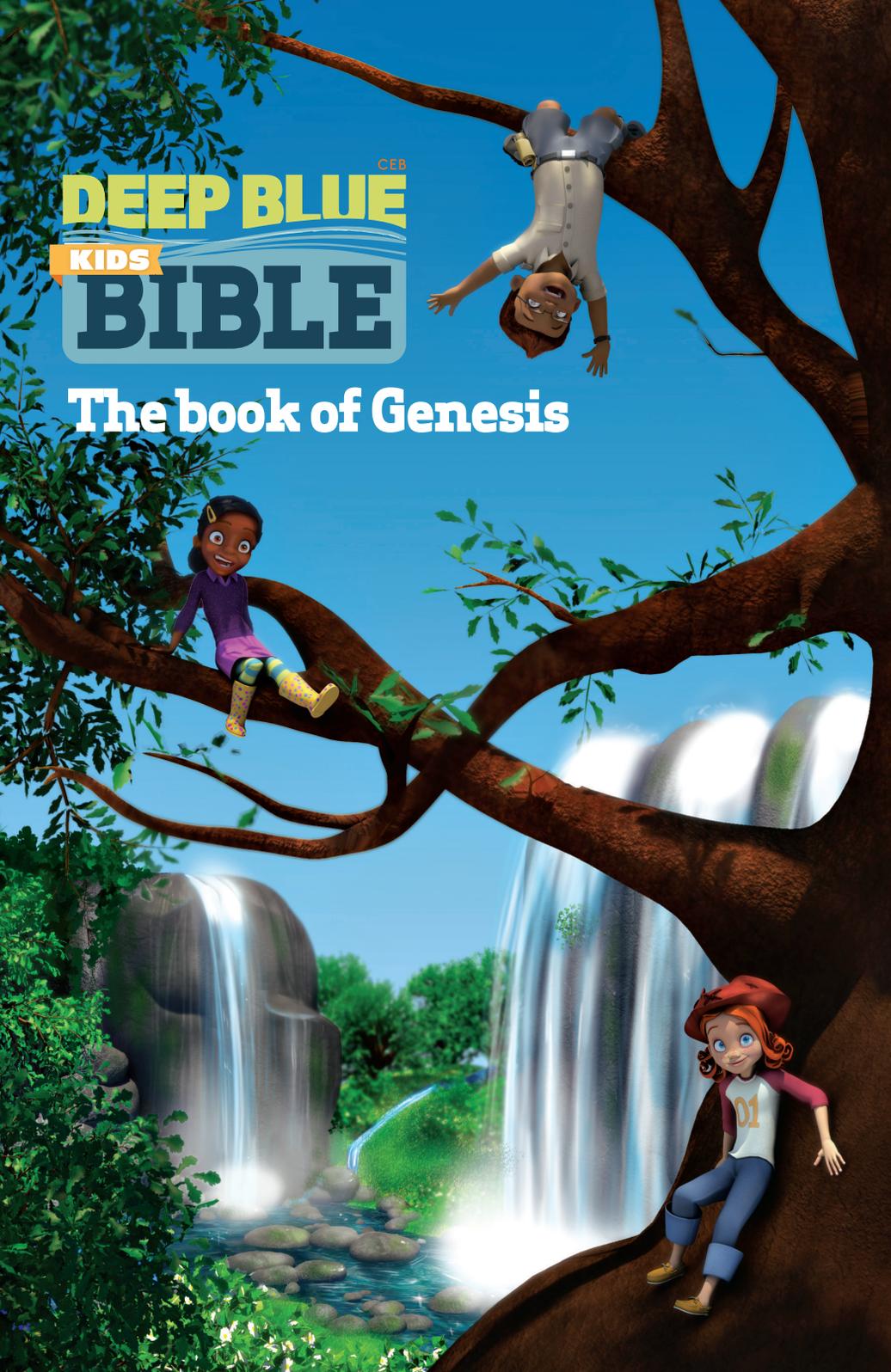


CEB
DEEP BLUE
KIDS
BIBLE

The book of Genesis



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Welcome to the

CEB

DEEP BLUE

Kids Bible!

We hope you enjoy this sample of the engaging and award-winning Deep Blue Kids Bible.

The Deep Blue Kids Bible introduces children to three characters – Asia, Edgar, and Kat – who walk kids through the Bible to discover what it means in their lives.

This interactive Bible includes four-color icons and illustrations throughout with a wealth of notes, historical facts, book introductions, devotionals, and other interactive elements to capture inquisitive young minds.



"I've spent some time looking through the Deep Blue Kids Bible. Although the 3D elements or the continuity characters might appeal to kids, I like the call-outs. The interesting facts and contemporary commentary will provide a continuing source of in-depth information and relatable content. There will always be new facts to discover and ideas to think about. Isn't that what we want when kids dig into God's Word?"

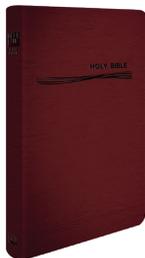
— **Dr. Mary Manz Simon**
Educator & Children's Specialist

WE HAVE A VARIETY OF DEEP BLUE KIDS BIBLE COVERS FROM WHICH TO CHOOSE.

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Celebrate Wonder Deep Blue Kids Bible



CELEBRATE WONDER | Hardback
\$29.99 | 9781609262259

The "Celebrate Wonder" edition includes additional introductory pages that inspire wonder and curiosity in children to learn more about the Bible. This edition can be a stand-alone Bible for any child, and it also complements the Wonder curriculum, available in 2020.

How to Use the *CEB Deep Blue Kids Bible*

First, let's open this gift called a Bible.

- With a hand on each side of the Bible, hold it in your lap with the open edge up facing you. Place your thumbs in the middle and divide the pages in half.
- Open your Bible. Did you find the book of Psalms? If not, turn a few pages to the front or back until you find Psalms. This book is sometimes called the song-book of the Bible, and it's located in the middle.
- Now with your Bible still divided in half, hold the back half between your hands. Follow the same process and use your thumbs to divide this section in half.
- Did you find the book of Matthew? Matthew is the fortieth book of the Bible and the first book of the New Testament. The New Testament tells us about Jesus. But more on that in a bit.

