EDIFIED EDITION

Genesis

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

50	1,533	Old	1
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Chapter 1

Genesis 1 recounts how God created the heavens and the earth in six days. By His word He calls light into being and separates it from the darkness; He makes an expanse to divide the waters, gathers the seas so that dry land appears, and makes the land put out plants and trees. He sets the sun, moon and stars in the sky to rule day and night, fills the waters and the air with living creatures, and makes the land bring out animals of every kind. Last of all He creates mankind in His own image, male and female, blesses them and gives them rule over the earth, and sees that everything He has made is very good.

1 In the beginning[1] God[2] created[3] the heavens and
the earth.

2 The earth was without form and empty,[4] darkness
lay over the face of the deep, and the Spirit of
God[5] was fluttering[6] over the face of the waters.

3 Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there
was light.

4 And God saw how good the light was, and God
made a division between the light and the
darkness.

5 God called the light “day”, and the darkness He
called “night”. Evening came, and morning came:
day one.

6 Then God said, “Let there be an expanse[7] in the
midst of the waters, to make a division between
waters and waters.”

7 So God made the expanse and separated the
waters that were below the expanse from the
waters that were above the expanse. And it was
so.

8 God called the expanse “heavens”. Evening
came, and morning came: a second day.

9 Then God said, “Let the waters under the
heavens gather together into one place, and let
dry land be seen.” And it was so.

10 God named the dry land “earth”, and the waters
gathered together He named “seas”. And God saw
that it was good.

11 Then God said, “Let the earth put out green
growth: plants that produce seed, and fruit trees
on the earth that bear fruit after their kind, with
their seed in it.” And it was so.

12 The earth brought out green growth: plants
producing seed after their kind, and trees bearing
fruit with their seed in it, after their kind. And God
saw that it was good.

13 Evening came, and morning came: a third day.

14 Then God said, “Let there be lights in the
expanse of the heavens to separate the day from
the night, and let them serve as signs, and for set
times,[8] and for days and years.

15 They shall be lights in the expanse of the
heavens to shine on the earth.” And it was so.

16 God made the two great lights, the greater light
to govern the day and the lesser light to govern
the night, as well as the stars.[9]

17 God placed them in the expanse of the heavens
to shine on the earth,

18 to govern by day and by night, and to make a
division between the light and the darkness. And
God saw that it was good.

19 Evening came, and morning came: a fourth day.

20 Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with
swarms of living beings, and let birds fly above the
earth across the face of the expanse of the
heavens.”

21 So God created the great sea creatures[10] and
every living being that moves, with which the
waters swarm, each after its kind, and every
winged bird after its kind. And God saw that it
was good.

22 God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful, grow in
number, and fill the waters of the seas; and let the
birds grow in number on the earth.”

23 Evening came, and morning came: a fifth day.

24 Then God said, “Let the earth produce living
beings, each after its kind: livestock, creeping
things and wild animals of the earth, each after its
kind.” And it was so.

25 God made the wild animals of the earth after
their kind, the livestock after their kind, and every
creeping thing of the ground after its kind. And
God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, “Let Us make mankind[11] in Our
image, according to Our likeness, and let them

rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27 So God created mankind in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

29 God said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth, and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be food for you.

30 And to every wild animal of the earth, to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life[12] in it, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

31 God saw all that He had made, and indeed it was very good. Evening came, and morning came: the sixth day.[13]

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1 Hebrew: בְּרֵאשִׁית (bereshit), the first word of the Bible, which gives the book its Hebrew name.

2 Hebrew: אֱלֹהִים (Elohim). The form is plural, but with a singular verb it means the one true God, in all His majesty.

3 Hebrew: בָּרָא (bara). In the Bible this verb always has God as its subject; it is never said of a human maker.

4 Hebrew: תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tohu vavohu), a rhyming pair: a shapeless, empty waste. Days 1–3 give the world its form; days 4–6 fill it.

5 Or ‘a wind from God’. Hebrew רוּחַ (ruach) means spirit, wind or breath.

6 The verb is used in Deuteronomy 32:11 of an eagle fluttering over its young.

7 Hebrew: רָקִיעַ (raqia), something beaten out and spread flat, like a sheet of metal: the sky, seen as a vault over the earth.

8 Hebrew: מוֹעֲדִים (mo’adim), the word later used for Israel’s appointed feasts.

9 The sun and moon are not named, perhaps because neighbouring peoples worshipped them as gods; here they are simply lamps that God has made.

10 Hebrew: תַּנִּינִם (tanninim), large creatures of the sea; elsewhere the word is used of serpents and of the sea monster that stands for chaos (Isaiah 27:1).

11 Hebrew: אָדָם (adam), human beings, both male and female (verse 27). The same word becomes the name Adam later in the book.

12 Hebrew: נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה (nephesh chayyah), ‘a living being’, the same words used of the man in 2:7.

13 Only the sixth day has ‘the’ in Hebrew; the first five are ‘day one’, ‘a second day’ and so on. The sixth day is marked out as the last and greatest day of making.

Chapter 2

> *Genesis 2 completes the account of creation: God finishes His work, rests on the seventh day, and blesses it and makes it holy. The narrative then tells again, more closely, how the LORD God shaped the man from the dust of the ground and breathed life into him, planted a garden in Eden with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and gave the man the garden to work and to keep, with one command. Finding no helper to correspond to the man among the animals, God builds a woman from the man’s side and brings her to him, and the chapter speaks of a man leaving his parents and becoming one flesh with his wife.*

1 So the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their host.[1]

2 On the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing, and on the seventh day He rested[2] from all the work He had done.

3 God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all His work that God had created in making it.

4 These are the generations[3] of the heavens and the earth when they were created, on the day that the LORD[4] God made earth and heavens.

5 No shrub of the field was yet on the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth, and there was no man to work the ground.

6 But a stream[5] would rise from the earth and water the whole face of the ground.

7 Then the LORD God formed the man[6] out of dust
from the ground, and blew into his nostrils the
breath of life, and the man became a living being.
8 The LORD God planted a garden in Eden,[7] in the
east, and there He put the man He had formed.
9 Out of the ground the LORD God made every
kind of tree grow up, pleasing to the eye and good
for food; the tree of life was in the middle of the
garden, along with the tree of the knowledge of
good and evil.
10 A river went out from Eden to water the garden,
and from there it divided and became four
branches.[8]
11 The first is named Pishon; it flows around the
whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.
12 That land's gold is good; bdellium[9] and onyx
stone are found there.
13 The second river is named Gihon; it flows
around the whole land of Cush.[10]
14 The name of the third river is Tigris;[11] it is the
one that flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river
is the Euphrates.
15 The LORD God took the man and settled him in
the garden of Eden to work it and to keep it.[12]
16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying,
"You may freely eat from every tree of the garden,
17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and
evil you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat
from it you will certainly die."[13]
18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the
man to be on his own. I will make him a helper
who corresponds to him."[14]
19 Out of the ground the LORD God had formed
every wild animal of the field and every bird of the
heavens, and He brought them to the man to see
what he would call them; and whatever the man
called each living being, that was its name.
20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, to
the birds of the heavens and to every wild animal
of the field. But for Adam[15] no helper was found
who corresponded to him.
21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on
the man, and he slept. Then He took one of his
ribs[16] and closed up the flesh in its place.
22 The LORD God built the rib that He had taken
from the man into a woman, and brought her to
the man.
23 The man said, "This one at last is bone from my
bones and flesh from my flesh! She will be called
Woman, because she was taken out of Man."[17]
24 For this reason a man will leave his father and
his mother and cling to his wife, and they will
become one flesh.
25 Both of them, the man and his wife, were naked,
and they felt no shame.

1 The ‘host’ is everything that fills them: sun, moon, stars and living creatures.

2 Hebrew: שָׁבַת (shavat), ‘stop, cease, rest’, from which shabbat (Sabbath) comes.

3 Hebrew: תּוֹלְדוֹת (toledot), ‘what was brought forth from’. This phrase heads each main section of Genesis (5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1; 37:2).

4 Hebrew: יהוה (YHWH), God’s personal name, revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14–15 and linked there to ‘I AM’. Following Jewish custom, it is written ‘the LORD’ in capitals.

5 Or ‘mist’. The meaning of the Hebrew word אֵד (ed) is uncertain.

6 Hebrew: אָדָם (adam), which sounds like adamah, ‘ground’. The verb ‘formed’ is the potter’s word.

7 Eden sounds like the Hebrew for ‘delight’. Greek translators called the garden paradeisos, a park, from which ‘paradise’ comes.

8 Hebrew: ‘four heads’.

9 A fragrant resin, or possibly pearl; the meaning is uncertain.

10 Cush is usually the land south of Egypt (modern Sudan), but here it may be a region in Mesopotamia (see 10:8).

11 Hebrew: חִדֶּקֶל (Hiddekel).

12 The two verbs, avad and shamar, are used later of the priests who ‘serve’ and ‘guard’ the tabernacle (Numbers 3:7–8).

13 Hebrew: ‘dying you will die’, a doubled verb that makes the statement certain.

14 Hebrew: עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ (ezer kenegdo), ‘a helper like his opposite’. Ezer does not mean a lesser assistant; it is used most often of God as Israel’s help (Psalm 121:1–2).

15 Or ‘for the man’. Here adam has no article in Hebrew, and may be read as a name for the first time.

16 Or ‘one of his sides’. Hebrew צֵלָע (tsela) is used elsewhere of the side of a building or of the ark.

17 Hebrew: אִשָּׁה (ishah), ‘woman’, sounds like אִישׁ (ish), ‘man’.

Chapter 3

Genesis 3 tells how the serpent, the most cunning of the wild animals, led the woman to doubt God’s word, and how she and her husband ate from the forbidden tree. Their eyes are opened, they know they are naked, and they hide from the LORD God. When He calls them to account, the man blames the woman and the woman blames the serpent. God curses the serpent and promises lasting hostility between its offspring and the woman’s, whose offspring will strike its head; He announces pain in childbirth for the woman and painful toil from a cursed ground for the man, until he returns to the dust. The man names his wife Eve, God clothes them with garments of skin, and He sends them out of the garden, placing cherubim and a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life.

1 Now the serpent was more cunning[1] than any
wild animal of the field that the LORD God had
made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say,
‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?”

2 The woman answered the serpent, “We may eat
the fruit of the garden’s trees,

3 but about the fruit of the tree that is in the
middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not
eat from it, and you shall not touch it, or you will
die.’”

4 The serpent said to the woman, “You will not
certainly die.

5 For God knows that the very day you eat from it,
your eyes will be opened and you will be like God,[2]
knowing good and evil.”

6 The woman saw that the tree was good for food,
a delight to look at, and desirable for gaining
wisdom; so she took some of its fruit and ate it.
She gave some to her husband too, who was with
her, and he ate it.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and
they knew that they were naked. So they sewed
fig leaves together and made themselves
loincloths.

8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking
in the garden in the breeze of the day,[3] and the
man and his wife hid themselves from the
presence of the LORD God among the trees of the
garden.

9 The LORD God called to the man. “Where are
you?” He asked him.

10 He said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden,
and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.”
11 He asked, “Who told you that you were naked?
Have you eaten from the tree I commanded you
not to eat from?”
12 The man said, “The woman whom You put here
with me, she gave me some from the tree, and I
ate.”
13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is
this that you have done?” The woman said, “The
serpent deceived me, and I ate.”
14 The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because
you have done this, cursed are you above all
livestock and above every wild animal of the field.
On your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all
the days of your life.
15 I will set hostility between you and the woman,
and between your offspring[4] and her offspring; He
will strike you on the head, and you will strike
Him on the heel.”[5]
16 To the woman He said, “I will make your pain in
pregnancy very great; with pain you will give birth
to children. Your desire will be toward your
husband, and he will rule over you.”[6]
17 And to Adam He said, “Because you listened to
the voice of your wife and ate from the tree about
which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat from
it,’ cursed is the ground because of you. With
painful toil you will eat from it all the days of your
life.
18 Thorns and thistles it will grow for you, and you
will eat the plants of the field.
19 With sweat on your face you will eat bread until
you go back to the ground, since from it you were
taken. You are dust, and to dust you will go back.”
20 The man called his wife’s name Eve,[7] because
she was the mother of all the living.
21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam
and his wife, and clothed them.
22 Then the LORD God said, “See, the man has
become like one of Us, knowing good and evil.
And now, he must not reach out his hand and take
from the tree of life as well, and eat, and live for
ever—”[8]
23 So the LORD God sent him out of the garden of
Eden to work the ground from which he had been
taken.
24 He drove the man out, and at the east of the
garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and
the flame of a sword that turned every way, to
guard the way to the tree of life.

1 Hebrew: עָרוּם (arum), a play on arummim, ‘naked’, in 2:25.

2 Or ‘like gods’, or ‘like divine beings’. Hebrew אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) can mean any of these.

3 Hebrew: ‘at the wind of the day’, that is, the cool of the evening.

4 Hebrew: ‘seed’. The word can mean one descendant or many.

5 The same verb, שׁוּף (shuph), is used for both blows. Hebrew has ‘he’. From early times Christians have read this verse as the first promise of Christ, the offspring of the woman who defeats the serpent (Romans 16:20; Galatians 4:4; Revelation 12:9), and so the pronouns are capitalised.

6 The same words, ‘desire’ and ‘rule’, appear in 4:7 of sin crouching at Cain’s door.

7 Hebrew: חַוָּה (Chavvah), which sounds like chay, ‘living’.

8 The Hebrew sentence breaks off unfinished, and the next verse tells what God did.

Chapter 4

Genesis 4 tells of the first sons of Adam and Eve. Cain works the ground and Abel keeps sheep; the LORD looks with favour on Abel’s offering but not on Cain’s, and warns Cain that sin is crouching at his door. Cain kills his brother in the field, denies knowing where he is, and is sent away from the ground as a restless wanderer, though the LORD puts a sign on him to protect him. Cain’s line builds the first city and begins herding, music and metalwork, and Lamech boasts of his own violence. Adam and Eve have another son, Seth, and in the days of Seth’s son Enosh people begin to call on the name of the LORD.

1 The man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived
and gave birth to Cain. She said, “I have gained[1] a
man with the help of the LORD.”
2 Again she gave birth, to his brother Abel.[2] Abel
became a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of
the ground.

3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the
fruit of the ground as an offering to the LORD.
4 Abel also brought some of the firstborn of his
flock and of their fat portions. The LORD looked
with favour on Abel and on his offering,
5 but on Cain and on his offering He did not look
with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face
fell.
6 The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and
why has your face fallen?
7 If you do well, will you not be lifted up?[3] But if
you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its
desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”
8 Cain spoke to his brother Abel.[4] And when they
were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother
Abel and killed him.
9 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your
brother Abel?” He said, “I do not know. Am I my
brother’s keeper?”
10 The LORD said, “What have you done? The voice
of your brother’s blood is crying out to Me from
the ground.
11 So now you are under a curse from the ground,
which opened its mouth to take your brother’s
blood from your hand.
12 When you work the ground, it will no longer
yield its strength to you. You will be a restless
wanderer on the earth.”
13 Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment[5] is too
great to bear.
14 Look, today You have driven me from the face of
the ground, and I shall be hidden from Your face. I
shall be a restless wanderer on the earth, and
whoever finds me will kill me.”
15 But the LORD said to him, “Not so![6] Whoever
kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.”
And the LORD set a sign on Cain, so that no one
who found him would strike him down.
16 So Cain left the LORD’s presence and lived in
the land of Nod,[7] east of Eden.
17 Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and gave
birth to Enoch. Cain was building a city, and he
called the city by the name of his son, Enoch.
18 To Enoch was born Irad; Irad fathered Mehujael;
Mehujael fathered Methushael; and Methushael
fathered Lamech.
19 Lamech married two women, one named Adah
and the other Zillah.
20 Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of
those who live in tents and keep livestock.
21 His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father
of all who play the lyre and pipe.
22 Zillah too gave birth, to Tubal-cain, who forged
every kind of tool from bronze and iron. Tubal-
cain’s sister was Naamah.
23 Lamech said to his wives, “Adah and Zillah, hear
my voice; wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I
have killed a man for wounding me, a young man
for striking me.
24 If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech
seventy-seven times.”
25 Adam knew his wife again, and she gave birth to
a son and called his name Seth, “because God has
appointed[8] for me another offspring in place of
Abel, since Cain killed him.”
26 To Seth also a son was born, and he called his
name Enosh. At that time people began to call on
the name of the LORD.

1 Hebrew: קָנִיתִי (qaniti), ‘I have gained’, which sounds like קַיִן (Qayin), Cain.

2 Hebrew: הֶבֶל (Hevel), ‘breath’ or ‘vapour’, the word translated ‘meaningless’ throughout Ecclesiastes.

3 Or ‘will you not be accepted?’ Hebrew ‘will there not be a lifting up?’, that is, of the face that has fallen (verse 6).

4 The Samaritan Pentateuch, the Greek, Syriac and Latin add ‘Let us go out to the field’.

5 Hebrew: עָוֹן (avon) means both a wrong done and the guilt or punishment it brings. Or ‘My guilt is too great to be forgiven’.

6 So the Greek, Syriac and Latin; Hebrew ‘Therefore’.

7 Nod means ‘wandering’ (see verses 12 and 14).

8 Hebrew: שָׁת (shat), ‘appointed’ or ‘granted’, which sounds like שֵׁת (Shet), Seth.

Chapter 5

Genesis 5 traces the line from Adam to Noah through ten generations. Each entry gives a man's age when his son was born, the years he lived afterwards, and the total of his life, ending with the words "and he died". The pattern is broken by Enoch, who walked with God and was not found, because God took him. Lamech names his son Noah, hoping that he will bring relief from the painful toil of the cursed ground, and Noah becomes the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. On the day God created mankind, He made him in the likeness of God.

2 Male and female He created them, and He blessed them and called their name Mankind[1] on the day they were created.

3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and called his name Seth.

4 After he fathered Seth, the days of Adam were 800 years, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

5 All the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.

6 When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh.

7 Seth lived 807 years after he fathered Enosh, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

8 All the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died.

9 When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan.

10 Enosh lived 815 years after he fathered Kenan, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

11 All the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.

12 When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel.

13 Kenan lived 840 years after he fathered Mahalalel, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

14 All the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died.

15 When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered Jared.

16 Mahalalel lived 830 years after he fathered Jared, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

17 All the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

18 When Jared had lived 162 years, he fathered Enoch.

19 Jared lived 800 years after he fathered Enoch, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

20 All the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

21 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah.

22 Enoch walked with God for 300 years after he fathered Methuselah, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

23 All the days of Enoch were 365 years.

24 Enoch walked with God, and then he was not there, because God took him.[2]

25 When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lamech.

26 Methuselah lived 782 years after he fathered Lamech, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

27 All the days of Methuselah were 969 years, and he died.

28 When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son.

29 He called his name Noah, saying, "This one will comfort us[3] in our work and in the painful toil of our hands, from the ground that the LORD has cursed."

30 Lamech lived 595 years after he fathered Noah, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

31 All the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

32 When Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham and Japheth.

1 Hebrew: אָדָם (adam), which is both 'mankind' and the name Adam.

2 Enoch did not die, the only break in the chapter's refrain 'and he died' (see Hebrews 11:5).

3 Hebrew: יְנַחֲמֵנוּ (yenachamenu), 'he will comfort us', which sounds like נֹחַ (Noach), Noah, whose name means 'rest'.

Chapter 6

Genesis 6 describes the spread of evil on the earth. The sons of God take wives from the daughters of mankind, the LORD limits man's days to 120 years, and the Nephilim are on the earth. The LORD sees that every intention of the human heart is only evil continually; He regrets having made mankind, and it grieves Him to His heart, so He resolves to wipe them out. But Noah, a righteous and blameless man who walks with God, finds favour in His eyes. God tells Noah that the earth is filled with violence and that He will bring a flood, and instructs him to build an ark of cypress wood, gives its measurements, and promises to establish His covenant with him. Noah does everything God commands.

1 Mankind began to increase on the face of the
ground, and daughters were born to them.
2 the sons of God[1] saw that the daughters of
mankind were beautiful, and they took as their
wives any they chose.
3 Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not remain[2]
in mankind for ever, for they are flesh. Their days
will be 120 years."
4 The Nephilim[3] were on the earth in those days,
and also afterwards, when the sons of God went in
to the daughters of mankind and they bore
children to them. These were the mighty men of
old, the men of renown.
5 The LORD saw that the evil of mankind on the
earth was great, and that every intention of the
thoughts of their heart was only evil all the time.
6 The LORD regretted that He had made mankind
on the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart.
7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe out mankind,
whom I have created, from the face of the ground:
mankind and animals, creeping things and birds of
the heavens, for I regret that I made them."
8 But Noah found favour in the eyes of the LORD.
9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was
righteous, a man blameless among his
contemporaries. Noah walked with God.
10 Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham and
Japheth.
11 The earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and
the earth was filled with violence.
12 God looked at the earth and saw how corrupt it
was, for all flesh had corrupted its way on the
earth.
13 God said to Noah, "I have decided to put an end
to all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence
because of them. Now I am going to destroy them
along with the earth.[4]
14 Make yourself an ark of cypress wood.[5] Make
rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with
pitch.
15 This is how you are to make it: the length of the
ark 300 cubits, its width 50 cubits and its height
30 cubits.[6]
16 Make a roof[7] for the ark and finish it to a cubit
above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make
it with lower, second and third decks.
17 As for Me, I am going to bring the flood of
waters on the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is
the breath of life from under the heavens.
Everything that is on the earth will die.
18 But I will establish My covenant with you, and
you will go into the ark, you and your sons, your
wife and your sons' wives with you.
19 And of every living thing, of all flesh, you are to
bring two of every kind into the ark to keep them
alive with you; they are to be male and female.
20 Two of every kind will come to you to be kept
alive: of the birds after their kind, of the livestock
after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the
ground after its kind.
21 You are also to take every kind of food that is
eaten and store it up, to be food for you and for
them."
22 Noah did this; he did everything just as God
commanded him.

1 The ‘sons of God’ are understood as angelic beings (as in Job 1:6), or as rulers, or as the line of Seth.

2 Or ‘contend’. The meaning of the Hebrew verb is uncertain.

3 The name may mean ‘fallen ones’. In Numbers 13:33 the Nephilim are giants.

4 The same Hebrew verb, שָׁחַת (shachat), is used in verses 11–13 for ‘corrupt’ and ‘destroy’: God will destroy what has destroyed itself.

5 Hebrew: גֹּפֶר (gopher) wood. The kind of tree is uncertain.

6 A cubit was the length from elbow to fingertip, about 45 centimetres (18 inches). The ark was about 135 metres long, 22 metres wide and 13.5 metres high.

7 Or ‘an opening for light’.

Chapter 7

Genesis 7 records the coming of the flood. The LORD tells Noah to enter the ark with his household, taking seven pairs of every clean animal and of the birds and one pair of every unclean animal, because in seven days He will send rain for forty days and forty nights. In Noah’s six hundredth year the springs of the great deep burst open and the windows of the heavens are opened; Noah, his family and the animals go in, and the LORD shuts him in. The waters rise above the highest mountains, every living thing on the land dies, and only Noah and those with him in the ark are left. The waters prevail on the earth for 150 days.

