzites were {also} living in that land at that time.

⁸Finally {one day} Abram said to Lot, "Please, since we are close relatives, let's do something so that you and I, and your herdsmen and my herdsmen, do not need to argue. ⁹Look, the entire land is available to you {to choose from}. Please {choose where you want to live and} let's live in separate places. If you choose {the land to} the left {of here}, then I will take {the land to} the right, or if you choose {the land to} the right {of here}, then I will take {the land to} the left."

¹⁰Lot looked {all} around and he noticed that the entire Jordan {River} Valley, all the way to {the town of} Zoar, had plenty of water. {It was lush and green} like the garden that Yahweh had planted or like the country of Egypt. {That is what it was like} before Yahweh destroyed {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah {which were also in that valley}.

¹¹So Lot chose for himself the entire Jordan {River} Valley. Then he {left Abram and} moved to the east {to live there}. That is how Abram and Lot went separate ways from each other. ¹²Abram stayed {where he was} in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived {in another part of the land} among the cities in the {Jordan River} valley and {eventually} moved his tents to {the city of} Sodom. ¹³But the people {who lived} in {the city of} Sodom were {extremely} wicked and were {always} sinning terribly against Yahweh.

¹⁴After Lot had left Abram, Yahweh said to Abram, " Look around from the place where you live: Look north, south, east and west. ¹⁵All the land that you see I will give to you and your descendants {to own} forever. ¹⁶In fact, I will

give you so many descendants that they will be as {numerous as} the {specks of} dust on the earth. No one will be able to count how many descendants you have, just as no one can count how many {specks of} dust there are.

¹⁷Now go walk through the land {in all directions}, including its length and its width, {and look it over,} because I am giving it {all} to you." ¹⁸Then Abram {obeyed Yahweh and} moved his tents to the oak trees that were {on the land that was} owned by {a man named} Mamre, and he lived there near {the city of} Hebron. There he built an altar {out of stones} {and burned sacrifices on it} to {thank and} worship Yahweh.

Chapter 14

¹During that time Amraphel was the king over {the land of} Shinar, Arioch was the king over {the city of} Ellasar, Chedorlaomer was the king over {the land of} Elam, and Tidal was the king over the Goyim {people}. ²Those {four} kings {joined forces and} went to war against {five other kings, including} Bera {who was} the king over {the city of} Sodom, Birsha {who was} the king over {the city of} Gomorrah, Shinab {who was} the king over {the city of} Admah, Shemeber {who was} the king over {the city of} Zeboyim, and the king over {the town of} Bela, which is {also called} Zoar. ³Those {five kings} all united their armies {as allies} {and fought against the four kings} in the Siddim Valley, which is now the Salt Sea.

⁴For twelve years the five kings had paid tribute to {King} Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they started to rebel {against him}. ⁵Then in the fourteenth year {King} Chedorlaomer and the {three} kings who were his allies {united their armies and} went {to war} {against all their enemies}. {First} they defeated the Rephaites in {the city of} Ashteroth-Karnaim, then the Zuzites in {the city of} Ham, the Emities in {the city of} Shaveh-Kiriathaim, ⁶and the Horites {who lived} in the Seir Mountains {all the way} to {the city of} El Paran, which is near the desert. ⁷Next those {four} kings {and their armies} turned around and went to {the city of} En Mishpat, which is {also called} Kadesh. They conquered the entire territory where the Amalekites lived and also the Amorites who were living in {the city of} Hazazon Tamar.

⁸Then the king over {the city of} Sodom, the king over {the city of} Gomorrah, the king over {the city of} Admah, the king over {the city of} Zeboyim, and the king over {the town of} Bela, which is {also called} Zoar, marched out {with their armies} into the Siddim Valley and got ready to fight ⁹against Chedorlaomer {who was} the king over {the land of} Elam, Tidal {who was} the king over the Goyim, Amraphel {who was} the king over {the land of} Shinar, and Arioch {who was} the king over {the kingdom of} Ellasar. {Then} the four kings attacked the five {kings} {and started defeating them}.

¹⁰Now there were many tar pits in the Siddim Valley. As the kings over {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah {and their soldiers} were running away {from the battle}, some {of their soldiers} died there {in the tar pits}. Those who escaped ran away to the mountains {to hide}. ¹¹Then the four kings seized all the {people's} belongings in {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah, including all their food, and carried it away. ¹²They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his belongings, since he was living in {the city of} Sodom.

¹³⁻¹⁴At that time, Abram was living near the big trees that belonged to Mamre, who belonged to the Amor clan. Abram had made an agreement with Mamre and his two brothers, Eshcol and Aner, that they would help each other if there was a war. One of the men who escaped from the battle told Abram the Hebrew what had happened and that the enemy had captured his nephew, Lot, and taken him away. So Abram summoned 318 men who were his servants, men who had been with Abram since they were born and who knew how to fight as warriors. They all went together and pursued their enemies as far as the city of Dan. ¹⁵There during the night, Abram and his men divided {into groups}, {surprise} attacked the {four} kings {and their soldiers}, and defeated them. Then they chased them as far as {the town of} Hobah, which is north of {the city of} Damascus. ¹⁶As a result, Abram recovered all the {people's} belongings {that the four kings had taken}. He also rescued his nephew Lot and his belongings, as well as the women and {all} the other people {whom the kings had captured}.

¹⁷After Abram defeated {King} Chedorlaomer and the {other} {three} kings who were his allies, he started to return {home}. When he reached the Shaveh Valley, which is {also called} the King's Valley, the king over {the city of} Sodom came there and welcomed him. ¹⁸Melchizedek who was the king over {the city of} Salem {also came there,

and he} brought food and wine {for Abram and his men to eat and drink}. King Melchizedek was also a priest who served the greatest God, ¹⁹so he blessed Abram by saying {to him}, "May the greatest God, who owns heaven and earth, bless you. ²⁰Praise the greatest God, because he enabled you to defeat your enemies!" Then Abram gave {King} Melchizedek ten percent of everything {that he had recovered in the battle}. ²¹After that, the king over {the city of} Sodom said to Abram, " {Please} return to me the people {whom you rescued}, but keep for yourself {their} belongings {that you recovered}." ²²But Abram replied to him, "{I will not keep anything, because} I have raised my hand {and sworn} to Yahweh, {who is} the greatest God {and} the One who owns heaven and earth, ²³that I will not accept anything that is yours {or your people's}, not even a string or the strap from a sandal. That way you can never say that you {were the one who} made me rich. ²⁴{So I will accept nothing,} except what my warriors ate and the part {of the plunder} that Aner, Eshcol and Mamre deserve for being my allies. {Please} let them have their part {of the plunder}."

Chapter 15

¹After that, Yahweh said to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I will protect you, {and} I will give you a very great reward." ²But Abram said {to him}, " Yahweh, my Master, even if you reward me greatly, {that will not benefit me, since} I still have no children. So {when I die,} the one who will inherit all that I have is {my servant} Eliezer {who is} {a foreigner} from {the city of} Damascus." ³Then Abram continued, "That's right, you have not given me any children, so that now {when I die,} {one of} my household servants will inherit everything I own!" ⁴But immediately Yahweh said to Abram, " {No,} your servant {Eliezer} will not inherit your property, rather it will be your very own {biological} son who will inherit it." ⁵Then Yahweh took Abram outside {his tent} and said {to him}, "Look {up} at the {night} sky and count how many stars there are, if {in fact} you are able to count them {all}." {While Abram was looking at the stars,} Yahweh said to him, " That is how many descendants you will have."

⁶Abram trusted Yahweh, and because of that, Yahweh considered him to be righteous. ⁷Then Yahweh said to him, "I am Yahweh who brought you {here} from {the city of} Ur that the Chaldeans rule, to give this land to you to own." ⁸But Abram asked {him}, " Yahweh, my Master, how can I be sure that this land will be mine?" ⁹Yahweh replied, "Bring me a heifer, a female goat and a male sheep, each which is three years old, as well as a dove and a young pigeon." ¹⁰So {the next day} Abram brought all those {animals} to Yahweh {and killed them}. Then he cut their bodies in half lengthwise and laid each half a short space across from the other half {in two rows}, except for the birds, which he did not cut in half. ¹¹Then {some} vultures flew down {and landed} on the {animal} bodies {to eat them}, but Abram chased them away.

¹²Later as the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and suddenly it became completely dark and he became terrified. ¹³Then Yahweh said to him, " I want you to know that your descendants will live as foreigners in a country that is not their own. They will serve the people {of that country} {as slaves}, and those people will treat them cruelly for 400 years. ¹⁴But I will punish those people whom they serve. After that, your descendants will leave {that country} and take many possessions with them. ¹⁵As for you, after you have lived a good long life, you will die peacefully and join your ancestors {who have died before you}. ¹⁶Then four generations later your descendants will return here {to live}, because that's when the Amorites will have sinned as much as I will allow {before I take away their land and give it to your descendants}.

¹⁷When the sun had set, it became {very} dark. Then suddenly a {clay} pot appeared {that was full} of burning coals and had smoke coming from it, and also a blazing torch, and they {both} went between the {animal} halves. ¹⁸At that time Yahweh made a covenant with Abram and said, "I am giving your descendants this land, {which extends} from Egypt's river {in the south} {up} to the great Euphrates River {in the north}. ¹⁹{That includes} the land which {presently} belongs to the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."

Chapter 16

¹Now Abram's wife Sarai had {still} not given birth to {any} children for him, but she owned an Egyptian servant woman whose name was Hagar. ²So she told Abram, "Please listen {to this}: Yahweh has not allowed me to have children. {So} please sleep with my servant {Hagar}. Maybe I can have a family through her {children}." Abram agreed to do what Sarai requested. ³{This all happened} after Abram {and his family} had lived in the land of Canaan for ten years. {That is when} his wife Sarai gave her Egyptian servant Hagar to him to be his {second} wife.

⁴So Abram slept with Hagar and she became pregnant. But when she realized that she was pregnant, she started to disrespect her mistress {Sarai}. ⁵So Sarai complained to Abram, "It is your fault that I am suffering! I gave my servant to you {to sleep with}, but now that she realizes that she is pregnant, she disrespects me! I ask Yahweh to judge whether it is you or I who is responsible {for this}!" ⁶Abram replied to her, " Listen, you are in charge of your servant. Do with her what{ever} you think is best."

Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she ran away {from home to get away} from her. ⁷Then one of Yahweh's angels came to Hagar by a spring of water in the desert. It was the spring beside the road to {the city of} Shur.

⁸And the angel asked {her}, "Hagar, Sarai's servant, where have you come from, and where are you headed?" She answered {him}, " I am running away from my mistress Sarai." ⁹Then Yahweh's angel told her, "Go back {home} to your mistress and {humbly} obey her {as her servant}."

¹⁰Then the angel added, " I {Yahweh} will give you so many descendants that no one will be able to count them all."

¹¹Then the angel {also} told her, "Listen, {as you know,} you are pregnant. You will have a son, and you are to name him Ishmael, {which means " God listens,"} because Yahweh listened to you when you were suffering {and helped you}. ¹²{When Ishmael grows up,} he will be {proud and free} like a wild donkey. He will fight against everyone, and everyone will fight against him. In fact, he will {even} be hostile toward all his relatives."

¹³Then Hagar gave the name El Roi to Yahweh who had spoken to her, because she exclaimed {to herself}, "I just now saw here the back of God who sees me!" {El Roi means, " the God who sees."} ¹⁴That is why the name of that well is Beer Lahai Roi {which means "Well of the Living One who sees me"}. It is {still} there between {the cities of} Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵Then Hagar {returned home and} gave birth to a son for Abram, and Abram named his son Ishmael. ¹⁶Abram was 86 years old when Hagar had Ishmael for him.

Chapter 17

¹{Years} later, when Abram was 99 years old, Yahweh appeared to him and said to him, "I am Almighty God. Live in a way that pleases me so that you will be blameless. ²I will establish my agreement with you, and I will increase {the number of} your descendants so that they are very numerous."

³Then Abram bowed with his face to the ground {before God} {to show respect}, and God continued speaking to him, ⁴" Listen, this is what I will do to fulfill my agreement with you: I will make you the ancestor of many people groups. ⁵Your name will no longer be Abram, rather {from now on} it will be Abraham, because you will be the ancestor of many people groups. ⁶Yes, I will give you many, many descendants, so that you will become {the ancestor of many} people groups. In fact, some of your descendants will be kings. ⁷I will establish my agreement with you and {all} your descendants {who live} after you for {all} generations to come. It will be an agreement that never ends, that I will be your God and {the God} of {all} your descendants. ⁸I will also give to you and your descendants this land where you have been living as a foreigner, {that is,} the entire land of Canaan. They will own it forever, and I will be their God."

⁹Then God continued, "Now as for your part {in this agreement}, you must obey me. {That applies to} you as well as {all} your descendants for {all} generations to come. ¹⁰This is {what I require in} my agreement with you and your descendants: You must circumcise all males {who live} among you. ¹¹You must circumcise yourselves, and that {custom} will remind {you all} that {I made} this agreement with you. ¹²For all {future} generations you must circumcise {every} baby boy among you who is eight days old, as well as all {other} males {in your household}. {That includes} those from your own family as well as those who are not your descendants, but are servants {whom you} bought from foreigners. ¹³{That's right,} you must definitely circumcise {all of} them, {regardless of} whether they are sons from your own family or servants whom you have bought. That is how you must mark my agreement on your bodies to show that it is an agreement that never ends. ¹⁴In fact, if any man refuses to let you circumcise him, you must {send him away and} not allow him to associate with my people, {because} he has disobeyed {what I require in} my agreement."

¹⁵Then God {also} told Abraham, " {As for} your wife Sarai, do not call her Sarai {any more}, rather {from now on} her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶I will bless her, and I will definitely give you a son from her. In fact, I will bless her so that she will become {the ancestor of many} people groups, and some of her descendants will be kings over people groups."

¹⁷Then Abraham bowed with his face to the ground {before God} {to respect him}, but he laughed and thought to himself, "How can a hundred-year-old man {like me} father a child? And how can Sarah who is 90 years old {still} have a baby?" ¹⁸Then Abraham said to God, "Please let Ishmael be the one whom you bless {as my heir}!" ¹⁹God replied, " Yes, but your wife Sarah will give birth to a son for you, and you must name him Isaac. I will establish my agreement with him as a permanent agreement {that will also stay in effect} with {all} his descendants {who live} after him.

²⁰"I also heard what you asked me to do for Ishmael. {So} this is what I will do: I will bless him and give him many children and greatly increase {the number of} his descendants. {In fact,} he will be the father of twelve {sons who become} {powerful} leaders, and I will make him become {the ancestor of} a large people group. ²¹However I will establish my agreement with Isaac, whom Sarah will give birth to for you at this time next year." ²²After he had finished talking to Abraham, God left him.

²³Then Abraham gathered his son Ishmael and all the {other} males who were born in his household and all his male servants whom he had bought, {yes,} every male in his household. Then on that same day he circumcised them {all}, just as God had commanded him {to do}. ²⁴Abraham was 99 years old when they circumcised him, ²⁵and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when Abraham circumcised him. ²⁶{So it was,} on that same day they circumcised Abraham, and {he circumcised} his son Ishmael. ²⁷And all the {other} males in Abraham's household, {including} those {who had been} born in his household and those {whom he had} bought {as slaves} from foreigners, were circumcised with him.

Chapter 18

¹Then {one day} Yahweh appeared {again} to Abraham at the oak trees on Mamre's land, while he was sitting at the entrance of his tent during the hottest part of the day. ²Abraham looked up and saw that there were three men standing a short distance away. As soon as he saw them, he {jumped up and} hurried {to them} to greet them. Then he bowed {before them} {with his face} to the ground {to show respect}, ³and he said {to them}, "Sirs, if you consider me worthy {to be your host}, please do not leave here without letting me serve you {as my guests}. ⁴Please let me bring {you} some water, so that you can wash {the dust off} your feet, and then rest under {the shade of} this tree. ⁵Since you are here with me, let me {also} bring some food {for you} {to eat}, so that you can regain your strength before you continue on your way." They replied {to him}, "That's good, do what you have proposed." ⁶Then Abraham hurried into his tent to Sarah and told her, " Quickly use three batches of our best flour, and bake {some} bread." ⁷Then he ran {outside} to his herd {of cattle} and chose one of his best calves that would be good to eat. Then he took it to one of his servants, and the servant quickly butchered it and cooked it. ⁸Then

Abraham brought {some} yogurt and milk and the meat that his servant had prepared, and he put it {all} before his {three} guests {to eat}. Then he stood nearby them {where they were sitting} under the tree {and served them} while they ate. ⁹Then {one of} the men asked Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?" Abraham answered, " {She is} there in the tent." ¹⁰Then the man {who was actually Yahweh} said {to Abraham}, "I will definitely return {here} to visit you at this time next year, and when I do, your wife Sarah will have a {baby} son." Now Sarah was listening inside the entrance of the tent which was behind the man. ¹¹She and Abraham were {already} very old, so that Sarah was {far} past the age that she could have children. ¹²So she laughed to herself {in disbelief} and said {to herself}, " It doesn't seem possible that I could experience the pleasure {of having a child} now that I am too old {to conceive} and my husband is {also} old!" ¹³But Yahweh asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh {to herself} and say that she is too old to have a child?" ¹⁴Nothing is too difficult for Yahweh {to do}! At the time that I have set, I will return to you {here}. {Yes, I will come} at this time next year, and Sarah will {already} have a son." ¹⁵{When Sarah heard what the man said,} she was afraid, so she lied {to him} and said, " I did not laugh." But Yahweh replied, "That's not true. You did laugh."

¹⁶{When they had finished eating,} the {three} men got up {to leave} and started walking down toward {the city of} Sodom. Abraham escorted them {for a while} to see them on their way. ¹⁷Then Yahweh thought {to himself}, " Should I keep secret from Abraham what I am about to do {to the city of Sodom}? ¹⁸After all, he {and his descendants} will definitely become a great and powerful people group, and through him I will bless all the people groups in the world. ¹⁹In fact, I have chosen him so that he will train his children and his descendants, so that they will live the way I want them to live and do what is right and treat people justly. Therefore I will do for him everything I have promised him {that I will do}." ²⁰Then Yahweh said {to Abraham}, "I have heard that {the people of} {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah have become very evil, and they are sinning very terribly. ²¹So I must go down {to those cities} now and determine whether or not they are guilty of everything that I have heard against them. If {they are} not {guilty}, {then} I will know {it} {and I will not punish them}." ²²Then the {other two} men left Yahweh and Abraham behind and continued walking toward {the city of} Sodom, while Abraham remained {there} with Yahweh. ²³Then Abraham stepped closer {to Yahweh} and asked {him}, " Certainly you will not destroy righteous people {along} with wicked people, will you? ²⁴What {will you do} if there are 50 righteous people in the city {of Sodom}? Will you really {still} destroy {all the people in} the city rather than let them all live because of the 50 righteous people who live there? ²⁵Certainly you would never do such a thing as kill righteous people together with evil people, so that you are treating them both the same way! Certainly you would never do such a thing! As the Judge over everyone on the earth, will you not treat people justly?" ²⁶Yahweh replied {to him}, "If I find 50 righteous {people} in the city of Sodom, then I will spare the whole city {and everyone who lives there} because of them." ²⁷Then Abraham spoke up {again} and asked {Yahweh}, " My Lord, please excuse me for speaking to you so boldly, even though I am {as insignificant as} dirt and ashes {compared to you}. ²⁸{But} what {will you do} if there are only 45 righteous people {in the city} instead of 50? Will you destroy the whole city {and everyone in it} if there are five people too few {who are righteous}?" Yahweh answered, "I will not destroy the city, if I find 45 {righteous people living} there." ²⁹Then Abraham spoke again to Yahweh and asked, " What {will you do} if you find {only} 40 {righteous people} in the city? {Will you destroy it then?}" Yahweh answered, "I will not destroy {the city}, in order to save the 40 {righteous people}." ³⁰Then Abraham pleaded {with him}, " My Lord, please do not be angry {with me}, but let me ask {you} {another question}: What {will you do} if you find {only} 30 {righteous people} {living} there?" He replied, "I will not destroy {the city}, if I find 30 {righteous people} there." ³¹Then Abraham asked {him}, " My Lord, please excuse me for speaking to you so boldly, {but} what {will you do} if you find {only} 20 {righteous people} {living} in the city?" Yahweh replied, "I will not destroy the city, in order to save the 20 {righteous people}." ³²Then Abraham said, " My Lord, please do not be angry {with me}, but let me ask {you} just one more thing: What {will you do} if you find {only} ten {righteous people} in the city? "Yahweh answered {him}, " I will not destroy {the city}, in order to save the ten {righteous people}." ³³When Yahweh had finished talking with Abraham, he left {him}, and Abraham returned home.

Chapter 19

¹That evening the two angels arrived at {the city of} Sodom, while Lot was sitting at the gate of the city. When Lot saw them, he stood up and greeted them and {then} bowed {before them} with his face to the ground {to show respect}. ²Then he said {to them}, "Sirs, please listen. Please come to my house so that I can serve you and you can lodge for the night {there}. {That way} too {you can} wash {the dust off} your feet, then {tomorrow morning} you can get up early and continue traveling." But the two angels replied, " Thank you, but we will {just} stay in the public square tonight." ³However Lot continued to urgently invite them until they {finally agreed and} went with him to his house. Then Lot prepared a big meal for them, including {some} flat bread, and they {sat down and} ate {the meal}.