Did you know the Bible isn't just one big book? It's really a library you can hold in your hands! In fact, there are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament (or the front part) and twenty-seven books in the New Testament (the back part of the Bible).

Because the Bible is really a big collection of books, the people who put the *CEB Deep Blue Kids Bible* together have given us some really great features to help us along the way. So let's dig in and check them out!

POP QUIZ

How many total books are there in the Bible?

Introduction Pages

Each book of the Bible starts with an introduction that explains the things you'll learn, the people you'll meet, the places you'll go, and the words you'll remember in each of the Bible's sixty-six books. Whenever you read something in the Bible, turn to the front of that book to find out more about it and what it tells us.

In-text Notes

Throughout the Bible there are notes that talk about what the Bible says.



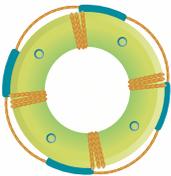
- **Sailboat** notes help us grow stronger with God by pointing out positive traits we can have in our lives.
-



- **Umbrella** notes give us help for difficult times by explaining how unhappy emotions and traits aren't good for us.
-



- **Lighthouse** notes help us develop rock solid faith by discussing the basics of following God for life.
-



- **Life Preserver** notes give us answers to tough questions and hard-to-understand sections of the Bible.
-

Other Features

did you know?

- **Did You Know!** call-outs point out interesting Bible trivia, customs, and practices.
-

God's THOUGHTS **My THOUGHTS**

- **God Thoughts / My Thoughts** devotions help us dive deeper by explaining how the Bible applies to life today.
-



- **Navigation Point!** memory verses mark key promises and passages to memorize.
-

Bet you can!

- **Bet You Can!** reading challenges encourage us to read the Bible for ourselves.
-

Bible Exploration Tools

- **Discovery Central** dictionary has definitions for more than three hundred fifty words. If you don't understand a word in the Bible, look in Discovery Central for the definition.
- **I Wonder What to Do When I Feel...** verses point us to promises and actions to take when we don't know what to do.
- **In-text Notes** list helps us explore the *CEB Deep Blue Kids Bible* topic by topic.
- **Life Preserver Notes** list shows us where to find answers to difficult questions in each book of the Bible.
- **God Thoughts / My Thoughts** lists all one hundred seventy devotions in order by book of the Bible
- **Bet You Can!** reading challenge tracker helps us track our memorization progress.

Maps

Discover the part of the world events in the Bible took place with eight color maps from



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OLD TESTAMENT

Book	Abbreviation	Page		Book	Abbreviation	Page	
Genesis	Gen	1	INSTRUCTION	Ecclesiastes	Eccl	745	
Exodus	Exod	62		Song of Songs	Song	758	
Leviticus	Lev	113		PROPHETS	Isaiah	Isa	766
Numbers	Num	150			Jeremiah	Jer	835
Deuteronomy	Deut	196			Lamentations	Lam	902
Joshua	Josh	242	Ezekiel		Ezek	911	
Judges	Judg	272	Daniel		Dan	962	
Ruth	Ruth	303	Hosea		Hos	982	
1 Samuel	1 Sam	309	Joel		Joel	995	
2 Samuel	2 Sam	349	Amos		Amos	1000	
1 Kings	1 Kgs	383	Obadiah		Obad	1010	
2 Kings	2 Kgs	420	Jonah		Jon	1013	
1 Chronicles	1 Chron	456	Micah	Mic	1017		
2 Chronicles	2 Chron	490	Nahum	Nah	1025		
Ezra	Ezra	531	Habakkuk	Hab	1029		
Nehemiah	Neh	545	Zephaniah	Zeph	1034		
Esther	Esth	564	Haggai	Hag	1039		
Job	Job	576	Zechariah	Zech	1044		
Psalms	Ps	611	WISDOM	Malachi	Mal	1058	
Proverbs	Prov	714					

Contents

NEW TESTAMENT

<u>Book</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Page</u>		<u>Book</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Page</u>
Matthew	Matt	1067	GOSPELS	1 Timothy	1 Tim	1327
Mark	Mark	1109		2 Timothy	2 Tim	1334
Luke	Luke	1135		Titus	Titus	1339
John	John	1176		Philemon	Phlm	1342
Acts	Acts	1208	LETTERS	Hebrews	Heb	1344
Romans	Rom	1246	LETTERS	James	Jas	1358
1 Corinthians	1 Cor	1265		1 Peter	1 Pet	1364
2 Corinthians	2 Cor	1281		2 Peter	2 Pet	1370
Galatians	Gal	1293		1 John	1 John	1374
Ephesians	Eph	1300		2 John	2 John	1380
Philippians	Phil	1307		3 John	3 John	1382
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Alphabetical Books of the Bible

OLD TESTAMENT

<u>Book</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Page</u>
Amos	Amos	1000	Judges	Judg	272
1 Chronicles	1 Chron	456	1 Kings	1 Kgs	383
2 Chronicles	2 Chron	490	2 Kings	2 Kgs	420
Daniel	Dan	962	Lamentations	Lam	902
Deuteronomy	Deut	196	Leviticus	Lev	113
Ecclesiastes	Eccl	745	Malachi	Mal	1058
Esther	Esth	564	Micah	Mic	1017
Exodus	Exod	62	Nahum	Nah	1025
Ezekiel	Ezek	911	Nehemiah	Neh	545
Ezra	Ezra	531	Numbers	Num	150
Genesis	Gen	1	Obadiah	Obad	1010
Habakkuk	Hab	1029	Proverbs	Prov	714
Haggai	Hag	1039	Psalms	Ps	611
Hosea	Hos	982	Ruth	Ruth	303
Isaiah	Isa	766	1 Samuel	1 Sam	309
Jeremiah	Jer	835	2 Samuel	2 Sam	349
Job	Job	576	Song of Songs	Song	758
Joel	Joel	995	Zechariah	Zech	1044
Jonah	Jon	1013	Zephaniah	Zeph	1034
Joshua	Josh	242			