1 Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.

2 Take with you seven pairs[1] of every clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of the animals that are not clean, a male and its mate,

3 and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth.

4 For in seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe out every living thing that I have made from the face of the ground.”

5 And Noah did everything that the LORD commanded him.

6 Noah was 600 years old when the flood came, with its waters over the earth.

7 Noah and his sons, his wife and his sons’ wives with him, went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood.

8 Of the clean animals and of the animals that are not clean, of the birds and of everything that creeps on the ground,

9 two by two they came to Noah into the ark, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.

10 And after the seven days the waters of the flood came on the earth.

11 In Noah’s six hundredth year, in the second month, on the seventeenth of the month, on that very day all the springs of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.

12 And the rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights.

13 On that very day Noah and Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them, went into the ark,

14 they, and every kind of wild animal, livestock, creeping thing that creeps on the earth and bird, each after its kind, birds of every sort, everything with wings.

15 They came to Noah into the ark, two by two of all flesh in which is the breath of life.

16 Those that came in, male and female of all flesh, came in as God had commanded him. Then the LORD shut him in.

17 The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth.

18 The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters.

19 The waters prevailed so greatly on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole of heaven were covered.

20 The waters prevailed fifteen cubits[2] higher, and the mountains were covered.

21 And all flesh that moved on the earth died: birds, livestock, wild animals, every swarming thing that swarms on the earth, and all mankind.

22 Everything on the dry land that had the breath
of the spirit of life in its nostrils died.

23 He wiped out every living thing that was on the
face of the ground, from mankind to animals to
creeping things and to birds of the heavens; they
were wiped out from the earth. Only Noah was
left, and those with him in the ark.

24 And the waters prevailed on the earth for 150
days.

1 Or ‘seven of each kind’. Hebrew ‘seven seven’.
2 About 7 metres (22 feet).

Chapter 8

Genesis 8 tells how the flood ends. God remembers Noah and the animals and sends a wind over the earth; the springs and windows of the heavens are closed, and the waters steadily go down until the ark rests on the mountains of Ararat. Noah sends out a raven and then a dove, which returns the second time with a fresh olive leaf and the third time does not return. When the earth is dry, God tells Noah to come out with his family and all the animals. Noah builds an altar and offers burnt offerings, and the LORD resolves never again to curse the ground or strike down every living thing, promising that seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will not cease while the earth remains.

1 But God remembered Noah, and all the wild
animals and livestock with him in the ark. God
sent a wind[1] over the earth, and the waters went
down.

2 The springs of the deep and the floodgates of the
heavens were closed, and the rain from the
heavens was held back.

3 The waters receded steadily from the earth, and
at the end of 150 days the waters had gone down.

4 In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of
the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains
of Ararat.[2]

5 The waters kept going down until the tenth
month, and on the first day of the tenth month the
mountain tops came into view.

6 After forty days Noah opened the window he had
made in the ark

7 and sent out the raven, and it went to and fro
until the waters had dried up from the earth.

8 Then he sent out the dove from him, to see
whether the waters had gone down from the face
of the ground.

9 But the dove found nowhere to rest her foot, and
she came back to him in the ark, because water
covered the whole earth. He reached out his hand,
caught her and brought her back into the ark.

10 He waited another seven days, and again he
sent out the dove from the ark.

11 The dove came back to him in the evening, and
there in her beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf.
So Noah knew that the waters had gone down
from the earth.

12 Then he waited another seven days and sent out
the dove, and she did not return to him again.

13 In the six hundred and first year, in the first
month, on the first day of the month, the waters
had dried up from the earth. Noah removed the
covering of the ark and looked, and there was the
face of the ground, drying.

14 By the twenty-seventh day of the second month,
the earth was dry.

15 Then God spoke to Noah, saying,

16 “Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and
your sons and your sons’ wives with you.

17 Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh
that is with you, birds and livestock and every
creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that
they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and
multiply on the earth.”

18 So Noah came out, together with his sons, his
wife and his sons’ wives.

19 Every animal, every creeping thing and every
bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out
of the ark by their families.

20 Noah built an altar to the LORD; he took some
of every clean animal and every clean bird and
offered them as burnt offerings on the altar.

21 The LORD smelled the soothing aroma,[3] and the
LORD said in His heart, “I will never again curse
the ground because of mankind, for the intention
of the human heart is evil from youth. Nor will I
ever again strike down every living thing, as I
have done.

22 As long as the earth lasts, seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night
will not stop.”

1 Hebrew: רוּחַ (ruach), the word used of the Spirit of God over the waters in 1:2. The flood is a return to the deep, and this is a new creation.

2 Ararat is the ancient kingdom of Urartu, in the region of eastern Turkey and Armenia.

3 Hebrew: נִיחֹחַ (nichoach), ‘soothing’, which sounds like Noah’s name. The phrase is used of offerings throughout Leviticus.

Chapter 9

Genesis 9 tells of God’s covenant with Noah and every living creature. God blesses Noah and his sons, gives them animals as food alongside plants, forbids eating flesh with its blood, and requires a reckoning for human blood, because God made mankind in His image. He promises never again to destroy all flesh by a flood, and sets His bow in the cloud as the sign of this everlasting covenant. Noah plants a vineyard, becomes drunk and lies uncovered in his tent; Ham sees his father’s nakedness and tells his brothers, while Shem and Japheth cover him without looking. Noah curses Canaan and blesses Shem and Japheth, and dies at 950 years.

1 God blessed Noah and his sons. “Be fruitful and
multiply,” He told them, “and fill the earth.

2 The fear and dread of you will be on every wild
animal of the earth, on every bird of the heavens,
on everything that creeps on the ground and on all
the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are given.

3 Everything that moves and lives will be your
food. Just as I gave you the green plants, I give
you everything.

4 Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is,
its blood.[1]

5 And for your lifeblood I will surely require a
reckoning. From every animal I will require it, and
from every human being; from each person I will
require a reckoning for the life of his fellow
human.

6 Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human
his blood will be shed, for in the image of God He
made mankind.[2]

7 And you, be fruitful and multiply; swarm on the
earth and multiply on it.”

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him,

9 “As for Me, I am now establishing My covenant
with you and with your offspring after you,

10 and with every living being that is with you,
birds, livestock and every wild animal with you on
the earth, all that came out of the ark, every
animal on the earth.

11 I will establish My covenant with you, that never
again will all flesh be cut off by the waters of a
flood, and never again will there be a flood to
destroy the earth.”

12 And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant
that I am making between Me and you and every
living being that is with you, for all generations to
come:

13 I have set My bow[3] in the cloud, and it will be
the sign of the covenant between Me and the
earth.

14 When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow
is seen in the cloud,

15 I will remember My covenant between Me and
you and every living being of every kind, and
never again will the waters become a flood to
destroy all flesh.

16 When the bow is in the cloud, I will see it and
remember the everlasting covenant between God
and every living being of all flesh that is on the
earth.”

17 So God told Noah, “This is the sign of the
covenant I have established between Myself and
all flesh on the earth.”

18 The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were
Shem, Ham and Japheth. Ham was the father of
Canaan.

19 These three were Noah’s sons, and from them
people spread out over the whole earth.

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

21 He drank some of the wine and became drunk,
and lay uncovered inside his tent.

22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father’s
nakedness and told his two brothers outside.

23 Then Shem and Japheth took a cloak, laid it on
both their shoulders, and walked backwards and

covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

24 Noah awoke from his wine and learned what his youngest son had done to him.

25 he said, "Cursed be Canaan! A servant of servants he will be to his brothers."[4]

26 He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem! And let Canaan be his servant.

27 May God make room for Japheth,[5] and let him live in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant."

28 After the flood Noah lived 350 years.

29 All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

1 Hebrew: 'flesh with its נֶפֶשׁ (nephesh), its blood'. The life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11).

2 The first half of the verse is a mirror in Hebrew: 'Shedding the blood of man, by man his blood shall be shed'.

3 Hebrew: קֶשֶׁת (qeshet), the word for a warrior's bow. God hangs up His bow in the clouds as a sign of peace.

4 Hebrew: עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים (eved avadim), 'servant of servants', that is, the lowest of servants.

5 Hebrew: יַפְתְּ (yapht), 'make room' or 'enlarge', sounds like יֶפֶת (Yephet), Japheth.

Chapter 10

Genesis 10 lists the descendants of Noah's sons, from whom the nations spread out over the earth after the flood. The sons of Japheth settle the coastlands; the sons of Ham include Cush, Egypt, Put and Canaan, with Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD who founded Babel and the cities of Assyria, and the Canaanite clans whose borders are traced. The sons of Shem include Eber, whose son Peleg is named because in his days the earth was divided. Each group is listed by its clans, languages, lands and nations.

1 These are the generations of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood.

2 The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan,[1] Tubal, Meshech and Tiras.

3 The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah.

4 The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittim and the Dodanim.[2]

5 From these the coastland peoples spread out in their lands, each with its own language, by their clans, in their nations.

6 The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put and Canaan.

7 The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan.

8 Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first to become a mighty man on the earth.

9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. That is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD."

10 The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.[3]

11 From that land he went out to Assyria[4] and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah,

12 and Resen, between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.

13 Egypt fathered the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites,

14 Pathrusites, Casluhites (from whom the Philistines came) and Caphtorites.

15 Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn, and Heth,

16 and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites,

17 the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites,

18 the Arvadites, the Zemarites and the Hamathites. Afterwards the clans of the Canaanites spread out.

19 The territory of the Canaanites reached from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

20 These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands and their nations.

21 To Shem also, the father of all the sons of Eber and the elder brother of Japheth,[5] sons were born.

22 The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud and Aram.

23 The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether and Mash.

24 Arpachshad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber.

25 Two sons were born to Eber. One was named Peleg,[6] because in his time the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan.

26 Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,

27 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,

28 Obal, Abimael, Sheba,

29 Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan.

30 The land where they lived stretched from Mesha in the direction of Sephar, the hill country of the east.

31 These are the sons of Shem, by their clans, their languages, their lands and their nations.

32 These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood.

1 Javan is Greece (Ionia); Madai is the Medes.
2 Some manuscripts and 1 Chronicles 1:7 read 'Rodanim', perhaps the people of Rhodes. The Kittim are the people of Cyprus.
3 Shinar is Babylonia, in southern Mesopotamia.
4 Or 'From that land Asshur went out'.
5 Or 'the brother of Japheth the elder'.
6 Peleg means 'division'.

Chapter 11

Genesis 11 tells how the whole earth had one language and the same words. Settling in the plain of Shinar, people set out to build a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, to make a name for themselves and avoid being scattered. The LORD comes down, confuses their language so that they cannot understand one another, and scatters them over the face of the earth; the city is called Babel. The chapter then traces the line of Shem down to Terah, the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. Terah takes Abram, his wife Sarai, who is barren, and his grandson Lot from Ur of the Chaldeans, heading for Canaan, but they settle in Haran, where Terah dies.

1 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.[1]

2 As people journeyed from the east,[2] they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.

3 They said to each other, "Come, let us mould bricks and fire them hard." They used brick instead of stone, and tar instead of mortar.

4 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

5 The LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the sons of mankind were building.

6 And the LORD said, "Look, they are one people, and they all have one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. Now nothing that they plan to do will be beyond them.

7 Come, let Us go down and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech."

8 So the LORD scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth, and they stopped building the city.

9 That is why its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused[3] the language of the whole earth, and from there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

10 These are the generations of Shem. When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad, two years after the flood.

11 Shem lived 500 years after he fathered Arpachshad, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

12 When Arpachshad had lived 35 years, he fathered Shelah.

13 Arpachshad lived 403 years after he fathered Shelah, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

14 When Shelah had lived 30 years, he fathered Eber.

15 Shelah lived 403 years after he fathered Eber, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

16 When Eber had lived 34 years, he fathered Peleg.

17 Eber lived 430 years after he fathered Peleg, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

18 When Peleg had lived 30 years, he fathered Reu.

19 Peleg lived 209 years after he fathered Reu, and
he fathered other sons and daughters.
20 When Reu had lived 32 years, he fathered
Serug.
21 Reu lived 207 years after he fathered Serug, and
he fathered other sons and daughters.
22 When Serug had lived 30 years, he fathered
Nahor.
23 Serug lived 200 years after he fathered Nahor,
and he fathered other sons and daughters.
24 When Nahor had lived 29 years, he fathered
Terah.
25 Nahor lived 119 years after he fathered Terah,
and he fathered other sons and daughters.
26 When Terah had lived 70 years, he fathered
Abram, Nahor and Haran.
27 These are the generations of Terah. Terah
fathered Abram, Nahor and Haran, and Haran
fathered Lot.
28 Haran died in the lifetime of his father Terah, in
the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans.
29 Abram and Nahor married. Abram's wife was
named Sarai, and Nahor's wife was named Milcah;
she was the daughter of Haran, who was the
father of both Milcah and Iscah.
30 Sarai was barren; she had no child.
31 Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot the
son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the
wife of his son Abram, and they set out together
from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of
Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they
settled there.
32 The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah
died in Haran.

1 Hebrew: 'one lip and the same words'.
2 Or 'journeyed eastward'.
3 Hebrew: בָּלַל (balal), 'confuse', which sounds like בָּבֶל (Bavel), Babel or Babylon.

Chapter 12

Genesis 12 begins the story of Abram. The LORD calls him to leave his land, his relatives and his father's house for a land He will show him, promising to make him a great nation and that in him all the families of the earth will be blessed. At seventy-five Abram sets out from Haran with Sarai, Lot and all they own; in Canaan the LORD appears to him and promises the land to his offspring, and Abram builds altars and calls on the name of the LORD. When famine drives him to Egypt, he has Sarai say she is his sister; Pharaoh takes her into his house, but the LORD strikes Pharaoh's household with plagues, and Pharaoh sends Abram away with his wife and all he has.

1 The LORD said to Abram, "Go out from your land,
from your relatives and from your father's house,
to the land I will show you.
2 I will make a great nation of you. I will bless you
and make your name great; and be a blessing.[1]
3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever
treats you with contempt I will curse; and in you
all the families of the earth will be blessed."[2]
4 So Abram set out, just as the LORD had told him,
and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five
when he left Haran.
5 Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all
the possessions they had gathered and the people
they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for
the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of
Canaan,
6 Abram travelled through the land as far as the
sacred place at Shechem, the oak of Moreh.[3] The
Canaanites were then in the land.
7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To
your offspring I will give this land." So he built an
altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to
him.
8 From there he moved on to the hill country east
of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel to the
west and Ai to the east. There he built an altar to
the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.
9 Then Abram journeyed on, travelling by stages
towards the Negev.[4]
10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram
went down to Egypt to stay there for a time,
because the famine was severe in the land.

11 As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his
wife Sarai, “I know well that you are a beautiful
woman to look at.
12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This
is his wife.’ Then they will kill me, but they will let
you live.
13 Please say you are my sister, so that it may go
well with me because of you, and my life may be
spared on your account.”
14 And when Abram arrived in Egypt, the
Egyptians saw how very beautiful the woman was.
15 Pharaoh’s officials, when they saw her, sang her
praises to Pharaoh, and she was taken into
Pharaoh’s palace.
16 He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram
acquired sheep and cattle, male donkeys, male
and female servants, female donkeys and camels.
17 But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his household
with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.
18 So Pharaoh sent for Abram. “What have you
done to me?” he said. “Why did you not tell me
she was your wife?
19 Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took
her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife.
Take her and go!”
20 And Pharaoh gave his men orders about him,
and they sent him on his way, with his wife and
everything he had.

1 The Hebrew is a command, ‘and be a blessing’; it can also mean ‘so that you will be a blessing’.
2 Or ‘will bless themselves’, that is, will ask to be blessed as Abram is. Paul quotes this promise in Galatians 3:8.
3 Or ‘the terebinth of Moreh’. Moreh means ‘teacher’; the tree may have been a place where oracles were sought.
4 The dry country in the south of Canaan.

Chapter 13

Genesis 13 tells how Abram and Lot part. Returning from Egypt rich in livestock, silver and gold, Abram comes back to the altar between Bethel and Ai. The land cannot support both him and Lot, and their herdsmen quarrel, so Abram generously lets Lot choose first. Lot chooses the well-watered plain of the Jordan and settles near Sodom, whose people are very wicked. The LORD then tells Abram to look in every direction, promising all the land he sees to him and his offspring for ever and offspring as countless as the dust of the earth. Abram settles by the oaks of Mamre at Hebron and builds an altar there.

1 So Abram went up from Egypt into the Negev, he
and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him.
2 Abram had become very rich[1] in livestock, silver
and gold.
3 He went on from stage to stage, from the Negev
as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had
been at first, between Bethel and Ai,
4 where he had first made the altar. And there
Abram called on the name of the LORD.
5 Lot, who was travelling with Abram, also had
flocks and herds and tents,
6 and the land could not support them both living
together; their possessions were so great that
they could not live together.
7 And quarrels broke out between those who
herded Abram’s livestock and those who herded
Lot’s. (The Canaanites and the Perizzites were
then living in the land.)
8 So Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be no
quarrel between you and me, or between my
herdsmen and yours, for we are kinsmen.[2]
9 The whole land is in front of you, is it not? Please
separate from me. If you take the left, I will take
the right; if you take the right, I will take the left.”
10 Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of
the Jordan was well watered everywhere, like the
garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as far
as Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed
Sodom and Gomorrah.)
11 So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the
Jordan, and Lot journeyed east; and so they parted
from each other.
12 Abram stayed in the land of Canaan, and Lot
settled in the cities of the plain, pitching his tent
near Sodom.
13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great
sinners against the LORD.
14 After Lot had parted from him, the LORD said to
Abram, “Look up from the place where you are,
and look north and south, east and west.
15 All the land that you see I will give to you and to
your offspring for ever.

16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust of the earth, your offspring could be counted too.

17 Get up, walk through the land, its length and its breadth, for I will give it to you.”

18 So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

1 Hebrew ‘very heavy’, from the same root as kavod, ‘glory’.
2 Hebrew ‘brothers’. Lot was Abram’s nephew (11:27).

Chapter 14

Genesis 14 tells of a war of four kings from the east against five kings of the Jordan plain, who had rebelled after twelve years of serving Chedorlaomer. The eastern kings defeat them in the Valley of Siddim, plunder Sodom and Gomorrah, and carry off Lot. Abram the Hebrew gathers 318 trained men born in his household, pursues the invaders as far as Dan, defeats them by night and brings back Lot, the people and the goods. Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God Most High, brings out bread and wine and blesses Abram, and Abram gives him a tenth of everything. Abram refuses to take anything from the king of Sodom, so that no one can say the king made him rich.

1 This happened when Amraphel was king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goiim.[1]

2 These kings went to war against Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).

3 All these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).[2]

4 For twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer came with his allied kings and crushed the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim,

6 and the Horites in their hill country of Seir, as far as El-paran on the edge of the wilderness.

7 Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they defeated the whole territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who lived in Hazazon-tamar.

8 Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) marched out and drew up their battle lines in the Valley of Siddim

9 against Chedorlaomer of Elam, Tidal of Goiim, Amraphel of Shinar and Arioch of Ellasar: four kings against five.

10 The Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country.

11 The victors seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food, and went away.

12 They also took Lot, the son of Abram’s brother, who was living in Sodom, and his goods, and went away.

13 Then a man who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew.[3] He was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol and of Aner; these were Abram’s allies.

14 When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he called out his trained men, born in his household, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

15 He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus.

16 He brought back all the goods, and he also brought back his kinsman Lot and his goods, along with the women and the people.

17 After he returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley).

18 Then Melchizedek,[4] king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of God Most High.

19 And he blessed Abram, saying, “May Abram be blessed by God Most High, Maker[5] of heaven and earth;

20 and blessed be God Most High, who has handed your enemies over to you!” Abram gave him a tenth of all he had taken.

21 Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Let me
have the people; you keep the goods.”

22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have
raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High,
Maker of heaven and earth,

23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal strap or
anything that is yours, so that you can never say, ‘I
made Abram rich.’

24 I will take nothing but what the young men have
eaten, and the share of the men who went with
me. Let Aner, Eshcol and Mamre take their share.”

1 Goiim means ‘nations’.

2 The Dead Sea.

3 The first use of ‘Hebrew’ in the Bible, perhaps linked to Eber (10:21).

4 The name means ‘king of righteousness’; Salem is linked with shalom, ‘peace’ (Hebrews 7:2), and is probably Jerusalem (Psalm 76:2).

5 Or ‘Possessor’.

Chapter 15

Genesis 15 records the LORD’s covenant with Abram. In a vision the LORD tells Abram not to be afraid, for He is his shield and his reward will be very great. Abram complains that he is childless and that a servant will be his heir, but the LORD promises a son of his own and offspring as many as the stars; Abram believes the LORD, and He credits it to him as righteousness. To confirm the promise of the land, God has Abram cut animals in two, and in a deep sleep Abram learns that his descendants will be strangers and oppressed for four hundred years before returning. After sunset a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the pieces, and the LORD makes a covenant giving Abram’s offspring the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates.

1 After these things the word of the LORD came to
Abram in a vision: “Do not fear, Abram. I am a
shield to you; your reward will be very great.”

2 But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what will You give
me, since I am going on childless, and the heir of
my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”[1]

3 And Abram said, “Look, You have given me no
offspring, and a servant born in my house will be
my heir.”

4 Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This
man will not be your heir; your heir will be one
who comes from your own body.”

5 He brought him outside and said, “Look up at the
sky and count the stars, if you are able to count
them.” Then He said to him, “So shall your
offspring be.”

6 Abram put his faith in the LORD, and He credited
it to him as righteousness.[2]

7 He said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you
out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to
possess.”

8 But he said, “Lord GOD, how am I to know that I
will possess it?”

9 He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer,
a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram,
a turtledove and a young pigeon.”

10 He brought Him all these, cut them in two and
laid each half opposite the other; but he did not
cut the birds in two.

11 Birds of prey swooped down on the carcasses,
but Abram drove them off.

12 As the sun was setting, a deep sleep came over
Abram, and a great and terrifying darkness came
upon him.

13 Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for
certain that your offspring will be strangers in a
land that is not theirs, and they will be enslaved
and oppressed for four hundred years.

14 But I will judge the nation they serve, and
afterwards they will come out with great
possessions.

15 You yourself will join your fathers in peace and
be buried at a ripe old age.

16 In the fourth generation they will come back
here, for the guilt of the Amorites is not yet
complete.”

17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a
smoking firepot and a flaming torch passed
between these pieces.[3]

18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with
Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land,

from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates:

19 the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites,

20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,

21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."

1 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. It contains a play on words between mesheq (perhaps 'heir') and Dammeseq (Damascus).

2 Quoted in Romans 4:3, Galatians 3:6 and James 2:23.

3 In such covenants the parties walked between the halves of the animals, calling the same fate on themselves if they broke their word (Jeremiah 34:18). Here God alone passes between them.

Chapter 16

Genesis 16 tells of Hagar and the birth of Ishmael. Because Sarai has no children, she gives her Egyptian servant Hagar to Abram, hoping to build a family through her. When Hagar conceives, she looks on Sarai with contempt; Sarai blames Abram and treats Hagar harshly, and Hagar runs away. The angel of the LORD finds her by a spring in the wilderness, tells her to return and submit, promises her countless offspring, and tells her to name her son Ishmael, because the LORD has heard her affliction. Hagar names the LORD "a God who sees me", and the well is called Beer-lahai-roi. Abram is eighty-six when Ishmael is born.