⁴{But} {after supper,} before they could lie down {to sleep}, {all} the men in the city of Sodom surrounded Lot's house, including men of all ages. {In fact,} all the people from every part {of the city were there}. ⁵Then they shouted to Lot, "Where are the {two} men who came to lodge with you tonight? Bring them outside to us so that we can have relations with them!" ⁶But Lot went outside near the doorway {to talk} to them, and he shut the door {of the house} behind him. ⁷Then he pleaded {with them}, " I beg you, my friends, do not do such an evil thing! ⁸Listen please, I have two daughters who have never had marital relations with a man. Please let me bring them out to you, so that you can do with them whatever you want. But do not harm these men, because they are my guests and I am responsible for their safety." ⁹But the men of Sodom shouted {at him}, "Get out of our way!" Then they said {to each other}, " This guy came {here} as a foreigner, and now he wants to judge us!" {Then they shouted at Lot,} "{Now} we will treat you worse than {we will treat} your {two} guests!" Then they started shoving hard against Lot and surged forward to break down the door {of his house}. ¹⁰But Lot's {two} guests {opened the door}, reached outside and {quickly} pulled him {back} into the house with them and closed the door. ¹¹Then they caused the men who were at the door of the house to be blind, every last one of them, so that they exhausted themselves {groping around} trying to find the door.

¹²Then the {two} angels asked Lot, " Do you have any other relatives here in Sodom? If you have sons-in-law or sons or daughters or any other relatives here, {hurry up and} get them away from this city, ¹³because we are about to destroy it. Yahweh has heard that the people of this city are guilty of serious sins, so he has sent us to destroy the city." ¹⁴So Lot went to his {future} sons-in-law who were engaged to his daughters, and he warned them, "Hurry up {and} leave this city, because Yahweh is about to destroy it!" But his sons-in-law thought that he was joking, {so they ignored him}.

¹⁵Early the next morning, the {two} angels urged Lot by saying, " Hurry up {and} take your wife and your two daughters {out of the city}! If you don't, you will die when {God} punishes {the people of} the city." ¹⁶Lot hesitated, but Yahweh was being merciful to him, so the {two} men grabbed his hand and the hands of his wife and his two daughters, and took them outside the city. ¹⁷As {soon as} the angels had taken them outside {the city}, one of them said {to Lot}, "Run away from here as fast as you can! Do not look behind you, and do not stop anywhere in the valley! Hurry to the mountains, or else you will die!" ¹⁸But Lot replied to them, " I beg you, sirs, please don't {make us do that}. ¹⁹Listen please. You have treated me well even though I am unimportant, and you have been very kind to me and saved my life. But I am not able to run {all the way} to the mountains before the disaster occurs and kills me. ²⁰{So} listen {to this} please: that town {up ahead} is near {enough} to run to {in time}, and it is {just} a small {town}. Please let us run there {and do not destroy it}, especially since it is so small. Then we can stay alive." ²¹The angel replied to Lot, "Alright, I will allow you to go to the {small} town that you're talking about and I will not destroy it. ²²{But} hurry up {now and} run there, because I cannot destroy anything until you get there." Since Lot said the town was small, the name of the town is Zoar {which means " small"}.

²³The sun was rising over the land as Lot {and his family} reached {the town of} Zoar. ²⁴Then Yahweh caused fire and burning rocks to fall like {heavy} rain from the sky on {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah. ²⁵{In that way,} he {completely} destroyed those {two} cities and the entire valley, including everyone who lived in the cities and {all} the plants in the area. ²⁶But Lot's wife, {who was} {walking} behind him, looked back {at the city}, and she turned into a statue of {solid} salt {rock}.

²⁷{Meanwhile} early that same morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood with Yahweh {the day before}. ²⁸He looked down at {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah and all {the rest of} the valley, and there in front of him, he saw that {lots of thick} smoke was billowing up over the land like smoke from a {huge} fire.

²⁹So it was {that} when God destroyed the cities in the valley, he did not forget Abraham, and so he saved Lot from the catastrophe that {completely} destroyed the cities which Lot had lived in.

³⁰After that, Lot was afraid to stay in {the town of} Zoar, so he and his two daughters moved from there to the mountains and lived in a cave. ³¹Then {one day} his oldest {daughter} said to the younger one, "Our father is old and there aren't any men around here to marry us, which is the custom {that people have} everywhere else in the world. ³²{So} come on, let's get our father drunk on wine, then let's have relations with him, so that we can continue our family line with him." ³³So that night they got their father drunk on wine. Then the older {daughter} went {to him} and had relations with him. But {he was so drunk that} he was not {even} aware that she got in bed {with him} or that she left.

³⁴The next day Lot's older {daughter} said to the younger one, " Listen, last night I slept with our father. Let's get him drunk on wine again tonight, then you {also} go {and} have relations with him, so that we can continue our family line with him." ³⁵So that night Lot's daughters got their father drunk on wine again. Then the younger {daughter} went and had relations with him. And {once again} {he was so drunk that} he was not aware that she got in bed {with him} or that she left.

³⁶In that way, both of Lot's daughters became pregnant from {having relations with} their father. ³⁷Later his older {daughter} gave birth to a son, and she named him Moab {which means "from my father"}. He became the ancestor of the Moabite people {who are still living} today. ³⁸Lot's younger {daughter} also gave birth to a son, and she named him Ben-Ammi {which means " son of my people"}. He became the ancestor of the Ammonite people {who are still living} today.

Chapter 20

¹Meanwhile Abraham {and his family} left the place where they were living {and moved south} to the Negev {Desert} area. There they lived between {the cities of} Kadesh and Shur, and they stayed for a while in {the city of} Gerar. ²{While they were there,} Abraham told {people} that his wife Sarah was his sister. So {one day} Abimelech, {who was} the king of Gerar, had {some of his servants} bring Sarah {to his home} {to be his wife}. ³But that night God appeared to {King} Abimelech in a dream and said to him, "Listen, you are about to die because the woman whom you have taken {to be your wife} is {already} married to someone else!" ⁴However Abimelech had not {yet} slept with Sarah, so he asked {God}, " My Lord, will you kill {me and my} people even if we are innocent? ⁵Abraham himself told me that Sarah was his sister. And she herself also said that he was her brother. {So} I took her {to be my wife} with a pure conscience, and I did not know that I was doing anything wrong!" ⁶God replied to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that it was with a pure conscience that you took Sarah {to be your wife}, and in fact I {am the one who} kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you sleep with her. ⁷So now you must give Abraham's wife back {to him}. He is a prophet {for me}, so he will ask me to be merciful to you, so that you will not die. However if you refuse to give Sarah back {to him}, you can be sure that you and all your people will definitely die!"

⁸Early the next morning {King} Abimelech got up and called together all of his officials. He told them everything that had happened, and they were very afraid {that God would punish them}. ⁹Then the king called in Abraham and said to him, " You have treated us very badly! I never did anything wrong to you, and yet you have caused me and the people whom I rule to be guilty of sinning terribly! You have wronged me in ways that should never be done {to anyone}!" ¹⁰Then {King} Abimelech asked him, "What motivated you to do what you did?" ¹¹Abraham answered {him}, " {I did it,} because I thought that surely no one in this place reveres God, so they will kill me to get my wife {for themselves}. ¹²Besides that, Sarah actually is my half-sister. We had the same father, but different

mothers, and {after we grew up,} we got married. ¹³{Years} later when God told me to leave my father's family, I asked her to do me a favor and tell people wherever we go that I am her brother."

¹⁴Then {King} Abimelech brought {many} sheep and cattle and male and female servants {to Abraham} and gave {them all} to him. He {also} gave Abraham's wife Sarah back to him. ¹⁵Then {King} Abimelech said {to him}, "Look, my land is available to you. Live {wherever} you decide is best." ¹⁶Then he {turned} to Sarah {and} said, "Listen, I am giving 1,000 pieces of silver to your brother. I'm doing this so that everyone knows you did nothing wrong, and to compensate you for everything {that has happened to you}." ¹⁷Then Abraham prayed to God {for King Abimelech}, so God healed him and his wife and his female servants, so that they could have children {again}. ¹⁸{Previously} Yahweh had kept all the women in Abimelech's household from conceiving because he had taken Abraham's wife Sarah.

Chapter 21

¹Then Yahweh blessed Sarah just as he had said {he would}. Yes, he did for her exactly what he had promised {to do}. ²So Sarah became pregnant and at the time {God had} appointed, she gave birth to a son for Abraham when he was old, just as God had promised him {that she would}. ³Then Abraham named his son Isaac, the son whom Sarah had given birth to. ⁴Also, when Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, just as God had commanded him {to do}.

⁵Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born. ⁶{When he was born,} Sarah exclaimed, "God has made me laugh {for joy}, {and} everyone who hears {about this} will laugh {for joy} with me!" ⁷She also exclaimed, "No one would have {even thought of} telling Abraham that I would have children. Yet I have given birth to a son {for him} when he is old!"

⁸Isaac grew as a child and reached the age when his mother stopped nursing him. When that happened, Abraham held a big feast {to celebrate}. ⁹But {during the feast} Sarah noticed that {Ishmael,} the son of {her} Egyptian {handmaid} Hagar and Abraham, was making fun of {Isaac}. ¹⁰So she {was angry and} told Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son! Her son must never get anything that my son Isaac will inherit {from you}!"

¹¹Abraham was very upset about that, because {Ishmael} was {also} his son {and he cared about him too}. ¹²But God said to Abraham, "Do not be upset about the boy or your slave woman. {Rather} listen to everything Sarah tells you {to do}, {and do it,} because Isaac is the one who will be the ancestor of your descendants {whom I promised to you}. ¹³But I will also make your slave woman's son become {the ancestor of} a {great} people group, because he is your son."

¹⁴Early the next morning Abraham got up, brought {some} food and a container of water to Hagar {and} put them on her back. Then he sent her off with the boy, and they left and wandered around in the desert near {the city of} Beersheba. ¹⁵When they had finished {all} the water in the container, she left her son under {the shade of} a bush. ¹⁶She thought {to herself}, "I cannot {bear to} watch my son die." So she went {away from him} and sat down by herself, about as far away as someone can shoot an arrow. Then she started crying loudly.

¹⁷God {also} heard the boy crying, so one of his angels called to Hagar from heaven and said, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid. God has heard the boy crying over there {and will take care of him}. ¹⁸{So} go help the boy get up and take care of him, because I {Yahweh} will make him become {the ancestor of} a great people group."

¹⁹Then God enabled Hagar to see a well of water, so she went {to the well}, filled her {water} container with water and gave her son a drink.

²⁰As the boy grew up, God was with him {and helped him}. He lived in the {Paran} Desert and became a {skilled} bowhunter. ²¹While he was there, his mother found a wife for him {who was} from the country of Egypt.

²²Meanwhile, one day {King} Abimelech {went} with his army captain Phicol {to Abraham} and said to him, "{I have noticed that} God is with you {and helps you} in everything that you do. ²³So now {please} vow to me here in God's

presence that you will never deceive me or my children or my descendants, {but that} just as I have treated you kindly, you {also} will be kind to me and {my people in} this country where you are living." ²⁴Abraham replied {to him}, "I vow {that I will do those things}."

²⁵Then Abraham complained to {King} Abimelech about a water well that Abimelech's servants had taken control of {from his servants}. ²⁶But Abimelech responded, "I do not know who did that. Besides that, you did not tell me {about it} {before} and so today is the first that I have heard about it." ²⁷Then Abraham gave {some of his} sheep and cattle to Abimelech, and he and Abimelech made a {peace} treaty {with one another}. ²⁸Abraham {also} separated seven female lambs from the flock by themselves. ²⁹So Abimelech asked him, "Why did you separate those seven lambs {from the rest of the flock}?" ³⁰Abraham replied, "Because I want you to accept them from me, to show {everyone} that you agree with me that I dug this well {and it belongs to me}." ³¹{Abimelech accepted the lambs,} so Abraham named that place Beersheba {which means "Well of the Seven" or "Well of the Vow"}, because that's where the two of them vowed {to live at peace with one another}.

³²After Abraham and {King} Abimelech made their treaty at Beersheba, Abimelech and his army captain Phicol left {from there} and returned {home} to {the capital city of} the Philistine territory {that he ruled as king}. ³³Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he worshiped Yahweh by name, {who is} the God who lives forever. ³⁴After that, Abraham lived {there} in the land of the Philistines for many years.

Chapter 22

¹Sometime later God {decided to} test Abraham. So he called to him, "Abraham!" Abraham replied, "Yes, {Lord}?"

²Then God commanded {him}, "Take your son {with you}, {yes,} your only son Isaac whom you love, and travel {with him} to the region of Moriah. There you are to burn him up {on an altar} as a sacrifice {to me}, on one of the mountains that I will show to you. "

³So the next morning Abraham got up early and put a {pack} saddle on his donkey {to get it ready} {for the trip}. Then he got his son Isaac and two of his servants, and they chopped {some} {fire}wood that they would use to burn the sacrifice {and loaded it on the donkey}. Then they started traveling to the place that God had told Abraham {to go to}. ⁴Three days later Abraham looked {ahead} and in the distance he could see the mountain {where they were headed}. ⁵Then he told his servants, "You {two} stay here with the donkey, while my son and I go {to the mountain} over there and worship {God}. Then we will come back to you."

⁶Then Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering {off the donkey} and loaded it on his son Isaac's shoulder {to carry}. He {himself} carried a fire pot {with hot coals in it} and a knife {to kill the sacrifice}. Then the two of them walked on together. ⁷{As they walked,} Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father?" Abraham replied, "Yes, my son?" Then Isaac asked {him}, "I see {that we have} the fire {coals} and the {fire}wood, but where is the lamb that we will burn as a sacrifice {to God}?" ⁸Abraham answered {him}, "My son, God himself will provide a lamb for us to burn as a sacrifice {to him}." Then they continued walking together {toward the mountain}.

⁹When they reached the place that God had told him {to go to}, Abraham built an altar there and put the wood {on top of it}. Then he tied his son Isaac's arms and legs {with rope} and laid him on top of the wood on the altar.

¹⁰Then he picked up the knife in order to kill his son. ¹¹But one of Yahweh's angels called to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" And he replied, "Yes, {Lord}?" ¹²Then the angel told {him}, "Do not harm your son or do anything {else} to him. Now I know that you revere me, since you {have obeyed me and} have not held back your son from me, {yes,} your only son."

¹³Then Abraham looked around and there behind him he saw a ram that had its horns stuck in a bush. So he {released Isaac,} went {over to the ram} and untangled it. {Then he killed it} and burned it {on the altar} as a sacrifice {to God} in place of his son. ¹⁴That is why Abraham named that place "Yahweh-Yireh," {which means "Yahweh will provide"}. {Even} today people {still} say, "On Yahweh's mountain he will provide what you need."

¹⁵Then Yahweh's angel called to Abraham from heaven again. ¹⁶He said, "This is what Yahweh declares {to you}: 'With myself {as my own witness}, I promise {to you} that since you have obeyed me and did not hold back your son {from me}, {yes,} your only son, ¹⁷I will abundantly bless you. I will greatly multiply your descendants {so that they will be as numerous} as the stars in the sky and {as numerous} as the {grains of} sand that are on the seashore. Your descendants will defeat their enemies and rule over them. ¹⁸Through your Descendant I will bless all the people groups on the earth. {I will do that} because you obeyed me.' "

¹⁹After that, Abraham returned {with Isaac} to his {two} servants. Then together they {all} traveled {back} {home} to {the city of} Beersheba, and Abraham {and his family} stayed there.

²⁰Sometime later someone told Abraham, "I have news {for you}: Your brother Nahor and {his wife} Milcah also have {some} sons, ²¹{including} their oldest {son} Uz, then Buz, and Kemuel, {who is} the father of Aram. ²²{They also have sons named} Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel, ²³who has {a daughter named} Rebekah." Those are the eight sons that Milcah had for Abraham's brother Nahor. ²⁴Besides that, Nahor and his slave woman Reumah also had {some} sons, {including} Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maacah.

Chapter 23

¹Sarah lived to be 127 years old. That is how old she was ²when she died in {the city of} Kiriath Arba, which is {also called} Hebron, in the land of Canaan. Abraham went {to her} and cried and mourned for her. ³Later he stood up from {mourning} beside her and {went} to {the leaders of} the Hittites {at the city gates} and said to them, ⁴"{As you know,} I am a foreigner who is living among you {so I do not own any property here}. {Please} sell me some land so that I can bury {the body of} my wife who has died." ⁵{The leaders of} the Hittites responded to Abraham, ⁶" Sir, {please} listen to what we propose: You are a powerful man among us. {So please choose} {any} one of our best burial sites and bury your deceased {wife} there. All of us are willing for you to use {any of} our burial sites to bury her. "

⁷Then Abraham stood up and bowed {in respect} before {the leaders of} the Hittites, who owned the land {in the area}, ⁸and he said to them, " If you are willing {for me} to bury my deceased {wife} {here}, {please} help me by asking Ephron the son of Zohar ⁹to sell me his cave that is at the edge of his field in the Machpelah {area}. Ask him to sell it to me for its full price, with {all of} you {here} to witness {the sale}. That way I will have a place where I can bury {my wife who has died}." ¹⁰Now Ephron the Hittite was sitting {there at the meeting} among the {other} Hittite leaders, so he replied to Abraham as the {other} leaders listened, including everyone who had gathered {there} at the city gate. He said, ¹¹"That's not necessary, sir. {Please} accept this offer: I {hereby} give you the {entire} field, including the cave that is in it. I am giving it to you {now} as the leaders of my people watch. {You may} bury your deceased {wife} {there}."

¹²Then Abraham bowed {again} before the leaders who owned the land {in the area}. ¹³As they listened, he said to Ephron, " Rather {than that,} since you are willing {to let me have the field}, {please} accept my offer. I want to pay {you} the {full} price for the field. {Please} let me buy it from you, so that {it will be mine and} I can bury {my wife} there who has died." ¹⁴Ephron responded to Abraham, ¹⁵"Sir, {please} listen to me. The land is worth 400 shekels of silver. {However} since you and I are friends, there is no need for that. {Go ahead and} bury your deceased {wife} {there}." ¹⁶Abraham agreed with Ephron's price, and he paid Ephron the {amount of} silver that he had suggested while {the rest of} the Hittites listened. {Abraham weighed the} 400 shekels of silver using the standard weights that sellers used {at that time}.

¹⁷So Ephron's field that was in the Machpelah {area} east of {the city of} Mamre, {including both} the field and the cave that was in the field, as well as all the trees that were anywhere inside the boundaries of the field, was {officially} sold ¹⁸to Abraham and became his property while the Hittites watched, including everyone who had gathered at the city gate. ¹⁹After that, Abraham put {the body of} his wife Sarah in the cave in that field in the Machpelah {area} east of {the city of} Mamre, which is {also called} Hebron, in the land of Canaan. ²⁰So {that is

how} that field, including the cave that was in the field, was {officially} sold to Abraham by the Hittites, so that he had a place where he could bury {his wife who had died}.

Chapter 24

¹Abraham had lived a long time and was {now} {very} old, and Yahweh had blessed him in every way. ²{One day} Abraham said to his chief household servant who managed his entire estate for him, "Please put your hand under my thigh {to show that you will do what I ask}. ³I want you to vow to me, with Yahweh the God who rules the heavens and the earth as your witness, that you will not arrange for my son {Isaac} to marry {any of} the Canaanite women who live around us here. ⁴Rather you must go to the country where I grew up, to my relatives {who live there}, and find a wife for him {from there}."

⁵But {Abraham's} servant asked him, "What {should I do} if the {young} woman {I find} refuses to come {back} with me to this land {to live}? Do you want me to take your son back {there} to your home country {to marry her} {and live there}?" ⁶Abraham answered him, "{No,} be sure that you never take my son back there {to live}, ⁷{because} Yahweh, the God who rules the heavens, brought me {here} from my father's household and from the land where {the rest of} my relatives live, and he vowed to me that he will give this land to my descendants. He will send one of his angels ahead of you {to help you}, so that you will find a wife for my son from there. ⁸But if the woman {you find} refuses to come back {here} with you, then you will be free from {keeping} this vow that you are making to me {now}. But {no matter what happens,} never take my son back to my home country!"

⁹So {Abraham's} servant put his hand under his master's thigh and vowed to him that he would do what Abraham had requested him to do. ¹⁰Then he got ten of his master's camels ready {for the trip}, and after he loaded them with all kinds of valuable things from his master {to use as gifts}, he left {with some other servants} and made the {long} trip to {the region of} Aram Naharaim, to the city where Nahor lived. ¹¹{When they arrived there,} Abraham's servant had the camels kneel down {to rest} outside the city near the well {that was there}. It was evening time, when the {young} women {of the city} were starting to come out {to the well} to draw water.

¹²Then Abraham's servant prayed, " {Dear} Yahweh, {who is} the God who takes care of my master Abraham, please help me succeed today and {in that way} be kind to my master. ¹³As you see, I am standing by this well, and young women from the city are coming {here} to draw water. ¹⁴{Please} make it happen that when I say to one of the young women, 'Please lower your jug so that I can have a drink,' she will say {to me}, 'Have a drink and I will also draw water for your camels.' Then I will know that she is the one you have chosen to be the wife of Isaac who serves you, and that you have been kind to my master."

¹⁵Before Abraham's servant had {even} finished praying, he saw {a young woman named} Rebekah coming out {of the city} carrying a water jug on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel, {who was} the son of Milcah and Abraham's brother Nahor. ¹⁶She was a very beautiful unmarried young woman, whom no man had ever slept with. She walked down to the well, filled her jug {with water} and came {back} up {carrying it on her shoulder}.