Alphabetical Books of the Bible

NEW TESTAMENT

<u>Book</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Page</u>
Acts	Acts	1208	Mark	Mark	1109
Colossians	Col	1314	Matthew	Matt	1067
1 Corinthians	1 Cor	1265	1 Peter	1 Pet	1364
2 Corinthians	2 Cor	1281	2 Peter	2 Pet	1370
Ephesians	Eph	1300	Philemon	Phlm	1342
Galatians	Gal	1293	Philippians	Phil	1307
Hebrews	Heb	1344	Revelation	Rev	1387
James	Jas	1358	Romans	Rom	1246
John	John	1176	1 Thessalonians	1 Thess	1319
1 John	1 John	1374	2 Thessalonians	2 Thess	1324
2 John	2 John	1380	1 Timothy	1 Tim	1327
3 John	3 John	1382	2 Timothy	2 Tim	1334
Jude	Jude	1384	Titus	Titus	1339
Luke	Luke	1135			

Bible Basics

What is the Bible?

The Bible is a very special collection of books (or scrolls) filled with stories of God's love for people. These sixty-six books tell about God, the creator of the universe who made people and wants them to follow God's ways. God loves people and sent Jesus to be the savior of the people of the whole world. The books in the Bible show us what God is like and how we can know God. The Bible comes from God, who inspired people to write down God's teaching. *Inspire* means that God's Spirit breathed through the writers who wrote the books. God also inspires us to read and understand those same teachings. Throughout history and still today the Bible changes people's lives.

Who wrote the Bible, and when was it written?

This collection of books was written by many different people. A long time ago there weren't written Bible stories. For hundreds of years, people told their children the stories from memory and those children told the same stories to their children. About 950 years before Jesus, people began writing down the stories and teachings found in the Old Testament in the Hebrew language.

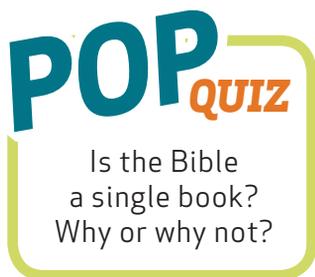
The stories and teachings in the New Testament were also told for many years before they were written. Some of the letters were written about twenty-five years after Jesus died. About five years later, people started writing down in the Greek language the stories and teachings of Jesus that are called *Gospels*: the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Why is the Bible important to people today?

As we read our Bibles, we learn more about God's great love for all people and about how Jesus taught us to live. God inspires us to read and understand the Bible for ourselves. The Bible shows us how awesome God is and how we can know God!

How can I find my way through the Bible?

The Bible is like a library you can hold in your hand. Each book has its own name and place in the Bible library. Different books of the Bible library have different kinds of writings. Some give God's Instruction. Others tell stories of history. Some are songs or poems. Others contain warnings. Some tell about Jesus. Others are letters to individuals or groups of people.



The Bible has two main parts: **The Old Testament** and **The New Testament**. Each part contains a large group of books. There are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven books in the New Testament.

The Old Testament covers a period of several thousand years. It tells the story of Israel, a nation in the Middle East. The Old Testament contains many stories about God's love and mighty acts. This was the Hebrew Bible Jesus learned as a child. There are five types of books in the Old Testament (see pages iii-iv to see how these books are arranged in the Bible library):

[Instruction] The first five books of the Old Testament contain the history of God's people from the creation of the world to Joseph's leadership of the Israelite people. Jewish people call these books the *Torah*. These books contain the instruction given to Moses, which God gave the people to help them live the way God wanted them to live.

[History] These twelve books tell stories about people who often failed to follow God's instruction so God chose leaders to help them. These books are filled with stories about good and bad leaders. They tell the history of God's people from Joshua's leadership to the return of the Israelite people from exile in Babylon.

[Songs] The book of Psalms is the largest book of the Bible. It contains poems that were used as songs in Israel's worship. The poems helped the people praise God. Some honest songs complained about things that were going wrong.

[Wisdom] The four books of wisdom contain poetry and speeches that express deep human emotions. Some are filled with wise sayings. Others are filled with words of praise to God. Some try to figure out what life really means.

[Prophets] The seventeen books named for prophets contain God's messages to God's people so they would remember God's instruction for living.

The New Testament covers a period of about one hundred years and wasn't written until many years after Jesus lived on earth. It tells about Jesus and the people who told his story around the world.

[Gospels] The first four books of the New Testament tell the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. They are called *Gospels* because they tell the good news about Jesus.

[Journeys] The fifth book Acts reports the actions and journeys of Jesus' followers and the beginning of the Christian church.



[Letters] Twenty-one books are actually letters written by early Christian leaders to help other people become faithful followers of Jesus.

[Revelation] The last book of the Bible describes how God comforts Christians, including the first Christians who suffered terribly when they began the early churches. This book is called *Revelation* because it reveals or makes known something that seems to be hidden.

How can I find a specific place in the Bible?

A Bible reference tells you where to look to find part of a book in the Bible. The first thing a Bible reference tells us is which book in the Bible to look up. On pages iii-iv are Contents pages listing all the books of the Bible in the order they appear and which page each book begins on.

The next thing a Bible reference tells us is what chapter or part of the book to look for. The beginning of each chapter in the Bible is marked with a big number.

The last thing a Bible reference tells us is what verse or small part of the chapter to look for. Each verse has been given a small number. The next verse begins when you come to a new verse number or when you reach the end of a section.

To review, each book in the Bible is divided into chapters and each chapter is divided into verses. To find a specific Bible passage you need to know what book, chapter, and verse to look for.

Let's practice!

Genesis 1:3

↑ book ↑ chapter ↑ verse

To find this Bible reference, find the book of Genesis, then chapter 1 and then the small 3. Note: the number for verse 1 is not printed in most Bibles, but every chapter begins with verse 1 even though it isn't printed there.

book → Genesis 1:26

chapter → 3

verse → 1

World's creation in seven days

1 When God began to create^a the heavens and the earth—²the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God's wind swept over the waters—³God said, "Let there be light." And so light appeared. ⁴God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God named the light Day and the darkness Night.