1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had an Egyptian servant girl named Hagar,

2 and Sarai said to Abram, "Look, the LORD has kept me from having children. Please go in to my servant; perhaps I can build a family through her." And Abram listened to what Sarai said.

3 So after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife.

4 He slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. And when she knew she was pregnant, she began to look down on her mistress.

5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant into your arms, and when she saw that she had conceived, I became contemptible in her eyes. May the LORD judge between you and me!"

6 Abram said to Sarai, "Look, your servant is in your hands; do to her whatever you think best." Then Sarai treated her harshly, and she ran away from her.

7 The angel of the LORD[1] found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the road to Shur.

8 He said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am running away from my mistress Sarai."

9 The angel of the LORD said to her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her authority."

10 The angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will multiply your offspring so greatly that they will be too many to count."

11 And the angel of the LORD said to her, "Look, you are pregnant and will give birth to a son. You shall call his name Ishmael,[2] because the LORD has heard of your affliction.

12 He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand against him, and he will live at odds with all his brothers."[3]

13 So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God who sees me," for she said, "Have I really seen here the One who sees me?"[4]

14 That is why the well was called Beer-lahai-roi;[5] it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

15 So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram named the son Hagar had borne him Ishmael.

16 Abram was eighty-six when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

1 In Genesis the angel of the LORD speaks as God Himself (verses 10 and 13; 22:11–12), and many have seen in Him an appearance of the Son of God before His birth.

2 Ishmael means ‘God hears’.

3 Or ‘he will live to the east of all his brothers’.

4 Hebrew: אֵל רֳאִי (El Roi), ‘God of seeing’. The second half of the verse is difficult in Hebrew.

5 ‘The well of the Living One who sees me’.

Chapter 17

Genesis 17 records the covenant of circumcision. When Abram is ninety-nine, the LORD appears to him as God Almighty, calls him to walk before Him and be blameless, and promises to make him the father of many nations, renaming him Abraham. God establishes an everlasting covenant with him and his offspring, to be their God and to give them the land of Canaan, and commands that every male be circumcised on the eighth day as the sign of the covenant. Sarai is renamed Sarah, and God promises that she will bear a son. Abraham laughs at the thought of a son at a hundred, and asks that Ishmael might live before God; God promises to bless Ishmael, but says the covenant will be with Isaac, to be born the next year. That same day Abraham circumcises himself, Ishmael and every male in his household.

1 When Abram was ninety-nine, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty;[1] walk before Me, and be blameless.

2 I will make My covenant between Me and you, and I will greatly increase your numbers.”

3 Abram fell on his face, and God spoke with him:

4 “For My part, this is My covenant with you: you will be the father of many nations.

5 Your name will no longer be Abram; your name will be Abraham,[2] because I have made you the father of many nations.

6 I will make you very fruitful indeed; I will make nations out of you, and kings will descend from you.

7 I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your offspring after you, generation after generation, as a covenant for ever, to be your God and the God of your offspring after you.

8 The land in which you now live as a stranger, the whole land of Canaan, I will give to you and your offspring after you as a possession for ever, and I will be their God.”

9 God also said to Abraham, “For your part, you must keep My covenant, you and your offspring after you, generation after generation.

10 This is My covenant between Me and you and your offspring after you, which you are to keep: every male among you is to be circumcised.

11 You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it will be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.

12 Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old, whether born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring.

13 Both the one born in your house and the one bought with your money must be circumcised. So My covenant will be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant.

14 An uncircumcised male, one who has not been circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, will be cut off from his people, for he has broken My covenant.”

15 God also said to Abraham, “Sarai your wife: you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah.[3]

16 I will bless her, and from her too I will give you a son. I will bless her, and she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed,[4] and said in his heart, “Can a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety, bear a child?”

18 And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live before You!”

19 God said, “No; your wife Sarah is going to bear you a son, and you are to name him Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him, a covenant for ever for his offspring after him.

20 As for Ishmael, I have heard you. I will bless him, make him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly. He will father twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.

21 But I will establish My covenant with Isaac,
whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next
year."
22 When He had finished speaking with Abraham,
God went up from him.
23 Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all
those born in his house or bought with his money,
every male among the men of Abraham's house,
and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins
that very day, as God had told him.
24 Abraham was ninety-nine when the flesh of his
foreskin was circumcised,
25 and his son Ishmael was thirteen when the flesh
of his foreskin was circumcised.
26 On that very day Abraham and his son Ishmael
were circumcised,
27 and every man of his household, whether born in
the house or bought with money from a foreigner,
was circumcised along with him.

1 Hebrew: אֵל שַׁדַּי (El Shaddai). The meaning of Shaddai is uncertain; the Greek and Latin translators understood it as 'Almighty'.

2 Abram means 'exalted father'; Abraham sounds like av hamon, 'father of a multitude'.

3 Both names mean 'princess'.

4 Hebrew: וַיִּצְחָק (vayyitschaq), 'and he laughed', the same word as the name Isaac (verse 19; see also 18:12 and 21:6).

Chapter 18

Genesis 18 tells how the LORD visited Abraham by the oaks of Mamre. Abraham sees three men standing near his tent in the heat of the day, hurries to welcome them, and has a meal prepared. The LORD promises that Sarah will have a son by this time next year; Sarah, listening at the tent door, laughs to herself, and the LORD asks, "Is anything too extraordinary for the LORD?" As the men set out towards Sodom, the LORD decides not to hide from Abraham what He is about to do, since Abraham will teach his household to keep the way of the LORD. He tells him that the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and Abraham pleads for the city, asking whether the Judge of all the earth will sweep away the righteous with the wicked. Step by step, from fifty down to ten, the LORD agrees to spare the city for the sake of the righteous.

1 The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of
Mamre as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the
heat of the day.
2 He looked up and saw three men standing near
him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from the tent
entrance to meet them and bowed down to the
ground.
3 He said, "My lord,[1] if I have found favour in your
eyes, please do not pass by your servant.
4 Let me have some water brought so that you can
wash your feet, and rest under the tree.
5 Let me fetch a piece of bread, so that you can
refresh yourselves, and after that you may go on,
since you have come to your servant." They said,
"Do as you have said."
6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and
said, "Quick! Three seahs[2] of fine flour; knead it
and make loaves."
7 Abraham ran to the herd, took a fine, tender calf
and gave it to a young man, who hurried to
prepare it.
8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that
had been prepared, and set it before them. He
stood by them under the tree while they ate.
9 They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" He
said, "There, in the tent."
10 Then the LORD said, "I will surely come back to
you when the season comes round,[3] and Sarah
your wife will have a son." Sarah was listening at
the entrance of the tent, which was behind him.
11 Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in
years, and Sarah was past the age of
childbearing.[4]
12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "Now that I
am worn out, shall I have pleasure, with my lord
so old?"
13 The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah
laugh and say, 'Shall I really bear a child, now that
I am old?'
14 Is anything too extraordinary for the LORD? At
the appointed time I will come back to you, when
the season comes round, and Sarah will have a
son."
15 But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh,"
for she was afraid. He said, "No, you did laugh."

16 When the men got up to leave, they looked out
over Sodom, and Abraham walked with them to
send them on their way.
17 The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham
what I am about to do,
18 Abraham is certain to become a great and
powerful nation, and in him all the nations of the
earth will be blessed.
19 For I have chosen[5] him, so that he will command
his children and his household after him to keep
the way of the LORD by doing what is right and
just, so that the LORD may bring about for
Abraham what He has promised him.”
20 Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom
and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very
grievous.
21 I will go down now and see whether they have
done altogether as the outcry that has come to Me
says; and if not, I will know.”
22 So the men turned from there and went towards
Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before
the LORD.[6]
23 Then Abraham drew near and said, “Will You
really sweep away the righteous along with the
wicked?
24 Suppose there are fifty righteous people within
the city. Will You indeed sweep it away, and not
spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous
who are in it?
25 Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put the
righteous to death with the wicked, so that the
righteous fare like the wicked! Far be it from You!
Will the Judge of all the earth not do justice?”
26 And the LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous
people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole
place for their sake.”
27 Abraham answered, “Now I have ventured to
speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes.
28 What if there are five fewer than fifty righteous?
Will You destroy the whole city because of five?”
He said, “If I find forty-five there, I will not
destroy it.”
29 Once more he spoke to Him and said, “Suppose
forty are found there.” He said, “For the sake of
the forty I will not do it.”
30 Then he said, “Please let the Lord not be angry,
and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there.”
He said, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”
31 He said, “Now I have ventured to speak to the
Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.” He said,
“For the sake of the twenty I will not destroy it.”
32 Then he said, “Please let the Lord not be angry,
and I will speak just once more. Suppose ten are
found there.” He said, “For the sake of the ten I
will not destroy it.”
33 When the LORD had finished speaking with
Abraham, He went His way, and Abraham
returned to his place.

1 Or ‘Lord’. The Hebrew vowels in the standard text read ‘Lord’ (Adonai), as if Abraham is addressing God; without them it may be read ‘my lord’, a polite address to a guest.

2 A seah was about 7 litres. Three seahs of fine flour was enough bread for a large company: a lavish welcome.

3 Hebrew ‘at the time of life’, probably meaning ‘when the year has come round again’ (verse 14).

4 Hebrew ‘the way of women had ceased to be with Sarah’.

5 Hebrew ‘known’, used of a close, chosen relationship (Amos 3:2).

6 An ancient Jewish tradition records that the text once read ‘but the LORD remained standing before Abraham’, and was changed out of reverence.

Chapter 19

Genesis 19 tells of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The two angels arrive at Sodom in the evening, and Lot, sitting in the city gate, presses them to stay in his house. The men of the city, young and old, surround the house and demand that Lot bring out his guests so that they may have relations with them; Lot offers his daughters instead, but the angels pull him inside and strike the men with blindness. At dawn the angels urge Lot to flee with his wife and daughters, seizing them by the hand because of the LORD’s compassion, and they allow him to escape to the small town of Zoar. The LORD rains sulphur and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah; Lot’s wife looks back and becomes a pillar of salt, and Abraham sees the smoke rising like smoke from a furnace. God remembers Abraham and brings Lot out. Lot settles in a cave with his daughters, who make him drunk and conceive by him, and their sons are the ancestors of Moab and Ammon.

1 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening,
while Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom.

When Lot saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed with his face to the ground.

2 He said, “Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant’s house, spend the night and wash your feet. Then you can rise early and go on your way.” They said, “No, we will spend the night in the town square.”

3 But he pressed them so strongly that they turned aside to him and came into his house. He made them a feast and baked bread without yeast, and they ate.

4 Before they had lain down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, young and old, all the people to the last man.

5 They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them.”[1]

6 Lot went out to them at the entrance and shut the door behind him.

7 He said, “Please, my brothers, do not do this wicked thing.

8 Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.”

9 But they said, “Stand back!” And they said, “This one came here as a foreigner, and now he wants to play the judge! Now we will treat you worse than them.” They pressed hard against the man, against Lot, and came near to break down the door.

10 But the men inside reached out their hands, brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door.

11 And they struck the men who were at the entrance of the house with blindness, from the youngest to the oldest, so that they wore themselves out trying to find the entrance.

12 Then the men said to Lot, “Whom else do you have here? Sons-in-law, your sons and daughters, anyone you have in the city: get them out of this place.

13 For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has grown great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.”

14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters.[2] He said, “Get up, get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city.” But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

15 As dawn was breaking, the angels urged Lot on, saying, “Get up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment[3] of the city.”

16 But he lingered. So the men seized his hand, his wife’s hand and the hands of his two daughters, because the LORD had compassion on him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.

17 When they had brought them out, one of them said, “Run for your life! Do not look back, and do not stop anywhere in the plain. Escape to the hills, or you will be swept away.”

18 But Lot said to them, “Oh no, my lord!

19 Your servant has found favour in your eyes, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills; the disaster will overtake me, and I shall die.

20 Look, this town is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Let me escape there; it is only a small place, is it not? Then my life will be spared.”

21 He said to him, “Very well, I grant you this request too; I will not overthrow the town you have spoken of.

22 Hurry, escape there, for I can do nothing until you arrive there.” That is why the town was called Zoar.[4]

23 The sun had risen over the land when Lot came to Zoar.

24 Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulphur and fire from the LORD out of the heavens.

25 He overthrew those cities and the whole plain, with everyone who lived in the cities and every plant that grew from the ground.

26 But Lot’s wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

27 Early the next morning Abraham went back to the place where he had stood before the LORD.

28 He looked down towards Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of the plain, and he saw the smoke of the land going up like the smoke of a furnace.

29 So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, God remembered Abraham, and He sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when He overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.

30 Lot went up out of Zoar and settled in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to stay in Zoar. He lived in a cave, he and his two daughters.

31 The firstborn said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is no man in the land to come in to us, as is the custom all over the earth.

32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, so that we may keep our father’s line alive.”

33 That night they gave their father wine to drink, and the older daughter went in and lay with him; he was not aware of her lying down or getting up.

34 The next day the firstborn said to the younger, “Look, I lay with my father last night. Let us make him drink wine tonight as well; then you go in and lie with him, so that we may keep our father’s line alive.”

35 So they made their father drink wine that night as well, and the younger got up and lay with him; he did not know when she lay down or when she got up.

36 Thus both of Lot’s daughters became pregnant by their father.

37 The older daughter gave birth to a son and named him Moab;[5] he is the ancestor of the Moabites of today.

38 The younger daughter also gave birth to a son and named him Ben-ammi;[6] he is the ancestor of the Ammonites of today.

1 That is, have sexual relations with them (as in verse 8).

2 Or ‘who had married his daughters’.

3 Hebrew: עָוֹן (avon), ‘iniquity’, and the punishment it brings (see 4:13).

4 Zoar sounds like the Hebrew for ‘small’ (verse 20).

5 Moab sounds like the Hebrew ‘from father’.

6 Ben-ammi means ‘son of my people’.

Chapter 20

Genesis 20 tells of Abraham and Abimelech. Living as a foreigner in Gerar, Abraham again says that Sarah is his sister, and Abimelech king of Gerar takes her. God comes to Abimelech in a dream and warns him that he is a dead man because she is married; Abimelech, who has not gone near her, pleads his innocence, and God says He kept him from sinning, and that Abraham is a prophet who will pray for him. Abimelech rebukes Abraham, who explains that he thought there was no fear of God in the place, and that Sarah is in fact his half-sister. Abimelech returns Sarah with gifts and lets Abraham settle where he likes, and when Abraham prays, God heals Abimelech’s household, for the LORD had closed every womb in it.

1 From there Abraham journeyed towards the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur, and he lived for a time in Gerar.

2 There Abraham said of his wife Sarah, “She is my sister,” and Abimelech king of Gerar sent for her and had her brought to him.

3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and told him, “You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is another man’s wife.”

4 Now Abimelech had not come near her. He said, “Lord, will You kill a nation even if it is innocent?

5 Did he not tell me himself, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ I did this with a clear conscience and clean hands.”[1]

6 Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know that you did this with a clear conscience, and it was I who kept you from sinning against Me. That is why I did not let you touch her.

7 So now give the man back his wife, for he is a prophet,[2] and he will pray for you so that you live. But if you do not give her back, be sure that you will die, you and everyone who belongs to you.”

8 So Abimelech rose early in the morning and called all his servants, and told them all these things, and the men were very much afraid.

9 Then Abimelech summoned Abraham and said, “What is this you have done to us? What wrong did I do you, that you should bring such great guilt on me and on my kingdom? You have treated me in a way no one should be treated.”

10 And Abimelech said to Abraham, “What were you thinking of, that you did this thing?”

11 Abraham said, “I thought, ‘There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me

because of my wife.’

12 And in any case she is indeed my sister: she is
my father’s daughter, but not my mother’s, and
she became my wife.

13 When God caused me to wander from my
father’s house, I said to her, ‘This is the kindness
you must show me: wherever we go, say of me,
“He is my brother.”’”

14 Then Abimelech took sheep and cattle, and male
and female servants, and gave them to Abraham,
and he returned his wife Sarah to him.

15 Abimelech said, “Look, my land is before you;
live wherever you please.”

16 To Sarah he said, “Look, I have given your
brother a thousand pieces of silver. It is to cover
the offence against you before all who are with
you, and before everyone you are vindicated.”[3]

17 Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed
Abimelech, his wife and his female servants, so
that they bore children again.

18 For the LORD had closed every womb in
Abimelech’s household because of Sarah,
Abraham’s wife.

1 Hebrew ‘in the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands’.

2 The first time the word prophet, נָבִיא (navi), is used in the Bible. A prophet speaks for God, and here also prays for others.

3 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. Literally ‘it is for you a covering of the eyes’.

Chapter 21

Genesis 21 records the birth of Isaac. The LORD visits Sarah as He had promised, and she bears Abraham a son in his old age; Abraham names him Isaac and circumcises him on the eighth day, and Sarah says that God has brought her laughter. At the feast when Isaac is weaned, Sarah sees Ishmael laughing and demands that Abraham drive out Hagar and her son. God tells Abraham to listen to Sarah, for through Isaac his offspring will be named, but promises to make Ishmael a nation too. Hagar wanders in the wilderness of Beersheba until the water runs out; God hears the boy’s voice, shows her a well, and is with Ishmael as he grows up. Abraham makes a covenant with Abimelech at Beersheba, plants a tamarisk there and calls on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.

1 The LORD came to Sarah’s aid as He had said;
the LORD did for Sarah what He had promised.

2 Sarah became pregnant and bore Abraham a son
in his old age, at the set time God had told him.

3 Abraham called the name of the son born to him,
whom Sarah bore him, Isaac.

4 When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham
circumcised him, as God had commanded.

5 Abraham was a hundred when his son Isaac was
born.

6 And Sarah said, “God has given me laughter; all
who hear of it will laugh with me.”[1]

7 She also said, “Who would ever have told
Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I
have given him a son in his old age!”

8 The child grew and was weaned, and on the day
Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast.

9 But Sarah saw the son whom Hagar the Egyptian
had borne to Abraham laughing.[2]

10 So she said to Abraham, “Drive out this slave
woman and her son, for the son of this slave
woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.”

11 The matter was very distressing to Abraham
because of his son.

12 But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed
because of the boy and your slave woman.
Whatever Sarah says to you, listen to her voice,
for it is through Isaac that offspring will be named
for you.

13 And I will also make a nation of the son of the
slave woman, because he is your offspring.”

14 Early next morning Abraham took some bread
and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He
put them on her shoulder, gave her the child, and
sent her off. She went, and wandered about in the
wilderness of Beersheba.

15 When the water in the skin was gone, she put
the child under one of the bushes.

16 Then she went and sat down about a bowshot
away, for she said, “Let me not look on the death
of the child.” As she sat there, she lifted up her
voice and wept.

17 God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God
called to Hagar out of heaven, “What is wrong,

Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy's voice from where he is.

18 Up, lift the boy and take him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him."

19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well. She went and filled the skin with water and let the boy drink.

20 God was with the boy as he grew up. He made his home in the wilderness and became an archer.

21 While he was living in the wilderness of Paran, his mother found him a wife from Egypt.

22 At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do.

23 So swear to me here by God that you will not deceive me, my children or my descendants. Show me and the land where you are living as a foreigner the same loyal kindness I have shown you."

24 And Abraham said, "I swear it."

25 But Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized.

26 Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing. You did not tell me, and I heard nothing of it until today."

27 So Abraham took sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant.

28 Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

29 Abimelech said to Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart?"

30 He said, "These seven ewe lambs you are to take from my hand, as a witness for me that I dug this well."

31 That is why that place was called Beersheba,[3] because there the two of them swore an oath.

32 So they made a covenant at Beersheba. Then Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army got up and returned to the land of the Philistines.

33 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.

34 And Abraham lived for many days as a foreigner in the land of the Philistines.

1 Hebrew: צְחֹק (tsechoq), 'laughter', and יִצְחָק (yitschaq), 'will laugh', both sound like the name Isaac.

2 Or 'mocking' or 'playing'. The Hebrew verb is again a play on Isaac's name; Paul reads it as persecution (Galatians 4:29).

3 Beersheba means 'well of seven' or 'well of the oath'; the Hebrew words for 'seven' and 'swear' sound alike.

Chapter 22

Genesis 22 tells how God tested Abraham. God tells him to take his son, his only one, whom he loves, Isaac, to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering. Abraham sets out early, and on the third day sees the place; as father and son climb the mountain, Isaac asks where the lamb is, and Abraham answers that God will see to the lamb Himself. Abraham builds the altar, binds Isaac and takes the knife, but the angel of the LORD calls from heaven to stop him, for now it is known that he fears God. Abraham sees a ram caught by its horns in a thicket and offers it in place of his son, naming the place "The LORD Will Provide". The angel swears in the LORD's name to bless him, to multiply his offspring like the stars and the sand, and that in his offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because he obeyed. The chapter ends with news of the children of Abraham's brother Nahor, including Rebekah.

1 Some time after this, God put Abraham to the test. "Abraham!" He called to him. "Here I am," he answered.

2 Then He said, "Take your son, your only one, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah.[1] Offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, the one I will show you."

3 So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and set out for the place God had told him of.

4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.

5 Then Abraham told his young men, "You stay here with the donkey, while the boy and I go on over there. We will worship and then come back to you."[2]

6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering
and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried
the fire and the knife. And the two of them walked
on together.

7 Isaac spoke to his father Abraham: “Father!”
“Here I am, my son,” he answered. “The fire and
the wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the
lamb for the burnt offering?”

8 Abraham said, “God will see to the lamb for a
burnt offering Himself, my son.” And the two of
them walked on together.

9 They reached the place God had told him of, and
Abraham built the altar there and arranged the
wood. He bound his son Isaac[3] and laid him on the
altar, on top of the wood.

10 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took
the knife to slaughter his son.

11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from
heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he
said, “Here I am.”

12 “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” He said. “Do
nothing to him. For now I know that you fear God;
you have not held back from Me your son, your
only one.”

13 Abraham looked up and saw a ram behind him,[4]
caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went
and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt
offering in place of his son.

14 So Abraham called the name of that place “The
LORD Will Provide”,[5] as it is said to this day, “On
the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”[6]

15 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a
second time from heaven

16 and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the
LORD, because you have done this and have not
withheld your son, your only one,

17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply
your offspring as the stars of the heavens and as
the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will
possess the gate of their enemies,

18 and in your offspring all the nations of the earth
will be blessed,[7] because you have obeyed My
voice.”

19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and
they set out together for Beersheba. And Abraham
lived at Beersheba.

20 Some time later Abraham received news:
“Milcah too has given birth to sons for your
brother Nahor:

21 Uz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the
father of Aram,

22 Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph and Bethuel.”

23 Bethuel fathered Rebekah. These eight Milcah
bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother.

24 His concubine, named Reumah, also had sons:
Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maacah.

1 2 Chronicles 3:1 says that Solomon built the temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem.

2 ‘We will come back’: see Hebrews 11:17–19, where Abraham is said to have reckoned that God could raise the dead.