¹⁷Then {Abraham's} servant ran to meet her and said {to her}, "Please let me have a little water to drink from your jug." ¹⁸She replied, " {Please} have a drink, sir." Then she quickly lowered her jug {from her shoulder} to her hands and let him drink {some water} {from it}. ¹⁹After that, she said {to him}, "I will also draw water for your camels until they have had enough to drink." ²⁰Then she quickly emptied {the rest of the water from} her jug into the {animal drinking} trough {that was there}, and ran back {and forth} to the well to draw {more water}, until she had drawn {enough} for all of the camels. ²¹Meanwhile {Abraham's} servant silently watched Rebekah {and waited} to find out whether or not Yahweh had made him successful on his journey {to find a wife for Isaac}. ²²Finally, when the camels had finished drinking, the servant {gave Rebekah} a gold nose ring that weighed one beka, and two gold bracelets for her wrists that weighed ten shekels {each}. ²³Then he asked {her}, " Please tell me who your father is. {Also,} is there room at his house for me and my men to spend the night {there}?" ²⁴Rebekah answered him, "My father is Bethuel, and he is one of Nahor and Milcah's sons." ²⁵Then she added, " We have plenty of both straw and {other} feed {at our house} {for the camels to eat}, {and there is} also {enough} room {for you all} to stay {there}

tonight." ²⁶Then the servant bowed to the ground and worshiped Yahweh, ²⁷saying, "Praise Yahweh, the God {who takes care} of my master Abraham! He has never stopped being kind and faithful to my master, and he has guided me on {my} journey {here} to the home of my master's relatives!"

²⁸Then Rebekah hurried {home} and told her mother's family about what had happened. ²⁹Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban, and he rushed out to the well where Abraham's servant was. ³⁰As soon as Laban had seen the nose ring {that his sister was wearing} and the bracelets on her arms, and had heard her announce what the servant had said to her, he went {out} to meet him. He found him standing with {his} camels at the well. ³¹Then Laban said {to him}, " Come {with me}, you whom Yahweh has blessed. There is no need for you to stand out here. I have gotten our house ready {for you and your men to stay with us} and {there is also} a place for {your} camels {to stay}." ³²So Abraham's servant went home {with Laban}. {When they arrived there,} Laban unloaded the camels, and he gave straw and {other} feed to them {to eat}. {He} also {gave} water {to the servant} and the men who were with him to wash their feet. ³³Then {Laban's family} served them a meal to eat, but the servant said {to them}, "Before I can eat, I need to tell {you} why I am here." Laban responded {to him}, " {Please} tell {us} {what you have to say}."

³⁴So the servant told {them}, "I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵Yahweh has abundantly blessed my master, so that he has become wealthy. Yahweh has given him {many} sheep and cattle, {much} silver and gold, {many} male and female servants, and {many} camels and donkeys. ³⁶Besides that, my master's wife Sarah gave birth to a son for him when she was old, and my master has given him everything that he owns. ³⁷{Before I came here,} my master made me vow {to do something for him}. He said, 'You must not arrange for my son {Isaac} to marry {any of} the Canaanite women whose land we have been living in. ³⁸Rather go to my father's family, to my {own} relatives, and find a wife for my son {from among them}. ³⁹So I asked my master, 'What {should I do} if the {young} woman {I find} refuses to come {back} {here} with me?' ⁴⁰He answered me, 'Yahweh whom I serve will send one of his angels with you. He will make you succeed on your journey, so that you will find a wife for my son from {among} my relatives, {someone} from my father's family. ⁴¹At that time you will be free from {keeping} the vow {you are making} to me {if this happens}: If you find a wife for Isaac but my family refuses to let her go with you, then you will be free from {keeping} your vow to me.'

⁴²" Then today when I came to {your city's} well, I prayed, '{Dear} Yahweh, {who is} the God {who takes care} of my master Abraham, if you are willing, please give me success on this journey that I have come on. ⁴³As you see, I am standing by this well. {Please} make it happen that when a young woman comes out {of the city} to draw water and I ask her, 'Please let me drink a little water from your jug,' ⁴⁴if she replies, " {Yes,} have a drink and I will also draw water for your camels," {then} let her be the woman whom {you} Yahweh have chosen to be the wife of my master's son.'

⁴⁵"Before I had {even} finished praying in my heart, I saw Rebekah coming out {of the city} carrying her {empty} {water} jug on her shoulder. After she walked down to the well and filled her jug with water, I said to her, 'Please let me have a drink.' ⁴⁶She quickly lowered her jug from her {shoulder} and said, 'Have a drink, and I will also draw water for your camels.' So I took a drink, and she also gave water to my camels. ⁴⁷Then I asked her, 'Who is your father?' She answered, 'My father is Bethuel, {who is} one of Nahor and Milcah's sons.' After that I gave her a nose ring and bracelets to wear. ⁴⁸Then I bowed {to the ground} and worshiped and praised Yahweh, the God {who takes care} of my master Abraham, because he guided me right where I should go to find the granddaughter of my master's brother {to be the wife} for my master's son. ⁴⁹So now, {please} tell me whether or not you are willing to be kind and faithful to my master {by letting her come with me}, so that I can decide what to do {next}."

⁵⁰Then Laban and Bethuel answered {Abraham's servant}, " {It is clear that} Yahweh has made {all} this happen, {so} it is not our place to tell you anything different. ⁵¹Here is Rebekah. Take {her with you} and return {home} so that she can marry your master's son as Yahweh has guided." ⁵²When Abraham's servant heard what they said, he bowed to the ground {and thanked} Yahweh. ⁵³Then he took out {expensive gifts, including} silver and gold jewelry, and {also} {beautiful} clothing, and gave {them} to Rebekah. He {also} gave {valuable} gifts to her brother and mother.

⁵⁴Then Abraham's servant and the men who were with him ate {supper} and slept {there} that night. {Early} the next morning after everyone got up, Abraham's servant said {to Rebekah's family}, "{Please} let me return {home} {now} to my master." ⁵⁵But Rebekah's brother and her mother replied, "{Please} let the young woman stay {here} with us {for another} ten days or so. Then you can go and take her {with you}." ⁵⁶But the servant said to them, "{Please} do not delay me. Now that Yahweh has made my journey successful, let me go so that I can return to my master." ⁵⁷So they replied, "Let's call Rebekah and ask her what she wants to do."

⁵⁸So they called for her and asked her, "Do you want to go {now} with this man?" She answered {them}, "{Yes,} I will go {now}." ⁵⁹So they {agreed to} send their sister Rebekah and her {personal} servant {who had helped raise her}, with Abraham's servant and his companions. ⁶⁰They blessed Rebekah by saying to her, "Sister, we pray that God will give you countless thousands {of descendants}, and that he will help them conquer {all} their enemies and rule over them!" ⁶¹After Rebekah and her servants {who were going with her} packed their things, they got up on the camels {they were going to ride} and went with Abraham's servant. So {Abraham's} servant took Rebekah {with him} and started the journey {back} {home}.

⁶²Meanwhile Isaac returned {home} from visiting {the place called} Beer Lahai Roi. {At that time} he was living in the Negev {Wilderness}. ⁶³{One day} as it was becoming evening, he went to the field to pray. {As he was praying,} he looked up and suddenly he saw {in the distance} {some} camels coming {toward him}. ⁶⁴Rebekah {also} looked up and saw Isaac. Immediately she got down from the camel {that she was riding}, ⁶⁵and asked {Abraham's} servant, "Who is that man in the field who is walking {this way} to greet us?" The servant answered {her}, "He is my master {Isaac}." So she covered her face with a veil {to show modesty}.

⁶⁶Then the servant told Isaac everything that he had done {on the journey}. ⁶⁷Then Isaac took Rebekah into the tent where his mother Sarah had lived, and he married her, so that she became his wife. Isaac loved her and he was happy again after {mourning for} his mother {who had died}.

Chapter 25

¹Then Abraham married another wife, whose name was Keturah. ²She had sons with him {whom they named} Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah. ³{Her son} Jokshan had {sons named} Sheba and Dedan. Dedan's descendants became {people groups named} the Asshurites, Letushites and Leummities. ⁴{Keturah's son} Midian had sons {named} Ephah, Ephraim, Hanoch, Abida and Eldaah. All of those were Keturah's descendants {whom she had with Abraham}.

⁵Abraham gave everything that he owned to Isaac. ⁶He also gave {valuable} gifts to the sons that his concubines had {with him}, but after that he made them move away to the east country {so that they would live} far away from his son Isaac.

⁷Abraham lived to be 175 years old. ⁸Then he took his last breath and died at a very old age. After he lived a long and satisfying life, he joined his ancestors {who had already died}. ⁹His sons Isaac and Ishmael put his body in the cave of Machpelah {which was} in the field that had belonged to Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, east of {the city of} Mamre. ¹⁰{That is} the {same} field that Abraham had bought from the Hittites. That is {the cave} where his sons buried his body next to {the body of} his wife Sarah {whom he had buried there before}. ¹¹After Abraham died, God blessed his son Isaac, who lived near {the well} Beer Lahai Roi.

¹²What follows is a record of the descendants of Abraham's son Ishmael, the son Abraham had with Sarah's Egyptian slave woman Hagar. ¹³Here is {a list of} the names of Ishmael's sons, {given} in the order that they were born: His oldest {son} was Nebaioth, followed by Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedermah. ¹⁶Those were Ishmael's {twelve} sons, who were the {original} leaders of twelve tribes that were named after them, and each tribe lived in its {own} towns and villages. ¹⁷Ishmael lived a total of 137 years. Then he took his last breath and died, and he joined his ancestors {who had died before him}.

¹⁸His descendants lived {throughout the area that extended} from {the region of} Havilah to {the wilderness of}

Shur that is east of {the country of} Egypt as you head {from there} to {the city of} Asshur. They lived as enemies against all their relatives.

¹⁹Here is {more of} the history about Abraham's son Isaac and his descendants: {After} Abraham had Isaac, ²⁰Isaac {grew up and} married Rebekah when he was 40 years old. {She was} a daughter of Bethuel, {who was} an Aramean from {the region of} Paddan Aram, and her brother was Laban {who was also} an Aramean. ²¹However {for many years} Rebekah was not able to become pregnant, so Isaac prayed that Yahweh would give her children. Yahweh did what Isaac prayed for, so that she became pregnant {with twins}. ²²But the {two} babies wrestled with each other inside her, so she asked, "Why is this happening to me?" Then she asked Yahweh about it. ²³Yahweh answered her, " {The ancestors of} two {future} people groups are inside you. They will be enemies {starting now} even before they are born. One of them will be more powerful than the other, so that the older {son's descendants} will serve the younger {son's descendants}."

²⁴Later when it was time {for Rebekah} to give birth, {sure enough} there were twin boys inside her! ²⁵The first {one} who was born was completely covered with thick red hair. So his parents named him Esau {which means "hairy"}. ²⁶Next his brother was born with his hand grabbing on {tightly} to Esau's heel. So they named him Jacob {which means "heel-grabber"}. Isaac was 60 years old when Esau and Jacob were born.

²⁷When the boys grew up, Esau became a skilled hunter and he enjoyed {being} in the open country, but Jacob had a quiet personality and {preferred} to work at home. ²⁸Isaac's favorite son was Esau, because he liked to eat the meat of wild animals {that Esau hunted}, whereas Rebekah's favorite son was Jacob.

²⁹{One day} when Jacob was making {some} soup, Esau came home from {hunting out in} the open country and he was exhausted {and hungry}. ³⁰So Esau requested from Jacob, "Please let me have some of that very red soup because I am exhausted {and hungry}!" That is why Esau's nickname was Edom {which means "red"}. ³¹But Jacob replied, "First trade your rights as the oldest son to me {for the soup,} {then I will give you some}." ³²Esau responded, " Look, I am about to die {from hunger}! So my birthright is of no use to me {right now}." ³³Jacob insisted, "{First} make a vow to me today {before God} {that your rights are now mine}!" So Esau vowed to Jacob that he had traded his rights as the oldest son to him {for the soup}. ³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau {some of} the lentil soup with {some} bread, and Esau {quickly} ate the meal and left. In that way, Esau treated his birthright {carelessly} as if it had no value.

Chapter 26

¹Now there was {another} severe food shortage in the region. {This was} a different shortage from the one that had happened {years} before, while Abraham was still alive. So Isaac {and his family} went {for help} to King Abimelech who ruled over the Philistines {and lived} in {their capital city of} Gerar. ²Then Yahweh appeared to Isaac and commanded {him}, "Do not go to {the country of} Egypt, {rather} stay in this land where I tell you {to live}. ³{Yes,} live {as a foreigner} in this land and I will stay with you and bless you. In fact, I will give you and your descendants all these lands, and I will continue {to keep} the promise I made to your father Abraham ⁴that I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. I will also give them all these lands, and through your Descendant I will bless all the people groups on the earth. ⁵{I will do all that} because Abraham obeyed me and did everything that I ever commanded {him} {to do}."

⁶Then Isaac {did what God said and} settled in {the city of} Gerar.

⁷Now Rebekah was very beautiful, so the men in that city started asking {Isaac} about her. Isaac was afraid they might kill him in order to have her, so he {lied and} told {them} she was his sister. ⁸{One day} after Isaac had lived there a long time, the Philistines' King Abimelech looked down from a window {of his palace} and saw to his surprise that Isaac was showing affection to his wife Rebekah. ⁹So Abimelech summoned Isaac and scolded {him}, " It is obvious that Rebekah is your wife! So why did you tell us that she is your sister?" Isaac answered him, "{I said that} because I thought someone might kill me in order to have her {as a wife}." ¹⁰Then Abimelech scolded {him}

{further}, " You have treated us very badly! Sooner or later, one of my men could have slept with your wife, and you would have caused us to be guilty {of adultery}!" ¹¹Then {King} Abimelech warned all {his} people, "I will definitely execute anyone who harms Isaac or his wife!"

¹²Isaac planted crops in that area, and that year he gathered {a huge harvest that was} a hundred times {more than what he had planted}. Yahweh continued to bless him, ¹³so that he became richer and richer until he was extremely wealthy. ¹⁴He owned many sheep and cattle and {he also owned} many servants. As a result, the Philistines were jealous of Isaac. ¹⁵So they filled up with dirt all the wells that the servants of his father Abraham had dug while he was {still} alive.

¹⁶Then {King} Abimelech said to Isaac, " {Please} move away from us, because you are so powerful {that you are a threat} to us." ¹⁷So Isaac moved from {the city of} Gerar and pitched his tents in the Gerar Valley and stayed there {for a while}. ¹⁸Then Isaac {had his servants} dig the dirt out of the wells that Abraham's servants had dug and that the Philistines had {just} filled {with dirt}. He gave the wells the same names that his father had given them.

¹⁹Next Isaac's servants dug {at a new place} in the valley and discovered a source of fresh water there. ²⁰But the herdsmen from {the city of} Gerar argued with Isaac's herdsmen and said, "That well is ours!" So Isaac named the well Esek {which means " argument"}, because they argued with him {about it}. ²¹Then Isaac's servants dug another well, but Gerar's herdsmen argued {with them} about that one too, so Isaac named it Sitnah {which means "hostility"}. ²²Then Isaac {and his family} moved from there and he {had his servants} dig a third well. {This time} Gerar's herdsmen did not argue about it, so he named it Rehoboth {which means " space "}, because he said, " Finally Yahweh has provided space for us so that we will prosper in the land."

²³From there Isaac {and his family} went south to {the city of} Beersheba. ²⁴That night Yahweh appeared to him and said {to him}, "I am the God whom your father Abraham serves. Do not be afraid, because I am with you. I will bless you and make your descendants numerous, just as {I promised} to Abraham who serves me." ²⁵So Isaac built an altar there {at Beersheba} and worshiped Yahweh by name. He also set up his tents there, and his servants started digging {another} well there {too}.

²⁶Then {King} Abimelech went to Isaac from {the city of} Gerar with his adviser Ahuzzath and his army commander Phicol. ²⁷Isaac asked them, " Why have you come to me, {especially} since you have been hostile toward me and forced me to move away from you?" ²⁸They answered {him}, "It is very obvious to us that Yahweh is with you {and blessing you}, and we decided that we should make a vow with you {to live in peace with one another}. So {please} let us make a {peace} treaty with you, ²⁹that you will never harm us, just as we never harmed you, but only treated you well and sent you away in peace. {As a result,} Yahweh has now blessed you." ³⁰Then Isaac prepared a feast, and they {all} ate and drank {together}. ³¹Early the next morning they got up and made vows to one another {that they would keep their treaty}. Then Isaac said goodbye to them, and they went home from him in peace.

³²That {same} day Isaac's servants came to inform him about the well that they were digging and announced, " We have struck water!" ³³So Isaac named the well Shibah {which means "vow"}. That is why {even} today the name of that city is still Beersheba {which means " well of the vow"}.

³⁴When Esau was forty years old, he married {two} Hittite women: Judith whose father was Beerli, and Basemath whose father was Elon. ³⁵Isaac and Rebekah were very distressed that their son had married foreign women {rather than a woman from their own religion and people group}.

Chapter 27

¹One day when Isaac was an old man and he could no longer see, he sent for his older son Esau and said to him, "My son." Esau answered him, " Yes, {sir}? " ²Then Isaac told {him}, " Please listen {closely}: I am an old man {now} {and} I do not know when I will die. ³So then, get your bow and arrows, go out in the open country and hunt

{some} deer {meat} for me. ⁴Next {use the meat to} cook a delicious meal for me the way that I like it, and bring it to me to eat, so that I can bless you before I die."

⁵Rebekah overheard what Isaac said to his son Esau. So after Esau had gone out to the open country to hunt, ⁶she said to her son Jacob, "Listen, I {just} overheard your father tell your brother Esau ⁷to get him {some} deer {meat} and {use it to} cook a delicious meal for him to eat. Then he wants to bless him before he dies, with Yahweh as his witness. ⁸So then, my son, listen to me and do what I tell you {to do}. ⁹Please go {out} to our flock {of goats} and get for me two of the best young goats. I will {use the meat from them to} cook a delicious meal for your father, {just} the way that he likes it. ¹⁰Then you can take the meal to your father to eat, so that he will bless you before he dies."

¹¹But Jacob responded to his mother, " As you know, my brother Esau has hairy skin, but I have smooth skin.

¹²What if my father feels my skin? He will {recognize me and} realize that I am trying to deceive him. Then he will curse me instead of bless me." ¹³But his mother replied, "{If that happens,} may God curse me instead of you, my son. Just listen to me and go get two goats for me!" ¹⁴So Jacob went {to the flock} and selected two goats and took them to his mother. Then she cooked a delicious meal the way that his father liked it. ¹⁵She also got her older son Esau's finest clothes that she had in the house and had her younger son Jacob put them on. ¹⁶And she used the goat skins to cover Jacob's arms and the part of his neck that had no hair {on it}.

¹⁷Then she handed the delicious meal to Jacob, including some bread that she had baked. ¹⁸He took the meal to his father and said, " Father." His father answered, "Yes? Which of my sons are you?" ¹⁹Jacob replied to his father, "I am Esau, your oldest son. I have done what you requested me {to do}. {So now} please sit up and eat some of the deer {meat} that I have cooked {for you}, so that you can bless me." ²⁰But Isaac asked him, " How were you able to find the deer so quickly, my son?" Jacob answered, "Yahweh, {who is} the God who takes care of you, helped me to succeed." ²¹Then Isaac said to him, " My son, please come here so that I can feel you and make sure that you are really my son Esau." ²²So Jacob stepped closer to his father Isaac, and his father felt him and thought {to himself}, "{Hmm,} his voice sounds like Jacob's voice, but {his} arms feel like Esau's arms." ²³So Isaac was not able to identify who Jacob was because his arms felt hairy like his brother Esau's. Isaac was about to bless Jacob, ²⁴but {first} {he wanted to be completely sure, so} he asked {him}, " Are you really my son Esau?" Jacob answered, "{Yes,} I am."

²⁵So Isaac said {to him}, "Serve me the meal, so that I can eat some of your deer meat and bless you." Then Jacob served the meal to his father and he ate it. Jacob also served him wine and he drank it.

²⁶Then Isaac said to Jacob, " Come here and kiss me, my son." ²⁷So Jacob went over {to his father} and kissed him {on the cheeks}. {As he did that,} his father recognized the fragrance of Esau's clothes, so he blessed him and said, "Ahh, my son, you smell {wonderful} like the fragrance of a field that Yahweh has caused to flourish! ²⁸I ask God to provide you {and your descendants} {plenty of} rain from the sky {for your crops and animals} and riches from the earth, including abundant harvests and {much} wine. ²⁹I also ask God to cause nations to serve and honor you {and your descendants}. You will rule over your brother's descendants, and they will {submit to you and} bow down to you. Whoever curses you God will curse, but whoever blesses you he will bless."

³⁰As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and right after Jacob had left his father's presence, Jacob's brother Esau returned {home} from hunting. ³¹Then he too cooked a delicious meal, and he took it to his father {Isaac} and said to him, " Father, {please} sit up and eat some of your son's deer meat, so that you can bless me." ³²But his father asked him, "Which son are you?" Esau answered, " I am your oldest son Esau." ³³Then Isaac {became so upset that his body} shook very violently and he asked {Esau}, "Then who was it that hunted deer meat and brought a meal to me? I finished eating it just before you came, and I blessed him. So God will definitely bless him." ³⁴When Esau heard what his father said, he shouted out with a very loud and distressed shout and begged his father, " {Please} bless me too, father!" ³⁵But his father responded, "Your brother came {to me} and tricked {me} and stole the blessing that I was planning to give you." ³⁶Then Esau exclaimed, " The name Jacob fits him exactly, because he has tricked me like this two times {now}! {First} he stole my rights as the oldest son, and now look {what he has done}: he has stolen my blessing!"