LIFE PRESERVER

Why are there two stories of creation? Genesis 1:1-2:25

If you read all the way through Genesis 1 and 2, you may be asking why there are two stories of creation. The first story tells us that the world was created in six days and ends with Sabbath, the

Let's try some more.

Genesis 1:3-5

Bible references that have a hyphen between verse numbers want us to read more than one verse. In this case, find the book of Genesis, then chapter 1, and read from the beginning of verse 3 to the end of verse 5. Stop when you see the small 6.

Genesis 1:26-27, 31

Bible references that have a comma tell us something different. They're telling us to read just the verses listed. In the reference above, find the first chapter of the book of Genesis. Read verses 26 and 27. Then skip verses 28, 29, and 30, but read verse 31.

Genesis 1

Sometimes a Bible reference doesn't show any verse numbers. In this case the reference is telling us to read the entire chapter. Find Genesis and read from the beginning of the first verse until you reach the number 2 for the next chapter.

One more thing!

Sometimes you'll see small letters next to certain words or verses. These little letters tell us to look to the bottom of the Bible text on a page to learn more. At the bottom of the Bible text there is a matching letter with the extra information. This extra information is called a footnote.

Where do we get started?

The more we read our Bibles the more we learn to treasure God's word. And the more we know God's word, the smarter we get! Navigation Point! verses are a great way to start learning God's word. Page xi lists the verses we'll learn together. Start with Genesis 1:31 and memorize it. Have a friend or family member quiz you to see how you're doing. Once you have that verse down, move on to the next one. When you finish the list, you'll know more than one hundred forty-five verses of the Bible!



Preface

The King James Version of the Bible was published in 1611. For two centuries the KJV competed for readership with the Geneva Bible. However, by the nineteenth century in America, the KJV would be described as the “common English Bible,” because it was the most widely used translation of Christian scripture. Numerous translations have appeared since that time. However, it has proved difficult to combine concern for accuracy and accessibility in one translation that the typical reader or worshipper would be able to understand. Therefore, readers in the twenty-first century, four hundred years after the creation of the KJV, need and deserve a new translation that is suitable for personal devotion, for communal worship, and for classroom study.

The Common English Bible (CEB), completed in 2011, is a fresh translation of the Bible. Some editions include the Apocrypha that are used in Anglican, Orthodox, and Catholic congregations. The translation is sponsored by the Common English Bible Committee, which is an alliance of denominational publishers, including Presbyterian (USA), Episcopalian, United Methodist, Disciples of Christ, and United Church of Christ representatives.

One hundred twenty biblical scholars from twenty-two faith traditions worked as translators for the CEB. In addition, members of seventy-seven reading groups from congregations throughout North America reviewed and responded to early drafts of the translation. As a result, more than five hundred individuals were integrally involved in the preparation of the CEB. These individuals represent the sorts of diversity that permit this new translation to speak to people of various religious convictions and different social locations.

The translators, reviewers, and editors represent the following faith communities: African Methodist Episcopal Church, American Baptist, Anglican, Baptist, Baptist General Conference, Church of the Nazarene, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Free Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Free Methodist, Mennonite, Moravian, National Baptist, Presbyterian (USA), Progressive National Baptist, Quaker, Reformed Church in America, Reform Judaism, Roman Catholic Church, Seventh-day Adventist, United Churches of Christ, and United Methodist. The CEB is truly a Bible created by churches and for the Church.

Accuracy and clarity. The CEB translators balance rigorous accuracy in the rendition of ancient texts with an equally passionate commitment to clarity of expression in the target language. Translators create sentences and choose vocabulary that

would be readily understood when the biblical text is read aloud. Two examples illustrate this concern for accuracy and clarity.

First, *ben 'adam* (Hebrew) or *huios tou anthrōpou* (Greek) are best translated as “human being” (rather than “son of man”) except in cases of direct address, where CEB renders “human one” (instead of “son of man” or “mortal”; e.g., Ezek 2:1). When *ho huios tou anthrōpou* is used as a title for Jesus, the CEB refers to Jesus as “the Human One.” People who have grown accustomed to hearing Jesus refer to himself in the Gospels as “the Son of Man” may find this jarring. Why “Human One”? Jesus’ primary language would have been Aramaic, so he would have used the Aramaic phrase *bar enosha*. This phrase has the sense of “a human” or “a human such as I.” This phrase was taken over into Greek in a phrase that might be translated woodenly as “son of humanity.” However, Greek usage often refers to “a son of x” in the sense of “one who has the character of x.” For example, Luke 10:6 refers in Greek to “a son of peace,” a phrase that has the sense of “one who shares in peace.” In Acts 13:10 Paul calls a sorcerer “a son of the devil.” This is not a reference to the sorcerer’s actual ancestry, but it serves to identify his character. He is devilish—or more simply in English “a devil.” Human or human one represents accurately the Aramaic and Greek idioms and reflects common English usage. Finally, many references to Jesus as “the Human One” refer back to Daniel 7:13, where Daniel “saw one like a human being” (Greek *huios anthropou*). By using the title Human One in the Gospels and Acts, the CEB preserves this connection to Daniel’s vision.

Second, the phrase “Lord of hosts” (*Yahweh sebaoth* in Hebrew; *Kyrios sabaoth* in Greek) appears hundreds of times in older Bibles and persists as an idiom in translations that preserve King James usage. This archaic translation is no longer meaningful to most English speakers. The CEB renders *Yahweh Sebaoth* and *Kyrios sabaoth* as “Lord of heavenly forces,” which conveys accurately the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek phrases by using contemporary English language.

English speakers, especially when telling a story, writing a letter, or engaging in conversation, make frequent use of contractions. As a result, translators have often used contractions, particularly in direct speech, in the CEB. However, formal genres of literature typically do not include contractions. As a result, translators did not include contractions in contexts such as (a) formal trials or royal interviews (socially formal situations), (b) much divine discourse (e.g., Hos 11:9; Exod 24:12), and (c) poetic and/or liturgical discourse (several types of psalms).