3 Hebrew: וַיַּעֲקֹד (vayya’aqod), ‘and he bound’. Jewish tradition calls this chapter the Aqedah, ‘the Binding’.

4 So most Hebrew manuscripts. Many manuscripts, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Greek and the Syriac read ‘a ram, one’, that is, ‘a single ram’.

5 Hebrew: יְהוָה יִרְאֶה (YHWH yir’eh), ‘the LORD will see’; the same verb as in verse 8.

6 Or ‘He will be seen’.

7 Or ‘will bless themselves’. Paul notes that ‘offspring’ here is singular and points to Christ (Galatians 3:16).

Chapter 23

Genesis 23 tells of Sarah’s death and burial. Sarah dies at Kiriath-arba, that is, Hebron, aged 127, and Abraham mourns and weeps for her. Though he is only a foreigner living among the Hittites, he asks them for a burial place, and they honour him as a mighty prince. Abraham asks to buy the cave of Machpelah from Ephron, who offers it as a gift in front of the people; Abraham insists on paying the full price, and weighs out four hundred shekels of silver. The field and the cave become Abraham’s property, the first part of the promised land he owns, and he buries Sarah there.

1 Sarah lived a hundred and twenty-seven years;
these were the years of Sarah’s life.

2 Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the
land of Canaan, and Abraham went in to mourn
for Sarah and to weep over her.

3 Then Abraham rose from beside his dead and
spoke to the Hittites.[1]
4 "I am a foreigner and a stranger living among
you," he said. "Give me property among you for a
grave, so that I may bury my dead out of my
sight."
5 The Hittites answered Abraham,
6 "Listen to us, my lord. You are a mighty prince[2]
among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our
graves. None of us will refuse you his grave for
burying your dead."
7 Abraham rose and bowed down to the people of
the land, the Hittites,
8 and spoke to them: "If you are willing for me to
bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and ask
Ephron the son of Zohar on my behalf
9 to let me have the cave of Machpelah, which
belongs to him and lies at the end of his field. Let
him give it to me among you for the full price, as
my property for a grave."
10 Ephron was sitting among the Hittites, and
Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the
hearing of the Hittites, of all who went in at the
gate of his city:[3]
11 "No, my lord, listen to me. The field I give to
you, and the cave in it I give to you as well. I give
it to you here, with my own people as witnesses.
Bury your dead."
12 Then Abraham bowed down before the people of
the land.
13 And he said to Ephron in the hearing of the
people of the land, "If only you would listen to me!
I will pay the price of the field. Accept it from me,
so that I may bury my dead there."
14 Ephron answered Abraham,
15 "My lord, listen to me: a piece of land worth four
hundred shekels of silver,[4] what is that between
you and me? Bury your dead."
16 Abraham agreed with Ephron, and Abraham
weighed out for Ephron the silver he had named
in the hearing of the Hittites: four hundred
shekels of silver, at the standard used by the
merchants.
17 So Ephron's field in Machpelah, east of Mamre,
the field with the cave in it and all the trees in the
field, throughout its whole boundary,
18 passed to Abraham as his property in the sight
of the Hittites, before all who went in at the gate
of his city.
19 Then Abraham laid his wife Sarah to rest in the
cave in the field of Machpelah facing Mamre (that
is, Hebron), in Canaan.
20 So the field and the cave in it passed from the
Hittites to Abraham as property for a grave.

1 Hebrew 'the sons of Heth' (see 10:15), here and throughout the chapter.
2 Hebrew 'a prince of God', a way of saying 'a very great prince'.
3 The city gate was where public business was done before witnesses (see Ruth 4:1–11).
4 About 4.5 kilograms (10 pounds) of silver. A shekel weighed about 11.5 grams.

Chapter 24

Genesis 24 tells how a wife was found for Isaac. The aged Abraham makes his senior servant swear not to take a wife for Isaac from the Canaanites, but to go to his own country and relatives, and never to take Isaac back there; the LORD will send His angel ahead of him. The servant travels to the city of Nahor in Aram-naharaim and prays at the well that the girl who offers water to him and his camels may be the one the LORD has chosen. Before he has finished praying, Rebekah, the granddaughter of Abraham's brother Nahor, comes out and does just that, and the servant worships the LORD for His loyal kindness and faithfulness. In her family's house he tells the whole story; Laban and Bethuel agree that the matter is from the LORD, and Rebekah herself agrees to go at once. Isaac, meditating in the field at evening, sees the camels coming; he takes Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent, she becomes his wife, he loves her, and he is comforted after his mother's death.

1 Abraham was now old and well on in years, and
the LORD had blessed Abraham in everything.
2 Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his
household, who was in charge of all he had, "Put
your hand under my thigh,[1]
3 I want you to swear by the LORD, God of the
heavens and God of the earth, that you will not

choose a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites I live among,

4 but will go to my homeland and my kindred and choose a wife there for my son Isaac."

5 "Suppose the woman refuses to come back with me to this land," the servant asked him. "Should I then take your son back to the country you came from?"

6 Abraham said to him, "Take care that you do not take my son back there.

7 The LORD, the God of heaven, took me from my father's house and my native land, spoke to me and gave me His oath, 'I will give this land to your offspring.' He will send His angel before you, and you will find a wife for my son there.

8 If the woman is not willing to follow you, you will be released from this oath of mine. Only you must not take my son back there."

9 So the servant placed his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and gave him his oath on this matter.

10 The servant took ten of his master's camels and set out, taking with him all kinds of good things from his master. He travelled to Aram-naharaim,[2] to the city of Nahor.

11 Outside the city, beside the well, he made the camels kneel. It was evening, the hour when women come out to draw water.

12 And he said, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and show loyal kindness to my master Abraham.

13 See, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water.

14 Let the young woman to whom I say, 'Please lower your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, 'Drink, and I will water your camels too', be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that You have shown loyal kindness to my master."

15 Before he had finished speaking, out came Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, with her jar on her shoulder.

16 She was a girl of great beauty, a virgin whom no man had known. Down she went to the spring, filled her jar and came back up.

17 Then the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me sip a little water from your jar."

18 "Drink, my lord," she said, and she quickly lowered her jar on to her hand and gave him a drink.

19 When she had given him enough, she said, "I will draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking."

20 She quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran back again to the well to draw water, and she drew enough for all his camels.

21 The man watched her in silence, waiting to learn whether the LORD had made his journey successful or not.

22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten shekels of gold,[3]

23 "Whose daughter are you?" he asked. "Please tell me, is there space at your father's house for us to stay the night?"

24 "My father is Bethuel," she answered, "the son Milcah bore to Nahor."

25 She added, "We have plenty of straw and fodder, and room to spend the night."

26 The man bowed his head and worshipped the LORD,

27 and said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not withdrawn His loyal kindness and His faithfulness from my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the way to the house of my master's relatives."

28 The young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things.

29 Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban, and Laban ran out to the man at the spring.

30 As soon as he saw the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and heard his sister Rebekah say, "This is what the man said to me," he went to the man, and there he was, standing by the camels at the spring.

31 He said, "Come in, you who are blessed by the LORD. Why are you standing outside? I have made the house ready, and a place for the camels."

32 So the man came into the house. The camels were unloaded and given straw and fodder, and water was brought to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him.

33 When food was put in front of him, he said, "I will not eat until I have told you my errand." "Tell us," said Laban.

34 So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant.

35 The LORD has richly blessed my master, and he has grown wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, menservants and maidservants, camels and donkeys.

36 And Sarah my master’s wife bore a son to my master when she was old, and he has given him everything he has.

37 My master put me under oath: ‘You are not to take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites whose land I live in.

38 Instead go to my father’s family, to my own clan, and take a wife for my son there.’

39 I said to my master, ‘What if the woman will not follow me?’

40 He said to me, ‘The LORD, before whom I have walked, will send His angel with you and make your journey a success, and you will take a wife for my son from my clan and from my father’s house.

41 Then you will be free from my curse,[4] when you come to my clan. And if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my curse.’

42 Today I came to the spring and said, ‘O LORD, God of my master Abraham, if You will indeed make the journey I am on a success,

43 see, I am standing by the spring of water. Let the young woman[5] who comes out to draw water, to whom I say, “Please give me a little water from your jar to drink,”

44 and who says to me, “Drink, and I will draw for your camels too”, let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master’s son.’

45 Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, ‘Please give me a drink.’

46 She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels too.’ So I drank, and she watered the camels as well.

47 Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son, whom Milcah bore to him.’ So I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms.

48 Then I bowed my head and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to take the daughter of my master’s kinsman for his son.

49 Now then, if you will show loyal kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn to the right or to the left.”

50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered, “This comes from the LORD; we cannot say anything to you, bad or good.

51 Here is Rebekah in front of you. Take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the LORD has spoken.”

52 When Abraham’s servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the ground before the LORD.

53 Then the servant brought out articles of silver and of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave costly gifts to her brother and her mother.

54 Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank, and spent the night there. When they got up in the morning, he said, “Send me back to my master.”

55 But her brother and her mother said, “Let the young woman stay with us a few days, ten or so; after that she may go.”

56 He said to them, “Do not hold me back, now that the LORD has made my journey a success. Send me on my way, so that I may go to my master.”

57 They said, “Let us call the young woman and ask her.”

58 So they called Rebekah and asked her, “Are you willing to go with this man?” “I am,” she said.

59 So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse, with Abraham’s servant and his men.

60 They blessed Rebekah with these words: “Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands upon thousands, and may your offspring take possession of the gates of their enemies!”

61 Then Rebekah and her young women got up, mounted the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and went on his way.

62 Now Isaac had come back from Beer-lahai-roi, for he was living in the Negev.

63 Isaac went out towards evening to meditate[6] in the field, and he looked up and saw camels coming.

64 Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she got down from the camel

65 She asked the servant, “Who is the man coming across the field to meet us?” “That is my master,” the servant replied. So she took her veil and covered her face.

66 The servant told Isaac everything he had done.

67 Then Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

1 A solemn way of taking an oath, linked with the source of life and offspring (see 47:29).

2 'Aram of the two rivers', the region of upper Mesopotamia between the Tigris and the Euphrates.

3 About 6 grams and 115 grams.

4 That is, from the curse that the oath would bring on the one who broke it.

5 Hebrew: עַלְמָה (almah), a young woman of marriageable age, the word used in Isaiah 7:14. Rebekah is also called a virgin, בְּתוּלָה (betulah), in verse 16.

6 The meaning of the Hebrew verb is uncertain; it may mean 'to walk'.

Chapter 25

Genesis 25 records the end of Abraham's life and the beginning of Isaac's line. Abraham takes another wife, Keturah, whose sons he sends away to the east with gifts, while leaving everything he has to Isaac. Abraham dies at 175, old and satisfied with life, and Isaac and Ishmael bury him with Sarah in the cave of Machpelah. The twelve sons of Ishmael are listed as princes of tribes, and Ishmael dies at 137. Isaac prays for his barren wife Rebekah, and she conceives twins who struggle within her; the LORD tells her that two nations are in her womb and that the elder will serve the younger. Esau is born red and hairy, and Jacob comes out gripping his heel. Esau becomes a skilful hunter and Jacob a quiet man who stays among the tents; one day Esau comes in famished and sells his birthright to Jacob for a meal of red lentil stew, despising his birthright.

1 Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah.

2 She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah.

3 Jokshan fathered Sheba and Dedan. The sons of Dedan were the Asshurim, the Letushim and the Leummim.

4 The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

5 Abraham gave everything he had to Isaac.

6 But to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the land of the east.

7 These are the days of the years of Abraham's life: a hundred and seventy-five years.

8 Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years, and he was gathered to his people.[1]

9 His sons Isaac and Ishmael laid him to rest in the cave of Machpelah, east of Mamre, in the field that had belonged to Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite,

10 the field that Abraham had bought from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah.

11 After Abraham's death God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac settled near Beer-lahai-roi.

12 These are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's servant, bore to Abraham.

13 These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, listed by name in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,

14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa,

15 Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah.

16 These were Ishmael's sons, and these their names, by their villages and their camps: twelve chiefs of their tribes.

17 These are the years of Ishmael's life: a hundred and thirty-seven years. He breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.

18 They settled from Havilah to Shur, which is east of Egypt in the direction of Assyria. He lived[2] at odds with all his brothers.

19 These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham fathered Isaac,

20 and Isaac was forty years old when he took as his wife Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram,[3] the sister of Laban the Aramean.

21 Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because
she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer,
and Rebekah his wife conceived.

22 The children struggled together within her, and
she said, “If this is how it is, why am I living?” So
she went to enquire of the LORD.

23 The LORD said to her, “Two nations are in your
womb, and two peoples from within you will be
divided. One people will be stronger than the
other, and the elder will serve the younger.”

24 When her days to give birth were completed,
there were twins in her womb.

25 The first came out red,[4] his whole body like a
hairy cloak, and they called his name Esau.[5]

26 After that his brother came out, with his hand
gripping Esau’s heel, and he was called Jacob.[6]
Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

27 When the boys grew up, Esau became a skilful
hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob
was a quiet man, living in tents.

28 Isaac loved Esau, because he had a taste for
wild game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came
in from the open country, exhausted.

30 Esau said to Jacob, “Let me gulp down some of
that red stuff, that red stew, for I am exhausted!”
That is why he was called Edom.[7]

31 “Sell me your birthright first,” said Jacob.[8]

32 Esau said, “Look, I am about to die; what use is
a birthright to me?”

33 “Give me your oath first,” said Jacob. So Esau
gave him his oath, and sold Jacob his birthright.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil
stew. He ate, drank, got up and left. Thus Esau
despised his birthright.

1 A phrase used of the death of the patriarchs, implying reunion with those who had gone before, not simply burial in the family grave.

2 Hebrew ‘fell’, perhaps ‘settled’, or ‘lived in hostility’ (see 16:12).

3 Paddan-aram is the region of Aram-naharaim (24:10), around Haran.

4 Hebrew: אַדְמוֹנִי (admoni), ‘red’, which sounds like Edom, Esau’s other name (verse 30).

5 Esau may sound like a word for ‘hairy’; his home Seir (32:3) sounds like שֵׂעָר (se’ar), ‘hair’.

6 Jacob sounds like עָקֵב (aqev), ‘heel’; the name can also mean ‘he grabs by the heel’, that is, ‘he supplants’ (27:36).

7 Edom means ‘red’.

8 The rights of the firstborn son, including a double share of the inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17).

Chapter 26

Genesis 26 tells of Isaac in the land of the Philistines. During a famine the LORD tells Isaac not to go down to Egypt but to stay in the land, and confirms to him the oath He swore to Abraham. At Gerar Isaac says that Rebekah is his sister, until Abimelech sees him caressing her and rebukes him. The LORD blesses Isaac with a hundredfold harvest and great wealth, and the envious Philistines fill in his father’s wells and send him away. Isaac reopens the old wells and digs new ones, naming them after the quarrels over them, until at Rehoboth there is room for him. At Beersheba the LORD appears to him again, and Abimelech comes to make a covenant of peace with him. Esau marries two Hittite women, who make life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

1 A famine came on the land, a second one after
the famine in Abraham’s time, and Isaac went to
Gerar, to Abimelech king of the Philistines.

2 The LORD appeared to him and said, “Do not go
down to Egypt. Stay in the land I tell you of.

3 Live as a foreigner in this land, and I will be with
you and bless you, for to you and to your offspring
I will give all these lands, and I will keep the oath
I swore to your father Abraham.

4 I will make your offspring as many as the stars of
the heavens, and give them all these lands, and in
your offspring all the nations of the earth will be
blessed,

5 because Abraham listened to My voice and kept
My charge, My commands, My statutes and My
laws.”[1]

6 So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

7 The men there asked him about his wife. “She is
my sister,” he said, afraid to call her his wife in
case the men of the place killed him for Rebekah,
since she was so beautiful.

8 When he had been there a long time, Abimelech
king of the Philistines happened to look out of a
window and saw Isaac caressing[2] his wife
Rebekah.
9 Abimelech summoned Isaac and said, “So she is
your wife! Why then did you say, ‘She is my
sister’?” Isaac answered, “Because I thought I
might die on her account.”
10 “What have you done to us?” said Abimelech.
“Any of the men could easily have lain with your
wife, and you would have made us guilty.”
11 So Abimelech gave orders to all the people:
“Whoever touches this man or his wife shall be
put to death.”
12 Isaac sowed seed in that land and reaped a
hundredfold that same year. The LORD blessed
him,
13 and the man grew rich; he went on growing
richer until he was very wealthy indeed.
14 He had flocks and herds and a great household
of servants, so that the Philistines envied him.
15 Now the Philistines had blocked up all the wells
dug by his father’s servants in Abraham’s day,
filling them with earth.
16 And Abimelech said to Isaac, “Leave us, for you
have become much too powerful for us.”
17 So Isaac left there, camped in the valley of
Gerar and settled there.
18 Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been
dug in the days of his father Abraham, which the
Philistines had stopped up after Abraham’s death,
and he gave them the same names his father had
given them.
19 When Isaac’s servants dug in the valley, they
found a well of fresh running water there.
20 But the herdsmen of Gerar quarrelled with
Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, “The water is ours.” So
he named the well Esek,[3] because they had
disputed with him.
21 Then they dug another well, and they quarrelled
over that one too, so he named it Sitnah.
22 He moved on from there and dug another well,
and they did not quarrel over it. He named it
Rehoboth, saying, “Now the LORD has made room
for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”
23 From there he went up to Beersheba.
24 That night the LORD appeared to him and said,
“I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be
afraid, for I am with you. I will bless you and
multiply your offspring for the sake of My servant
Abraham.”
25 So Isaac built an altar there and called on the
name of the LORD. He pitched his tent there, and
there Isaac’s servants dug a well.
26 Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar, with
Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of
his army.
27 “Why have you come to me,” Isaac asked them,
“when you hated me and drove me away?”
28 They said, “We have seen plainly that the LORD
is with you. So we thought, let there be a sworn
agreement between us, between you and us, and
let us make a covenant with you,
29 Swear that you will do us no harm, as we have
not laid a hand on you, but have always treated
you well and let you go in peace. And now the
LORD has blessed you.”
30 So he made them a feast, and they ate and
drank.
31 Early in the morning they exchanged oaths.
Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they left
him in peace.
32 That same day Isaac’s servants came and told
him about the well they had dug. “We have found
water!” they said.
33 He named it Shibah;[4] and so the city is called
Beersheba to this day.
34 At the age of forty Esau married Judith,
daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath,
daughter of Elon the Hittite.
35 and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

1 Hebrew: תּוֹרֹתָי (torotai), ‘My instructions’, the plural of torah.

2 Hebrew: מְצַחֵק (metsacheq), another play on Isaac’s name, ‘laughing’.

3 Esek means ‘dispute’; Sitnah (verse 21) means ‘opposition’; Rehoboth (verse 22) means ‘broad places’ or ‘room’.

4 Shibah sounds like the Hebrew for ‘oath’ and ‘seven’ (see 21:31).

Chapter 27

Genesis 27 tells how Jacob took his father's blessing. Old and nearly blind, Isaac sends Esau to hunt game and make him a tasty meal, so that he may bless him before he dies. Rebekah overhears and has Jacob bring two young goats; she cooks them, dresses Jacob in Esau's clothes and covers his hands and neck with the goatskins. Isaac is uneasy, saying, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau", yet he eats and blesses Jacob with the richness of the earth and lordship over his brothers. When Esau returns, Isaac trembles violently, and Esau cries out bitterly for a blessing too; Isaac can only tell him that he will live by the sword and serve his brother until he breaks his yoke. Esau resolves to kill Jacob after Isaac's death, and Rebekah sends Jacob away to her brother Laban in Haran.

1 When Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to
see, he called his elder son Esau and said to him,
"My son." He answered, "Here I am."
2 Isaac said, "I am old now, and I do not know the
day of my death.
3 So take your gear, your quiver and your bow, and
go out into the country and hunt some game for
me.
4 Then prepare a tasty dish for me, the kind I like,
and bring it to me to eat, so that my soul may
bless you before I die."
5 Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to his
son Esau. When Esau went out into the country to
hunt game and bring it back,
6 Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "I have just heard
your father say to your brother Esau,
7 'Bring me game and make me a tasty dish to eat,
so that I may bless you before the LORD before I
die.'
8 Now, my son, listen to me and do what I tell you.
9 Go to the flock and bring me two good young
goats from there, so that I can make them into a
tasty dish for your father, the kind he likes.
10 Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may
bless you before he dies."
11 But Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, "My
brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am smooth-
skinned.
12 Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall look
to him like someone mocking him, and bring a
curse on myself instead of a blessing."
13 His mother said to him, "Let your curse fall on
me, my son. Only do as I say; go and fetch them
for me."
14 So he went and fetched them and brought them
to his mother, and his mother made a tasty dish,
the kind his father liked.
15 Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her
elder son, which she kept in the house, and put
them on Jacob her younger son.
16 She covered his hands and the smooth part of
his neck with the skins of the young goats,
17 and put into her son Jacob's hands the tasty dish
and the bread she had made.
18 He went in to his father and said, "My father."
He said, "Here I am. Which of my sons are you?"
19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your
firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up
and eat some of my game, so that your soul may
bless me."
20 But Isaac said to his son, "How did you find it so
quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the
LORD your God gave me success."
21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come close, so that I
may feel you, my son, to know whether you really
are my son Esau or not."
22 So Jacob came near to Isaac his father, who felt
him and said, "It is Jacob's voice, but these are
Esau's hands."
23 He did not recognise him, because his hands
were hairy like his brother Esau's hands, and so
he blessed him.
24 He asked, "Are you really my son Esau?" He
answered, "I am."
25 Then he said, "Bring it to me, and let me eat
some of my son's game, so that my soul may bless
you." So he brought it to him, and he ate; and he
brought him wine, and he drank.
26 Then his father Isaac said, "Come near now, my
son, and kiss me."
27 So he came and kissed him, and when Isaac
smelled the scent of his clothes, he blessed him
and said, "See, the scent of my son is like the
scent of a field that the LORD has blessed!
28 May God give you of the dew of heaven and of
the richness of the earth, and plenty of grain and
new wine.

29 May peoples serve you and nations bow before you. Be master over your brothers; may your mother's sons bow before you. A curse on all who curse you, and a blessing on all who bless you!"

30 As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had barely gone out from his father Isaac's presence, his brother Esau came in from his hunting.

31 He too prepared a tasty dish and brought it to his father, and he said to his father, "Let my father sit up and eat some of his son's game, so that your soul may bless me."

32 "Who are you?" asked his father Isaac. "I am Esau," he said, "your son, your firstborn."

33 Then Isaac trembled violently and said, "Who was it, then, who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it all before you came, and I blessed him; and blessed he will be!"

34 When Esau heard his father's words, he cried out with a great and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me, me too, my father!"

35 But he said, "Your brother came deceitfully and has taken your blessing."

36 Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? He has supplanted me these two times. He took my birthright, and now look, he has taken my blessing." Then he said, "Have you not kept back a blessing for me?"

37 Isaac answered Esau, "I have made him lord over you, and I have given him all his brothers as servants, and I have provided him with grain and new wine. What then can I do for you, my son?"

38 "Is that your only blessing, father?" Esau said. "Bless me too, father, bless me!" And Esau wept aloud.