Then Esau begged {his father}, "Is there still a way you can {ask God to} bless me?" ³⁷Isaac answered, "Listen, I have {already} appointed Jacob to be your master. In fact, I have asked {God to make it so} that you and all your descendants will serve him {and his descendants}. Besides that, I have {also} blessed him with {abundant} harvests and wine. So then, there is no way left for me to bless you, my son!" ³⁸But Esau continued to beg his father {and say}, " Father, isn't there {just} one more way that you can bless {me}? {Please} bless me too, father!" Then Esau started crying loudly. ³⁹Finally his father said to him, "Listen, you {and your descendants} will live in a place where the land is not good {for farming} and where there is not much rain. ⁴⁰You {and your descendants} will have to fight battles to stay alive,

and you will serve your brother {and his descendants}.

But when you rebel {against them}, you will get free from their control over you."

⁴¹After that Esau held a grudge against Jacob because their father had blessed him. So Esau thought to himself, " Soon my father will die; then after we {bury him and} mourn for him, I will kill my brother Jacob." ⁴²But Rebekah heard about what her oldest son Esau was planning, so she sent for her youngest son Jacob and told him, "Listen, your brother Esau is planning to take revenge on you and kill you. ⁴³So then, my son, listen to me: Hurry {and} escape to {the city of} Haran to my brother Laban! ⁴⁴Live with him for a short time until your brother is no longer angry {with you}. ⁴⁵When he is not angry with you anymore and he forgets what you did to him, I will send word that it is safe for you to come {back home} from there. I do not want to lose both of you on the same day!"

⁴⁶Then Rebekah complained to Isaac, " My life is {very} miserable because of our Hittite daughters-in-law {whom Esau married}! If Jacob were to {also} marry a local Hittite woman like that, I would not want to keep on living!"

Chapter 28

¹So Isaac summoned Jacob, blessed him and told him, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman. ²{Instead} you must go right away to {the land of} Paddan Aram, to the home of your mother's father, Bethuel, and marry one of your uncle Laban's daughters. ³I pray that God who is all-powerful will bless you and give you many children and increase {the number of} your descendants, so that you become {the ancestor of} many people groups. ⁴I {also} pray that he will bless you and your descendants the same way that he blessed Abraham, so that you will own this land where you have been living as a foreigner, {the same land} which God gave to him." ⁵Then Isaac sent Jacob {on his way}, so Jacob started traveling to Laban's house which was in {the land of} Paddan Aram. {Laban was} the son of Bethuel the Aramean and {also} the brother of Rebekah, {who was} Jacob and Esau's mother.

⁶Now Esau had seen Isaac bless Jacob and send him to {the land of} Paddan Aram to marry a woman from there. As Isaac was blessing him, {Esau heard} him tell Jacob, " You must not marry a Canaanite woman!" ⁷{Esau also saw that} Jacob obeyed their father and mother and started traveling to Paddan Aram. ⁸That is when Esau realized that his father Isaac did not approve of {his sons marrying} Canaanite women. ⁹So in addition to the {two} wives he already had, Esau went to {the family of} Abraham's son Ishmael and married Ishmael's daughter Mahalath, whose brother was Nebaioth.

¹⁰{After} Jacob left from {his family's home} {in the city of} Beersheba, he started traveling to {the city of} Haran.

¹¹{That evening} he reached a good place {to sleep}, so he stopped there {for the night} because the sun had set. He chose {one} of the stones that was there and used it as a pillow. Then he lay down and went to sleep. ¹²While he was dreaming, he saw a stairway. The bottom of the stairway was on the ground and its top reached up to heaven, and he saw God's angels going up and coming down on the stairway. ¹³And there standing at the top {of the stairway} was Yahweh, and he said {to Jacob}, "I am Yahweh, the God whom your ancestors Abraham and Isaac serve. I will give you and your descendants this land that you are lying on. ¹⁴They will be {as numerous} as the dust {specks} on the ground, so that they live throughout this land in every direction. Because of you and your descendants, I will bless all the families in the world. ¹⁵Remember that I will {always} be with you and I will protect

you wherever you go, and I will lead you back to this land. In fact, I will never leave you and I will do everything that I have promised you {that I will do}."

¹⁶Suddenly Jacob woke up from his dream and exclaimed {to himself}, "Yahweh definitely lives in this place, but I did not know it {before now}!" ¹⁷He was afraid, so he {also} exclaimed, "This is a terrifying place! This can only be God's house! It must be the entrance to heaven!" ¹⁸Early the next morning Jacob got up, took the stone that he had used as a pillow and set it up {on its end} to mark the place {where God had appeared to him}. Then he poured {some} {olive} oil on top of the stone {to dedicate the place to God}. ¹⁹He named that place Bethel {which means "house of God"}. Previously the name of that town had been Luz.

²⁰Then Jacob made a vow {to God} and said, "God, if {you,} will stay with me and protect me as I travel on this journey and if you provide me food to eat and clothes to wear, ²¹so that I return safely to my father's home, then Yahweh, {you} will be the God whom I serve. ²²This stone that I have set up will be your house and mark the place {that you appeared to me}, and I will give back to you a tenth of everything that you give to me."

Chapter 29

¹Then Jacob left {Bethel} and continued traveling {until he came} to the land in the east where various people groups lived. ²{When he arrived there,} he looked {around} and saw a well in an {open} field. There were three flocks of sheep lying near the well {waiting for water}. That was the well that flocks drank water from, but there was a large stone covering the top of the well. ³{Every day} shepherds would bring all the flocks {of sheep} there. They would {work together to} remove the stone from the top of the well and draw water for the sheep. Then they would put the stone back over the top of the well.

⁴Jacob asked the shepherds, "My friends, where do you live?" They replied, "We are from {the city of} Haran." ⁵So Jacob asked them, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?" They answered, " {Yes,} we do." ⁶So Jacob asked, "Is he doing well?" They answered {him}, " {Yes,} {he is} well. In fact, here comes his daughter Rachel {now}, bringing {his} sheep." ⁷Then Jacob urged {them}, "Look, the sun is still bright, and it is too early to gather the flocks {for the night}. {You ought to} draw water for them and take them back out {to the fields} to graze {some more}." ⁸But they replied, "We can't {do that} until all the shepherds are here with their flocks. Then {together} we will move the stone away from the top of the well and draw water for the sheep."

⁹While Jacob was still talking with the shepherds, Rachel arrived {at the well} with her father {Laban}'s sheep; it was her job to take care of them. ¹⁰As soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of his uncle Laban with her father's sheep, he walked over {to the well}, removed the stone that covered it, and drew water for his uncle's sheep. ¹¹Then he kissed Rachel {on her cheek} and {he was so happy that} he started crying. ¹²Then he told her that he was her father's nephew, the son of {her aunt} Rebekah. So she ran home and told her father {the news}.

¹³When Laban heard about his sister's son Jacob, he ran {out} to greet him. Then he hugged him and kissed him {on the cheeks} and took him to his house. Then Jacob told Laban {about himself and} everything that had happened, ¹⁴and Laban exclaimed to him, "There is no doubt that you are a close relative of my family!"

After Jacob had stayed with Laban {and worked for him} {for} an entire month, ¹⁵Laban said to him, " {Just} because you are my nephew, {that does not mean that} you should {have to} work for me for free! Tell me what you want me to pay you." ¹⁶Now Laban had two daughters: The name of the older {one} was Leah, and the younger {one} was Rachel. ¹⁷Leah had pretty eyes, but Rachel was extremely beautiful in every way. ¹⁸Jacob was in love with Rachel, so he said {to Laban}, "I will work seven years for you if you will let me marry your younger daughter Rachel." ¹⁹Laban replied, " {I agree to your terms.} I would {much} rather give her to you {to marry} than give her to someone else. {So} stay here {and work for me}." ²⁰So Jacob worked seven years {for Laban} so that he could marry Rachel, but he loved her so {much} that to him the time seemed {to pass quickly} like {only} a few days.

²¹{When the seven years were over,} Jacob said to Laban, "{Please} let me marry {your daughter} {Rachel} {now} so that I can live with her {as} my wife, because I have finished my {seven} years {of work} {for you}." ²²So Laban invited all the local people and held a {wedding} feast. ²³But that evening Laban {tricked Jacob and} brought his daughter Leah {to Jacob's tent} {instead of Rachel}, so that he had marital relations with her. ²⁴Laban also gave his female servant Zilpah to Leah to be {her} {personal} servant.

²⁵But the next morning Jacob was shocked to see that it was Leah {he had married}! So he complained to Laban, "You have treated me very badly! {You know that} Rachel is the one I served you for! So why did you trick me?"

²⁶Laban replied, " It is not our custom here for the younger {daughter} to marry before the older {daughter} {marries}. ²⁷{So then,} {keep Leah as your wife and} finish this week of celebrating your marriage to her. Then our family will also give you {my} younger daughter {to marry} if you will work for me for another seven years."

²⁸So Jacob {agreed with Laban and} did what he said: he finished celebrating his marriage to Leah that week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to marry. ²⁹Laban {also} gave his servant Bilhah to Rachel to be her servant.

³⁰Then Jacob had marital relations with Rachel, and he loved her more than {he loved} Leah. Then he {started} working for Laban for another seven years.

³¹Now Yahweh knew that Jacob did not love Leah, so he made it possible for her to have children, but Rachel was not able to conceive. ³²Then Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben {which means "See, a son!"}, because she exclaimed, " Now that Yahweh has seen that I am suffering {and helped me}, surely my husband will love me!"

³³Then Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to {another} son. She exclaimed, "Since Yahweh heard that my husband does not love me, he has given me this child also." So she named him Simeon {which means " he hears"}.

³⁴Then Leah became pregnant {yet} again and gave birth to another son, and she exclaimed, "Now finally my husband will want to be with me because I have given him three sons!" That is why his name was Levi {which means " be with"}.

³⁵Once again Leah became pregnant and gave birth to another son, and she exclaimed, "This time I will praise Yahweh!" That is why she named him Judah {which means " praise"}. Then Leah stopped having children {for a while}.

Chapter 30

¹Meanwhile {when} Rachel realized that she was not able to bear {any} children for Jacob, she was jealous of her sister, and she demanded of Jacob, "Help me have children, or else I want to die!" ²Jacob became very angry with Rachel and responded, " I am not God! He is the one who has prevented you from having children!" ³Then Rachel told {him}, "You can have my servant Bilhah {as a wife}. Sleep with her, so that she will have children for me so that I too can have a family." ⁴So Rachel gave Jacob her servant Bilhah to be {another} wife {for him}, and Jacob slept with her.

⁵Then Bilhah became pregnant and had a son for Jacob, ⁶and Rachel exclaimed, " God has judged in my favor! Yes indeed, he has answered my prayer and given me a son!" That is why she named the baby Dan {which means "he judged in my favor"}. ⁷Then Rachel's servant Bilhah became pregnant again and had a second son for Jacob. ⁸So Rachel said, " I have had a difficult contest with my sister, and {now} I have defeated her!" Then she named that son Naphtali {which means "my contest"}.

⁹Now when Leah realized that she had stopped having children, she brought her servant Zilpah {to Jacob} and gave her to him to be {another} wife {for him}. ¹⁰Then Zilpah had a son for Jacob, ¹¹and Leah exclaimed, " I am so fortunate!" So she named him Gad {which means "fortunate"}.

¹²Then Leah's servant Zilpah had a second son for Jacob, ¹³and Leah exclaimed, " {God} has truly blessed me! Now {other} women will know that {God} has blessed me." So she named that son Asher {which means "blessed"}.

¹⁴Then {one day} during the season when people were harvesting wheat, Leah's son Reuben went out in a field and found {some} fertility plants, and he gave them to his mother. {When Rachel found out about the plants,} she begged Leah, " Please give me some of the fertility plants that your son found." ¹⁵But Leah replied to her, "{No!} It was {bad} enough that you stole my husband {from me}! And {now} you even want to take my son's fertility plants!" Rachel replied, " Alright then, Jacob can sleep with you tonight if you will give me your son's fertility plants."

¹⁶That evening when Jacob came {home} from {working in} the field, Leah went out to greet him and told {him}, "You must sleep with me {tonight}, because I have traded my son's fertility plants for time with you." So Jacob spent that night with Leah. ¹⁷God answered {the prayers of} Leah, so that she became pregnant and had a fifth son for Jacob. ¹⁸Then she said, " God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband {as a wife}." So she named that son Issachar {which means "reward"}.

¹⁹Then Leah became pregnant again and had a sixth son for Jacob. ²⁰Then she said, " God has given me a valuable gift, {so that} now my husband will honor me because I have had six sons for him." So she named their son Zebulun {which means "honor"}.

²¹{Sometime} after that, Leah had a daughter and named her Dinah.

²²God had not forgotten Rachel, so he answered her {prayers} and made it possible for her to have children.

²³Then she became pregnant and had a son, and she exclaimed, " God has made it so that I am no longer ashamed!" ²⁴She named her son Joseph {which means "may he give another"}, {because} she said, " I pray that Yahweh will give me another son."

²⁵After Rachel had Joseph, Jacob requested of Laban, "{Please} allow me to leave {here}, so that I can return to my {own} home in my {own} country. ²⁶Let me take my wives and my children whom I have finished serving you for, so that I can leave {with them}. You yourself know how {well} I have served you." ²⁷But Laban responded to him, " Please be kind to me and stay, {because} I have found out from observing signs that Yahweh has blessed me because you {are here with me}." ²⁸Then he added, "Tell me what you want your pay to be, and that is what I will pay you." ²⁹Jacob replied to him, " You yourself know how {hard} I have worked for you and how {well} your animals have prospered under my care. ³⁰The few that you owned before I came have multiplied dramatically. Yes, Yahweh has blessed you because of me. But now, I need to also provide for my {own} family!"

³¹So Laban asked {him}, "What can I pay you {to persuade you} {to stay here}?" Jacob answered, " Do not pay me anything. Just do this {one} thing for me, and I will continue taking care of your flocks: ³²Let me look through all your flocks today and separate out from them all the lambs that are speckled, spotted or dark-colored, and {all} the young goats that are spotted or speckled. They will be my pay. ³³That way {too}, in the future it will be easy {for you} to know whether {or not} I am being honest whenever you check the animals you have paid me. {If you see} that I have any {sheep or} goats that are not speckled or spotted, or any lambs {that are not} dark-colored, {you will know that} I stole them {from you}."

³⁴Laban replied, "I agree. Yes, let's do exactly as you have suggested." ³⁵But that {same} day, Laban separated {from his flocks} {all} the he-goats that had streaks or spots, and all the she-goats that had speckles or spots, all that {had any} white {marks} on them, together with all the dark-colored lambs. Then he told his sons to take care of them, ³⁶and he {and his sons} took {those animals} a three-day walking-distance away from Jacob. Meanwhile Jacob continued taking care of the rest of Laban's flocks.

³⁷Then Jacob cut {some} branches from poplar {trees}, almond {trees} and chestnut {trees}, and made white streaks on them {by peeling off long strips of bark}, which exposed the white {wood} that was inside the branches.

³⁸Then he put those {streaked} branches in all the drinking troughs that the flocks would come to drink from, so that the flocks would see the branches. {That way, whenever} the animals that were ready to mate came {to the troughs} to drink, ³⁹they would see the branches as they were mating. As a result, they would have {young that

were} streaked or speckled or spotted. ⁴⁰Then Jacob separated those young animals {from Laban's flocks} {to form new flocks for himself}, and he put {the rest of} the flocks with the streaked and dark-colored animals in Laban's flocks {so that they would mate and have young that were streaked or dark-colored}. In that way, {over time} he created separate flocks {of sheep and goats} for himself that he kept separate from Laban's flocks.

⁴¹Whenever the stronger female animals were ready to mate, Jacob put the {streaked} branches in the {drinking} troughs in front of those animals so that they would see the branches as they were mating. ⁴²But whenever the weaker female animals {were ready to mate}, Jacob did not put {the branches in the troughs}. In that way, {the young from} the weaker animals were Laban's and {the young from} the stronger animals were Jacob's. ⁴³So Jacob became extremely wealthy and owned large flocks {of sheep and goats}, and {many} male and female servants, and {many} camels and donkeys.

Chapter 31

¹Then Jacob heard that Laban's sons were {complaining and} saying, "Jacob has taken {for himself} everything that our father owned. In fact, he has gotten all his riches from what belonged to our father!" ²Jacob also noticed that Laban no longer acted friendly toward him the way he used to in the past. ³Then Yahweh told Jacob, "Return to your ancestors' homeland, where your relatives live, and I will stay with you {and help you}."

⁴So Jacob sent a message to Rachel and Leah that they should meet him at the field {where he was with} his flocks. ⁵{When they arrived,} he said to them, "I have noticed that your father no longer acts friendly toward me the way he used to in the past, but the God whom my father serves has stayed with me {and helped me}. ⁶You {both} know how I have worked for your father as hard as I could, ⁷but he has cheated me by changing what he pays me ten times. However God has not permitted him to hurt me. ⁸{For example,} every time that he told {me} that the speckled animals would be my pay, all {the female animals in} the flocks gave birth to speckled young. But whenever he {changed his mind and} told {me} that the streaked animals would be my pay, then they all gave birth to streaked young. ⁹In that way, God has taken your father's animals {from him} and has given them to me.

¹⁰" One time during the season when the flocks {of sheep and goats} were mating, I had a dream. {In the dream} I looked around and was surprised to see that the {only} male goats {and sheep} that were mating with the female goats {and sheep} were streaked, speckled or blotched. ¹¹Then an angel from God called to me in the dream, 'Jacob!' and I answered, 'Yes, {Lord}?' ¹²Then he said {to me}, 'Look around and notice that all the male goats {and sheep} that are mating with the female goats {and sheep} are streaked, speckled or blotched. {I have caused that to happen,} because I have noticed all {the wrong things} that Laban has been doing to you. ¹³I am the God {who appeared to you} at {the town of} Bethel, where you poured oil on top of a memorial stone {to dedicate the place to me}, and where you made an oath to me. {So} then, get ready {and} leave this land {immediately}, and go back to your home land.' "

¹⁴Then Rachel and Leah responded to Jacob, "We will not inherit anything from our father {when he dies}! ¹⁵It is obvious that he treats us like outsiders {not family}. For example, he sold us {to you} {and became wealthy from the work you did for him}, but he spent all the money that should have been ours. ¹⁶In fact, all the wealth that God has taken from our father {rightfully} belongs to us and our children. So then, {you should} do everything that God has told you {to do}."

¹⁷So Jacob {quickly} got ready {for the journey} and helped his wives and his children {get up} onto some camels.

¹⁸Then he {started} herding {the camels and} all his {other} animals toward the land of Canaan where his father Isaac lived. {He took with him} all his possessions that he had accumulated, {including} all the livestock that he had acquired {while living} in {the region of} Paddan Aram.

¹⁹Now {before that,} Laban the Aramean had gone away {for several days} to shear his sheep. {While her father was gone,} Rachel {entered his tent and} stole his idols {that he worshiped}. ²⁰Then Jacob {also} deceived Laban by fleeing {secretly} without telling him that he was leaving. ²¹So {in that way} Jacob ran away {with his family} and

{took} everything that they owned. They quickly crossed the {Euphrates} River and headed toward the hill country of Gilead.

²²Three days later someone informed Laban that Jacob had run away. ²³So Laban took {some of} his relatives with him and chased after Jacob for seven days until they overtook him in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁴But that night God appeared to Laban in a dream and warned him, " Be sure that you do not threaten Jacob in any way."

²⁵{By the time that} Laban caught up with Jacob, Jacob had {already} set up his tents in the hill country {of Gilead}, so Laban and his relatives {also} set up camp there {at a place nearby}. ²⁶Then {the next day} Laban {met with Jacob and} complained to him, "Look what you have done! You have deceived me and dragged away my daughters like prisoners of war! ²⁷Why did you deceive me and secretly run away? Why didn't you tell me {that you were leaving}? {If I had known,} we could have {held a feast and} sung joyful songs {and danced} together, with tambourines and lyres playing, before sending you {on your way}. ²⁸You did not {even} let me kiss my daughters and my grandchildren {before they left}! What you have done is foolish! ²⁹I have the power to harm {all of} you, but last night {in a dream} the God whom your father serves warned me not to threaten you in any way. ³⁰Now then, {I understand that} you left because you were so homesick to return to your father's family, but why did you steal my gods?"

³¹Jacob answered Laban, " {We left secretly} because I was afraid. I thought that {if I told you we were leaving,} you might take your {two} daughters from me {by force}. ³²{However we did not take your gods. In fact,} if you find your gods with anyone {here}, that person will die {for stealing them}! {So} while our relatives are watching, {go ahead and} search {all} my belongings for yourself. {If you find} anything that is yours, take it." {When Jacob said that,} he did not know that Rachel {was the one who} had stolen the idols.

³³So Laban started searching in Jacob's tent, then {he searched} through Leah's tent and through the two servant women's tent, but he did not find anything. Next after he left those tents, he went into Rachel's tent. ³⁴But Rachel had hidden the idols inside {her} camel saddlebag, and she was sitting on them. So Laban searched through everything {else} in the tent, but could not find them. ³⁵{As he was searching,} Rachel said to him, "Sir, {please} do not be upset that I am not able to get up to greet you, because it's that time of the month {when I feel weak}." {That is also why} he could not find {his} idols when he searched {her tent}.