Texts. Translators of the Old Testament used as their base text the Masoretic Text (MT) as found in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* and the published fascicles of *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*. For some books the Hebrew University Bible Project was consulted. Judicious departures from the Masoretic Text, based on ancient

manuscript (e.g., reading with the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1 Sam 10:27b or Deut 32:8) and versional evidence (e.g., reading with the Septuagint in Gen 4:8), were sometimes necessary. In those situations, in which one may postulate two literary editions of a biblical book, or in which there are major or lengthy differences between the Masoretic Text and other texts or versions (e.g., 1 Sam 17), the CEB translated the edition that became canon in the Masoretic Text.

Translators of the New Testament used as their base text the eclectic Greek text known as Nestle Aland, the twenty-seventh edition, which was published in 1993.

Translators of the Apocrypha faced a more complicated set of choices. Translators generally used the base text presented in the Göttingen Septuagint. For those books not yet published in the fascicles of the Göttingen Septuagint, translators used the 2006 revised edition of Rahlfs' Septuaginta, edited by Robert Hanhart. However, in those instances in which Hebrew texts have survived and offer a better reading (e.g., in Sirach and Tobit), the translator noted alternative readings to the Greek Septuagint. Second Esdras presents a special problem, explained in a footnote about the Latin text.

Footnotes. Translators decided, in certain instances, that they should explain their translations or textual decisions. However, notes are kept to a minimum and are rendered with utmost concision. Such notes when present offer: (a) evidence from ancient texts and versions (e.g., LXX; MT *men of*); (b) brief philological comment (e.g., Heb uncertain); (c) explanations of anomalies in versification (e.g., Acts 8:37: Critical editions of the Gk New Testament do not include 8:37 *Philip said to him, "If you believe with your whole heart, you can be." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son."*); (d) citations of the Old Testament in the New Testament; and rarely (e) alternative translations (e.g., *Or everyone*). In those instances in which the Old Testament is cited in the New Testament the quoted text is set in italic font.

Measurements. When possible, the CEB converts linear and spatial dimensions to feet and inches. Thus archaic terms such as rods, cubits, spans, handbreadths, and fingerbreadths are replaced with feet and inches. For example, Genesis 6:15 gives the dimensions of Noah's ark in *'ammah* or "forearms." Most translations since the KJV use the archaic English cubit to translate *'ammah*: "the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits." The CEB translates: "the length of the ark four hundred fifty feet, its width seventy-five feet, and its height forty-five feet."

The CEB prefers to transliterate (rather than translate) measurements of capacity, both wet (e.g., bath) and dry (e.g., homer), as well as measurements of

weight (e.g., kikkar). When feasible, a footnote is allowed to calculate the rough equivalent in a U.S. English measurement, such as quarts.

Monetary values are inherently relative, and prices are constantly changing. Therefore, the CEB prefers to transliterate (rather than translate) monetary weights (e.g., shekel) and coins (e.g., denarion).

Months in the biblical lunar calendar are transliterated, with a footnote to indicate the approximate month or months in the Gregorian solar calendar (e.g., Nisan is March-April).

Pronouns. In ancient Hebrew and Greek a pronoun is often bound with the verb. If the translator is too literal, the English reader loses the antecedent of the pronoun so that one cannot tell who is speaking or acting in the sentence or paragraph. This problem occurs throughout much biblical literature. The CEB addresses this issue by substituting a noun for a pronoun, but only when the antecedent is clear. Because this problem and its resolution are so common, the CEB usually does not offer footnotes to identify these substitutions. CEB translators also use gender-inclusive or neutral syntax for translating pronouns that refer to humans, unless context requires otherwise.

Consistency. Although translators often try to use the same English word for a Hebrew or Greek word, many words in any language offer a breadth of meanings that do not readily correlate with a single word in the target language. For example, the Hebrew word *torah*, which has often been translated as Law, is often better translated as Instruction. The same could be said for Sheol (Hebrew) or Hades (Greek). The CEB translates these two terms as “grave” or “death” or “underworld” or “hell,” depending on context. A mechanical selection of any one term for words that involve semantic breadth would preclude a translation sensitive to the originating literary context.

The women and men who participated in the creation of the CEB hope that those who read and study it will find the translation to be an accurate, clear, and inspiring version of Christian scripture.

The Editorial Board of the Common English Bible
www.CommonEnglishBible.com

**Turn the page for
the book of Genesis!**



Genesis

Genesis tells us that our world began with God's wind sweeping over the waters.

God spoke and then our world existed—the sun and the stars, the plants, the animals, and the people. God told the first man and woman to care for everything God made, including the beautiful garden in Eden. God created Adam and Eve to be partners, to have good relationships with God and each other.

This book tells a story of God's amazing creation but also explains the disaster of human sin. Adam and Eve didn't follow God's command. God sent a giant flood, but saved Noah in an ark that floated on the rising waters. Then God made promises to Abraham and his children as the first of God's new people. God sent this faith-filled follower on a daring journey from the distant city of Ur to Canaan, the land that is now Israel.

Genesis also tells the story of Joseph, a boastful young man who was sold as a slave by his brothers. God made Joseph a leader in Egypt, which made it possible for him to save Egypt and then his family from famine. In the end, Joseph and his brothers became friends again.

Genesis says that God created the world—and the stories show why. God wants to be connected with all people—including you! 💧



things YOU'LL DISCOVER

The book of Genesis tells us about the amazing beginning of the world. God created the earth, sky, and everything in the world. God made human beings to enjoy and take care of the world. This book also explains the beginning of God's people, the Israelites.

people YOU'LL MEET

Adam and Eve—the Bible's first man and woman (Gen 1-4)

Abraham—the father of the nation of Israel, first called Abram (Gen 11-25)

Sarah—Abraham's wife, first called Sarai (Gen 11-23)

Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel—Abraham's son and grandson and their wives (Gen 17-49)

Joseph—a young man who became a ruler in Egypt (Gen 37-50)

places YOU'LL GO

Eden, Ur (present-day Iraq),
Canaan (present-day Israel),
Egypt

words YOU'LL REMEMBER

"When God began to create the heavens and the earth—the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God's wind swept over the waters—God said, 'Let there be light.' And so light appeared" (Gen 1:1-3).