39 Then his father Isaac answered him, "Your home will be away from the richness of the earth, and away from the dew of heaven above.[1]

40 By your sword you will live, and you will serve your brother; but when you grow restless, you will break his yoke from your neck."

41 Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob."

42 When the words of her elder son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, "Your brother Esau is consoling himself with the thought of killing you.

43 Now then, my son, listen to me: get up and flee to my brother Laban in Haran,

44 and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury subsides,

45 When your brother's anger has cooled and he has forgotten what you did to him, I will send for you to come back. Why should I be robbed of you both on one day?"

46 Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of these Hittite women. If Jacob takes a wife from the Hittite women like these, from the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

1 The same Hebrew words as in verse 28, 'from the richness... from the dew', are here read as 'away from'. They could also mean 'of', as in Jacob's blessing.

Chapter 28

Genesis 28 tells of Jacob's journey and his dream at Bethel. Isaac blesses Jacob, tells him not to marry a Canaanite woman but to take a wife from Laban's daughters in Paddan-aram, and prays that God Almighty will give him the blessing of Abraham. Esau, seeing that Canaanite women displease his father, marries a daughter of Ishmael. On the way, Jacob sleeps with a stone under his head and dreams of a stairway reaching from earth to heaven, with the angels of God going up and down on it, and the LORD standing above it. The LORD renews to him the promises made to Abraham and Isaac and promises to be with him, keep him and bring him back. Jacob wakes in awe, calls the place Bethel, sets up the stone as a pillar, and vows that if God brings him back in peace, the LORD will be his God and he will give Him a tenth of all he receives.

1 So Isaac called Jacob, blessed him and gave him this command: "You are not to take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.

2 Go at once to Paddan-aram, to the household of your mother's father Bethuel, and choose a wife there from among the daughters of your uncle Laban.

3 May God Almighty bless you, make you fruitful
and multiply you, so that you become an assembly
of peoples.
4 May He give the blessing of Abraham to you and
to your offspring with you, so that you may
possess the land where you now live as a
foreigner, which God gave to Abraham."
5 So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-
aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Aramean,
the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and
Esau.
6 Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and
sent him to Paddan-aram to find a wife there, and
that in blessing him he had ordered him, "Do not
marry any of the daughters of Canaan,"
7 and that Jacob had done as his father and mother
said and set off for Paddan-aram.
8 So when Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan
did not please his father Isaac,
9 Esau went to Ishmael and took as his wife, in
addition to the wives he had, Mahalath the
daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of
Nebaioth.
10 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran.
11 He came to a certain place and stayed there for
the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of
the stones of the place, he put it under his head
and lay down to sleep in that place.
12 And he dreamed: there was a stairway[1] set up
on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and
there were the angels of God going up and coming
down on it.
13 And there was the LORD, standing above it,[2] and
He said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham
your father and the God of Isaac. The land on
which you are lying I will give to you and to your
offspring.
14 Your offspring will be as the dust of the earth,
and you will break out westward and eastward,
northward and southward. Through you and your
offspring all the families of the earth will find
blessing.
15 I am with you and will keep you wherever you
go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not
leave you until I have done what I have promised
you."
16 Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said,
"Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not
know it."
17 And he was afraid. "What an awesome place this
is!" he said. "It can only be the house of God; here
is the gate of heaven."
18 Early in the morning Jacob took the stone he
had put under his head, set it up as a pillar and
poured oil on top of it.
19 He called the name of that place Bethel,[3] though
the city was formerly called Luz.
20 Then Jacob made a vow: "If God will be with me
and will keep me on this journey I am making, and
will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear,
21 and I return safely to my father's house, then
the LORD will be my God,
22 and this stone, which I have set up as a pillar,
will be God's house; and of all that You give me I
will give You a full tenth."

1 Or 'ramp', or 'ladder'. Jesus speaks of this vision in John 1:51.
2 Or 'beside him'.
3 Bethel means 'house of God'.

Chapter 29

Genesis 29 tells of Jacob's arrival in Haran and his marriages. At a well in the open country Jacob meets shepherds from Haran, and then Rachel, Laban's daughter, comes with her father's sheep; Jacob rolls the stone from the well, waters her flock, kisses her and weeps. Laban welcomes him as his own flesh and blood. Jacob loves Rachel and agrees to serve seven years for her, years that seem to him only a few days. On the wedding night Laban gives him Leah instead, saying it is not their custom to give the younger before the firstborn, and Jacob serves another seven years for Rachel. The LORD sees that Leah is unloved and gives her children: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah, each named for what she felt, while Rachel remains barren.

1 Jacob continued on his way and arrived in the
land of the eastern peoples.
2 He looked, and there in the open country was a
well, with three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for

the flocks were watered from that well. The stone over the mouth of the well was large.

3 When all the flocks had gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone off the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and then put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well.

4 "Where are you from, my brothers?" Jacob asked them. "From Haran," they answered.

5 He said to them, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?" They said, "We know him."

6 He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and look, here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."

7 He said, "Look, it is still broad daylight; it is not yet time for the livestock to be gathered in. Water the sheep, and go and pasture them."

8 But they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered and the stone is rolled off the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."

9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was the one who looked after them.

10 When Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his mother's brother Laban, and the sheep of his uncle Laban, he went up, rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered his uncle Laban's flock.

11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud.

12 Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.

13 As soon as Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he ran to meet him, embraced him, kissed him and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban all that had happened,

14 and Laban said to him, "You are indeed my bone and my flesh!" And Jacob stayed with him for a whole month.

15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Just because you are my kinsman, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be."

16 Laban had two daughters: the elder was called Leah, the younger Rachel.

17 Leah's eyes were weak,[1] but Rachel was lovely in form and beautiful to look at.

18 Jacob was in love with Rachel. "For your younger daughter Rachel," he said, "I will work for you seven years."

19 Laban said, "Better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay with me."

20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him only a few days, because of his love for her.

21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is completed, so that I may go in to her."

22 So Laban gathered all the people of the place and made a feast.

23 But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her.

24 (Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her servant.)

25 When morning came, there was Leah! Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?"

26 "In our part of the world," Laban answered, "the younger is not given in marriage before the firstborn.

27 Complete the wedding week of this one, and we will give you the other one too, in return for serving me another seven years."

28 Jacob did so and completed Leah's week, and Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.

29 (Laban gave his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her servant.)

30 So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served Laban another seven years.

31 The LORD saw that Leah was unloved,[2] so He opened her womb, while Rachel remained barren.

32 Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, "Because the LORD has looked on my affliction; surely now my husband will love me."[3]

33 She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has given me this one too." And she called his name Simeon.[4]

34 Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." That is why he was called Levi.[5]

35 She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." That is why she called his name Judah.[6] Then she stopped having children.

1 Or ‘tender’, or ‘soft’. The meaning is uncertain; the point is the contrast with Rachel.

2 Hebrew ‘hated’, meaning loved less (verse 30; compare Malachi 1:2–3).

3 Reuben sounds like ‘See, a son’, and like ‘He has looked on my affliction’.

4 Simeon sounds like the Hebrew for ‘heard’.

5 Levi sounds like the Hebrew for ‘attached’.

6 Judah sounds like the Hebrew for ‘praise’.

Chapter 30

Genesis 30 continues the rivalry between Leah and Rachel. Rachel, jealous of her sister, gives Jacob her servant Bilhah, who bears Dan and Naphtali; Leah, no longer bearing, gives him her servant Zilpah, who bears Gad and Asher. Rachel trades a night with Jacob for Reuben’s mandrakes, and Leah bears Issachar and Zebulun, and then a daughter, Dinah. At last God remembers Rachel, and she bears Joseph, praying for another son. Jacob asks to go home, but Laban, who has learned that the LORD has blessed him because of Jacob, asks him to name his wages. Jacob asks only for the speckled, spotted and dark animals of the flock; Laban removes them, but Jacob uses peeled branches at the watering troughs and breeds the strongest animals so that the flock produces his markings, and he becomes exceedingly rich.

1 Rachel, seeing that she was bearing Jacob no children, grew jealous of her sister. “Give me children,” she said to Jacob, “or I shall die!”

2 Jacob’s anger burned against Rachel, and he said, “Am I in the place of God, who has kept the fruit of the womb from you?”

3 Then she said, “Here is my servant Bilhah. Go in to her, so that she may give birth on my knees,[1] and through her I too may have children.”

4 So she gave her servant Bilhah to Jacob as a wife, and he slept with her.

5 Bilhah became pregnant and gave Jacob a son.

6 Then Rachel said, “God has judged in my favour; He has also heard my voice and given me a son.” That is why she called his name Dan.[2]

7 Rachel’s servant Bilhah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son.

8 Then Rachel said, “With mighty wrestlings[3] I have wrestled with my sister, and I have won.” So she called his name Naphtali.

9 When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife.

10 Leah’s servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son.

11 Leah said, “Good fortune has come!”[4] and she called his name Gad.

12 Leah’s servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son.

13 And Leah said, “How happy I am! For the women will call me happy.” So she called his name Asher.[5]

14 At the time of the wheat harvest Reuben came across some mandrakes[6] in the fields and brought them home to his mother Leah. “Please let me have some of your son’s mandrakes,” Rachel said to her.

15 But she said to her, “Is it not enough that you have taken my husband? Would you take my son’s mandrakes too?” Rachel said, “Then he may sleep with you tonight in return for your son’s mandrakes.”

16 That evening, as Jacob came in from the fields, Leah went out to meet him. “You are to sleep with me,” she said, “for I have paid for you with my son’s mandrakes.” So that night he slept with her.

17 God heard Leah’s prayer; she became pregnant and gave Jacob a fifth son.

18 Leah said, “God has given me my wages, because I gave my servant to my husband.” So she called his name Issachar.[7]

19 Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son.

20 Then Leah said, “God has endowed me with a good dowry; now my husband will honour me, because I have borne him six sons.” So she called his name Zebulun.[8]

21 Afterwards she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah.

22 Then God remembered Rachel; He heard her prayer and opened her womb.

23 She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. “God has removed my disgrace,” she said.

24 She called his name Joseph,[9] saying, “May the LORD add to me another son!”

25 After Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob
said to Laban, “Let me go, so that I can return to
my own home and country.
26 Let me have my wives and children, for whom I
have worked for you, and I will go. You know well
how hard I have worked for you.”
27 But Laban said to him, “If I have found favour in
your eyes, please stay. I have learned by divination
that the LORD has blessed me because of you.”
28 He said, “Name your wages, and I will give
them.”
29 “You know how I have worked for you,” Jacob
replied, “and how well your livestock has done in
my care.
30 You had little before I came, and it has increased
abundantly; the LORD has blessed you wherever I
turned. But now, when shall I provide for my own
household too?”
31 “What shall I give you, then?” he asked. “Give
me nothing at all,” Jacob said. “If you will agree to
this one thing, I will go on tending and guarding
your flocks.
32 Let me go through all your flock today, removing
from it every speckled and spotted sheep, every
dark lamb, and the spotted and speckled among
the goats; they will be my wages.
33 So my honesty will answer for me later, when
you come to check my wages. Any goat that is not
speckled or spotted, or any lamb that is not dark,
if found with me, will count as stolen.”
34 Laban said, “Agreed. Let it be as you say.”
35 But that same day Laban removed the male
goats that were striped and spotted, and all the
female goats that were speckled and spotted,
every one with white on it, and every dark lamb,
and put them in the charge of his sons.
36 And he put a distance of three days’ journey
between himself and Jacob, while Jacob pastured
the rest of Laban’s flock.
37 Then Jacob took fresh branches of poplar,
almond and plane trees, and peeled white streaks
in them, exposing the white of the wood.
38 He set the peeled branches in front of the flocks
in the troughs, the watering places where the
flocks came to drink. When they came to drink,
they mated,
39 and the flocks mated in front of the branches,
and bore young that were striped, speckled and
spotted.[10]
40 Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks
face the striped and all the dark animals in
Laban’s flock. So he formed separate flocks for
himself and did not put them with Laban’s flock.
41 Whenever the stronger animals were mating,
Jacob would lay the branches in the troughs in
front of the flock, so that they mated among the
branches;
42 but for the weaker animals he would not lay
them there. So the weaker were Laban’s, and the
stronger were Jacob’s.
43 Thus the man grew exceedingly rich, and had
large flocks, female and male servants, camels
and donkeys.

1 A sign that the child would be counted as Rachel’s own.

2 Dan means ‘he judged’.

3 Hebrew ‘wrestlings of God’, that is, great struggles. Naphtali sounds like ‘my wrestling’.

4 Gad means ‘good fortune’.

5 Asher means ‘happy’.

6 A plant whose fruit was believed to help women conceive.

7 Issachar sounds like the Hebrew for ‘wages’ or ‘hire’ (verse 16).

8 Zebulun sounds like the Hebrew for ‘honour’, and also like ‘dowry’.

9 Joseph means ‘may He add’, and sounds like the Hebrew for ‘taken away’ (verse 23).

10 Jacob’s method reflects a belief of the time; in 31:10–12 he learns in a dream that it was God who made the flock bear his markings.

Chapter 31

Genesis 31 tells of Jacob's flight from Laban. Hearing the resentment of Laban's sons and seeing that Laban's attitude has changed, Jacob is told by the LORD to return to the land of his fathers. He explains to Rachel and Leah how their father cheated him and changed his wages ten times, while God took Laban's livestock and gave it to him; they agree that their father has treated them as foreigners. Jacob slips away with his family and flocks, and Rachel steals her father's household gods. Laban pursues and overtakes him in the hill country of Gilead, though God warns him in a dream not to harm Jacob. Laban searches for his gods, but Rachel hides them in the camel's saddle and sits on them. Jacob angrily recounts his twenty years of hard service; then the two make a covenant, set up a heap of stones as a witness, and part in peace.

1 Now Jacob heard what Laban's sons were saying:
"Jacob has taken all that was our father's, and
from what was our father's he has gained all this
wealth."

2 And Jacob saw from Laban's face that he was not
the same towards him as before.

3 Then the LORD told Jacob, "Go back to the land
of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be
with you."

4 So Jacob sent for Rachel and Leah to come out to
the fields where his flocks were.

5 and said to them, "I can see from your father's
face that he is not the same towards me as before.
But the God of my father has been with me.

6 You yourselves know how I have worked for your
father with all my might,

7 yet your father has cheated me and changed my
wages ten times. But God did not allow him to
harm me.

8 If he said, 'The speckled will be your wages',
then all the flock bore speckled young; and if he
said, 'The striped will be your wages', then all the
flock bore striped.

9 In this way God has taken your father's livestock
away and given it to me.

10 In the season when the flock was mating, I
looked up and saw in a dream that the male goats
mounting the flock were striped, speckled and
mottled.

11 The angel of God called to me in the dream,
'Jacob!' 'Here I am,' I answered.

12 He said, 'Look up and see: all the male goats
mounting the flock are striped, speckled and
mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to
you.

13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a
pillar and made a vow to Me. Now get up, leave
this land and return to the land of your birth.'"

14 Rachel and Leah replied, "Do we have any share
left in the inheritance of our father's house?

15 Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For
he has sold us, and he has quite used up the
money paid for us.[1]

16 All the wealth that God has taken from our
father belongs to us and to our children. So now
do whatever God has told you."

17 Then Jacob got up and put his children and his
wives on camels.

18 He drove away all his livestock and all the
property he had gained, the livestock he had
acquired in Paddan-aram, to go to his father Isaac
in the land of Canaan.

19 Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel
stole her father's household gods.[2]

20 And Jacob stole the heart of Laban the Aramean,
by not telling him that he was running away.[3]

21 He fled with all that he had. He set out and
crossed the River,[4] and headed for the hill country
of Gilead.

22 On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had
fled.

23 He took his kinsmen with him and pursued him
for seven days, and caught up with him in the hill
country of Gilead.

24 But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream
by night and said to him, "Be careful not to say
anything to Jacob, either good or bad."

25 Laban overtook Jacob. Jacob had pitched his
tent in the hill country, and Laban with his
kinsmen pitched theirs in the hill country of
Gilead.

26 "What have you done?" Laban said to Jacob.
"You have deceived me and carried my daughters
off like prisoners of war.

27 Why did you flee in secret and deceive me, and
not tell me, so that I might have sent you away
with joy and songs, with tambourine and lyre?

28 You did not even let me kiss my grandchildren
and my daughters goodbye. You have acted
foolishly.
29 It is in my power to do you harm; but the God of
your father spoke to me last night, saying, ‘Be
careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good
or bad.’
30 Now you have gone away because you longed so
much for your father’s house; but why did you
steal my gods?”
31 Jacob answered Laban, “Because I was afraid; I
thought that you would take your daughters from
me by force.
32 But anyone with whom you find your gods shall
not live. In the presence of our kinsmen, point out
whatever of yours is with me, and take it.” Jacob
did not know that Rachel had stolen them.
33 Laban searched Jacob’s tent, Leah’s tent and the
tent of the two servant women, and found nothing.
Then he left Leah’s tent and entered Rachel’s.
34 But Rachel had taken the household gods and
put them inside her camel saddle and was sitting
on them. Laban searched the whole tent by touch
and found nothing.
35 Rachel said to her father, “Do not be angry, my
lord, that I cannot stand up in your presence; I am
having my period.” So he searched, but the
household gods were not to be found.
36 Then Jacob became angry and took Laban to
task. Jacob said to Laban, “What is my offence?
What is my sin, that you have chased after me so
hotly?
37 You have felt through all my goods; what have
you found of all your household goods? Set it here
before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, and let
them decide between us two.
38 For twenty years now I have been with you. Your
ewes and she-goats have never lost their young,
and I have never eaten a ram from your flocks.
39 What was torn by wild beasts I did not bring to
you; I bore the loss myself. You demanded it from
my hand, whether stolen by day or stolen by night.
40 This is how I was: by day the heat consumed me,
and the frost by night, and sleep fled from my
eyes.
41 Twenty years I have spent in your household:
fourteen working for your two daughters and six
for your flocks, and ten times you changed my
wages.
42 If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and
the Fear of Isaac,[5] had not been with me, you
would certainly have sent me off with nothing. But
God saw my hardship and how hard my hands
have worked, and last night He gave His verdict.”
43 Laban answered Jacob, “These women are my
daughters, these children are my children, these
flocks are my flocks; everything you see belongs to
me. Yet what can I do today about my own
daughters, or about the children they have given
birth to?
44 Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I,
and let it be a witness between you and me.”
45 Jacob took a stone and stood it upright as a
pillar.
46 He told his kinsmen, “Collect some stones.” So
they brought stones and piled them in a heap, and
there beside the heap they ate.
47 Laban named the heap Jegar-sahadutha; Jacob
named it Galeed.[6]
48 Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you
and me today.” That is why it was called Galeed,
49 and also Mizpah,[7] for he said, “May the LORD
watch between you and me when we are out of
each other’s sight.
50 If you ill-treat my daughters, or if you take wives
besides my daughters, although no one is with us,
see, God is witness between you and me.”
51 Then Laban said to Jacob, “See this heap and
see the pillar that I have set up between you and
me.
52 This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a
witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to
you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and
this pillar to me, to do harm.
53 The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the
God of their father, be judge between us.” And
Jacob took his oath by the Fear of his father Isaac.
54 Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and
called his kinsmen to eat bread. They ate bread
and spent the night on the mountain.
55 Early in the morning Laban rose, kissed his
grandchildren and his daughters and blessed
them. Then Laban left and returned home.[8]

1 The bride-price that Jacob paid in work should in part have come to the daughters.

2 Hebrew: תְּרָפִים (teraphim), small images of household gods, perhaps also linked to the right of inheritance.

3 That is, he deceived him. The same verb ‘stole’ is used of Rachel in verse 19.

4 The Euphrates.

5 A name for God: the One whom Isaac feared (also in verse 53).

6 Both names mean ‘heap of witness’, the first in Aramaic, the second in Hebrew.

7 Mizpah means ‘watchtower’.

8 In Hebrew Bibles this verse is 32:1, and the verses of chapter 32 are numbered one higher than in English.

Chapter 32

Genesis 32 tells how Jacob prepared to meet Esau and wrestled at the Jabbok. Angels of God meet Jacob on his way, and he names the place Mahanaim. He sends messengers to Esau, and learns that Esau is coming with four hundred men. In great fear Jacob divides his people and flocks into two camps and prays, confessing that he is unworthy of all the LORD’s loyal kindness and faithfulness, and holding Him to His promise. He sends ahead droves of animals as a gift to win Esau’s favour. That night, alone by the ford of the Jabbok, Jacob wrestles with a man until daybreak; the man touches his hip and puts it out of joint, but Jacob will not let go until he is blessed. The man renames him Israel, because he has striven with God and with men and has prevailed. Jacob names the place Peniel, for he has seen God face to face and lived, and he limps away as the sun rises.

1 As Jacob went on his way, angels of God came to meet him.[1]

2 On seeing them Jacob said, “This is the camp of God!” and he named the place Mahanaim.[2]

3 Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom,

4 with these instructions: “This is what you are to say to my lord Esau: ‘Your servant Jacob says this: I have been living with Laban as a foreigner, and have stayed there until now.

5 I have oxen and donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants. I am sending to tell my lord, in the hope of finding favour in your eyes.’”

6 The messengers came back to Jacob and said, “We went to your brother Esau, and he is already on his way to meet you, with four hundred men.”

7 Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. He divided the people with him, and the flocks, herds and camels, into two camps,

8 thinking, “If Esau attacks one camp and strikes it down, the camp that is left will escape.”

9 Then Jacob prayed: “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your kindred, and I will do you good’,

10 I am unworthy of all the loyal kindness and all the faithfulness You have shown Your servant. With only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps.

11 Rescue me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him, that he will come and strike us all, the mothers with the children.

12 But You Yourself said, ‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring like the sand of the sea, too many to be counted.’”

13 He spent that night there, and from what he had with him he chose a gift for his brother Esau:

14 two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams,

15 thirty milking camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.

16 He handed them over to his servants, each drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Go on ahead of me, and keep a space between one drove and the next.”

17 He instructed the first, “When my brother Esau meets you and asks, ‘Whose man are you? Where are you going? And whose are these animals in front of you?’,

18 you are to say, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau; and look, he himself is behind us.’”

19 He gave the same instructions to the second and the third and to all who followed the droves: “Say

the same thing to Esau when you find him,

20 and say, ‘Your servant Jacob is right behind us.’” For he thought, “I will appease him with the gift that goes ahead of me, and afterwards I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me.”[3]

21 So the gift went on ahead of him, while he himself spent that night in the camp.

22 That same night he got up, took his two wives, his two servant women and his eleven children,[4] and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.[5]

23 He took them and sent them across the stream, and he sent across everything he had.

24 And Jacob was left alone. A man wrestled with him until daybreak.

25 When the man saw that he could not overcome him, he struck the socket of his hip, and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.

26 Then he said, “Let me go, for the day is breaking.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

27 “What is your name?” the man asked him. “Jacob,” he answered.

28 Then the man said, “No longer will you be called Jacob, but Israel,[6] because you have striven with God and with men and have overcome.”

29 Jacob said, “Tell me your name, I beg you.” But he replied, “Why do you ask my name?” Then he blessed him there.

30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel,[7] saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been spared.”

31 The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

32 That is why to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he struck Jacob’s hip socket on the sinew of the thigh.