³⁶Then Jacob became {very} angry {at Laban} and confronted him by saying to him, " Tell me my crime! Tell me what sin I have done {against you} that gives you the right to chase after me! ³⁷Now that you have searched through all my things, did you find anything {that anyone took} from your household? {If so,} put it here in front of our relatives, so that they can decide which one of us is right!

³⁸"For twenty years I have worked for you! {During all that time} your sheep and your goats had no trouble bearing young, and I have never {killed and} eaten {any} animals from your flocks. ³⁹Whenever wild animals killed {any of} your animals, I never brought {the dead animal} to you {to prove I was innocent}, {rather} I replaced them at my own expense. {Besides that,} you required me to pay for {any} animals {that anyone ever} stole {at any time of} day or night. ⁴⁰That was my situation! During the days, I suffered from the hot sun, and during the nights it was so cold that I could not sleep. ⁴¹{It was like} that for me {during the entire} twenty years that I was with you. I worked for you for fourteen years in order to marry your two daughters, and {I worked} {another} six years to earn flocks {of animals} from you, even though you changed my pay ten times. ⁴²If God whom my ancestors Abraham and Isaac serve and revere had not been with me {taking care of me}, there is no doubt that I would now be leaving with {absolutely} nothing. {But} God knows how {much} you have mistreated me and how hard I have worked {for you}, so last night he rebuked you."

⁴³Then Laban responded to Jacob, " These women are my daughters and their children are my grandchildren, and these flocks are {also} mine. In fact, all that you see {here} is mine! But there is nothing I can do today to keep my daughters or their children near me {any longer}! ⁴⁴So then, you and I should make a {peace} treaty {with each other}, and there should be something to remind us {to keep that treaty}."

⁴⁵So Jacob picked out a {large} stone and set it up {on its end} as a monument {to mark the place where they made their treaty}. ⁴⁶Then he told his relatives, "Gather {some more} stones." So they {all} gathered stones and put them in a {large} pile. Then everyone ate {a meal together} there next to the pile {of stones}. ⁴⁷Laban gave the pile the {Aramaic} name Jegar Sahadutha {which means " pile that reminds "}, while Jacob gave it the {Hebrew} name Galeed {which has the same meaning}. ⁴⁸Laban said {to him}, " {Starting} today this pile {of stones} will remind you and me {about our peace treaty}. "That is why the name of that place is Galeed. ⁴⁹{Another name for the place is} Mizpah {which means " watchtower"}, because Laban said {to Jacob}, "May Yahweh watch both of us {to make sure that we keep our treaty} while we are apart from each other. ⁵⁰If you treat my daughters badly, or if you marry {other} wives besides them, remember {that} even if no one {else} is {watching us}, God is {always} watching both of us, {to hold us accountable}."

⁵¹Then Laban {also} said to Jacob, " Here is this pile {of stones}, and here is this monument which we stood up between us {to remind us about our peace treaty}. ⁵²This pile {of stones} and this monument {both} remind us that I must never go past this pile {to attack you}, and that you must never go past this pile and this monument to attack me. ⁵³May {your grandfather} Abraham's God and {my grandfather} Nahor's gods, {which were also} their father {Terah}'s gods, judge between us {and punish us if we break this agreement}!" But Jacob swore by the God whom his father Isaac revered {that he would keep their treaty}, ⁵⁴and he burned {the body of} an animal {on an altar} as a sacrifice {to God} on the mountain. Then he invited his relatives to eat a meal {together} {there}. So they {all} ate the meal {together} and spent the night there.

⁵⁵Early the next morning Laban got up and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters {goodbye} {on the cheeks} and asked God to bless them. Then he {and his men} left {from there} and returned home.

Chapter 32

¹Meanwhile Jacob continued on his journey {toward home} {with his family}, and {some} angels from God met him.

²When Jacob saw the angels, he exclaimed, "This is God's army!" So he named that place Mahanaim {which means " two armies"}.

³Then Jacob sent {some} messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau {who was living} in the region of Seir, {which was also called} the country of Edom. ⁴{Before they left,} he ordered them, "This {is what} you must tell my master Esau: 'I, your servant Jacob, want you to know that I have been staying with {our uncle} Laban all this time. ⁵I own {many} cattle, donkeys and flocks, as well as {many} male and female servants. I have sent this message to {you,} sir, hoping that you will be kind {to me} {when I arrive}.' "

⁶{After the messengers delivered Jacob's message,} they returned to Jacob and reported {to him}, " We went {and spoke} to your brother Esau. Now he is on his way {here} to meet you, but {there are} {also} 400 men {coming} with him!" ⁷{When Jacob heard that,} he was very frightened and worried. So he put {all} the people {and animals} that were with him into two {large} groups, including {his family, his servants and} {all} his flocks {of sheep and goats}, herds {of cattle} and camels. ⁸{He did that} because he thought, "If Esau {and his men} come and attack one group, then the other group might {be able to} escape."

⁹Then he prayed, " {Dear} Yahweh, the God whom my grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac serve, you told me to go back to my country where my relatives live, and that you would cause me to prosper. ¹⁰I am not worthy of how kind and faithful you have always been to {me} as I have served you. When I {first} crossed this Jordan {River}, all that I owned was my walking stick, but now my family and belongings are enough to form two {large} groups.

¹¹Please rescue me from my brother Esau, because I am afraid that he {and his men} will come and attack me {as well as} {these} mothers and {our} children! ¹²But you promised me that you would greatly prosper me, and that you would make my descendants {as numerous} as {the grains of} sand on the seashore, which are so numerous that no one can count them all. "

¹³Then Jacob spent the night there, and {during that time} he selected many of his animals to give to his brother Esau, ¹⁴{including} 200 female goats and twenty male goats, 200 female sheep and twenty male sheep, ¹⁵thirty mother camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, {and} twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. ¹⁶Jacob put his servants in charge of the animals, with each kind {of animal} in a separate group. Then he ordered his servants, " Go ahead of me, {one group at a time,} and keep {some} distance between each group {of animals}." ¹⁷He {also} ordered the servant in charge of the first group {of animals}, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, 'Who is your master, and where are you headed? And who do these {animals} belong to that {you are driving} ahead of you?' ¹⁸then you are to tell {him}, 'Esau, sir, these {animals} belong to Jacob who {humbly} serves you. He has sent them to you as a gift. In fact, he is following us {here}.'

¹⁹In the same way, Jacob ordered the servants who were in charge of the second and third groups {of animals}, and all {the servants} who were in charge of the {other} groups, " When you meet Esau, tell him the same thing {that I told the first servant}. ²⁰Especially be sure to tell {him} that his servant Jacob is following you {there}." {Jacob did all that,} because he thought that if he sent the gifts {of animals} ahead of himself {to Esau}, then Esau would stop being angry at him. He was hoping that when Esau saw the gifts, he would {forgive him and} welcome him when they met in person." ²¹So Jacob's servants {went} ahead of Jacob with the {animal} gifts {for Esau}, while Jacob {and his family} stayed {behind} in the camp that night.

²²{Later} that {same} night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two concubines and his eleven sons across a shallow place in the Jabbok {Stream}. ²³{After} he had taken them across the stream, he {went back and} had his servants take {all} his {animals and other} belongings across {the stream} {too}. ²⁴Then Jacob was {there} by himself {for a while}, and a man {came and} fought with him until daybreak. ²⁵When the man realized that he was not able to defeat Jacob, he struck him on his hip, so that it went out of place as they fought with each other. ²⁶Then the man said {to him}, "Let go of me, because it is daybreak!" But Jacob replied, " {No!} I will not let go of you until you {first} bless me!" ²⁷So the man asked him, "What is your name?" He answered, " {My name is} Jacob." ²⁸Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but {rather it will be} Israel {which means " he who wrestles with God"}", because you have wrestled with God and with people, and you have won."

²⁹Then Jacob asked the man what his name was. But he replied, "There is no need for you to ask {me} what my name is!" Then the man blessed Jacob there. ³⁰So Jacob named the place Peniel {which means " God's face"}, because {he exclaimed}, "I saw God's face {here}, but {yet} he allowed me to live!"

³¹The sun was shining as Jacob left Peniel {and returned to his family}, and he was limping because of his hip {injury}. ³²That is why even today the people of Israel do not eat meat that comes from an {animal's} hip joint, because that is the place on Jacob's hip that God struck {and injured}.

Chapter 33

¹Then Jacob looked and saw {in the distance} that Esau was coming {toward him}, and with him {were} 400 men! So Jacob {quickly} divided up {his} children among Leah, Rachel and {his} two servant wives. ²He put his servant wives and their children first {in line}, then Leah with her children behind them, and Rachel with {her son} Joseph last. ³Then Jacob himself went ahead of them {all} {toward his brother}. As he got closer to him, he bowed {with his face} to the ground seven times {to show respect}.

⁴But Esau ran to greet Jacob and hugged him. He held him tightly and kissed him {on the cheeks}, as they {both} cried {for joy}. ⁵Then Esau looked ahead and noticed the women and children {who were there}, so he asked {Jacob}, "Who are these {people}? {Do they belong} to you?" Jacob answered {him}, " {They are} {the wives and} the children whom God has kindly given to me, sir." ⁶Then the {two} servant wives with their children came forward, and they {all} bowed {to the ground} {in front of Esau} {to show respect}. ⁷Next Leah and her children also came forward and bowed {to the ground}. Then last {of all}, Joseph and {his mother} Rachel came forward, and they {also} bowed {to the ground}.

⁸Then Esau asked {Jacob}, "Why did you send all those herds {of animals} that I encountered?" Jacob answered {him}, " {They are gifts for you} so that you will be kind to me, sir." ⁹But Esau replied, "My brother, I {already} have enough {animals}, {so} keep them for yourself." ¹⁰But Jacob insisted, " No, please. {Rather} if you want to be kind to me, then {please} accept these gifts from me. After all, for me to see your face is like seeing God's face, especially since you have welcomed me {so kindly}. ¹¹{So} please accept my gift {of animals} that I sent to you, because God has been kind to me, so that I have all {that I need}." Jacob kept insisting {that Esau accept the animals from him} until {finally} he accepted {them}.

¹²Then Esau suggested {to Jacob}, "Let's start traveling {home}, and I will accompany you." ¹³But Jacob replied to him, " Sir, as you know, {my} children are fragile and I need {to be careful with} {all} the sheep and cattle that are nursing {their young}. If I force the animals to go too far {for} {even} one day, all of them will die. ¹⁴{So then,} sir, please go on {home} ahead of me, sir. I will travel along slowly at a safe pace for the animals and the children that are with me, until we reach you in {the land of} Seir."

¹⁵So Esau responded, "{Okay, then} please let me leave with you some of my men {to escort you}." But Jacob replied, " There is no need {for you} to do that. {Just} please {continue to} be kind to me, sir." ¹⁶So that day Esau {and his men} started on their way back {home} to {the land of} Seir. ¹⁷Meanwhile, {instead of going to Seir,} Jacob {and his family} traveled to {the town of} Succoth. There he {and his men} built houses for himself {and his family}, and they built {some} shelters for his animals. That is why the name of that place is Succoth {which means "shelters"}.

¹⁸{After that,} Jacob {and his family} continued their journey {home} from Paddan Aram, until they arrived safely at the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan. Then they set up their tents {in a field} near that city. ¹⁹{While he was there,} he bought the land where he had set up his tents for a hundred pieces {of silver} from the descendants of Hamor, {who was} the father of Shechem. ²⁰Jacob {also} built an altar {out of stones} on that land, and he named it El Elohe Israel {which means " God is the God of Israel"}.

Chapter 34

¹Then {one day} Dinah, {who was} the daughter of Jacob and Leah, went out to visit with {some of} the local women. ²The chief of that region was a Hivite named Hamor. His son Shechem saw {how beautiful} Dinah was, so he grabbed {hold of} her and raped her. ³Shechem admired Jacob's daughter Dinah so much that he fell in love with her and spoke sweetly to her {to try to woo her}. ⁴Then Shechem said to his father Hamor, "Negotiate {things} for me so that I can marry this girl."

⁵When Jacob found out that Shechem had dishonored his daughter Dinah, his sons were {still} {out} in the fields taking care of his animals, so he didn't say anything {about it} until they returned {home}. ⁶Meanwhile, {Shechem and} his father Hamor went to talk to Jacob. ⁷Soon Jacob's sons returned {home} from the fields. When they heard {what had happened}, they were shocked and extremely angry that Shechem had dishonored {the people of} Israel by raping Jacob's daughter. No one should ever do such a {horrible} thing! ⁸But Hamor urged Jacob and his sons, " My son Shechem deeply loves your daughter {and sister}. {So} please allow him to marry her. ⁹{In fact,} let's allow marriage between our two people groups, {so that} your daughters can marry our {young men} and your {young men} can marry our daughters. ¹⁰You can live among us. The land is available for you {to choose what you want}; live {in it} {wherever you want}. You can {also} trade {freely} here, and you can buy {your own} land."

¹¹Then Shechem said to Dinah's father and brothers, "{Please} be kind to me {and let me marry her}, then I will pay {you} whatever you request from me {for her}. ¹²Set the bride-price and {marriage} gifts {that I must pay} {for her} as high as you want, and I will pay {you} whatever you ask from me. {Just please} give the young woman to me to marry."

¹³But since Shechem had dishonored their sister Dinah, Jacob's sons replied to him and his father Hamor in a deceitful way. ¹⁴They said to them, " We are not able to do such a thing as let our sister marry a man {like you} who

is not circumcised, because that would dishonor our family! ¹⁵The only way that we can agree with your proposal is if {first} you {and your people} become like us by circumcising all of your males. ¹⁶{If you do that,} then we will allow your {young} men to marry our daughters, and {we will allow} your daughters to marry our {young men}. We will {also} live among you {in this land} so that we become one people group. ¹⁷However if you refuse to agree with our requirement that you circumcise {your people}, then we will take our sister and move {somewhere else}."

¹⁸What Jacob's sons said seemed good to Hamor and his son Shechem. ¹⁹So right away Shechem, who was the most respected member in his family, started to do what they required, because he was thrilled with Jacob's daughter. ²⁰In fact, he and his father Hamor went {straight} to their city entrance {for a town meeting}, and they told the elders of their city {about Jacob and his sons}, ²¹"These people are friendly toward us, so {let's} allow them to live in {our} land and trade {freely} here. After all, there is more than enough space in the land for them {too}. {Besides that,} {then} our {young} men can marry their daughters, and their {young} men can marry our daughters. ²²There is just one thing: They will only agree to live among us and become one people group {with us} if we circumcise all our males so that we are like them. ²³{But if we do that,} {all} their property, {including} their livestock and all their {other} animals will belong to us! {So} let's just agree to do what they require so that they will live among us!" ²⁴All {the men} who were leaders of the city agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem, so they circumcised every male in the city, including themselves.

²⁵Three days later, when the men of {the city of} Shechem were {all} {still} sore {from being circumcised}, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, both took their swords and attacked the city, with no one opposing them. They killed all the men {there} ²⁶with their swords, including Hamor and his son Shechem. Then they got Dinah from Shechem's house and left {the city}. ²⁷{Next} {all} Jacob's sons went {into the city} and took everything valuable from the dead bodies and from {the rest of} the city. {They did that,} because {that was where} Shechem had dishonored their sister. ²⁸They plundered whatever was in the city and in the {surrounding} fields, including the people's flocks {of sheep and goats}, their herds {of cattle} and their donkeys. ²⁹They carried away all the valuable things the people of Shechem had owned, including everything that was in their houses. They also captured their women and children.

³⁰Later Jacob scolded Simeon and Levi {by saying}, " You have brought me {serious} trouble by causing the Canaanites and Perizzites who live in this land to hate us! "I {only} have a few men {to defend us}, so if they {all} join {forces} against us and attack us, they will destroy us and {the rest of} our family!" ³¹But Simeon and Levi responded, " Shechem should not have treated our sister like a whore!"

Chapter 35

¹Then God commanded Jacob, "Leave here and move to {the town of} Bethel. Build an altar there and worship {me as} the God who appeared to you {there} when you were running away from your brother Esau." ²So Jacob told his family and everyone else who was with him, " Get rid of the idols you have that other people groups worship. Also wash and make yourselves clean and put on clean clothes. ³Then we will leave here and move to {the town of} Bethel. There we will build an altar and worship God because he helped me during the time when I was in trouble. He has {always} been with us {and taken care of us} everywhere that we have gone." ⁴So they gave Jacob all their idols and {all} their earrings. Then Jacob buried all those things at the base of the oak tree that was near {the city of} Shechem.

⁵Then Jacob and everyone with him left that place, and God caused {the people in} the surrounding towns to be terrified, so that they did not attack Jacob's family. ⁶He and his family {continued traveling} in the land of Canaan, and they arrived at {the town of} Luz, which {also has the name} Bethel. ⁷There Jacob built an altar, and he named the place El Bethel {which means "the God of Bethel"}, because that is where God had {first} appeared to him when he was running away from his brother.

⁸{While they were there,} Deborah died. She was the servant that had helped raise {Jacob's mother} Rebekah {when she was young}. Jacob buried her body at the base of an oak tree, {in the valley} near {the town of} Bethel. So he named the place Allon Bacuth {which means "oak tree of mourning"}.

⁹Now that Jacob had returned from {the region of} Paddan Aram, God appeared to him {at Bethel} again. {There} God blessed him ¹⁰and said to him, "{Although} your name has been Jacob, that will no longer be your {only} name, but {rather} you will {also} have the name Israel!" So {once again} God gave Jacob the name Israel.

¹¹Then God {also} said to Jacob, " I am Almighty God. Have many children so that you {and your descendants} become {very} numerous. Your descendants will become many people groups, and some of your descendants will be kings. ¹²{Besides that,} the land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I {also} give to you and your descendants {who live} after you." ¹³After God finished talking to Jacob, he left him there and went up {to heaven}.

¹⁴Then Jacob stood a {large} stone up {on its end} at the place where God had talked to him to mark the place {as special}. Then he poured some wine and some {olive} oil on it {to thank God and dedicate the place to him}. ¹⁵Since God had talked to Jacob at that place, Jacob named it Bethel {which means "God's house"}.

¹⁶Later Jacob and his family moved on from Bethel and headed for {the town of} Ephrath. While they were still some distance from there, {his wife} Rachel went into labor and was experiencing great difficulty. ¹⁷Then when her labor pain was at its worst, {the baby was born and} the woman who was helping her deliver exclaimed to her, " Do not despair! You {now} have another son!" ¹⁸But Rachel was dying, and as her spirit was leaving her body, she named her baby Benoni {which means "son of my sorrow"}. But {later,} his father {Jacob} changed his name to Benjamin {which means "son of my right hand"}.

¹⁹After Rachel died, they buried her body beside the road to {the town of} Ephrath, which {also} has the name Bethlehem. ²⁰Jacob stood a stone up {on its end} on her grave {to mark where it was}. {In fact,} that {same} stone still marks Rachel's grave today.

²¹Then Israel {and his family} moved on {from there} and set up their tents on the south side of the tower of Eder.

²²While they were living in that area, {Israel's son} Reuben committed adultery with his father's servant wife Bilhah, and Israel found out {about it}.

{With the birth of Benjamin,} Jacob {now} had {a total of} twelve sons. ²³The sons {he had} with Leah were Reuben, {who was} his oldest {child}, then Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun. ²⁴The sons {he had} with Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁵The sons {he had} with Rachel's servant Bilhah were Dan and Naphtali. ²⁶And the sons {he had} with Leah's servant Zilpah were Gad and Asher. {All} those are the sons Jacob had {starting from the time that he lived} in {the region of} Paddan Aram.

²⁷Then Jacob went {home} to his father Isaac {in the city of} Mamre, which {also has the name} Kiriath Arba or Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac {and their families} had lived for a while {as foreigners}. ²⁸Isaac lived to be 180 years old. ²⁹Then, after living a long, full life, he took his {last} breath, died and joined his ancestors {who had died before him}. Then his sons Esau and Jacob buried his body.

Chapter 36

¹Here is a record about the descendants of Esau, whose {nickname} was Edom. ²Esau had married {two} Canaanite women, {including} Adah, {who was} the daughter of a Hittite named Elon, and Oholibamah, {who was} Anah's daughter and the granddaughter of a Hivite named Zibeon. ³{Esau also married} Basemath, {who was} Ishmael's daughter and Nebaioth's sister.

⁴Adah had {a son} with Esau {whom they named} Eliphaz, while Basemath had {a son named} Reuel. ⁵Oholibamah had {sons named} Jeush, Jalam and Korah. {All} those were Esau's sons whom he had {while he lived} in the land of Canaan.

⁶⁻⁷Jacob and Esau had very many possessions. For this reason, they needed more land for their livestock. The land where they were living was not big enough for all their livestock. So Esau, whose other name was Edom, had taken his wives and sons and daughters and all the other members of his household, his sheep and goats and his other animals, and all the other things he had obtained in Canaan land, and they had moved to an area that was away from Jacob. ⁸That is how Esau {and his family} ended up living in the Seir Mountains. {That is the record about} Esau, that is, Edom.

⁹Here is a {more detailed} record of the descendants of Esau, {who was} the ancestor of the Edomites {who live} in the Seir Mountains. ¹⁰{Two of} Esau's sons were Eliphaz, whom he had with his wife Adah, and Reuel, whom he had with his wife Basemath. ¹¹Eliphaz {and his wife} had sons {they named} Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz. ¹²Eliphaz and his servant wife Timna had {a son they named} Amalek. Eliphaz's sons were {all} grandsons of {Esau and} his wife Adah.