World's creation in seven days

1When God began to create^a the heavens and the earth—²the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God's wind swept over the waters—³God said, "Let there be light." And so light appeared. ⁴God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God named the light Day and the darkness Night.

There was evening and there was morning: the first day.

⁶God said, "Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters to separate the waters from each other." ⁷God made the dome and separated the waters under the dome from the waters above the dome. And it happened in that way. ⁸God named the dome Sky.

There was evening and there was morning: the second day.

⁹God said, "Let the waters under the sky come together into one place so that the dry land can appear." And that's what happened. ¹⁰God named the dry land Earth, and he named the gathered waters Seas. God saw how good it was. ¹¹God said, "Let the earth grow plant life: plants yielding seeds and fruit trees bearing fruit with seeds inside it, each according to its kind throughout the earth." And that's what happened. ¹²The earth produced plant life: plants yielding seeds, each according to its kind, and trees bearing fruit with seeds inside it, each according to its kind. God saw how good it was.

¹³There was evening and there was morning: the third day.

¹⁴God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will mark events, sacred seasons, days, and years. ¹⁵They will be lights in the dome of the sky to shine on the earth." And that's what happened. ¹⁶God made the stars and two great lights: the larger light to rule over the day and the smaller light to rule over the night. ¹⁷God put them in the dome of the sky to shine on the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw how good it was.

¹⁹There was evening and there was morning: the fourth day.

LIFE PRESERVER



Why are there two stories of creation? Genesis 1:1–2:25

If you read all the way through Genesis 1 and 2, you may be asking why there are two stories of creation. The first story tells us that the world was created in six days and ends with Sabbath, the day God rested. The second story begins with the garden and tells us that the very first thing God created was a human being.

As you read these two stories, notice the different styles of writing. The first story uses a lot of repetition. God is a bit distant and commands creation. The second story reads like we have zoomed in with a camera to get a close-up picture of the characters interacting with each other. God is much more personal and interacts with creation.

These stories are the work of writers who give us their perspectives on the beginning of life. The variety of voices invites us to think in different ways about the story of God, who lovingly created a world for us to live in and enjoy, a world entrusted to our care. 💧



²⁰God said, "Let the waters swarm with living things, and let birds fly above the earth up in the dome of the sky." ²¹God created the great sea animals and all the tiny living things that swarm in the waters, each according to its kind, and all the winged birds, each according to its kind. God saw how good it was. ²²Then God blessed them: "Be fertile and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth."

²³There was evening and there was morning: the fifth day.

²⁴God said, "Let the earth produce every kind of living thing: livestock, crawling things, and wildlife." And that's what happened. ²⁵God made every kind of wildlife, every kind of livestock, and every kind of creature that crawls on the ground. God saw how good it was. ²⁶Then God said, "Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth."

^aOr In the beginning, God created

²⁷God created humanity in God's own image, in the divine image God created them,^b male and female God created them.

²⁸God blessed them and said to them, "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and master it. Take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, and everything crawling on the ground."²⁹Then God said, "I now give to you all the plants on the earth that yield seeds and all the trees whose fruit produces its seeds within it. These will be your food.³⁰To all wild-life, to all the birds in the sky, and to everything crawling on the ground—to everything that breathes—I give all the green grasses for food." And that's what happened.

³¹God saw everything he had made: it was supremely good.

There was evening and there was morning: the sixth day.

2The heavens and the earth and all who live in them were completed.²On the sixth^c day God completed all the work that he had done, and on the seventh day God rested from all the work that he had done.³God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all the work of creation.^d⁴This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

World's creation in the garden

On the day the LORD God made earth and sky—⁵before any wild plants appeared on the earth, and before any field crops grew, because the LORD God hadn't yet sent rain on the earth and there was still no human being^e to farm the fertile land, ⁶though a stream rose from the earth and watered all of the fertile land— ⁷the LORD God formed the human^f from the topsoil of the fertile land^g and blew life's breath into his nostrils. The human came to life.⁸The LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east and put there the human he had formed.⁹In the fertile land, the LORD God grew every beautiful tree with edible fruit, and also he grew the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

did you know?

The word used for *image* in Gen 1:27 comes from the same root word used for *imagination*. So our ability to imagine and be creative is part of how we're made in the image of our creator.

¹⁰A river flows from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides into four headwaters.¹¹The name of the first river is the Pishon. It flows around the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold.¹²That land's gold is pure, and the land also has sweet-smelling resins and gemstones.¹³The name of the second river is the Gihon. It flows around the entire land of Cush.¹⁴The name of the third river is the Tigris, flowing east of

LIFE PRESERVER

Why are the trees in the garden of Eden important?

Genesis 2:9

In the second story of creation, we read about two trees that were planted in the garden of Eden. One tree, sometimes called the tree of life, had fruit that would make whoever ate it live forever. The fruit on the other tree, sometimes called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, gave the person who ate it self-awareness and knowledge about life.

Although humans had work to do in the garden, they also had freedom to do as they pleased as long as they didn't eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You may know what happened next. Eve and Adam did what they weren't supposed to do. They ate the fruit from the forbidden tree. Rather than being protected from the knowledge of everything good and everything evil, they gained knowledge meant only for God. They didn't have the wisdom to handle this knowledge.

This story reminds us that like Eve and Adam, we're all human. We'd all like to have the knowledge God has. But we don't have the wisdom to handle it. Like Eve and Adam, we do the wrong things and make bad choices. Even so, God forgives us, continues to love us, and stays with us as we try to live as God's faithful people. 💧

^bHeb has singular *him*, referring to *humanity*. ^cLXX, Sam, Syr; MT *seventh* ^dOr *from all his work, which God created to do*
^eOr *man* (Heb *adam*) ^fHeb *adam* ^gHeb *adamah* ^hHeb uncertain



Memorize
Gen 1:31



Assyria; and the name of the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God took the human and settled him in the garden of Eden to farm it and to take care of it. ¹⁶The LORD God commanded the human, “Eat your fill from all of the garden’s trees; ¹⁷but don’t eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because on the day you eat from it, you will die!” ¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “It’s not good that the human is alone. I will make him a helper that is perfect for him.” ¹⁹So the LORD God formed from the fertile land all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky and brought them to the human to see what he would name them. The human gave each living being its name. ²⁰The human named all the livestock, all the birds in the sky, and all the wild animals. But a helper perfect for him was nowhere to be found.