1 In Hebrew Bibles the verses of this chapter are numbered one higher (32:2–33), because English 31:55 is Hebrew 32:1.

2 Mahanaim means ‘two camps’ (see verses 7 and 10).

3 The Hebrew repeats the word ‘face’ four times in this verse: ‘I will cover his face… I will see his face… he will lift up my face’. It prepares for Peniel, ‘the face of God’ (verse 30).

4 Dinah, his daughter, is not counted among the eleven sons; Benjamin was not yet born.

5 Jabbok sounds like the Hebrew for ‘wrestled’ in verse 24, and like the name Jacob.

6 Israel sounds like ‘he strives with God’.

7 Peniel means ‘the face of God’; in verse 31 it is spelled Penuel.

Chapter 33

Genesis 33 tells of Jacob’s meeting with Esau. Jacob sees Esau coming with four hundred men, arranges his family with Rachel and Joseph last, and goes ahead of them, bowing to the ground seven times. But Esau runs to meet him, embraces him, falls on his neck and kisses him, and they weep. Jacob introduces his family and presses Esau to accept his gift, saying that to see Esau’s face is like seeing the face of God. Esau offers to travel with him, but Jacob pleads the slow pace of the children and the flocks; Esau returns to Seir, and Jacob goes to Succoth and then to Shechem, where he buys a piece of land and sets up an altar called “God, the God of Israel”.

1 Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children between Leah, Rachel and the two servant women.

2 He put the servant women with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph at the back.

3 He himself went on ahead of them, bowing to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4 But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him; he threw his arms round his neck and kissed him,[1] and they wept.

5 When Esau looked up and saw the women and children, he asked, “Who are these with you?” Jacob said, “The children God has graciously given your servant.”

6 Then the servant women came near with their children and bowed down;

7 Leah too came near with her children and bowed down; and last of all Joseph and Rachel came near and bowed down.

8 Esau said, “What do you mean by all this company that I met?” Jacob answered, “To find

favour in my lord's eyes."

9 But Esau said, "I have plenty, my brother; keep what you have for yourself."

10 Jacob said, "No, please! If I have found favour in your eyes, accept my gift from my hand. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me kindly.

11 Please take my blessing that has been brought to you, because God has been gracious to me, and I have all I need." He urged him, and Esau took it.

12 Then Esau said, "Let us set out and be on our way, and I will go alongside you."

13 But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail, and that the flocks and herds nursing their young are a care to me. If they are driven hard for a single day, all the flocks will die.

14 Let my lord go on ahead of his servant, and I will lead on slowly, at the pace of the livestock in front of me and at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir."

15 Esau said, "Then let me leave with you some of the men who are with me." But Jacob said, "Why should you? Only let me find favour in my lord's eyes."

16 So that day Esau went back on his way to Seir.

17 But Jacob journeyed to Succoth, where he built himself a house and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place is called Succoth.[2]

18 Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram, and he camped in front of the city.

19 From the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for a hundred pieces of money[3] the piece of land where he had pitched his tent.

20 There he set up an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.[4]

1 In the standard Hebrew text the word 'and kissed him' is marked with dots above each letter, perhaps showing that the scribes questioned it.

2 Succoth means 'shelters' or 'booths'.

3 Hebrew 'a hundred qesitahs', a unit of value now unknown.

4 'God, the God of Israel'.

Chapter 34

Genesis 34 tells of the violation of Dinah and the revenge of her brothers. Shechem, son of the Hivite prince Hamor, seizes Jacob's daughter Dinah and lies with her by force; then he loves her and asks his father to get her for him as his wife. Jacob's sons are grieved and furious at the outrage. Hamor proposes intermarriage and trade between the two peoples, and Shechem offers any bride-price they ask. Jacob's sons answer deceitfully that they can agree only if every male of the city is circumcised. The men of the city agree, but on the third day, while they are in pain, Simeon and Levi kill every male, including Hamor and Shechem, and take Dinah away, and the other brothers plunder the city. Jacob rebukes them for making him odious to the people of the land, but they reply, "Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?"

1 Dinah, the daughter Leah had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the women of the land.

2 Shechem, son of Hamor the Hivite, who ruled that region, saw her; and he took her and forced her to lie with him.[1]

3 His soul was drawn to Dinah, Jacob's daughter; he loved the young woman and spoke tenderly to her.

4 So Shechem said to his father Hamor, "Get me this girl for my wife."

5 When Jacob heard that his daughter Dinah had been defiled, his sons were out in the fields with his livestock, so he said nothing until they came home.

6 And Hamor, Shechem's father, came out to Jacob to speak with him.

7 Jacob's sons came in from the field as soon as they heard, and the men were grieved and very angry, because Shechem had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, a thing that ought not to be done.

8 But Hamor spoke with them: "My son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as his wife.

9 Let us intermarry: you give us your daughters, and you take our daughters.

10 You shall live with us, and the land will be open to you. Live in it, trade in it and acquire property in it."

11 Then Shechem spoke to Dinah's father and brothers: "Only let me find favour with you, and I will give you whatever you ask.

12 Make the bride-price and gift as high as you like, and I will pay whatever you tell me. Only give me the young woman to be my wife."

13 Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully, because he had defiled their sister Dinah.

14 They said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to a man who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us.

15 Only on this condition will we agree with you: that you become as we are, and every male among you is circumcised.

16 Then we will give our daughters to you, and take your daughters for ourselves, and we will live among you and become one people.

17 But if you will not listen to us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and go."

18 Their words seemed good to Hamor and to Hamor's son Shechem.

19 The young man did not delay to do it, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. He was the most honoured of all his father's house.

20 So Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city:

21 "These men are at peace with us. Let them live in the land and trade in it, for the land is wide enough for them. Let us take their daughters as wives, and give them our daughters.

22 But the men will agree to live among us and become one people with us only if every male among us is circumcised, as they are.

23 Will not their livestock, their property and all their animals be ours? Only let us agree with them, and they will live with us."

24 Every man who went out through the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem, and every male among them, all who went out through the city gate, was circumcised.

25 On the third day, when they were still in pain, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword, came against the city while it felt secure, and killed every male.

26 They put Hamor and his son Shechem to the sword, took Dinah from Shechem's house and left.

27 Jacob's sons came upon the slain and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled.

28 They took their flocks, their herds, their donkeys, and whatever was in the city and in the field.

29 All their wealth, all their little ones and their wives they captured and plundered, along with everything in the houses.

30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me stink among the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. I am few in number; if they gather against me and attack me, I shall be destroyed, I and my household."[2]

31 But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?"

1 Hebrew 'and humbled her', a term used of rape (Deuteronomy 22:29; 2 Samuel 13:14).

2 Jacob remembers this on his deathbed (49:5–7).

Chapter 35

Genesis 35 tells of Jacob's return to Bethel and the deaths of Rachel and Isaac. God tells Jacob to go up to Bethel and build an altar there, and Jacob has his household put away their foreign gods and purify themselves; he buries the gods under the oak near Shechem, and a terror from God falls on the surrounding cities. At Bethel God appears to him again, confirms the name Israel, and as God Almighty renews the promise of nations, kings and the land. On the way to Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem, Rachel dies in hard labour giving birth to a son; she names him Ben-oni, but Jacob calls him Benjamin, and he sets up a pillar on her grave. Reuben lies with his father's concubine Bilhah. The twelve sons of Jacob are listed, and Isaac dies at 180 and is buried by Esau and Jacob.

1 God said to Jacob, "Get up, go up to Bethel and live there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."

2 So Jacob told his household and everyone with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you. Make yourselves clean and put on fresh clothes.

3 Then let us get up and go up to Bethel, so that I
can make an altar there to the God who answered
me in the day of my distress and has been with me
wherever I have gone."
4 So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had,
and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them
under the oak near Shechem.
5 As they set out, a terror from God fell on the
cities all around them, so that no one pursued the
sons of Jacob.
6 So Jacob and all the people with him arrived at
Luz (that is, Bethel) in Canaan.
7 There he built an altar and called the place El-
bethel,[1] because it was there that God had
revealed Himself to him when he fled from his
brother.
8 Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was
buried below Bethel under the oak; so it was
named Allon-bacuth.[2]
9 After Jacob had come back from Paddan-aram,
God appeared to him once more and blessed him.
10 God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer
shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall
be your name." So He called his name Israel.
11 God also told him, "I am God Almighty. Be
fruitful and increase in number. A nation, indeed a
company of nations, will spring from you, and
kings will be among your descendants.
12 The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I now
give to you, and I will give the land to your
offspring after you."
13 Then God went up from him at the place where
He had spoken with him.
14 In the place where God had spoken with him
Jacob set up a stone pillar; he poured out a drink
offering on it, and poured oil over it.
15 Jacob called the place where God had spoken
with him Bethel.
16 Then they set out from Bethel. While there was
still some distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel went
into labour, and her labour was hard.
17 When her labour was at its hardest, the midwife
said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have
another son."
18 As her soul was departing, for she was dying,
she called his name Ben-oni;[3] but his father called
him Benjamin.
19 So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way
to Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem.
20 Over her grave Jacob raised a pillar, and it
marks Rachel's tomb to this day.
21 Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond
the tower of Eder.[4]
22 While Israel was staying in that region, Reuben
went and slept with his father's concubine Bilhah,
and Israel came to hear of it. Jacob had twelve
sons.
23 The sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn,
Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun.
24 The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.
25 The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant: Dan and
Naphtali.
26 The sons of Leah's servant Zilpah were Gad and
Asher. These were Jacob's sons, born to him in
Paddan-aram.
27 Jacob came home to his father Isaac at Mamre,
at Kiriath-arba, that is, Hebron, where Abraham
and Isaac had lived as foreigners.
28 Isaac lived a hundred and eighty years.
29 Then Isaac breathed his last and died, and was
gathered to his people, old and full of days. His
sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

1 'The God of Bethel'.
2 'Oak of weeping'.
3 Ben-oni means 'son of my sorrow'; Benjamin means 'son of the right hand', the hand of honour and strength.
4 Migdal-eder, 'tower of the flock' (see Micah 4:8).

Chapter 36

Genesis 36 records the descendants of Esau, that is, Edom. It lists Esau's Canaanite and Ishmaelite wives and their sons, born in Canaan, and tells how Esau moved away from Jacob to the hill country of Seir, because the land could not support both their flocks. It names the chiefs descended from Esau's sons, the sons and chiefs of Seir the Horite, the earlier inhabitants of the land, and the kings who reigned in Edom before any king reigned over Israel, ending with the chiefs of Edom by their clans and places.

1 These are the generations of Esau, that is, Edom.

2 Esau took his wives from the women of Canaan:
Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah
the daughter of Anah and granddaughter[1] of
Zibeon the Hivite,

3 and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of
Nebaioth.[2]

4 Adah bore Esau Eliphaz; Basemath bore Reuel;

5 and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam and Korah.
These are the sons of Esau who were born to him
in the land of Canaan.

6 Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters
and all the members of his household, his
livestock, all his animals and all the property he
had gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a
land away from his brother Jacob.

7 For their possessions were too great for them to
live together; the land where they were staying
could not support them because of their livestock.

8 So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir; Esau is
Edom.

9 These are the generations of Esau, the father of
the Edomites, in the hill country of Seir.

10 These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the
son of Adah, Esau's wife, and Reuel the son of
Basemath, Esau's wife.

11 The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho,
Gatam and Kenaz.

12 (Timna was a concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son,
and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz.) These are the
sons of Adah, Esau's wife.

13 These are the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah,
Shammah and Mizzah. These are the sons of
Basemath, Esau's wife.

14 These are the sons of Oholibamah the daughter
of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon, Esau's
wife: she bore to Esau Jeush, Jalam and Korah.

15 These are the chiefs[3] among the sons of Esau.
The sons of Eliphaz, Esau's firstborn: the chiefs
Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz,

16 Korah, Gatam and Amalek. These are the chiefs
descended from Eliphaz in the land of Edom; they
are the sons of Adah.

17 These are the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: the
chiefs Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.
These are the chiefs descended from Reuel in the
land of Edom; they are the sons of Basemath,
Esau's wife.

18 These are the sons of Oholibamah, Esau's wife:
the chiefs Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These are the
chiefs descended from Oholibamah the daughter
of Anah, Esau's wife.

19 These are the sons of Esau, that is, Edom, and
these are their chiefs.

20 These are the sons of Seir the Horite, the
inhabitants of the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon,
Anah,

21 Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These are the chiefs of
the Horites, the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom.

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

23 These are the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath,
Ebal, Shepho and Onam.

24 These are the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah.
This is the Anah who found the hot springs[4] in
the wilderness while he was pasturing the donkeys
of his father Zibeon.

25 These are the children of Anah: Dishon and
Oholibamah the daughter of Anah.

26 These are the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban,
Ithran and Cheran.

27 These are the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan and
Akan.

28 These are the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

29 These are the chiefs of the Horites: the chiefs
Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,

30 Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These are the chiefs of
the Horites, chief by chief, in the land of Seir.

31 These are the kings who reigned in the land of
Edom before any king reigned over the Israelites.

32 Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom; the name
of his city was Dinhabah.

33 Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah
reigned in his place.

34 Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the
Temanites reigned in his place.

35 Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who
defeated Midian in the country of Moab, reigned
in his place; the name of his city was Avith.

36 Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in
his place.

37 Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth on the
River reigned in his place.

38 Shaul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor
reigned in his place.

39 Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his place; the name of his city was Pau. His wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

40 These are the names of the chiefs of Esau, by their clans and their places, name by name: the chiefs Timna, Alvah, Jetheth,

41 Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon,

42 Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar,

43 Magdiel and Iram. These are the chiefs of Edom, by their settlements in the land they possessed. This is Esau, the father of the Edomites.

1 Hebrew 'daughter'; so the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Greek, which read 'son', see verse 24.

2 The names of Esau's wives differ from those in 26:34 and 28:9; some may have had more than one name.

3 Hebrew: אַלּוּף (alluph), 'chief', perhaps the leader of a clan of a thousand (אֶלֶף, eleph).

4 The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain.

Chapter 37

Genesis 37 begins the story of Joseph. Joseph, seventeen and his father's favourite, brings a bad report of his brothers, and Israel makes him a long, ornate robe, so that his brothers hate him. Joseph dreams that his brothers' sheaves bow down to his sheaf, and that the sun, moon and eleven stars bow down to him; his brothers hate him all the more, and his father rebukes him but keeps the matter in mind. Sent to check on his brothers, Joseph finds them at Dothan, where they plot to kill him. Reuben persuades them to throw him into an empty pit instead, meaning to rescue him; but at Judah's suggestion they sell him for twenty pieces of silver to traders bound for Egypt. They dip his robe in goat's blood and bring it to Jacob, who mourns his son as torn to pieces and refuses to be comforted. In Egypt Joseph is sold to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard.

1 Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as a foreigner, the land of Canaan.

2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was shepherding the flock with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his other sons, because he was the son of his old age, and he made him a long, ornate robe.[1]

4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more.

6 He said to them, "Please listen to this dream I have had.

7 We were binding sheaves out in the field, and suddenly my sheaf rose up and stood upright, and your sheaves gathered round and bowed down to my sheaf."

8 His brothers said to him, "Are you really going to be king over us? Are you really going to rule us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

9 Then he had yet another dream and told it to his brothers. "I have had another dream," he said. "This time the sun, the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

10 When he told it to his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream you have had? Are we really to come, I and your mother and your brothers, and bow to the ground before you?"

11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

12 His brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem.

13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Your brothers are pasturing the flock at Shechem, are they not? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am."

14 So he said to him, "Go now and see whether all is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring word back to me." So he sent him off from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

15 A man found him wandering in the countryside and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

16 "I am looking for my brothers," he said. "Please tell me where they are pasturing the flock."

17 The man said, “They have moved on from here; I
heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph
went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.
18 They saw him in the distance, and before he
reached them they plotted to kill him.
19 They said to one another, “Here comes this
master of dreams!
20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one
of the pits. We will say a wild animal devoured
him. Then we shall see what becomes of his
dreams!”
21 But when Reuben heard this, he rescued him
from their hands. “Let us not take his life,” he
said.
22 “Shed no blood,” Reuben told them. “Throw him
into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay
a hand on him.” He meant to rescue him from
them and bring him back to his father.
23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they
stripped him of his robe, the ornate robe he was
wearing,
24 Then they seized him and threw him down into
the pit, which was empty, with no water in it.
25 Then they sat down to eat. Looking up, they saw
a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, their
camels loaded with gum, balm and myrrh,[2] on
their way down to Egypt.
26 Judah said to his brothers, “What do we gain by
killing our brother and covering up his blood?
27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not
lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our
own flesh.” And his brothers agreed.
28 When the Midianite traders came by, they pulled
Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold
him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver.[3]
And they took Joseph to Egypt.
29 When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that
Joseph was not in it, he tore his clothes.
30 He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy
is gone! And I, where can I go?”
31 Then they took Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a
young goat and dipped the robe in the blood.
32 They sent the ornate robe and had it brought to
their father with the message, “We found this.
Please look and see whether it is your son’s robe
or not.”
33 He recognised it and said, “It is my son’s robe! A
wild animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely
been torn to pieces.”
34 Jacob tore his clothes, wrapped sackcloth round
his waist and grieved for his son for a long time.
35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him,
but he would not be comforted. “I will go down to
my son in Sheol,[4] still mourning,” he said. And his
father wept for him.
36 Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt
to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain
of the guard.

1 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain; perhaps ‘a robe reaching to the hands and feet’. The Greek translation gave rise to the traditional ‘coat of many colours’. The same garment is worn by a king’s daughter in 2 Samuel 13:18.

2 Aromatic resins used for incense, medicine and perfume.

3 About 230 grams of silver. Midianites and Ishmaelites appear to be names for the same traders (see verse 36 and 39:1; Judges 8:24).

4 Hebrew: שְׁאוֹל (Sheol), the place of the dead, the first time it is named in the Bible.

Chapter 38

Genesis 38 tells of Judah and Tamar. Judah leaves his brothers, marries the daughter of a Canaanite named Shua and has three sons, Er, Onan and Shelah. Er marries Tamar but is wicked, and the LORD puts him to death; Onan refuses to raise offspring for his brother and also dies. Judah sends Tamar back to her father’s house to wait for Shelah, but never gives her to him. After Judah’s wife dies, Tamar disguises herself with a veil and sits by the road to Timnah; Judah takes her for a prostitute and leaves his seal, cord and staff as a pledge. When Tamar is found to be pregnant, Judah orders her to be burned, but she produces the pledge, and he admits, “She is more righteous than I.” She gives birth to twins, Perez and Zerah.

1 At that time Judah went down from his brothers
and turned aside to a man of Adullam named
Hirah.
2 There Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite
man named Shua. He married her and went in to
her,

3 She became pregnant and gave birth to a son,
whom Judah named Er.
4 Again she became pregnant and gave birth to a
son, and she named him Onan.
5 Yet again she bore a son, and she called his name
Shelah. Judah was at Chezib when she bore him.
6 For Er, his firstborn, Judah found a wife named
Tamar.
7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of
the LORD, and the LORD put him to death.
8 Then Judah told Onan, "Sleep with your brother's
widow and do your duty as her brother-in-law;[1]
raise up offspring for your brother."
9 But Onan knew that the offspring would not be
his, so whenever he went in to his brother's wife
he spilled his seed on the ground, so as not to give
offspring to his brother.
10 What he did was evil in the sight of the LORD,
and He put him to death too.
11 Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar,
"Remain a widow in your father's house until my
son Shelah grows up." For he thought, "He might
die too, like his brothers." So Tamar went and
lived in her father's house.
12 After a long time Judah's wife, the daughter of
Shua, died. When Judah had been comforted, he
went up to Timnah to his sheep-shearers, he and
his friend Hirah the Adullamite.
13 Word reached Tamar: "Your father-in-law is on
his way up to Timnah for the sheep-shearing."
14 So she took off her widow's garments, covered
herself with a veil and wrapped herself up, and sat
at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to
Timnah. For she saw that Shelah had grown up,
and she had not been given to him as his wife.
15 Judah saw her and took her for a prostitute,
since her face was veiled.
16 He turned aside to her by the road and said,
"Come, let me come in to you," for he did not
know she was his daughter-in-law. She said,
"What will you give me for coming in to me?"
17 "I will send you a kid from my flock," he said.
"Will you give me something as a pledge until you
send it?" she asked.
18 He said, "What pledge shall I give you?" She
said, "Your seal and its cord, and the staff in your
hand."[2] So he gave them to her and went in to her,
and she conceived by him.
19 Then she got up and went away, took off her veil
and put on her widow's garments again.
20 Judah sent the young goat by his friend the
Adullamite to recover the pledge from the woman,
but he could not find her.
21 He asked the local men, "Where is the shrine
prostitute[3] who sat by the road at Enaim?" "There
has never been a shrine prostitute here," they
said.
22 So he returned to Judah and said, "I did not find
her, and the men of the place said, 'There has
been no shrine prostitute here.'"
23 Judah said, "Let her keep the things, or we shall
become a laughing stock. After all, I sent this
young goat, and you could not find her."
24 About three months later Judah was told, "Your
daughter-in-law Tamar has played the prostitute,
and what is more, she is pregnant by
prostitution." Judah said, "Bring her out, and let
her be burned."
25 As she was being brought out, she sent word to
her father-in-law: "I am pregnant by the man to
whom these belong." And she said, "Please
examine them: whose are these, the seal, the cord
and the staff?"
26 Judah recognised them and said, "She is more
righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son
Shelah." And he did not know her again.
27 When the time came for her to give birth, there
were twins in her womb.
28 As she was giving birth, one put out a hand, and
the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his
hand, saying, "This one came out first."
29 But as he drew back his hand, out came his
brother, and she said, "What a breach you have
made for yourself!" So he was named Perez.[4]
30 Afterwards his brother came out with the scarlet
thread on his hand, and he was named Zerah.[5]

1 If a man died childless, his brother was to marry the widow, and the first son would carry on the dead man's name (Deuteronomy 25:5–10).

2 A cylinder seal worn on a cord round the neck, used to sign documents; with the staff, it was a mark of a man's identity.

3 Hebrew: קְדֵשָׁה (qedeshah), a woman attached to a pagan shrine; Judah's friend uses a more respectable word than the one in verse 15.

4 Perez means 'breach' or 'breaking out'. Perez is an ancestor of David (Ruth 4:18–22) and of Jesus (Matthew 1:3).

5 Zerah may mean 'brightness' or 'dawning', perhaps recalling the scarlet thread.

Chapter 39

Genesis 39 tells of Joseph in Potiphar's house and in prison. The LORD is with Joseph and makes everything he does succeed, so that Potiphar puts him in charge of his whole household, and the LORD blesses the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. Potiphar's wife repeatedly urges Joseph to lie with her, but he refuses, saying he cannot do such a great wrong and sin against God. One day she seizes him by his garment; he leaves it in her hand and flees, and she accuses him of trying to assault her. Potiphar, in anger, puts Joseph in the prison where the king's prisoners are kept. But there too the LORD is with Joseph and shows him loyal kindness, and the keeper of the prison puts him in charge of everything.

1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt, and
Potiphar, an Egyptian, one of Pharaoh's officials
and the captain of the guard, bought him from the
Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.