¹³Reuel's sons were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. They were the grandsons of {Esau and} his wife Basemath.

¹⁴Esau and his wife Oholibamah had sons {whom they named} Jeush, Jalam and Korah. {Oholibamah was} the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon.

¹⁵Here is {a record of} the descendants of Esau who became chiefs: The sons of his firstborn {son} Eliphaz {who became} chiefs were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, ¹⁶Korah, Gatam and Amalek. They were the chiefs {who descended} from Eliphaz {and lived} in the land of Edom. They were {all} grandsons of Adah {and Esau}.

¹⁷The sons of Esau's son Reuel {who became} chiefs were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. They were the chiefs {who descended} from Reuel {and lived} in the land of Edom. They were {all} grandsons of {Esau and} his wife Basemath.

¹⁸The sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah {who became} chiefs were Jeush, Jalam and Korah. They were the chiefs {who descended} from {Esau and} his wife Oholibamah, {who was} Anah's daughter.

¹⁹{All} those {chiefs} were the descendants of Esau, that is, Edom, and each one led his own family group.

²⁰Here is {a record of} the descendants of Seir the Horite who were {also} living in that land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ²¹Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. They were the descendants of Seir {who became} chiefs over the Horites in the land of Edom.

²²Lotan's sons were Hori and Hemam, and his sister was Timna.

²³Shobal's sons were Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho and Onam.

²⁴Zibeon's sons were Aiah and Anah. This is {the same} Anah who discovered some hot springs while he was {out} in the desert grazing his father's donkeys. ²⁵Anah's children were {his son} Dishon and his daughter Oholibamah.

²⁶Dishon's sons were Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Keran.

²⁷Ezer's sons were Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan.

²⁸Dishan's sons were Uz and Aran.

²⁹⁻³⁰The people groups who were descendants of Hor lived in Seir land. The names of the people groups are Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.

³¹Here is {a record of} the kings who ruled over {the people of} the land of Edom before the Israelites had their own king. ³²Bela, {who was} the son of Beor, was the {first} king to rule over {the people of} {the land of} Edom. The name of his hometown {that he ruled from} was Dinhabah. ³³When {King} Bela died, Jobab, {who was} the son of Zerah, replaced him as king {and ruled} from {his hometown of} Bozrah. ³⁴When {King} Jobab died, Husham

replaced him as king {and ruled} from {his hometown which was in} the land where the Temanites lived. ³⁵When {King} Husham died, Hadad, {who was} the son of Bedad, replaced him as king. {King Hadad is the one} who defeated the Midianites {in battle} in the land of Moab. The name of his hometown {that he ruled from} was Avith. ³⁶When {King} Hadad died, Samlah replaced him as king {and ruled} from {his hometown of} Masrekah. ³⁷When {King} Samlah died, Shaul replaced him as king {and ruled} from {his hometown of} Rehoboth beside the {Euphrates} River. ³⁸When {King} Shaul died, Baal-Hanan, {who was} the son of Acbor, replaced him as king. ³⁹When {King} Baal-Hanan died, Hadar replaced him as king, and the name of his hometown {that he ruled from} was Pau. His wife's name was Mehetabel, {who was} the daughter of Matred and the granddaughter of Me-Zahab.

⁴⁰⁻⁴³Here is a list of all the people groups that were descendants of Esau: Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram. They all lived in the land of Edom. The land where each people group lived got the same name as the name of the people group.

Chapter 37

¹Jacob continued to live in the land of Canaan, where his father {Isaac} had lived for a while {as a foreigner}. ²Here is {more of} the record about Jacob and his family: {One day} {his} seventeen-year-old son Joseph was taking care of the {family's} flocks {of sheep and goats}. Joseph was helping his brothers {who were} the sons of his father's {servant-}wives Bilhah and Zilpah, and he told their father about the bad things they were doing.

³Now {Jacob, whose other name was} Israel, loved Joseph more than any of his other sons because he was born to him when he was old. So he made a {special} robe for him that had many colors. ⁴When Joseph's brothers realized that their father loved Joseph more than the rest of them, they hated him so much that they would not talk to him in a friendly manner.

⁵{One night} Joseph had a dream, and he told his brothers about it. That made them hate him even more {than before}. ⁶{This is what} he told them, "Please listen to this dream that I had: ⁷{In it} I saw us {working} out in a field {cutting and} tying bundles {of grain stalks}. Then suddenly the bundle that I had made stood up straight. Then I saw that the bundles you had made gathered around {my bundle} and bowed down to my bundle {to show respect}." ⁸His brothers responded to him, " Do you really expect to be our king? You will never rule over us!" So they hated him even more {intensely} {than they did before} because of what he had said {to them} about his dreams.

⁹Then Joseph had another dream that he {also} told to his brothers. He said, "Listen, I {just} had another dream, and {in it} I saw that the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowed down {to the ground} before me {to show respect}." ¹⁰Later Joseph told {the same dream} to {both} his father and his brothers, but his father scolded him by saying, " That is a strange dream that you had! Do you really expect your mother and me and your brothers to bow down before you?" ¹¹So Joseph's brothers were jealous of him, but his father continued to think about what it all could mean.

¹²Sometime after that, Joseph's brothers took their father's flocks to graze {in the fields} near {the city of} Shechem. ¹³Then {one day} Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are tending {our flocks} near {the city of} Shechem. Get ready so that I can send you to them." Joseph responded, " I'm ready {to go}." ¹⁴Then Israel told him, "Please go and check on how your brothers and the flocks are doing. Then report back to me {what you find out}." So Israel sent him {on his way} from {their home in} the valley near {the city of} Hebron, and Joseph traveled to {the city of} Shechem. ¹⁵{When he arrived there,} a man saw him searching around in the {nearby} fields and asked him, " What are you looking for?" ¹⁶He replied, "I am looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are tending {their flocks}?" ¹⁷The man answered, " They were here and then left, but I overheard them say that they were going to {the town of} Dothan. " Joseph followed his brothers and caught up with them near {the town of} Dothan. ¹⁸But they saw him while he was still some distance away, and before he reached them, they made plans to kill him. ¹⁹They said to each other {about him}, " Look, here comes that expert dreamer! ²⁰Come on, let's kill him

and throw his body into one of the pits {here}. Then we can tell {people} that a vicious animal ate him up, and we will see if his dreams come true!"

²¹But Reuben heard {their plan}, so he {tried to} rescue Joseph from them by urging them, "We should not kill him."

²²Then he continued, " You must not take his life. {Instead} put him into this pit {here} in the desert, but you must not harm him." Reuben was planning to rescue Joseph from them and take him back {home} to their father.

²³When Joseph reached his brothers, they {took hold of him and} ripped off the colorful robe that he was wearing.

²⁴Then they grabbed him and put him into the pit. The pit was empty and {completely} dry inside.

²⁵Then {some of} Joseph's brothers sat down to eat a meal, and {while they were eating,} they looked around and noticed that {headed their way was} a {large} group of Ishmaelite {traders} {who were} traveling from {the region of} Gilead. Their camels were loaded with {expensive} spices, healing salve and incense that they were taking down to {the country of} Egypt {to sell there}. ²⁶So Judah said to his brothers, "We will not gain anything by killing our brother and trying to hide it! ²⁷{Instead,} come on, let's sell him to those Ishmaelite {traders} {over there} so that we will not be guilty of harming him. After all, he is a member of our family, our own brother." Judah's brothers agreed {with him}. ²⁸So when the Midianite {(that is, Ishmaelite)} traders came by {them}, {some of} Joseph's brothers pulled Joseph up out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. Then the Ishmaelites took him to {the country of} Egypt.

²⁹Later Reuben returned to the pit, but he was shocked to see that Joseph was not there! So he tore his clothes {to show distress}. ³⁰Then he went to his brothers and exclaimed {to them}, " Joseph is gone! Now I do not know what to do!"

³¹So Joseph's brothers killed a young goat and dipped Joseph's robe in the {goat's} blood.

³²Then they had someone take the colorful robe back to their father and say {to him} {for them}, "We found this {robe}. Please look at it {to see} whether or not it is your son's." ³³Jacob recognized the robe and exclaimed, " {This is} my son {Joseph}'s robe! Clearly a fierce animal has torn him to bits and eaten him up! " ³⁴Then Jacob tore his clothes {in grief}, put on mourning clothes, and for many days he mourned that his son had died. ³⁵All Jacob's sons and daughters came {to him} {and tried} to console him, but he did not let them comfort him. Instead he said {to them}, " {No,} I will continue to mourn {for my son} until I {die and} go down to be with him in the world of the dead." So Joseph's father continued to mourn for him.

³⁶Meanwhile in {the country of} Egypt, the Midianite {traders} sold Joseph to Potiphar, {who was} an officer under Pharaoh {the King of Egypt}; {he was} the captain over the {palace} guards.

Chapter 38

¹Meanwhile Judah left his brothers and went down to {the town of} Adullam and stayed near {the home of} a man from there whose name was Hirah. ²{While he was living} there, he met a Canaanite woman whose father was Shua, and he married her. Then he slept with her, ³and she became pregnant. When she gave birth, she had a son, whom Judah named Er. ⁴Then Judah's wife became pregnant again and gave birth to {another} son, and she named him Onan. ⁵Then she {became pregnant} yet again and gave birth to another son, and she named him Shelah. When she gave birth to Shelah, Judah was at {the town of} Kezib.

⁶When Judah's oldest son Er {grew up}, Judah arranged for him to marry a woman whose name was Tamar. ⁷But Er did things that Yahweh considered to be evil, so Yahweh caused him to die.

⁸After that, Judah told {his son} Onan, "Marry your brother's widow {Tamar} {according to our custom} so that you fulfill your obligation to her {as her brother-in-law} and have children {with her} for your {deceased} brother."

⁹However Onan knew that the children {they would have together} would not belong to him. So whenever he slept

with Tamar, he wasted {his semen} on the ground to keep her from {getting pregnant and} having {any} children for his brother. ¹⁰Yahweh considered what he did to be evil, so he caused him to die too.

¹¹Then Judah told his daughter-in-law Tamar, " {Go and} live at your father's house, and do not marry again until my son Shelah is old enough {to marry you}." {Actually Judah did not want Shelah to marry Tamar} because he was afraid {that if he did,} he would also die like his brothers had. So Tamar went {home} to her father's house and stayed there.

¹²After a long time, Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. After Judah finished mourning {for her}, {one day} he {decided to} go to {the town of} Timnah {to work} with the men who were shearing his sheep {there}. He and his friend Hirah, {who was} from {the town of} Adullam, {started traveling there together}. ¹³Meanwhile someone told Tamar, "Listen, your father-in-law {Judah} is on his way to {the town of} Timnah to shear his sheep." ¹⁴So she changed from her clothes that showed she was a widow and covered her face with a {thin} headscarf and dressed herself {like a prostitute}. Then {she went} toward {the town of} Timnah and sat down near the gateway of {the town of} Enaim, which was along the way. {She did that} because she had noticed that Shelah was now old enough {to marry}, but Judah had not given her to him to marry {as he was supposed to do}.

¹⁵{As Judah was traveling to Timnah,} he saw Tamar {beside the road}, but since she had veiled her face {with a scarf}, {he could not see who she was and} he assumed that she was a prostitute. ¹⁶So he went over to where she was {sitting} beside the road and said {to her}, " Let me sleep with you. "{He did that} because he did not recognize that she was his daughter-in-law {Tamar}. So she asked {him}, " What will you pay me so that you can sleep with me?" ¹⁷He answered {her}, "I will send {you} a young goat from my flock." She replied, " {I will agree,} if you will give {me} something {valuable} {of yours} to keep until you deliver {the goat to me}." ¹⁸So Judah asked, "What do you want me to leave with you?" She answered {him}, " {Leave me} your name seal with its cord {that you have around your neck}, and your walking stick that you are holding." So he gave {those things} to her. Then he slept with her, and she became pregnant from him. ¹⁹After that, Tamar left {Judah} and returned {home}. Then she took off her scarf and put {back} on her clothes that showed she was a widow.

²⁰Meanwhile Judah sent a young goat with his friend {Hirah} {who was} from {the town of} Adullam to reclaim his things from the prostitute {whom he had given them to}. But Hirah was not able to find her. ²¹So he asked {some} men {who lived} near the place where she had been, "Where is the temple prostitute who was {sitting} beside the road near {the town of} Enaim?" But they answered {him}, " There has never been a temple prostitute around here. " ²²So Hirah returned to Judah and told {him}, " I was not able to find the prostitute. In fact, the men who live near that town claim {that} there has never been a temple prostitute around there." ²³Then Judah said, "{Stop looking for her and} let her keep {my things} for herself. Otherwise everyone will make fun of us. Besides that, I {did try to} send this goat {to her}, but you were not able to find her."

²⁴About three months later, someone told Judah, " Your daughter-in-law Tamar has acted like a prostitute. In fact, look, she is {now} pregnant from doing that!" Judah responded {angrily}, "Take her outside {the town} and burn her {to death}!" ²⁵{So they went to get her, but} as they were taking her out {of the town}, she sent {a messenger} to her father-in-law {along with his things} and told the messenger to say, " The man who owns these things is the one who got me pregnant. Please identify {the man} who owns this name seal with its cord and this walking stick." ²⁶Judah recognized {his things} and confessed, "Tamar is right and I am wrong, because I refused to have my son Shelah marry her {as I was supposed to}!" {So they released Tamar,} and {after that,} Judah never slept with her again.

²⁷Months later, when Tamar was ready to give birth, they realized that {there were} twins inside her! ²⁸While she was in labor, one {of them} stuck out {his} hand. So the midwife {who was there} tied a {bright} red string around his wrist and said, " This baby was born first." ²⁹But then the baby pulled his hand back inside, and suddenly his brother was born {first} {instead}. So the midwife exclaimed {to the baby}, "What a dramatic way for you to burst out!" That is why he was named Perez {which means " break out"}. ³⁰After that, his brother, who had the {bright} red string on his wrist, came out. So he was named Zerah {which means "brightness"}.

Chapter 39

¹Now {as you know,} {some} Ishmaelite traders had taken Joseph down to {the country of} Egypt, and an Egyptian {named} Potiphar had bought him {as a servant} from them. Potiphar {was} {one of} Pharaoh's officers, the captain over the king's {personal} guards. ²As Joseph worked in his Egyptian owner's house, Yahweh was with him {and helped him}, so that he succeeded in everything he did. ³His owner realized that Yahweh {was} with him and was helping him to succeed in everything that he did. ⁴So he was pleased with Joseph and made him his personal servant. He also put him in charge of managing his household and taking care of everything {else} {that} he owned. ⁵From the time {that} Joseph's Egyptian owner did that, Yahweh blessed the household of that Egyptian {man} for Joseph's sake. He blessed everything that belonged to him, {including} {everything} in {his} home and in {his} fields. ⁶In fact, after Joseph's owner put him in charge of everything that he owned, he did not {need to} concern himself with anything {in his household}, except for {personal matters like} {deciding} what {kind of} food {he wanted} to eat.

Joseph was well-built and good-looking. ⁷So after a while, his owner's wife started looking {with desire} at him and told {him}, "Come to bed with me!" ⁸But Joseph refused and said to her, "Listen, because of me, my owner does not {have to} concern himself with anything that {is} in {his} house. In fact, he has put me in charge of everything that he owns, ⁹{so that} he has no one in his household who has more authority than I do. He has given me freedom with everything {in his household}, except you, {of course,} because you {are} his wife. So there is no way I would {ever} sin against God by doing such an evil thing!" ¹⁰Day after day Potiphar's wife kept pressuring Joseph {to go to bed with her}, but he refused her requests and stayed away from her.

¹¹Then one day Joseph went to {his owner's} house {as usual} to do his work, but no other menservants from the household were there. ¹²So Potiphar's wife {saw her chance and} grabbed {hold of} Joseph by his robe {and} demanded, "Come to bed with me!" But {immediately} he fled and left his robe in her hands as he ran outdoors. ¹³As soon as she saw that Joseph had run outdoors and left his robe {behind} in her hands, ¹⁴she summoned the {other} menservants from her household. Then {when they arrived,} she exclaimed to them, "Look, my husband brought {this} Hebrew servant {here} among us to make fools of us! He came here to rape me, but I screamed loudly {for help}!" ¹⁵Then as soon as he heard me scream like that, he left his robe with me and ran outdoors!"

¹⁶So Potiphar's wife kept Joseph's robe with her until {her husband,} Joseph's owner returned home. ¹⁷Then {when he arrived,} she told him the same story. She said, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought among us came here to make a fool of me!" ¹⁸But as soon as I screamed loudly, he left his robe with me and ran outdoors!" ¹⁹When Joseph's owner heard what his wife said his servant had done to her, he became very angry. ²⁰So he {had soldiers} arrest Joseph and put him in the prison where they kept people who had committed crimes against the king.

Joseph remained there in prison, ²¹but Yahweh was with him and was kind to him and caused the prison warden to be pleased with him {so that he treated him well}. ²²So {before long} the warden put Joseph in charge of all the {other} prisoners who {were} in the prison, so that he {was the one who} managed everything that they did there. ²³The warden did not {need to} pay attention to anything at all that Joseph was in charge of, because Yahweh was with Joseph and enabled him to succeed at everything he did.

Chapter 40

¹Sometime after that, the {head} wine-server and the {head} baker disobeyed their master, {who was} {Pharaoh,} the king of Egypt. ²As a result, Pharaoh was furious with those two officers. ³So he {had his soldiers arrest them and} put them in prison at the captain over the guards' house, in the same prison where Joseph was. ⁴{There} the captain over the guards appointed Joseph to {take care of} them, so he served them, and they remained in prison {for} some time.

⁵Then one night the king of Egypt's wine server and baker each had a dream while they were in prison. Each {one's} dream had its own meaning. ⁶The next morning, when Joseph came to {serve} them, he noticed that they looked sad. ⁷So he asked them, "Why do you look {so} unhappy today?" ⁸They answered him, " We {each} had a dream {last night}, but there is no one {here} who can tell {us} what our dreams mean." Joseph replied, "God is the {only} one who gives someone the ability to interpret {the meaning of dreams}. Please tell me {what you dreamed}."

⁹Then the head wine-server told Joseph what was in his dream. He said, " While I was dreaming, I saw a vine in front of me ¹⁰that had three branches. Soon buds started forming {on the branches}, {then} {the buds} became flowers, {and the flowers} became bunches of ripe grapes. ¹¹Next I was holding Pharaoh's cup, and I picked grapes {from the vine} and squeezed juice from them into the cup. Then I handed the cup to Pharaoh {and he drank from it}."

¹²Joseph said to him, "This {is} what your dream means: The three branches {represent} three days. ¹³In three days Pharaoh will summon you and give you back your job, so that you will {again} serve wine to Pharaoh, as you used to do when you were his wine-server. ¹⁴When {you are out of prison and} everything is going well for you, please remember that I was {here} with you, and please be kind to me and mention my situation to Pharaoh so that he releases me from this prison. ¹⁵People brought me {here} by force from the land where {my people} the Hebrews live. Even here {in Egypt} I have done nothing {wrong} to deserve being in a dungeon."

¹⁶When the head baker heard the positive meaning that Joseph gave {for the first dream}, he told him, " I also {had a dream}, and while I was dreaming, I saw three bread baskets {stacked} on my head. ¹⁷In the top basket {there were} many kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh {to eat}, but {some} birds were gobbling them {up} from the basket."

¹⁸Joseph said {to him}, "This {is} what your dream means: The three baskets {represent} three days. ¹⁹In three days Pharaoh will {have his soldiers} chop off your head and impale your body on a {sharp} pole, where vultures will eat {all} your flesh off your bones."

²⁰Then sure enough, three days later {it was} Pharaoh's birthday, and he invited all his officers to attend a banquet. {During the banquet,} he {had soldiers} bring {his} head wine-server and head baker {to the banquet} in front of {all} his {other} officers. ²¹Then he returned the head wine-server to his {former} work, so that he {again} served wine to him. ²²But he {had his soldiers execute} the head baker {and} impale {his body on a pole}. {Everything happened} exactly the way Joseph had explained {their dreams} to them.

²³However the head wine-server {completely} forgot about Joseph and did not remember {to tell Pharaoh about} him.

Chapter 41

¹Two whole years later, Pharaoh had a dream. {In the dream} he saw himself standing beside the {Nile} River.

²Suddenly, seven healthy-looking, fat cows walked up out of the river and started eating the tall grass {beside the river}. ³Next he saw that seven sickly-looking, scrawny cows walked up out of the river and stood next to the {first} cows on the river bank. ⁴Then the sickly-looking, scrawny cows devoured the seven healthy-looking, fat cows. {Just} then Pharaoh woke up.

⁵Then he went {back} to sleep and had a second {dream}. {This time} he saw seven plump, well-formed heads of grain growing on the same plant. ⁶Then suddenly, seven small heads of grain that the {hot} desert wind had dried out started growing {on the same plant} beside the first heads. ⁷Next, the small heads of grain gobbled up the seven big, well-formed heads. At that point, Pharaoh woke up and realized that {he had been} dreaming.