²¹So the LORD God put the human into a deep and heavy sleep, and took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh over it. ²²With the rib taken from the human, the LORD God fashioned a woman and brought her to the human being. ²³The humanⁱ said,

“This one finally is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh.

She will be called a woman^j

because from a man^k she was taken.”

²⁴This is the reason that a man leaves his father and mother and embraces his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵The two of them were naked, the man and his wife, but they weren’t embarrassed.

Knowledge, not eternal life

3 The snake was the most intelligent^l of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say that you shouldn’t eat from any tree in the garden?”

²The woman said to the snake, “We may eat the fruit of the garden’s trees³ but not the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. God said, ‘Don’t eat from it, and don’t touch it, or you will die.’”

⁴The snake said to the woman, “You won’t die!⁵ God knows that on the day you eat from it, you will see clearly and you will be like God,

knowing good and evil.”⁶ The woman saw that the tree was beautiful with delicious food and that the tree would provide wisdom, so she took some of its fruit and ate it, and also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷Then they both saw clearly and knew that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made garments for themselves.

⁸During that day’s cool evening breeze, they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden; and the man and his wife hid themselves from the LORD God in the middle of the garden’s trees. ⁹The LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

¹⁰The man^m replied, “I heard your sound in the garden; I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.”

¹¹He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree, which I commanded you not to eat?”

LIFE PRESERVER



What does the snake represent?

Genesis 3:1, 4-5, 14-15

The snake in the garden asked Eve the question that she and Adam had probably been thinking about. “Did God really say that you shouldn’t eat from any tree in the garden?” So Eve was tempted by the snake’s offer. Who wouldn’t want to see clearly and be like God? When Eve and Adam ate the fruit, they realized they were naked and needed to find some clothes. And since they were ashamed of what they did, they hid from God when God came looking for them.

The snake wasn’t some strange creature that came into the garden. The snake was there all along. Think about a time in your life when you were trying to figure out what to do. Perhaps like Eve there was something whispering in your ear, telling you what to do, and part of you knew it was wrong. That’s like the snake speaking to Eve. The snake represents the temptation everyone faces to make poor choices.

Like Eve and Adam, we have choices to make in life. God knows us, loves us, and supports us as we try to make right choices. 💧

ⁱOr man (Heb adam) ^jOr wife (Heb ishshah) ^kOr husband (Heb ish) ^lHeb sounds like naked. ^mOr He

¹²The man said, “The woman you gave me, she gave me some fruit¹ from the tree, and I ate.”

¹³The LORD God said to the woman, “What have you done?!”

And the woman said, “The snake tricked me, and I ate.”

¹⁴The LORD God said to the snake,

“Because you did this,
you are the one cursed
out of all the farm animals,
out of all the wild animals.

On your belly you will crawl,
and dust you will eat
every day of your life.

¹⁵I will put contempt
between you and the woman,
between your offspring and hers.
They will strike your head,
but you will strike at their heels.”

¹⁶To the woman he said,
“I will make your pregnancy very painful;
in pain you will bear children.
You will desire your husband,
but he will rule over you.”

¹⁷To the man he said, “Because you listened
to your wife’s voice and you ate from the tree
that I commanded, ‘Don’t eat from it,’
cursed is the fertile land because of you;
in pain you will eat from it
every day of your life.

¹⁸Weeds and thistles will grow for you,
even as you eat the field’s plants;

¹⁹by the sweat of your face
you will eat bread—
until you return to the fertile land,
since from it you were taken;
you are soil,
to the soil you will return.”

¹Heb lacks some fruit.



God's Special Gift *Genesis 3:1-24*

Have you ever disobeyed? Adam and Eve did.

When God put Adam and Eve in the garden, God gave them everything they needed—food to eat, water to drink, sunlight to keep them warm, and soft grass to sleep on at night. God gave them love and visited with them every day.

God also gave Adam and Eve a special gift, something they couldn't see or feel. It was the gift of free will, which is the right to choose to obey or disobey God. God wanted Adam and Eve to show love by obeying, but their free will meant they had a choice. They chose to disobey and did not do what God had asked.

Even though their disobedience broke God's heart, God didn't stop loving Adam and Eve. God disciplined them, causing them to leave the garden and have to raise their own food, but God also cared for them, giving them clothes to wear and sending the rain and sunlight to make their crops grow.

God gave us the same gift of free will that Adam and Eve had. When we choose to obey, we show that we love God.

How can you obey God?

Name two things God has given you.



²⁰The man named his wife Eve^o because she is the mother of everyone who lives. ²¹The LORD God made the man and his wife leather clothes and dressed them. ²²The LORD God said, “The human being^p has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.” Now, so he doesn’t stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever, ²³the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to farm the fertile land from which he was taken. ²⁴He drove out the human. To the east of the garden of Eden, he stationed winged creatures wielding flaming swords to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

4 The man Adam knew his wife Eve intimately. She became pregnant and gave birth to Cain, and said, “I have given life to^q a man with the LORD’s help.” ²She gave birth a second time to Cain’s brother Abel. Abel cared for the flocks, and Cain farmed the fertile land.

³Some time later, Cain presented an offering to the LORD from the land’s crops ⁴while Abel presented his flock’s oldest offspring with their fat. The LORD looked favorably on Abel and his sacrifice ⁵but didn’t look favorably on Cain and his sacrifice. Cain became very angry and looked resentful. ⁶The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why do you look so resentful? ⁷If you do the right thing, won’t you be accepted? But if you don’t

did you know? Some people thought God put a sign on Cain as a punishment for murdering his brother Abel. But the Bible says God put the sign on Cain to show the world that Cain was under God’s protection. Anyone who tried to harm Cain for revenge would be in trouble with God.

do the right thing, sin will be waiting at the door ready to strike! It will entice you, but you must rule over it.”