2 The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a
successful man; he lived in the house of his
Egyptian master.

3 His master saw that the LORD was with him, and
that the LORD made everything he did succeed in
his hands.

4 So Joseph found favour in his eyes and became
his personal attendant. Potiphar put him in charge
of his household and entrusted to him everything
he owned.

5 From the time he put him in charge of his
household and of all he owned, the LORD blessed
the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. The
LORD's blessing was on everything he had, in the
house and in the field.

6 So he left everything he had in Joseph's care, and
with Joseph there he concerned himself with
nothing except the food he ate. Now Joseph was
well built and handsome.

7 After a time his master's wife cast her eyes on
Joseph and said, "Lie with me."

8 But he refused, and said to his master's wife,
"Look, with me here my master gives no thought
to anything in the house; he has entrusted to me
everything he owns.

9 No one is greater in this house than I am, and he
has withheld nothing from me except you, because
you are his wife. How then could I do this great
evil, and sin against God?"

10 Though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he
would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be
with her.

11 But one day, when he went into the house to do
his work, and none of the household servants was
there in the house,

12 she grabbed hold of his cloak and said, "Lie with
me!" But he left the cloak in her hand and ran out
of the house.

13 When she saw that he had run out and left his
cloak in her hands,

14 she called out to the men of her household and
said to them, "See, he has brought among us a
Hebrew to make sport of us! He came in to me to
lie with me, and I screamed.

15 When he heard me raise my voice and scream,
he left his cloak beside me and fled and ran
outside."

16 She kept his cloak beside her until his master
came home,

17 and she told him the same story: "The Hebrew
slave you brought among us came in to me to
make sport of me.

18 But as soon as I raised my voice and screamed,
he left his cloak beside me and fled outside."

19 When his master heard the words his wife spoke
to him, "This is how your slave treated me", his
anger burned.

20 Joseph's master took him and put him in the
prison,[1] the place where the king's prisoners were
confined, and he remained there in the prison.

21 But the LORD was with Joseph. He showed him
loyal kindness and made the prison keeper look on
him with favour.
22 The keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of
all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever
was done there, he was the one who did it.
23 The keeper of the prison paid no attention to
anything in Joseph's care, because the LORD was
with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it
succeed.

1 Hebrew 'the round house', perhaps a fortress used as a prison.

Chapter 40

Genesis 40 tells how Joseph interpreted the dreams of two prisoners. Pharaoh's chief cupbearer and chief baker offend him and are put in the prison where Joseph is held, and Joseph is assigned to serve them. One night each has a dream, and in the morning they are downcast because there is no one to interpret them. Joseph says that interpretations belong to God and asks them to tell him. The cupbearer's dream of a vine with three branches means that in three days Pharaoh will restore him to his post, and Joseph asks him to remember him to Pharaoh. The baker's dream of three baskets on his head, with birds eating from the top one, means that in three days Pharaoh will hang him. On Pharaoh's birthday both things happen as Joseph said; but the chief cupbearer does not remember Joseph, and forgets him.

1 Some time after this, the cupbearer and the
baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord the
king of Egypt.
2 Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the
chief cupbearer[1] and the chief baker,
3 and he put them in custody in the house of the
captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph
was confined.
4 The captain of the guard assigned Joseph to
them, and he attended them. They were in custody
for some time.
5 One night they both had a dream, the cupbearer
and the baker of the king of Egypt who were
confined in the prison, each his own dream, and
each dream with its own meaning.
6 When Joseph came to them in the morning, he
saw that they were troubled.
7 So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were with
him in custody in his master's house, "Why are
you looking so downcast today?"
8 They said to him, "We have each had a dream,
and there is no one to interpret it." Joseph said to
them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell
them to me, please."
9 So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph.
He said to him, "In my dream, there was a vine in
front of me,
10 and on the vine were three branches. As soon as
it budded, its blossoms came out, and its clusters
ripened into grapes.
11 I had Pharaoh's cup in my hand, and I took the
grapes and squeezed them into it, and handed the
cup to Pharaoh."
12 "Here is what it means," Joseph told him. "The
three branches stand for three days.
13 Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head[2]
and restore you to your post, and you will put
Pharaoh's cup in his hand as you used to do when
you were his cupbearer.
14 Only remember me when it goes well with you,
and please show me kindness by mentioning me to
Pharaoh, and get me out of this house.
15 For I was stolen away from the land of the
Hebrews, and here too I have done nothing for
which they should have put me in the pit."
16 When the chief baker saw that the
interpretation was favourable, he said to Joseph,
"I too had a dream: there were three baskets of
white bread[3] on my head.
17 In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods
for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of
the basket on my head."
18 "Here is what it means," Joseph replied. "The
three baskets stand for three days.
19 Within three days Pharaoh will lift your head off
you and hang your body on a tree,[4] and the birds
will peck the flesh from your bones."
20 Three days later came Pharaoh's birthday, and
he gave a banquet for all his officials. In their
presence he lifted up the heads of the chief
cupbearer and the chief baker.

21 He restored the chief cupbearer to his position,
and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand;
22 but the chief baker he hanged, just as Joseph
had interpreted to them.
23 Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember
Joseph; he forgot him.

1 The cupbearer tasted and served the king's wine; it was a position of trust and influence (see Nehemiah 1:11).

2 A play on words: 'lift up your head' means 'restore you to honour' here, but in verse 19 'lift up your head from you' means 'behead you'.

3 Or 'three wicker baskets'.

4 Or 'impale you on a pole'; the body was displayed after execution.

Chapter 41

Genesis 41 tells of Pharaoh's dreams and Joseph's rise to power. Two years later Pharaoh dreams of seven fat cows eaten by seven thin cows, and of seven full ears of grain swallowed by seven thin ears, and none of his magicians or wise men can interpret them. The chief cupbearer remembers Joseph, who is brought from the prison. Joseph says that God, not he, will give Pharaoh an answer: the two dreams are one, foretelling seven years of plenty followed by seven years of severe famine, and God will soon bring it about. He advises Pharaoh to appoint a wise man to store a fifth of the harvest in the good years. Pharaoh recognises the Spirit of God in Joseph and sets him over all Egypt, giving him his signet ring, fine linen, a gold chain, an Egyptian name and a wife, Asenath. Joseph, thirty years old, gathers grain like the sand of the sea and has two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. When the famine comes, Egypt and all the earth come to Joseph to buy grain.

1 After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he
was standing by the Nile,
2 and out of the Nile came up seven cows, sleek
and fat, and they grazed among the reeds.
3 After them seven other cows came up out of the
Nile, ugly and thin, and stood beside the other
cows on the bank of the Nile.
4 And the ugly, thin cows ate up the seven sleek,
fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.
5 He fell asleep and dreamed a second time: seven
ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on a
single stalk.
6 After them sprouted seven ears, thin and
scorched by the east wind.[1]
7 The thin ears swallowed up the seven plump, full
ears. Then Pharaoh woke up, and it was a dream.
8 In the morning his spirit was troubled, and he
sent for all the magicians[2] of Egypt and all its wise
men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one
could interpret them for Pharaoh.
9 Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh:
"Today I call to mind my offences.
10 When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, he
put me and the chief baker in custody in the house
of the captain of the guard.
11 One night we had dreams, he and I, each dream
with its own meaning.
12 A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of
the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams,
and he interpreted them for us, giving each of us
the interpretation of his dream.
13 And as he interpreted to us, so it turned out: I
was restored to my office, and the baker was
hanged."
14 Then Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and they quickly
brought him out of the pit. When he had shaved
and changed his clothes, he came in to Pharaoh.
15 Pharaoh told Joseph, "I have had a dream that
no one can explain. But I am told that you need
only hear a dream to explain it."
16 Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me. God
will give Pharaoh a favourable answer."[3]
17 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream I
was standing on the bank of the Nile.
18 Seven cows, fat and sleek, came up out of the
Nile and grazed among the reeds.
19 After them came up seven other cows, poor, very
ugly and lean. I have never seen such ugly cows in
all the land of Egypt.
20 And the lean, ugly cows ate up the first seven fat
cows,
21 but when they had eaten them, no one could tell
that they had eaten them, for they were still as
ugly as before. Then I woke up.

22 I also saw in my dream seven ears of grain, full
and good, growing on a single stalk.
23 After them sprouted seven ears, withered, thin
and scorched by the east wind,
24 and the thin ears swallowed the seven good
ones. I described this to the magicians, but none
of them could tell me what it meant."
25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Pharaoh's dreams
are one and the same. God has shown Pharaoh
what He is about to do.
26 The seven good cows stand for seven years, and
so do the seven good ears; it is all one dream.
27 The seven lean, ugly cows that came up after
them are seven years, and so are the seven empty
ears scorched by the east wind. They are seven
years of famine.
28 It is as I told Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh
what He is about to do.
29 Seven years of great plenty are coming
throughout all the land of Egypt,
30 After them will come seven years of famine. All
the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the
famine will ravage the land.
31 and the plenty will not be remembered in the
land because of the famine that follows, for it will
be very severe.
32 The dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice
because the matter is fixed by God, and God will
soon bring it about.
33 So let Pharaoh now find a man of insight and
wisdom and put him in charge of the land of
Egypt.
34 Let Pharaoh act and appoint overseers over the
land, and take a fifth of the produce of the land of
Egypt in the seven years of plenty.
35 Let them gather all the food of these good years
that are coming, and store up grain under
Pharaoh's authority, to be kept as food in the
cities.
36 That food will be a reserve for the land against
the seven years of famine that will come on the
land of Egypt, so that the land may not be wiped
out by the famine."
37 The proposal seemed good to Pharaoh and to all
his servants.
38 And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a
man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?"[4]
39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has
made all this known to you, there is no one as
discerning and wise as you.
40 You shall be over my house, and all my people
shall be ruled by your word.[5] Only by the throne
will I be greater than you."
41 Pharaoh went on, "I hereby put you in charge of
the whole land of Egypt."
42 And Pharaoh took off his signet ring and placed
it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of
fine linen and hung a gold chain round his neck.
43 He had him ride in his second chariot, and they
called out before him, "Abrek!"[6] So he set him
over all the land of Egypt.
44 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, but
without your consent no one shall lift up hand or
foot in all the land of Egypt."
45 Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-
paneah,[7] and gave him as his wife Asenath,
daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. And Joseph
went out to take charge of Egypt.
46 Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the
service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Joseph went out
from Pharaoh's presence and travelled through all
the land of Egypt.
47 In the seven years of plenty the land produced
abundantly,
48 and he gathered up all the food of the seven
years that came to the land of Egypt and stored
the food in the cities. In every city he stored the
food from the fields around it.
49 Joseph heaped up grain in great abundance, like
the sand of the sea, until he stopped measuring it,
because it was beyond measure.
50 Before the years of famine came, two sons were
born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of
Potiphera priest of On, bore to him.
51 Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh, saying,
"God has made me forget all my troubles and all
my father's household."[8]
52 He named the second Ephraim, saying, "God has
made me fruitful in the land where I suffered."[9]
53 Then the seven years of abundance in Egypt
came to an end,
54 and, just as Joseph had foretold, the seven years
of famine set in. Every other land suffered famine,
but throughout Egypt there was bread.
55 When the whole of Egypt began to feel the
famine, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread,

and Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph and do what he tells you.”

56 So when the famine had spread over the whole face of the earth, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt.

57 And all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

1 The hot wind from the desert, which withers crops.

2 Hebrew: חַרְטֻמִּים (chartummim), a word borrowed from Egyptian for priests skilled in sacred writings and the interpretation of dreams.

3 Hebrew ‘will answer the peace (shalom) of Pharaoh’.

4 Or ‘the spirit of the gods’, as Pharaoh might have understood it.

5 Hebrew ‘at your mouth all my people shall kiss’, perhaps meaning ‘submit to your orders’.

6 Probably an Egyptian word meaning ‘Attention!’ or ‘Make way!’; it sounds like the Hebrew for ‘kneel’.

7 An Egyptian name, perhaps meaning ‘God speaks and he lives’. On, later called Heliopolis, was the centre of sun worship.

8 Manasseh sounds like the Hebrew for ‘made me forget’.

9 Ephraim sounds like the Hebrew for ‘made fruitful’.

Chapter 42

Genesis 42 tells of the brothers’ first journey to Egypt. When the famine reaches Canaan, Jacob sends ten of his sons to buy grain, keeping Benjamin at home. They come before Joseph, the governor of the land, and bow down to him with their faces to the ground; he recognises them, though they do not recognise him, and remembering his dreams he treats them harshly and accuses them of being spies. They protest that they are twelve brothers, sons of one man, of whom the youngest is with their father and one is no more. Joseph keeps Simeon in custody and demands that they bring their youngest brother to prove their words. The brothers say to one another that they are being punished for their guilt over Joseph, and Joseph, who understands them, turns away and weeps. On the way home they find their money returned in their sacks and are afraid. Jacob refuses to let Benjamin go, saying that if harm came to him it would bring his grey hairs down to Sheol in sorrow.

1 When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why do you keep looking at one another?”

2 “I hear there is grain to be had in Egypt,” he said. “Go down and buy us some, so that we can stay alive and not starve.”

3 So ten of Joseph’s brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt.

4 But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph’s brother, with his brothers, for he was afraid that harm might come to him.

5 So Israel’s sons were among those who came to buy, because the famine had reached Canaan.

6 Now Joseph was governor over the land; he was the one who sold grain to all the people of the land. And Joseph’s brothers came and bowed down to him with their faces to the ground.

7 Joseph saw his brothers and recognised them, but he made himself a stranger to them and spoke harshly to them. “Where have you come from?” he asked. They said, “From the land of Canaan, to buy food.”

8 Joseph recognised his brothers, but they did not recognise him.[1]

9 Joseph called to mind the dreams he had had about them, and told them, “You are spies! You have come to spy out where the land is unprotected.”[2]

10 “Not so, my lord,” they said. “Your servants have come only to buy food.

11 We are all sons of one man. We are honest men; your servants are not spies.”

12 “No,” he insisted, “you have come to find where the land is unprotected.”

13 “Your servants were twelve brothers,” they answered, “sons of one man who lives in Canaan. The youngest is now at home with our father, and one is gone.”

14 But Joseph said to them, “It is just as I told you: you are spies.

15 This is how you will be tested: as Pharaoh lives, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here.

16 Send one of you to fetch your brother, while the rest of you are kept in prison, so that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. Otherwise, as Pharaoh lives, you are spies.”

17 And he put them all together in custody for three days.

18 On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and live, for I fear God.

19 If you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined in your prison, and let the rest go and carry grain for the hunger of your households.

20 Then bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and you will not die.” And they did so.

21 Then they said to one another, “Surely we are guilty because of our brother. We saw his anguish when he begged us, and we would not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us.”

22 Reuben answered them, “Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you would not listen. Now his blood is being required of us.”

23 They had no idea that Joseph could understand them, because he spoke to them through an interpreter.

24 He turned aside from them and wept. When he came back and could speak to them again, he took Simeon and had him bound while they watched.

25 Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man’s money back in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them.

26 They loaded their grain on their donkeys and left.

27 When they stopped for the night, one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder, and he saw his money in the mouth of his bag.

28 “My money has come back!” he told his brothers. “Look, it is here in my bag!” Their hearts failed them, and trembling they said to each other, “What has God done to us?”

29 When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them:

30 “The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly to us and took us for spies of the land.

31 But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we have never been spies.

32 We are twelve brothers, all sons of the same father. One is gone, and the youngest is at home with our father in Canaan.’

33 Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I shall know whether you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, take grain for the hunger of your households and go.

34 Bring your youngest brother to me. Then I shall know that you are not spies but honest men, and I will give your brother back to you, and you may trade in the land.’”

35 As they emptied their sacks, there in each man’s sack was his bundle of money. When they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were afraid.

36 Their father Jacob said to them, “You have robbed me of my children. Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin. Everything is against me!”

37 Then Reuben said to his father, “You may put my two sons to death if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my care, and I will bring him back to you.”

38 But Jacob said, “My son will not go down with you. His brother is dead, and he is the only one left. If any harm comes to him on your journey, you will send me down to Sheol, grey-haired and grieving.”

1 The Hebrew plays on the verb ‘recognise’ (nakar), which also means ‘act as a stranger’ (verse 7); compare 37:32–33 and 38:25–26.

2 Hebrew ‘the nakedness of the land’, its undefended points.

Chapter 43

Genesis 43 tells of the brothers' second journey to Egypt. When the grain runs out, Judah tells Jacob that they cannot go back without Benjamin, and offers himself as surety for the boy. Jacob reluctantly agrees, sending a gift of the best produce of the land and double the money, and praying that God Almighty will grant them mercy before the man. In Egypt Joseph has them brought to his house; afraid because of the money, they explain to his steward, who reassures them and brings Simeon out to them. When Joseph comes, they bow before him, and he asks after their father. Seeing Benjamin, his mother's son, Joseph is overcome and goes out to weep in private. At the meal the brothers are seated in order of age, to their astonishment, and Benjamin's portion is five times as large as theirs; they feast and drink freely with him.

1 Still the famine lay heavy on the land.

2 So when they had used up all the grain brought back from Egypt, their father told them, "Go back and buy us a little more food."

3 But Judah answered him, "The man warned us in the strongest terms, 'Unless your brother is with you, you will not see my face.'

4 If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food.

5 But if you will not let him go, we will not go down. The man told us, 'Unless your brother is with you, you will not see my face.'"

6 "Why did you bring this trouble on me," Israel said, "by telling the man you had another brother?"

7 They replied, "The man questioned us closely about ourselves and our family: 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' We answered his questions. How could we possibly know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

8 Judah urged his father Israel, "Let the boy come with me, and we will set off at once, so that we may live and not die, we and you and our children.

9 I myself will be surety for him; you may hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, let me bear the blame before you all my life.

10 If we had not delayed, we could have been there and back twice by now."

11 Then their father Israel said, "If that is how it has to be, do this. Put some of the best produce of the land in your bags and take it down as a present for the man: some balm and some honey, gum and myrrh, pistachios and almonds.

12 Take double the money with you, and take back with you the money that was returned in the mouths of your bags; perhaps it was an oversight.

13 Take your brother too, and get up and go back to the man.

14 May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, so that he may release your other brother and Benjamin to you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved."

15 So the men took the gift, and they took double the money with them, and Benjamin. They got up and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

16 When Joseph saw that Benjamin was with them, he told his steward, "Take these men to my house. Kill an animal and get it ready; they are to have their midday meal with me."

17 The steward did as Joseph told him and took the men to Joseph's house.

18 The men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house, and they said, "It is because of the money that was put back in our bags the first time that we have been brought in, so that he can find a pretext against us, fall upon us, and take us as slaves, with our donkeys."

19 So they went up to Joseph's steward and spoke with him at the door of the house.

20 "Please, my lord," they said, "we came down the first time to buy food.

21 When we came to the lodging place and opened our bags, there was each man's money in the mouth of his bag, our money in full weight. So we have brought it back with us,

22 and we have brought other money down with us to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our bags."

23 He said, "Peace be with you; do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your bags for you. I received your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

24 The steward took them into Joseph's house and gave them water to wash their feet, and fodder for their donkeys.

25 They got the gift ready for Joseph's arrival at noon, for they had heard that they were to eat a

meal there.

26 When Joseph came home, they brought into the house the gift they had with them, and bowed down to the ground before him.

27 He asked how they were, and said, “How is your aged father, whom you told me about? Is he still living?”

28 They said, “Your servant our father is well; he is still alive.” And they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves.

29 Looking up, he saw Benjamin, his own mother’s son. “So this is your youngest brother, whom you told me about?” he said. “May God be gracious to you, my son.”

30 Then Joseph hurried out, for his heart yearned for his brother, and he was on the verge of tears. He went into his private room and wept there.

31 Then he washed his face and came out, and controlling himself he said, “Serve the food.”

32 He was served at a table by himself, they by themselves, and the Egyptians eating with him by themselves; for Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, which Egyptians regarded as detestable.

33 The brothers were seated in front of him in order of age, from the firstborn to the youngest, and they looked at each other in astonishment.

34 Portions were taken to them from Joseph’s table, but Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and feasted freely with him.[1]

1 Hebrew ‘they drank and became drunk with him’, that is, they drank their fill.

Chapter 44

Genesis 44 tells of Joseph’s final test of his brothers. Joseph has their sacks filled and their money returned, and his own silver cup hidden in Benjamin’s sack. When they have left the city, his steward overtakes them and accuses them of stealing it; confident of their innocence, they offer that the guilty one should die and the rest become slaves. The cup is found in Benjamin’s sack, and they tear their clothes and return to the city. Before Joseph, Judah confesses that God has found out their guilt. Joseph says that only the one with the cup will be his slave, and the rest may go in peace. Then Judah comes near and pleads with him, telling how their father’s life is bound up with the boy’s and how he himself stood surety for him, and offers to remain as a slave in Benjamin’s place, for he cannot bear to see the grief it would bring on his father.

1 Then Joseph commanded the steward of his house, “Fill the men’s bags with as much food as they can carry, and put each man’s money in the mouth of his bag.

2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the youngest one’s bag, with the money for his grain.” He did as Joseph told him.

3 At first light the men were sent on their way with their donkeys.

4 They had gone only a short distance from the city when Joseph said to his steward, “Up, go after the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid good with evil?

5 Is this not the cup from which my lord drinks, and which he uses for divination?[1] You have done wrong in doing this.’”

6 When he overtook them, he spoke these words to them.

7 They said to him, “Why does my lord speak like this? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing!

8 Look, the money we found in the mouths of our bags we brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house?

9 Whichever of your servants is found to have it shall die, and the rest of us will become my lord’s slaves.”

10 He said, “Very well, let it be as you say: the one with whom it is found shall be my slave, and the rest of you will go free.”

11 Quickly each man lowered his bag to the ground and opened it.

12 He searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin’s bag.

13 At this they tore their clothes. Then every man loaded up his donkey, and they went back to the city.

14 Joseph was still at home when Judah and his brothers arrived, and they threw themselves down on the ground in front of him.

15 Joseph said to them, “What is this deed you have done? Did you not know that a man like me can practise divination?”

16 Judah said, “What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? How can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants. Here we are, my lord’s slaves, both we and the one in whose hand the cup was found.”

17 But he said, “Far be it from me to do that! Only the man in whose hand the cup was found shall be my slave. As for you, go up in peace to your father.”

18 Then Judah went up to him and said, “Please, my lord, let your servant speak a word in my lord’s ears, and do not let your anger burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself.

19 My lord put a question to his servants: ‘Do you have a father, or a brother?’

20 And we said to my lord, ‘We have an old father, and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother’s children, and his father loves him.’

21 You told your servants, ‘Bring him down to me, so that I can see him for myself.’

22 We said to my lord, ‘The boy cannot leave his father; if he leaves his father, his father will die.’

23 Then you said to your servants, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall not see my face again.’

24 So when we went back up to your servant my father, we reported to him what my lord had said.

25 And when our father said, ‘Go again, buy us a little food’,

26 we answered, ‘We cannot go down unless our youngest brother goes with us. We will not be allowed to see the man’s face unless our youngest brother is there.’