⁸The next morning Pharaoh was upset {about the dreams}, so he had {servants} summon all the sorcerers and {other} scholars in {the country of} Egypt. {When they arrived,} he told them what he had dreamed, but no one was

able to explain to him {what} the dreams {meant}. ⁹Then the head wine-server said to Pharaoh, "{Sir,} today I remember how I offended {you}. ¹⁰{Some time ago,} {King} Pharaoh, you were angry with your officials, {including} me and the head baker, and you put us in prison at the captain of the guards' house. ¹¹{While we were there,} one night we {each} had a dream, {and} each of our dreams had a different meaning. ¹²There was a young Hebrew man with us {who was} a servant for the captain over the guards. After we told him our dreams, he explained them to us. He told us what each of our dreams meant. ¹³And sure enough, everything happened exactly the way he had explained {the dreams} to us: you returned me to my {former} work {as your wine-server}, and you {had your soldiers} execute the baker."

¹⁴{When Pharaoh heard that,} {immediately} he had {servants} summon Joseph. So they went right away and got him out of the prison. Then after he shaved {his head and face} and changed into appropriate clothing, he went before Pharaoh. ¹⁵Then Pharaoh said to him, " I had a dream, but no one has been able to explain {to me} what it means. But someone told me about you, that when you hear a dream, {you are able} to explain what it means." ¹⁶Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "{Sir,} I do not have that ability {on my own}, {but} God will explain {your dream} so that {you,} {King} Pharaoh, will have peace {in your heart}."

¹⁷So Pharaoh told Joseph, " As I was dreaming, I saw myself standing beside the {Nile} River. ¹⁸Then suddenly, seven fat, healthy-looking cows walked up out of the river {onto the bank} and started eating the tall grass {that was there}. ¹⁹Suddenly seven other cows walked up {out of the river} behind the first cows; {they were} in terrible condition, very sickly-looking and scrawny. {In fact,} I have never seen such awful-looking {cows} anywhere in the land of Egypt! ²⁰Then the scrawny, sickly cows devoured the seven fat ones. ²¹But {even} after they had swallowed them, no one would {ever} know that they had devoured them, because they {still} looked just as terrible as before. That's when I woke up.

²²"Then I {went back to sleep and} had {another} dream. {This time} I saw that there were seven big, well-formed heads of grain growing on the same plant. ²³Then seven small heads of grain sprouted {on the same plant} next to the first heads. {These had} wilted because the {hot} desert wind had dried them out. ²⁴Then the small heads of grain gobbled up the seven well-formed ones. I told {my dreams} to {my} sorcerers, but none of them could explain to me {what the dreams meant}."

²⁵Then Joseph told Pharaoh, " {Your Majesty,} {both of} your dreams mean the same thing. {Through them,} God is revealing to you what he is going to do. ²⁶The seven healthy cows {represent} seven years, and the seven well-formed heads of grain {represent} {the same} seven years. {Both} dreams mean the same thing. ²⁷The seven thin ugly cows that came up behind them and the seven worthless heads of grain that were dried up by the hot east wind each represent seven years of famine. ²⁸It will happen just as I have told you, because God has revealed to you what he is about to do. ²⁹There will be seven years in which there will be plenty of food throughout the land of Egypt. ³⁰Then there will be seven years of famine. Then people will forget all the years when there was plenty of food, because the famine that will come afterward will ruin the country. ³¹The people will forget how plentiful food was previously, because the famine will be very terrible. ³²The reason God gave to you two dreams is that he has firmly decided that this will happen, and he will cause it to happen very soon.

³³Now I suggest that you should choose a man who is wise and can make good decisions. I suggest that you appoint him to direct the affairs of the whole country. ³⁴You should also appoint supervisors over the country, in order that they can arrange to collect one-fifth of all the grain that is harvested during the seven years when food is plentiful. ³⁵They should collect this amount of grain during those seven years that are coming, when there will be plenty of food. Each of the cities should supervise and protect the food that is stored up. ³⁶This grain should be kept so that it can be eaten during the seven years when there will be a famine here in Egypt, so that the people in this country will not die from hunger."

³⁷The king and his officials thought that this would be a good plan. ³⁸So the king said to them, "Can we find any other man like Joseph, a man to whom God has given his spirit?"

³⁹Then the king said to Joseph, "Because God has revealed all this to you, it seems to me that there is no one who is as wise as you and who can decide wisely about things. ⁴⁰So I will put you in charge of everything in my palace. All the people here in Egypt must obey what you command. Only because I am king will I have more authority than you."

⁴¹Then the king said to Joseph, "I am now putting you in charge of the whole country of Egypt." ⁴²The king took from his finger the ring that had his seal on it, and he put it on Joseph's finger. He put robes made of fine linen on him, and he put a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³Then he arranged for Joseph to ride around in the chariot that showed that he was the second most important man in the country. When Joseph rode in the chariot, men shouted to the people who were on the road in front of him, "Bow down!" So Joseph went out to supervise this work all over Egypt.

⁴⁴The king said to Joseph, "I am the king, but no one in the whole land of Egypt will do anything if you do not permit them to do it." ⁴⁵The king gave Joseph a new name, Zaphenath-Paneah. He also gave him Asenath to be his wife. She was the daughter of Potiphera, who was a priest in a temple in the city of On. In this way Joseph became known through all the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶Joseph was thirty years old when he started to work for the king of Egypt. To do his work, he left the king's palace and traveled throughout Egypt. ⁴⁷During the next seven years, the land produced abundant crops, so there was plenty of food. ⁴⁸As Joseph supervised them, his helpers collected one-fifth of all the grain that was produced during those years, and stored it in the cities. In each city, he had his helpers store up the grain that was grown in the fields that surrounded that city. ⁴⁹Joseph had them store up a huge amount of grain. It looked as plentiful as the sand on the seashore. There was so much grain that after a while they stopped keeping records of how much grain was stored, because there was more grain than they could measure.

⁵⁰And to Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore to him. ⁵¹Joseph named the first one Manasseh, which sounds like the Hebrew word that means "forget," because he said, "God has caused me to forget all my troubles and all my father's family." ⁵²He named his second son Ephraim, which means "to have children," because he said, "God has given me children here in this land where I have suffered."

⁵³Finally the seven years in which there was plenty of food ended. ⁵⁴Then the seven years of famine started, just as Joseph had predicted. There was also a famine in all the other nearby lands, but although the crops did not grow, there was food everywhere in Egypt, because of the grain they had stored up in the cities. ⁵⁵When all the people of Egypt had eaten all of their own food and were still hungry, they begged the king for food. So the king told all the people of Egypt, "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you to do."

⁵⁶When the famine was very bad over the whole country, Joseph ordered his helpers to open the storehouses. Then they sold the grain in the storehouses to the people of Egypt, because the famine was very severe all over Egypt. ⁵⁷People from many nearby countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was very severe everywhere.

Chapter 42

¹When someone told Jacob that there was grain in Egypt that people could buy, he said to his sons, "Why do you just sit there looking at each other? We need some grain!" ²He said to them, "Someone told me that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us, in order that we can stay alive!"

³So Joseph's ten older brothers went down to Egypt to buy some grain. ⁴But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's younger brother, to go with the others, because he was afraid that something terrible might happen to him like what happened to Joseph. ⁵So Jacob's sons went down from Canaan to Egypt to buy grain, and others went too, because there was a famine in Canaan also.

⁶At that time Joseph was the governor of Egypt. He was the one who sold grain to people who came from all over Egypt and from many other countries to buy grain. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they prostrated themselves before him with their faces to the ground. ⁷As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them. But he pretended that he did not know them. He spoke harshly to them, saying, "Where do you come from?" One of them replied, "We have come from Canaan land, to buy some grain."

⁸Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. ⁹Then Joseph remembered what he had dreamed about them many years previously. But he decided not to tell them yet that he was their younger brother. He said to them, "You are spies! You have come to find out whether we will be able to defend ourselves if you attack us!" ¹⁰One of them replied, "No, sir! We have come to buy grain. ¹¹We are all sons of one man. We are honest men, not spies." ¹²He said to them, "I do not believe you! You have come just to see whether we would be able to defend ourselves if we were attacked!" ¹³But one of them replied, "No, that is not true! Originally there were twelve of us who were brothers, the sons of one man. Our youngest brother is with our father. One of them is no longer alive. "

¹⁴Joseph replied, "You are lying! I think it is just as I told you. You are spies! ¹⁵But this is how I will find out whether what you are saying is true. I think that as surely as the king lives, you are spies. So you will not leave this place until your youngest brother comes here! ¹⁶Send one of your group to go and get your younger brother and bring him here. I will put the rest of you in prison, in order that I may test what you have said to find out whether what you are telling me is true. If the one who goes does not bring your younger brother here, then, just as surely as the king lives, it will be clear that you are lying and that you are spies." ¹⁷Then Joseph put them all in prison for three days.

¹⁸On the third day after that, Joseph went to the prison and said to them, "I am a man who fears that God will punish me if I do not do what I promise. So do what I tell you, and I will spare your lives. ¹⁹If you are honest men, let one of you brothers stay here in prison, and the rest of you can take some grain back to your families who are very hungry because of the famine. ²⁰But if you come back here again, you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that you can prove that what you told me is true, and as a result I will not have you executed." So they agreed to do that.

²¹They said to each other, "It is surely because of what we did to our younger brother that we are being punished! We saw that he was very distressed when he pleaded with us not to harm him. But we did not pay any attention to him, and that is why we are having this trouble!"

²²Reuben said to them, "I told you not to harm the boy, but you did not pay attention to what I said! Now we are being paid back for killing him!"

²³While they were talking with Joseph, they were speaking to an interpreter, but when they said these things among themselves, they were speaking in their own language. They did not know that Joseph could understand their language and that he understood what they were saying. ²⁴Because of what they said, Joseph realized that they admitted that what they had done to him many years previously was wrong. But he knew that he could not keep from crying, and he did not want them to see him crying, so he left them and went outside the room and began to cry. But then he returned to them and talked to them again. Then he took Simeon, and while they were watching, he told his servants to tie him up. He left Simeon in the prison and told the others that they could go.

²⁵Joseph told his servants to fill the men's sacks with grain, but he also told them to put the money that each one had paid for the grain in the top of his sack. He also told them to give them food to eat along the way. And his brothers received the food from Joseph's servants. ²⁶His older brothers loaded the sacks of grain on their donkeys and left.

²⁷At the place where they stopped to sleep that night, one of them opened his sack to get some grain for his donkey. He was amazed to see his money in the top of the sack. ²⁸He exclaimed to his brothers, "Someone has returned my money! Here it is in my sack!" They started shaking with fear, and said to each other, "What is this that God has done to us?"

²⁹When they returned to their father in Canaan land, they told him all that had happened to them. One of them said, ³⁰"The man who governs the whole land of Egypt talked very harshly to us. He acted toward us as though we were spying on his country. ³¹But we told him, 'We are honest men! We are not spies. ³²Originally there were twelve of us who were brothers, the sons of one father. One has died, and our youngest brother is with our father in Canaan.' ³³The man who is the governor of the land did not believe us, so he said to us, 'This is how I will know if you are truly honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me. Then the rest of you can take some grain for your families that are starving from hunger and go. ³⁴But when you return, bring your youngest brother to me, in order that I will know that you are not spies, but instead, that you are honest men. Then I will release your brother for you. And then you can buy whatever you want in this country.'"

³⁵As they were emptying their sacks, they were surprised that in each man's sack was his pouch of money! When they and their father saw all the pouches of money, they were frightened. ³⁶Their father Jacob said to them, "You have caused two of my children to be taken from me! Joseph is dead, and Simeon is gone! And now you want to take Benjamin from me! It is I who am suffering because of all these things that are happening!"

³⁷Reuben said to his father, "I will bring Benjamin back to you. Let me take care of him. If I do not bring Benjamin back to you, you may kill both of my sons." ³⁸But Jacob said, "No, I will not let my son go down there with you. His older brother is dead, and he is the only one of my wife Rachel's sons who is left! If something harms him while you are traveling, you would cause me, a gray-haired old man, to die because of sorrow."

Chapter 43

¹The famine in Canaan got worse. ²Finally, when Jacob and his family had eaten all the grain they had brought from Egypt, Jacob said to them, "Go back to Egypt and buy some more grain for us!" ³But Judah said to him, "The man who sold us the grain warned us sternly, 'I will not let you see me again if you come and your younger brother is not with you.' ⁴So if you will send our younger brother with us, we will go down to Egypt and buy some grain for you. ⁵But if you will not send him, we will not go down there, because that man said to us, 'I will not let you see me again if your younger brother is not with you.'"

⁶Jacob asked, "Why did you cause me to have this trouble by telling the man that you had a younger brother?" ⁷One of them replied, "The man asked about us and about our family. He said, 'Is your father still living? Do you have another brother?' We had to answer his questions. We could not know that he would say, 'The next time that you come down here, bring your brother with you!'"

⁸Then Judah said to his father Jacob, "Send the boy with me, and we will go immediately, in order that we and you and our children may get grain and not die from hunger. ⁹I myself will guarantee that he will return. You can require me to do what I am promising. If I do not bring him back to you safely, you can say forever that I am to blame. ¹⁰If we had not wasted so much time, by now we could have gone there and returned two times!"

¹¹Then their father Jacob said to them, "If there is no other way, do this: Put in your sacks some of the best things that are grown in this land, and take them down to the man as a gift. Take some balm and honey and spices and myrrh, some pistachio nuts, and almonds. ¹²Take twice as much money as you took the previous time, because you must return the silver that someone put in the tops of your sacks. Perhaps it was a mistake that it was put in your sacks. ¹³Take your youngest brother and go back to that man. ¹⁴I will pray that God Almighty will cause that man to act mercifully toward you, so that he will let your other brother, as well as Benjamin, come back here with you. But as for me, if my sons are taken from me, then I will not have my sons!"

¹⁵So the men took the gifts that Jacob said that they should take, and twice the amount of money that the grain would cost. They also took Benjamin. They went down quickly to Egypt, and they stood in front of Joseph. ¹⁶When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the man who was in charge of things in his house, "Take these men to my house. Slaughter an animal and prepare a meal, because I want them to eat with me at noon." He told his servant in what order they were to be seated.

¹⁷The man did as Joseph said; he took them to Joseph's house. ¹⁸But they were afraid because he was taking them to Joseph's house. They were thinking, "He is taking us here because of the silver that was put in our sacks the first time that we came here. While we are eating, he will have his servants attack us and seize us and cause us to become his slaves, and also take our donkeys."

¹⁹They went with the man who was in charge of things in Joseph's house. When they arrived at the entrance of the house, ²⁰one of them said to him, "Please, sir, listen to me. We came down here previously and bought some grain. ²¹But at the place where we stopped for the night as we were returning home, we opened our sacks. We were astonished to see that in the top of each of our sacks was the exact amount of silver that we had paid for the grain! So we have brought it back with us. ²²We have also brought more silver with us to buy more grain. We do not know who put the silver in our sacks."

²³The man replied, "Relax! Do not worry about it! I received the silver that you brought. Your God, the God your father worships, must have put it in your sacks." And then he brought Simeon to them from the prison.

²⁴Then he took them into Joseph's house. He gave them water to wash their feet and gave them food for their donkeys. ²⁵He told them that they were going to eat with Joseph at noon. So the men prepared their gifts to give to Joseph when he arrived.

²⁶When Joseph came home, they presented to him the gifts that they had brought into the house. Then they bowed down to the ground in front of him. ²⁷He asked them if they were well, and then he asked, "How is the health of your old father, the one that you told me about? Is he still living?" ²⁸One of them replied, "Yes, your servant, our father, is still alive, and he is well." Then again they bowed down in front of him.

²⁹Then he saw his younger brother Benjamin, his own mother's other son. He asked them, "Is this your youngest brother, the one whom you told me about?" After they said "Yes," he said to Benjamin, "Young man, I pray that God will act kindly toward you." ³⁰Joseph quickly left the room. He realized that he was about to cry because he was full of emotion about his younger brother. He went into his private room and cried there. ³¹Then, after he washed the tears from his face, he came out, and controlling his emotions, he said to the servants, "Serve the food!"

³²Now the people of Egypt thought that it was disgraceful for them to eat with Hebrews, so the servants served food to Joseph by himself, and served the other people of Egypt who ate with him by themselves, and they served Joseph's older brothers and younger brother by themselves. ³³His brothers were astonished to see that their seats were arranged according to their ages, from the youngest to the oldest! ³⁴When their portions of food were served to them from Joseph's table, Benjamin's portion was five times as much as anyone else's portion! So they ate food and drank wine with Joseph until they became very cheerful.

Chapter 44

¹When his brothers were ready to return home, Joseph said to the man who was in charge of things in his house, "Fill the sacks of those men with as much grain as they can carry on their donkeys. And put in the top of each man's sack the silver that he paid for the grain. ²Then put my silver cup in the top of the youngest brother's sack, along with the silver that he paid for the grain." So the servant did what Joseph told him to do.

³The next morning at dawn the men were allowed to leave for home with their donkeys. ⁴When they had not gone far from the city, Joseph said to the servant in charge of things in his house, "Pursue those men immediately. When you catch up to them, say to them, 'We did good things for you! Why have you paid us back by doing something bad to us? ⁵You have stolen the cup that my master drinks from! It is the cup that he uses to find out things that nobody knows! What you did was very wicked!'"

⁶When the servant caught up with them, he told them what Joseph had told him to say. ⁷But one of them replied to him, "Sir, why do you say such things? We are your servants, and we would never do anything like that! ⁸We even brought back to you from Canaan the silver that we found inside the tops of our sacks! So we certainly would not

steal silver or gold from your master's house! ⁹If you discover that any of us has that cup, you can execute him, and the rest of us will become your slaves."

¹⁰The man replied, "I will do what you say. But the one who has the cup will not be executed. Instead, he will become my slave, and the rest of you may return home."

¹¹Each of the men quickly lowered his sack down from the donkey to the ground and opened it. ¹²Then the servant started to search for the cup in each sack. He started with the oldest brother's sack and ended with the youngest one's sack. He found the cup in Benjamin's sack and showed it to them. ¹³The brothers tore their clothes because they were so dismayed. They loaded the sacks on the donkeys again and returned to the city.

¹⁴When Judah and his older and younger brothers entered Joseph's house, Joseph was still there. The servant told Joseph what had happened. Then the brothers threw themselves down on the ground in front of Joseph. ¹⁵He said to them, "Why did you do this? Do you not know that a man like me can find out things that nobody knows?"

¹⁶Judah replied, "Sir, what can we say? How can we prove that we are innocent? God has paid us back for the sins we committed many years ago. So now we will become your slaves—both we and the one in whose sack the cup was found." ¹⁷But Joseph replied, "No, I could never do anything like that. Only the man in whose sack the cup was found will become my slave. The rest of you can return to your father peacefully."

¹⁸Then Judah came near to Joseph and said, "Sir, please let me say something to you. You are equal to the king himself, so you could command that I be executed; but do not be angry with me for speaking to you. ¹⁹You asked us, 'Is your father still living, and do you have another brother?' ²⁰We answered, 'Our father is alive, but he is an old man. He has a young son who was born after our father became an old man. That son had an older brother, who is now dead. So the youngest son is the only one of his mother's sons who is still alive, and his father loves him very much.' ²¹Then you said to us, 'The next time you come here, bring your younger brother down to me, so that I can see him.' ²²We said to you, 'No, we cannot do that, because the boy cannot leave his father. If he leaves his father, his father will die because of sorrow.' ²³But you told us, 'If your youngest brother does not come down with you, I will not let you see me again!' ²⁴When we returned to our father, we told him what you said. ²⁵Months later our father said, 'Go back to Egypt and buy some more grain!' ²⁶But we said, 'We cannot go back by ourselves. We will go only if our youngest brother is with us. We will not be able to see the man who sells grain if our youngest brother is not with us.' ²⁷Our father replied, 'You know that my wife Rachel gave birth to two sons for me. ²⁸One of them disappeared, and I said, "A wild animal has surely torn him to pieces." And I have not seen him since then. ²⁹If you take this other one from me, too, and something harms him, you would cause me, an old gray-haired man, to die because of my sorrow.'

³⁰So please listen. My father will remain alive only if his youngest son remains alive. ³¹If he sees that the boy is not with us when we return to him, he will die. We will cause our gray-haired father to die because of his sorrow. ³²I guaranteed that the boy would return safely. I told him, 'You can require me to do what I am promising. If I do not bring him back to you, you can say forever that I am to blame for not bringing him back to you.'

³³So, please let me remain here as your slave instead of my youngest brother, and let the boy return home with his other older brothers. ³⁴I cannot return to my father if the boy is not with me! I do not want to see how miserable my father would become!"

Chapter 45

¹Joseph was not able to control his feelings any longer. He did not want to cry in front of his servants, so he said to them loudly, "All of you go outside!" After they went outside, there were no Egyptians there with Joseph when he told his brothers who he was. ²He cried so loudly that even the people outside heard it, and even the people in the king's palace heard it. ³Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is our father still alive?" But his brothers were not able to reply, because they were frightened because of what he said. ⁴Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come

close to me!" When they came closer to him, he said, "I am your brother Joseph! I am the one you sold to traders who brought me here to Egypt! ⁵But now, do not be distressed, and do not be angry with yourselves for having sold me as a slave. It was God who sent me here ahead of you in order to keep you from dying in the famine.

⁶There has been a famine in this country for two years, and it will continue for five more years. During this time, no one will plow the ground, and there will be no crops to harvest. ⁷God sent me here ahead of you to keep you from starving, and to make sure that your descendants would survive. ⁸Therefore, it was not you who sent me here; it was God who sent me here! He has caused me to become like a father to the king. I am in charge of everything in his palace and the governor of everyone in Egypt! ⁹Now return to my father quickly and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: "God has caused me to become the governor over the whole land of Egypt. Come down to me immediately! ¹⁰You can live in the region of Goshen. You and your children and your grandchildren, your sheep and goats and cattle, and everything that you own, will be near me. ¹¹Since there will be five more years of famine, I will make sure that you have food. If you do not come here, you and your family and all of your servants will starve.'"