27 Then your servant my father told us, ‘You know that my wife gave me two sons.

28 One left me, and I said, “Surely he has been torn to pieces”, and I have not seen him since.

29 If you take this one from me too, and harm comes to him, you will bring my grey hairs down to Sheol in misery.’

30 So now, if I go back to your servant my father without the boy, when his very life is bound up with the boy’s life,

31 when he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die, and your servants will bring the grey hairs of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow.

32 For your servant became surety for the boy to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, I will bear the blame before my father all my life.’

33 Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a slave to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers.

34 For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I could not bear to see the misery that would come upon my father.”

1 Divination by watching patterns in a liquid was practised in the ancient Near East. The steward is speaking as an Egyptian official would; Joseph is keeping up his disguise.

Chapter 45

Genesis 45 tells how Joseph made himself known to his brothers. Unable to hold back any longer, Joseph sends everyone else out and weeps so loudly that the Egyptians hear. “I am Joseph,” he says; “is my father still alive?” His brothers are too dismayed to answer. He tells them not to be distressed for having sold him, for God sent him ahead of them to preserve life and to keep a remnant for them on the earth; it was not they who sent him, but God, who has made him lord of all Egypt. He tells them to bring their father down quickly to live near him in the land of Goshen through the five remaining years of famine. He weeps on Benjamin’s neck and kisses all his brothers. Pharaoh welcomes the news and sends wagons and provisions for the family. When Jacob hears that Joseph is alive, his heart grows numb, but when he sees the wagons, his spirit revives, and he says, “Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

1 Then Joseph could no longer control himself in front of all who stood by him, and he cried out, “Have everyone go out from me!” So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

2 And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it.

3 Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my
father still alive?” But his brothers could not
answer him, for they were dismayed at his
presence.

4 “Come closer to me,” Joseph said to his brothers,
and they came closer. “I am Joseph, your brother,”
he said, “the one you sold into Egypt.

5 And now, do not be distressed or angry with
yourselves for selling me here, for God sent me
ahead of you to preserve life.

6 For the famine has been in the land these two
years, and there are still five years in which there
will be neither ploughing nor harvest.

7 God sent me on ahead of you to make sure you
would have survivors on the earth, and to save
your lives by a great deliverance.

8 So it was not you who sent me here; it was God.
He has made me a father to Pharaoh,[1] master of
his whole household and ruler of all Egypt.

9 Hurry and go up to my father and say to him,
‘Your son Joseph says this: God has made me lord
of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not delay.

10 You will live in the region of Goshen[2] close to
me, you, your children and grandchildren, your
sheep and cattle, and everything you own.

11 There I will provide for you, for there are still
five years of famine to come, so that you and your
household and all that you have do not fall into
poverty.’

12 You can see with your own eyes, and my brother
Benjamin can see, that it is my own mouth that
speaks to you.

13 Tell my father about all my glory in Egypt, and
about all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my
father down here.”

14 Then he threw his arms round his brother
Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on
his neck.

15 He kissed each of his brothers and wept as he
held them, and after that his brothers were able to
talk with him.

16 News reached Pharaoh’s palace that Joseph’s
brothers had arrived, and Pharaoh and his officials
were pleased.

17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your
brothers, ‘Do this: load your animals and go back
to the land of Canaan,

18 Fetch your father and your families and come to
me. I will give you the best land in Egypt, and you
will live off the richness of the land.’

19 You are also commanded to say, ‘Do this: take
wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones
and your wives, and bring your father, and come.

20 Do not be concerned about your belongings, for
the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.’”

21 The sons of Israel did so. Joseph gave them
wagons, as Pharaoh had commanded, and gave
them provisions for the journey.

22 To each of them he gave a change of clothes, but
to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of
silver and five changes of clothes.

23 To his father he sent ten donkeys laden with the
finest things of Egypt, and ten she-donkeys laden
with grain, bread and supplies for his father’s
journey.

24 Then he sent his brothers away, and as they left
he said to them, “Do not quarrel[3] on the way.”

25 So they went up out of Egypt and came to their
father Jacob in the land of Canaan.

26 “Joseph is alive!” they told him. “He is actually
governor of the whole of Egypt!” Jacob’s heart
went cold; he could not believe them.

27 But when they told him all the words Joseph had
spoken to them, and when he saw the wagons
Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their
father Jacob revived.

28 “It is enough,” said Israel. “Joseph my son is
alive! I will go and see him before I die.”

1 An Egyptian title for a chief adviser.

2 The fertile region of the eastern Nile delta.

3 Or ‘Do not be afraid’. The Hebrew verb means ‘be agitated’.

Chapter 46

Genesis 46 tells of Jacob's journey to Egypt. At Beersheba Jacob offers sacrifices, and God speaks to him in a vision of the night, telling him not to be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there He will make him a great nation; He will go down with him and will surely bring him up again, and Joseph's hand will close his eyes. Jacob and all his offspring set out in Pharaoh's wagons. The names of the descendants of Israel who came to Egypt are listed by their mothers, seventy persons in all. Judah goes ahead to Goshen, and Joseph rides out to meet his father, falls on his neck and weeps a long time; Israel says he can now die, having seen Joseph's face. Joseph prepares his brothers to tell Pharaoh that they are herdsmen, so that they may settle in Goshen, since shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians.

1 Israel set out with everything he had, and when
he reached Beersheba he offered sacrifices to the
God of his father Isaac.

2 In a vision at night God called to Israel, "Jacob,
Jacob!" "Here I am," he answered.

3 "I am God, the God of your father," He said. "Do
not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make
you a great nation there.

4 I Myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I
Myself will surely bring you up again, and
Joseph's hand will close your eyes."

5 Then Jacob set out from Beersheba. The sons of
Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones
and their wives in the wagons that Pharaoh had
sent to carry him.

6 They took their livestock and all the possessions
they had gained in Canaan, and Jacob and all his
descendants went to Egypt.

7 He took with him to Egypt his sons and
grandsons, his daughters and granddaughters, all
his descendants.

8 Here are the names of Israel's sons, Jacob and
his descendants, who went to Egypt: Reuben,
Jacob's firstborn;

9 and the sons of Reuben: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron
and Carmi.

10 The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad,
Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite
woman.

11 The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

12 The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and
Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of
Canaan); and the sons of Perez were Hezron and
Hamul.

13 The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puvah, Yob and
Shimron.

14 The sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon and Jahleel.

15 These are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to
Jacob in Paddan-aram, together with his daughter
Dinah; altogether his sons and daughters
numbered thirty-three.

16 The sons of Gad: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon,
Eri, Arodi and Areli.

17 The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah,
and their sister Serah. The sons of Beriah: Heber
and Malchiel.

18 These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave
to his daughter Leah; she bore these to Jacob,
sixteen persons.

19 The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife: Joseph and
Benjamin.

20 To Joseph in the land of Egypt were born
Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the
daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore to him.

21 The sons of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, Ashbel,
Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and
Ard.

22 These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to
Jacob, fourteen persons in all.

23 The son of Dan: Hushim.

24 The sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer and
Shillem.

25 These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave
to his daughter Rachel; she bore these to Jacob,
seven persons in all.

26 All the persons belonging to Jacob who came
into Egypt, his own descendants, not counting the
wives of Jacob's sons, were sixty-six persons in all.

27 With the two sons born to Joseph in Egypt, the
members of Jacob's family who went to Egypt
numbered seventy in all.[1]

28 Jacob sent Judah on ahead to Joseph to get
directions to Goshen, and they arrived in the
region of Goshen.

29 Then Joseph harnessed his chariot and went up
to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as he
appeared before him, he threw his arms round his
neck and wept on his neck a long time.

30 “Now I can die,” Israel told Joseph, “for I have seen you with my own eyes and know you are alive.”

31 Joseph said to his brothers and to his father’s household, “I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, ‘My brothers and my father’s household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me.

32 The men are herdsmen; they have always looked after livestock, and they have brought with them their sheep and cattle and everything they own.’

33 When Pharaoh calls you and asks, ‘What is your occupation?’,

34 you shall say, ‘Your servants have kept livestock from our youth until now, both we and our fathers’, so that you may live in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is detestable to the Egyptians.”

1 The total includes Jacob, Joseph and Joseph’s two sons. The Greek translation has ‘seventy-five’, the number Stephen gives in Acts 7:14.

Chapter 47

Genesis 47 tells how Jacob’s family settled in Egypt and how Joseph managed the famine. Joseph presents five of his brothers to Pharaoh, who grants them the land of Goshen and asks for capable men among them to look after his own livestock. Jacob is brought before Pharaoh and blesses him, describing his 130 years as few and hard. As the famine deepens, Joseph sells grain to the Egyptians, first for their money, then for their livestock, and finally for their land and themselves, so that all the land except the priests’ becomes Pharaoh’s, and a fifth of the harvest is to be paid to Pharaoh. Israel prospers in Goshen. When Jacob, now 147, nears death, he makes Joseph swear to bury him with his fathers in Canaan, and bows in worship at the head of his bed.

1 So Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, “My father and my brothers, with their flocks and herds and all they own, have come from the land of Canaan, and they are now in the land of Goshen.”

2 He chose five of his brothers and brought them before Pharaoh.

3 Pharaoh asked his brothers, “What is your occupation?” They said to Pharaoh, “Your servants are shepherds, as our fathers were.”

4 “We have come to stay in the land for a time,” they went on, “because the famine is so bad in Canaan that there is no grazing for your servants’ flocks. Please allow your servants to live in Goshen.”

5 Pharaoh then said to Joseph, “Now that your father and brothers have come to you,

6 the whole land of Egypt is at your disposal. Give your father and brothers the best of the land to live in; let them stay in Goshen. And if there are men of ability among them, make them overseers of my own herds.”

7 Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

8 Pharaoh asked Jacob, “How old are you?”[1]

9 Jacob replied to Pharaoh, “The years of my wanderings are a hundred and thirty. Few and hard have been the years of my life, and they have not reached the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their wanderings.”

10 Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence.

11 So Joseph gave his father and brothers a home and a holding in Egypt, in the finest part of the country, the district of Rameses, as Pharaoh had ordered.

12 And Joseph provided his father, his brothers and all his father’s household with food, according to the number of their dependants.

13 Now there was no food in all the land, for the famine was very severe, and the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan wasted away because of the famine.

14 Joseph collected all the money to be found in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan in exchange for the grain they bought, and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh’s house.

15 When the money of the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan was spent, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, “Give us food! Why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone.”

16 “Then bring your livestock,” Joseph said. “Since your money has run out, I will give you food in return for your animals.”

17 So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses,

the flocks, the herds and the donkeys. That year he supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock.

18 When that year was ended, they came to him the following year and said, “We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent, and the herds of livestock are my lord’s. Nothing is left in my lord’s sight but our bodies and our land.

19 Must we perish before your eyes, we and our land as well? Take us and our land in payment for food, and we and our land will belong to Pharaoh. Only give us seed so that we live and do not die, and the land does not become a desert.”

20 In this way Joseph acquired the whole of Egypt’s land for Pharaoh; the famine pressed so hard on the Egyptians that every one of them sold his field. So the land passed to Pharaoh.

21 As for the people, he moved them into the cities[2] from one end of Egypt to the other.

22 Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had a fixed allowance from Pharaoh and lived on the allowance Pharaoh gave them; that is why they did not sell their land.

23 Joseph told the people, “Today I have acquired you and your land for Pharaoh. Here is seed for you to sow the land.

24 At harvest you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and as food for yourselves, your households and your little ones.”

25 They said, “You have saved our lives! May we find favour in my lord’s eyes, and we will be Pharaoh’s slaves.”

26 Joseph made this a law for the land of Egypt, still in force today: a fifth of the produce belongs to Pharaoh. Only the priests’ land did not pass to Pharaoh.

27 Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. They acquired property there, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly.

28 Jacob lived for seventeen years in Egypt, and the whole span of his life was a hundred and forty-seven years.

29 When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “If I have found favour in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal with me in loyal kindness and faithfulness: do not bury me in Egypt.

30 Let me lie with my fathers; carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.” He said, “I will do as you have said.”

31 And he said, “Swear to me.” So he swore to him. Then Israel bowed in worship at the head of his bed.[3]

1 Hebrew ‘How many are the days of the years of your life?’

2 So the Hebrew. The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Greek read ‘he made them slaves’.

3 The Greek translation, quoted in Hebrews 11:21, reads ‘leaning on the top of his staff’; the Hebrew words for ‘bed’ and ‘staff’ have the same consonants.

Chapter 48

Genesis 48 tells how Jacob blessed Joseph’s sons. When Jacob falls ill, Joseph brings Manasseh and Ephraim to him. Jacob recalls how God Almighty appeared to him at Luz and promised to make him a company of peoples, and he adopts Joseph’s two sons as his own, to rank with Reuben and Simeon. Though his eyes are dim with age, he kisses and embraces the boys. Joseph places Manasseh, the elder, at Jacob’s right hand and Ephraim at his left, but Jacob crosses his hands, laying his right hand on Ephraim. He blesses them in the name of the God before whom Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been his shepherd, and the Angel who redeemed him from all evil. When Joseph tries to move his father’s hand, Jacob refuses, saying that the younger will be greater than the elder, and so he puts Ephraim before Manasseh. He tells Joseph that God will bring them back to the land of their fathers, and gives him an extra portion.

1 After these things Joseph was told, “Your father is ill.” So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

2 When Jacob was told, “Your son Joseph has come to you”, Israel gathered his strength and sat up in bed.

3 “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in Canaan,” Jacob told Joseph, “and there He blessed me.

4 and said to me, ‘I am going to make you fruitful and multiply you; I will make you a company of

peoples, and I will give this land to your offspring after you as an everlasting possession.'

5 So now your two sons, born to you in Egypt before I joined you here, are to be counted as mine. Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine as much as Reuben and Simeon are.

6 Any children born to you after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance.

7 As for me, when I came from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died on the way in the land of Canaan, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem."

8 When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?"

9 "These are my sons," Joseph told his father, "whom God has given me in this land." "Bring them to me," Israel said, "so that I may bless them."

10 Now Israel's eyes were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them.

11 Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face, and now God has let me see your offspring as well."

12 Then Joseph took them from his father's knees and bowed with his face to the ground.

13 Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand towards Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand towards Israel's right, and brought them near him.

14 But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn.

15 Then he blessed Joseph: "May the God in whose presence my fathers Abraham and Isaac lived, the God who has shepherded me from my birth to this very day,

16 the Angel who has redeemed[1] me from every harm, bless these boys. May my name live on in them, and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they become a great multitude on the earth."

17 When Joseph saw that his father had laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him, and he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.

18 "No, father," Joseph said to him, "this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head."

19 But his father would not. "I know, my son, I know," he said. "He too will become a people and he too will be great; but his younger brother will be greater, and his descendants will become a whole company of nations."

20 So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh.'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you back to the land of your fathers.

22 And I give to you, over and above your brothers, one mountain slope[2] that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow."

1 Hebrew: הַגֹּאֵל (haggo'el), 'the redeemer', the word used in Ruth for the family redeemer.

2 Hebrew: שְׁכֶם (shekhem), 'shoulder', or 'ridge', a play on the town of Shechem, where Joseph was later buried (Joshua 24:32).

Chapter 49

Genesis 49 records Jacob's last words to his twelve sons, telling them what will happen to them in days to come. Reuben, his firstborn, loses his pre-eminence because he defiled his father's bed; Simeon and Levi are cursed for their violent anger and will be scattered in Israel. Judah is praised by his brothers and likened to a lion; the sceptre will not turn aside from him until Shiloh comes, and the obedience of the peoples will be his. Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher and Naphtali each receive a word about their future, and Jacob cries out, "I wait for Your salvation, O LORD!" Joseph receives a rich blessing from the Mighty One of Jacob, the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, God Almighty; Benjamin is a ravenous wolf. Jacob then charges his sons to bury him in the cave of Machpelah with Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah and Leah, draws his feet up into the bed, breathes his last and is gathered to his people.

1 Then Jacob called his sons and said, “Gather round, so that I may tell you what will happen to you in the days to come.

2 Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to Israel your father.

3 Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might and the first fruit of my strength, pre-eminent in dignity and pre-eminent in power.

4 Unstable as water, you shall not have pre-eminence, because you went up to your father’s bed; then you defiled it: he went up to my couch!

5 Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords.[1]

6 Let my soul not enter their council; let my glory not be joined to their assembly. For in their anger they killed men, and at their whim they hamstrung oxen.

7 A curse on their anger, so fierce, and on their rage, so cruel! I will divide them among Jacob and scatter them through Israel.[2]

8 Judah, you are the one your brothers will praise;[3] your hand will grip your enemies by the neck; the sons of your father will bow before you.

9 A young lion is Judah; you have come up from the kill, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness; who would dare to stir him?

10 The sceptre will not turn aside from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes,[4] and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

11 Tying his donkey to the vine, and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine, and his robes in the blood of grapes.

12 His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.[5]

13 Zebulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea; he shall be a haven for ships, and his border shall reach to Sidon.

14 Issachar is a strong-boned donkey, lying down between the sheepfolds.

15 He saw that a resting place was good, and that the land was pleasant; so he bent his shoulder to the burden and became a slave at forced labour.

16 Dan will win justice for his people,[6] as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 Dan shall be a serpent by the road, a viper by the path, that bites the horse’s heels so that its rider falls backwards.

18 I wait for Your salvation, O LORD!

19 Gad: raiders shall raid him, but he shall raid at their heels.[7]

20 Asher’s food shall be rich, and he shall provide delicacies fit for a king.

21 Naphtali is a doe let loose that bears lovely fawns.[8]

22 Joseph is the branch of a fruitful tree, a fruitful tree beside a spring, whose shoots climb over the wall.[9]

23 The archers bitterly attacked him; they shot at him and harassed him fiercely.

24 Yet his bow remained steady, and his arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,

25 by the God of your father, who helps you, and by the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings from the heavens above, blessings from the deep that lies below, blessings of breast and womb.

26 The blessings of your father are mightier than the blessings of the ancient mountains, the bounty of the everlasting hills.[10] May they be on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the one set apart from his brothers.

27 Benjamin is a ravenous wolf: in the morning he devours the prey, and in the evening he divides the plunder.”

28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, blessing each with the blessing suited to him.

29 Then he gave them his instructions: “I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me beside my fathers in the cave in the field that belonged to Ephron the Hittite,

30 the cave in the field at Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite as a burial ground.

31 That is where Abraham and Sarah his wife were buried, and Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.

32 The field and the cave that is in it were bought from the Hittites.”

33 When Jacob had finished charging his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

1 The meaning of the Hebrew word translated ‘swords’ is uncertain.

2 Simeon’s territory was absorbed into Judah (Joshua 19:1–9), and Levi received cities among all the tribes instead of land (Joshua 21).

3 A play on the name Judah, ‘praise’ (29:35).

4 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. It may also be read ‘until he comes to whom it belongs’ or ‘until tribute comes to him’. From early times Jews and Christians have read the verse as a promise of the Messiah, the King from Judah (Revelation 5:5).

5 Or ‘his eyes are dark from wine, and his teeth white from milk’.

6 Dan means ‘he judged’ (30:6).

7 In Hebrew every word in this verse except ‘but’ and ‘heels’ sounds like Gad.

8 Or ‘that gives beautiful words’.

9 Or ‘Joseph is a wild colt, a wild colt by a spring, wild donkeys on a terraced hill’. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

10 So the Greek; Hebrew ‘of my progenitors to the bounds of the everlasting hills’.

Chapter 50

Genesis 50 closes the book with the burials of Jacob and the death of Joseph. Joseph weeps over his father and has him embalmed, and Egypt mourns him for seventy days. With Pharaoh’s permission Joseph goes up to Canaan with all Pharaoh’s officials, the elders of Egypt and his family, and after a great lamentation at the threshing floor of Atad, Jacob’s sons bury him in the cave of Machpelah. Afterwards Joseph’s brothers fear that he will now pay them back, and send him a message asking his forgiveness. Joseph weeps, and tells them not to be afraid, for he is not in the place of God: they planned evil against him, but God planned it for good, to keep many people alive. Joseph lives to 110, sees Ephraim’s great-grandchildren, and before he dies tells his brothers that God will surely visit them and bring them up to the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, making them swear to carry his bones up from Egypt. He dies and is embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

1 Then Joseph threw himself on his father’s face,
wept over him and kissed him.

2 Joseph ordered the physicians in his service to
embalm his father, and they embalmed Israel.

3 It took forty days, for that is the time required for
embalming, and the Egyptians wept for him
seventy days.

4 When the days of weeping for him were past,
Joseph spoke to Pharaoh’s household: “If I have
found favour in your eyes, please speak to
Pharaoh for me, saying,

5 ‘My father made me swear, saying, “I am about to
die. Bury me in my tomb that I dug for myself in
the land of Canaan.” Now please let me go up and
bury my father, and then I will come back.’”

6 Pharaoh answered, “Go up and bury your father,
as he made you swear.”

7 So Joseph went up to bury his father. With him
went up all Pharaoh’s officials, the elders of his
household and all the elders of the land of Egypt,

8 as well as all Joseph’s household, his brothers
and his father’s household. Only their little ones,
their flocks and their herds were left in the land of
Goshen.

9 Chariots and horsemen also went up with him; it
was a very large company.

10 At the threshing floor of Atad, beyond the
Jordan, they held a great and solemn lament, and
Joseph mourned his father for seven days.

11 When the Canaanites who lived in the land saw
the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they
said, “This is a grievous mourning for the
Egyptians.” That is why the place was called Abel-
mizraim;[1] it is beyond the Jordan.

12 So his sons did for him as he had commanded
them.

13 They carried him to Canaan and laid him in the
cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre, the
field that Abraham had bought from Ephron the
Hittite as a burial ground.

14 After he had buried his father, Joseph returned
to Egypt, with his brothers and all who had gone
up with him to bury his father.

15 When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father
was dead, they said, “What if Joseph bears a
grudge against us and pays us back in full for all
the evil we did to him?”

16 So they sent word to Joseph, saying, “Your
father gave this command before he died:

17 ‘This is what you are to say to Joseph: I beg you,
forgive your brothers their wrong and their sin in
doing you harm.’ So now, please, forgive the
wrong done by the servants of your father’s God.”
When their message reached him, Joseph wept.

18 His brothers also came and fell down before him
and said, “Here we are, your slaves.”

19 “Do not be afraid,” Joseph told them. “Am I in
God’s place?

20 You planned evil against me, but God planned it
for good, so as to do what is happening today: to
keep many people alive.

21 So do not be afraid; I will provide for you and
your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and
spoke kindly to them.[2]

22 So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father’s
household. Joseph lived a hundred and ten years.

23 He lived to see the third generation of
Ephraim’s descendants, and the children of
Manasseh’s son Machir were placed at birth on
Joseph’s knees.[3]

24 Then Joseph told his brothers, “I am dying. But
God will surely come to your aid and lead you up
out of this land to the land He promised on oath to
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

25 And Joseph put the sons of Israel under oath:
“God will surely come to your aid, and then you
must carry my bones up from here.”[4]

26 Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. He
was embalmed and laid in a coffin in Egypt.

1 Abel-mizraim sounds like ‘mourning of Egypt’.

2 Hebrew ‘spoke to their heart’.

3 That is, they were accepted as his own (see 30:3).

4 This was done at the exodus (Exodus 13:19) and Joseph was buried at Shechem (Joshua 24:32); see Hebrews 11:22.