¹²If you—and Benjamin, too—look closely at me, all of you will see that it is really I, Joseph, who am speaking to you. ¹³Go and tell my father about how much honor I have here in Egypt. And tell him about everything else that you have seen. Bring my father down here quickly!"

¹⁴Then he threw his arms around his younger brother Benjamin's neck and cried. And Benjamin hugged him and cried. ¹⁵Then he kissed his older brothers on their cheeks, and he cried. After that, his brothers started to talk with him.

¹⁶Someone went to the palace and told the news that Joseph's brothers had come. The king and all his officials were pleased. ¹⁷The king said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers this: 'Put loads of grain on your animals and return to Canaan land. ¹⁸Then bring your father and your families back here. I will give you the best land in Egypt, and you will have the best food in the land to eat.' ¹⁹Also tell this to your brothers: 'Take some carts from Egypt to carry your children and your wives, and get them and your father and come back here quickly. ²⁰Do not worry about bringing your possessions, because the best things in Egypt will be yours. Because of that, you will not need to bring things from Canaan.'"

²¹Jacob's sons did what the king commanded. Joseph gave them carts and food to eat along the way, as the king had ordered. ²²To each of them he gave new clothes, but he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five sets of new clothes to Benjamin! ²³This is what he sent to his father: Ten male donkeys, loaded with some of the best things that came from Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and other food for his father's trip to Egypt. ²⁴Then he sent his brothers on their way, saying to them "Do not quarrel along the way!"

²⁵So the brothers left Egypt and came to their father Jacob in Canaan land. ²⁶One of them told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is the governor over all of Egypt!" Jacob was extremely astonished; he could not believe that it was true. ²⁷But they told him everything that Joseph had said to them, and Jacob saw the carts that Joseph had sent to carry him and his family and possessions to Egypt. Then Jacob's shock ended. ²⁸He said, "What you have said is enough to convince me! My son Joseph is still alive, and I will go and see him before I die!"

Chapter 46

¹So Jacob left, taking with him all his family and possessions. When they arrived at Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to God, the one whom his father Isaac worshiped. ²That night, God called to Jacob in a vision, saying, "Jacob! Jacob!" He replied, "I am here!" ³God said, "I am God, the one your father worshiped. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, because I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation there. ⁴I will go down to Egypt with you, and later I will bring your descendants back to Canaan again. And Joseph will be with you when you die."

⁵So Jacob left Beersheba, and his sons took their father, their wives, and their children, in the carts that the king had sent for them to travel in. ⁶In this way, Jacob and all his family went to Egypt. They took with them the livestock and all the other possessions that they had acquired in Canaan. ⁷Jacob went to Egypt with all his sons, his daughters, grandsons, and granddaughters—his whole family.

⁸This is a list of the names of the members of Jacob's family who went with him to Egypt: Jacob's oldest son;

⁹Reuben's sons Hanok, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi;

¹⁰Simeon and his sons Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul, who was the son of a woman who came from the Canaanite people group;

¹¹Levi and his sons Gershon, Kohath, and Merari;

¹²Judah and his sons, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (his other sons, Er, and Onan, had died in Canaan land); two sons of Perez: Hezron and Hamul;

¹³Issachar and his sons Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron;

¹⁴Zebulun and his sons Sered, Elon, and Jahleel

¹⁵These were the sons of Jacob and Leah, who were born in Paddan Aram, in addition to Dinah his daughter. There were thirty-three sons and daughters altogether.

¹⁶Gad and his sons Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli;

¹⁷Asher and his sons Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah; and their sister Serah; 's sons: Heber and Malkiel;

¹⁸(Those were the children and grandchildren of Jacob and Zilpah, the slave woman whom Laban had given to his daughter Leah. These were sixteen people altogether.)

¹⁹Joseph and Benjamin, the sons of Jacob's wife Rachel;

²⁰(Ephraim and Manasseh were Joseph's two sons. They did not go down to Egypt because they had been born in Egypt. They were sons of Asenath, the daughter of On, who was the priest in the temple in the city of On.)

²¹Benjamin and his sons Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard;

²²(These were the sons and grandsons of Rachel and Jacob. They were fourteen people altogether.)

²³Dan and his son Hushim;

²⁴Naphtali and his sons Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

²⁵(These were the sons and grandsons of Jacob and Bilhah, the slave girl whom Laban had given to his daughter Rachel. They were seven people altogether.)

²⁶Altogether there were sixty-six descendants of Jacob who went to Egypt with him. That number does not include his sons' wives. ²⁷Including Jacob and Joseph and Joseph's two sons who were born in Egypt, there were seventy members of Jacob's family when they were all there in Egypt.

²⁸Jacob sent Judah to go ahead of the rest of them to talk with Joseph and to ask for directions on how to travel to Goshen. Then Judah returned to the rest of his family and they all traveled to the region of Goshen. When they arrived there, ²⁹Joseph got his chariot ready and went to Goshen to meet his father. When Joseph arrived, he threw his arms around his father's neck and cried for a long time. ³⁰Jacob said to Joseph, "I have seen you, and now I know that you are still alive! So I am ready to die."

³¹Then Joseph said to his brothers and to the rest of his father's family, "I will go to the king and say to him, 'My brothers and my father and the rest of his family, who were living in Canaan land, have all come to me. ³²The men are all shepherds. They take care of their livestock, and they have brought with them their sheep, goats, and cattle, and everything else that they own.' ³³When the king summons you and asks, 'What work do you do?' ³⁴answer by saying, 'From the time when we were young, we have taken care of livestock, just as our ancestors did.' If you tell him that, he will let you live in the region of Goshen." Joseph told them to say that because the people of Egypt despised shepherds.

Chapter 47

¹⁻²Joseph chose five of his brothers to go with him to talk to the king. He introduced them to the king, and then he said, "My father and my brothers have come from Canaan land. They have brought all their sheep, goats, cattle, and everything else that they own, and they are living now in region of Goshen." ³The king asked the brothers, "What work do you do?" They replied to the king, "We are shepherds, just as our ancestors were." ⁴They also said to him, "We have come here to live for a while in this land, because the famine is very severe in Canaan, and our animals have no pasture there. So now, please let us live in the region of Goshen."

⁵The king said to Joseph, "So your father and brothers have come to you. ⁶They can live wherever you want in all of Egypt. Give your father and your brothers the best part of the land. They can live in Goshen. And if you know that any of them have any special ability to work with livestock, have them be in charge of my own livestock, too."

⁷Then Joseph brought his father Jacob into the palace and introduced him to the king. Jacob asked God to bless the king. ⁸Then the king asked Jacob, "How old are you?" ⁹Jacob replied, "I have been traveling around for 130 years. I have not lived as long as my ancestors, but my life has been full of troubles." ¹⁰Then Jacob again asked God to bless the king and left him.

¹¹That is how Joseph enabled his father and brothers to start living in Egypt. As the king had commanded, he gave them property in the best part of the land, in Goshen, which is now called Rameses. ¹²Joseph also provided food for all his father's family. The amounts that he gave them were according to how many children each of them had.

¹³There was no food growing in the whole country because the famine was very severe. The people of Egypt and Canaan became weak because they did not have enough food to eat. ¹⁴Joseph received all the money that the people in Egypt and Canaan paid for the grain he sold them, and he brought it to the king's palace. ¹⁵When the people of Egypt and Canaan had spent all their money for grain, they all kept coming to Joseph and saying, "Please give us some food! If you do not give us grain, we will die! We have used all our money to buy food, and we have no money left!" ¹⁶Joseph replied, "Since your money is all gone, bring me your livestock. If you do that, I will sell you food in exchange for your livestock." ¹⁷So they brought their livestock to Joseph. He gave them food in exchange for their horses, their sheep and goats, their cattle, and their donkeys.

¹⁸When that year was ended, the next year they came to him and said, "We cannot hide this from you: We have no more money, and now all our cattle belong to you. We have only our bodies and our land to give to you. We have nothing else left. ¹⁹If you do not give us some food, we will die! If you do not give us seeds, our fields will become useless. Buy us and our land in exchange for food. Then we will be the king's slaves, and he will own the land. Give us seeds so that we can plant and grow food, in order that we will not die, and in order that our land will not become like a desert."

²⁰So Joseph bought all the farms in Egypt for the king. The people of Egypt each sold their land to him because the famine was very severe and they had no other way to buy food. So all the farms became the king's farms. ²¹As a result, Joseph caused all the people from one border of the country to the other to become the king's slaves. ²²But he did not buy the priests' land, because they received their food from the king regularly. That is the reason they did not sell their land to him.

²³Joseph said to the people, "Listen to me! Today I have bought you and your land for the king. So here are seeds for you so that you can plant them in the ground. ²⁴But when you harvest the crop, you must give one-fifth of the crop to the king. The rest of the crop you can keep to be seed to plant in the fields and to be food for you and your children and for everyone else in your household to eat." ²⁵They replied, "You have saved our lives! We want you to be pleased with us. And we will be the king's slaves."

²⁶So Joseph made a law about all the land in Egypt, stating that one-fifth of the crops that are harvested belongs to the king. That law still exists. Only the land that belonged to the priests did not become the king's land.

²⁷Jacob and his family started to live in Egypt, in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there. Many children were born to them there. As a result, their population increased greatly.

²⁸Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years. Altogether he lived 147 years. ²⁹When it was almost time for him to die, he summoned his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have pleased you, put your hand between my thighs to solemnly promise that you will be faithful to me as your father and do what I am now trusting you to do: When I die, do not bury me here in Egypt. ³⁰Instead, when I die and join my ancestors who have died previously, take my body out of Egypt, and bury it in Canaan where they are buried." Joseph replied, "I will do what you have said." ³¹Jacob said, "Swear to me that you will do it!" So Joseph swore to do it. Then Jacob bowed down as he worshiped God, near the head of his bed.

Chapter 48

¹Some time after this, someone told Joseph, "Your father is ill." When Joseph heard that, he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to see his father. ²When someone told Jacob, "Look, your son Joseph has come to see you!" Jacob, also called Israel, made an effort and sat up on the bed, even though it was difficult for him to do that. ³He said to Joseph, "When I was at Luz in the land of Canaan, God Almighty appeared to me. He blessed me ⁴and said to me, 'I am going to enable you to become the father of many children. You will have many descendants, and they will become many people groups. And I will give this land to your descendants to possess forever.'

⁵And now I will consider that your two sons, who were born to you here in Egypt before I came here, belong to me. Ephraim and Manasseh will be my sons, and they will inherit my possessions, just like my sons Reuben and Simeon and the others will. ⁶If you later become the father of any more children, they will not be considered to be my children, but instead as my grandchildren. They will receive as part of what they inherit some of the same land that is in the territory that their brothers will inherit. ⁷Many years ago, as I was returning from Paddan Aram, your mother Rachel sadly died in the land of Canaan, while we were still traveling, not far from the town of Ephrath. So I buried her body there alongside the road to Ephrath" (which is now called Bethlehem).

⁸When Jacob saw Joseph's sons, he asked, "Who are these boys?" ⁹Joseph replied to his father, "They are the sons that God has given to me here in Egypt." Jacob said, "Bring them close to me so that I can bless them." ¹⁰Jacob was almost blind because he was very old. He could not see well. So Joseph brought his sons close to his father, and Jacob kissed them and hugged them. ¹¹Jacob said to Joseph, "I did not expect to see your face again, but look at this! God has allowed me to see you, and he has allowed me to see your children, too!"

¹²Joseph took the boys from Jacob's knees. Then he bowed down with his face to the ground. ¹³Then Joseph took both of the boys, putting Ephraim on his right side toward Jacob's left hand, and putting Manasseh on his left side toward Jacob's right hand, and brought them close to Jacob. ¹⁴But Jacob did not do what Joseph wanted him to do. Instead, he reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, even though he was the younger son. He crossed his arms and put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the older son. ¹⁵Then he blessed Joseph and his sons, saying, "My grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac conducted their lives as God desired, and to this very day God has led me and taken care of me as a shepherd leads and cares for his sheep.

¹⁶The angel whom he sent has kept me from being harmed in any way.

I pray that God will bless these boys.

I pray that people will think about me and my ancestors, Abraham and Isaac, because of what God does for them.

I pray that they will have many descendants who will live all over the earth.”

¹⁷When Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand on Ephraim’s head and not on Manasseh’s head, he was distressed. So he took his father’s hand to move it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. ¹⁸Joseph said to him, “My father, that is not right! The one on whom you put your left hand is my older son. Put your right hand on his head.” ¹⁹But his father refused, saying, “I know that, my son; I know what I am doing. Manasseh’s descendants will also become a people group, and they will become important. But his younger brother’s descendants will become greater than his will. His descendants will become many nations.” ²⁰So he blessed them both on that day, saying, “The people in Israel will use your names when they bless people. They will say, ‘We pray that God will help you as he helped Ephraim and Manasseh.’” In that way, Jacob said that Ephraim would become more important than Manasseh.

²¹Then Jacob said to Joseph, “I am about to die. But I know that God will help you. Some day he will take your descendants back to the land of their ancestors. ²²It is to you, who stands above your brothers that I will give the fertile hill in the area of Shechem. I captured that land from the Amor people group, fighting them with my sword and my bow and arrows.”

Chapter 49

¹Jacob summoned all his sons and said to them, ²“Gather around close to me in order that I can tell you what will happen in the future. My sons, come and listen to me. I am your father, Jacob.

³Reuben, you are my oldest son. You were born when I was young and energetic. When I became a grown man, you were my first child. You are prouder and stronger than all the rest of my sons. ⁴But you were as unstable as ocean waves. So now you will not be my most important son, because you climbed up onto my bed and slept with my concubine. That caused me, your father, to have great shame.

⁵Simeon and Levi, you two brothers have both acted like criminals. You use your swords to act violently. ⁶I do not want to be with you when you make evil plans. I am too honorable to join you in your meetings, because you killed people when you became very angry, and you hamstringed oxen just to have fun.

⁷God says, ‘I will curse them for being very angry, for acting very cruelly when they were very furious. I will scatter their descendants throughout Israel land.’

⁸Judah, your older and younger brothers will praise you. They will bow down before you, because you will thoroughly defeat your enemies.

⁹Judah is like a young lion that has returned to its den satisfied after eating the animals that it has killed. He is like a lion that lies down and stretches out after eating; no one would dare to disturb it.

¹⁰There will always be a ruler from the descendants of Judah. Each one will hold a scepter to show that he has authority as a king. He will do that until nations bring tribute to him and show that they will obey him.

¹¹The grapevines of his descendants will produce grapes very abundantly. As a result, they will not object to tying their young donkeys to the grapevines in order that they can eat the leaves of the grapevines. Wine will be very plentiful, with the result that they will wash their clothes in wine; they will wash their cloaks in wine that is as red as blood. ¹²Their eyes will be red because of drinking too much wine, but their teeth will be very white because of drinking much milk from the cows.

¹³Zebulun, your descendants will live by the seashore where there will be a safe harbor for ships. Their land will extend north as far as the city of Sidon.

¹⁴Issachar, your descendants will be like strong donkeys that are lying down between two groups of sheep. so tired that they cannot get up! ¹⁵They will see that their resting place is good and that the land pleases them very much. But they will bend their backs to carry heavy loads and be forced to work for others.

¹⁶Dan, although your tribe will be small, your leaders will rule their people just as the leaders of other tribes of Israel will rule their people. ¹⁷Your descendants will be like snakes at the side of a road, like poisonous snakes lying beside a path. They will strike the heels of horses that pass by, causing the riders to fall backwards as the horses rear up on their hind legs."

¹⁸Then Jacob prayed, "Yahweh, I am waiting for you to rescue me from my enemies."

¹⁹Then Jacob continued telling his sons what would happen in the future. He said, "Gad, your tribe will be attacked by a group of bandits, but your tribe will pursue and attack them.

²⁰Asher, your descendants will eat good tasting food; they will produce food that is delicious enough for kings to eat.

²¹Naphtali, your descendants will be like deer that run free, deer that have beautiful fawns.

²²Joseph, you will have many descendants. Their children will be as many as the fruit on a vine near a spring of water, whose branches extend over a wall. ²³Their enemies will attack them fiercely, and shoot at them with bows and arrows and pursue them. ²⁴But they will hold their bows steady and their arms will remain strong, because of the power of my mighty God, because of Yahweh, who guides and provides for me, as a shepherd guides and provides for his sheep. The people of Israel will ask Yahweh to protect them, as people take refuge on top of a high rock.

²⁵God, the one whom I worship, will help your descendants. God Almighty will bless them by sending them rain from the sky and by giving them water from deep below the ground. He will give them many children and will nourish them.

²⁶The blessings that I want God to give you are great ones. They are greater than the blessings that come from the eternal mountains, than the ones that come from the everlasting hills. Joseph, I pray that these blessings will be given to you, because you are the leader of your brothers.

²⁷Benjamin, your descendants will be like vicious wolves. In the morning they will kill their enemies like a wolf devours its prey, and in the evening they will divide among their warriors the spoils that they seized from their enemies."

²⁸Those twelve sons are the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel. That is what their father said to them as he blessed them, telling to each one words that were right for him.

²⁹Then Jacob said to his sons, "I will soon die and join my ancestors who have already died. Bury my body where some of my ancestors are buried, in the cave that is in the field that was bought from Ephron, who belonged to the Heth people group. ³⁰The field of Machpelah, was east of Mamre, in the land of Canaan. Abraham bought it from Ephron to use as a burial place. ³¹That is where they buried him and his wife Sarah. That is where they buried my father Isaac and his wife Rebekah. And that is where I buried my wife Leah. ³²That field and the cave in it were bought from the Heth people group; so that is where I want you to bury me."

³³When Jacob finished giving those instructions to his sons, he lay down on his bed again. Then he stopped breathing and died.

Chapter 50

¹Joseph fell on his father's face and he cried over him and kissed him. ²Joseph commanded his servants who prepared the dead for burial to embalm his father's body. ³It took forty days to embalm Jacob's body, because that is the amount of time that was always required for them to embalm a body. The people of Egypt cried for seventy days because of Jacob's death. ⁴When the time of mourning was finished, Joseph said to the king's officials, "If you are pleased with me, please take this message to the king: ⁵When my father was about to die, he told me to solemnly promise that I would bury his body in Canaan land, in the tomb that he himself had prepared. So please let me go up to Canaan and bury my father's body. Then I will return."

⁶After they gave the king the message, he replied, "Tell Joseph, 'Go up and bury your father's body, as you swore that you would do.'" ⁷So Joseph went up to Canaan to bury his father's body. All of the king's officials, all the king's advisors, and all the elders in Egypt went with him. ⁸His family's small children and their sheep and goats and their cattle stayed in the region of Goshen. But all the rest of Joseph's family and his brothers and his father's family went with him. ⁹Men riding in chariots and on horses also went along. It was a huge group.

¹⁰They went to the east side of the Jordan River and arrived at Atad. There was a place there where people threshed the grain to separate the wheat from the chaff. There they mourned loudly for Jacob for a long time. Joseph performed mourning ceremonies for his father for seven days. ¹¹When the Canaan people group who lived there saw them mourning like that, they said, "This is a sad mourning place for the people of Egypt!" So they named the place Abel Mizraim, which sounds like the Hebrew words that mean "mourning of the Egyptians."

¹²Then Jacob's sons did for him what their father had commanded. ¹³They crossed the Jordan River and carried Jacob's body into Canaan land. They buried it in the cave in the field at Machpelah, east of Mamre town. That was the field that Abraham had bought from Ephron, who was one of the Heth people group, to use as a burial place.

¹⁴After he had buried his father, Joseph and his brothers and all the others who had gone up to Canaan with him for the funeral returned to Egypt.

¹⁵After Jacob died, Joseph's brothers became worried. They realized what might happen. They said, "What will happen if Joseph is carrying hatred for us and wants to take revenge on us, because of all the evil things we did to him many years ago?" ¹⁶So they sent someone to tell this to Joseph for them: "Before our father died, he told us this: ¹⁷Say to Joseph, Please forgive your older brothers for the evil thing that they did to you, for their terrible sin against you, because what they did to you was very wrong.' So now we, who are servants of your father's God, ask you, please forgive us for what we did to you." Joseph cried when he received their message. ¹⁸Then his older brothers themselves came and threw themselves on the ground in front of Joseph, and one of them said, "Please listen. We will be your servants." ¹⁹But Joseph replied to them, "Do not be afraid! God is the one who punishes people; am I God? ²⁰As for you, yes, you wanted to do something very evil to me. But God caused something good to come from it! He wanted to save many people from dying of hunger, and that is what happened! Today they are alive! ²¹So I say again, do not be afraid! I will make sure that you and your children have enough to eat." In this way he reassured them as he spoke to them.

²²Joseph lived with his father's family in Egypt until he was 110 years old. ²³He lived long enough to see Ephraim's children and grandchildren. The children of Joseph's grandson Machir, who was Manasseh's son, were born before Joseph died, and they were recognized as being his descendants. ²⁴One day Joseph said to his older brothers, "I am about to die. But God will certainly help you. Some day he will lead your descendants up out of this land and take them to Canaan, the land that he solemnly promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." ²⁵Then Joseph said, "When God enables you to do that, you must take my body up from here to Canaan." He made his older brothers solemnly promise to do that.

²⁶So Joseph died in Egypt when he was 110 years old. His body was embalmed and put in a coffin there.

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