⁸Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”^r When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

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



A Jealous Rage *Genesis 4:5-6, 8*

It is an awful truth that envy, jealousy, and shame often lead to violence and acts of anger. We can feel very upset when someone else gets the thing we want the most. When this happens, we may feel desperately angry. Cain was so filled with rage toward his younger brother Abel that he killed him. There are terrible and long-lasting consequences when we seek to solve our problems with violence. God wants us to find better ways to resolve our conflicts with each other. 



Cain said, “I don’t know. Am I my brother’s guardian?”

¹⁰The LORD said, “What did you do? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground. ¹¹You are now cursed from the ground that opened its mouth to take your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹²When you farm the fertile land, it will no longer grow anything for you, and you will become a roving nomad on the earth.”

¹³Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear. ¹⁴Now that you’ve driven me away from the fertile land and I am hidden from your presence, I’m about to become a roving nomad on the earth, and anyone who finds me will kill me.”

¹⁵The LORD said to him, “It won’t happen,^s anyone who kills Cain will be paid back seven times.” The LORD put a sign on Cain so that no one who found him would assault him. ¹⁶Cain left the LORD’s presence, and he settled down in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Cain’s descendants

¹⁷Cain knew his wife intimately. She became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain built a city and named the city after his son Enoch.

¹⁸Irada was born to Enoch. Irada fathered Mehujael, Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. ¹⁹Lamech

^oHeb sounds like live. ^pOr man (Heb adam) ^qOr created; Heb sounds similar to Cain. ^rLXX, Syr, Vulg, Sam; MT lacks Let’s go out to the field. ^sLXX, Syr, Vulg; MT therefore

took two wives, the first named Adah and the second Zillah.²⁰ Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the ancestor of those who live in tents and own livestock.²¹ His brother's name was Jubal; he was the ancestor of those who play stringed and wind instruments.²² Zillah also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the ancestor of blacksmiths and all artisans of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain's sister was Naamah.

²³Lamech said to his wives,
 “Adah and Zillah, listen to my voice;
 wives of Lamech,
 pay attention to my words:
 I killed a man for wounding me,
 a boy for striking me;

²⁴so Cain will be paid back seven times
 and Lamech seventy-seven times.”

²⁵Adam knew his wife intimately again, and she gave birth to a son. She named him Seth^a “because God has given me another child in place of Abel, whom Cain killed.”²⁶ Seth also fathered a son and named him Enosh. At that time, people began to worship in the LORD's name.

did you know?

Methuselah was the oldest person ever to live. He didn't become a father until he was

187 years old, and he lived until he was 969 years old. Even if people in ancient times had fewer than 365 days in their year, as some people think, that's still really old.

Adam's descendants

5 This is the record of Adam's descendants. On the day God created humanity, he made them to resemble God² and created them male and female. He blessed them and called them humanity^v on the day they were created.³ When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son in his image, resembling him, and named him Seth.⁴ After Seth's birth, Adam lived 800 years; he had other sons and daughters.⁵ In all, Adam lived 930 years, and he died.

⁶When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of Enosh.⁷ After the birth of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years; and he had other sons and daughters.⁸ In all, Seth lived 912 years, and he died.

⁹When Enosh was 90 years old, he became the father of Kenan.¹⁰ After Kenan's birth, Enosh lived 815 years; and he had other sons and daughters.¹¹ In all, Enosh lived 905 years, and he died.

¹²When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel.¹³ After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years; and he had other sons and daughters.¹⁴ In all, Kenan lived 910 years, and he died.

¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared.¹⁶ After Jared's birth, Mahalalel lived 830 years; and he had other sons and daughters.¹⁷ In all, Mahalalel lived 895 years, and he died.

¹⁸When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch.¹⁹ After Enoch's birth, Jared lived 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters.²⁰ In all, Jared lived 962 years, and he died.

²¹When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah.²² Enoch walked with God. After Methuselah's birth, Enoch lived 300 years; and he had other sons and daughters.²³ In all, Enoch lived 365 years.²⁴ Enoch walked with God and disappeared because God took him.

²⁵When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech.²⁶ After Lamech's birth, Methuselah lived 782 years; and he had other sons and daughters.²⁷ In all, Methuselah lived 969 years, and he died.

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son²⁹ and named him Noah, saying, “This one will give us relief^w from our hard work, from the pain in our hands, because of the fertile land that the LORD cursed.”³⁰ After Noah's birth, Lamech lived 595 years; and he had other sons and daughters.³¹ In all, Lamech lived 777 years, and he died.

³²When Noah was 500 years old, Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Ancient heroes

6 When the number of people started to increase throughout the fertile land, daughters were born to them.² The divine beings

^tHeb lacks the ancestor of. ^uSounds like the Heb verb gave. ^vHeb *adam*. ^wHeb resembles the sound of Noah's name.

saw how beautiful these human women were, so they married the ones they chose. ³The LORD said, “My breath^x will not remain in humans forever, because they are flesh. They will live one hundred twenty years.” ⁴In those days, giants^y lived on the earth and also afterward, when divine beings and human daughters had sexual relations and gave birth to children. These were the ancient heroes, famous men.

Great flood

⁵The LORD saw that humanity had become thoroughly evil on the earth and that every idea their minds thought up was always completely evil. ⁶The LORD regretted making human beings on the earth, and he was heartbroken. ⁷So the LORD said, “I will wipe off of the land the human race that I’ve created: from human beings to livestock to the crawling things to the birds in the skies, because I regret I ever made them.” ⁸But as for Noah, the LORD approved of him.

⁹These are Noah’s descendants. In his generation, Noah was a moral and exemplary man; he^z walked with God. ¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ¹¹In God’s sight, the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. ¹²God saw that the earth was corrupt, because all creatures behaved corruptly on the earth.

¹³God said to Noah, “The end has come for all creatures, since they have filled the earth with violence. I am now about to destroy them along with the earth, ¹⁴so make a wooden ark.^a Make the ark with nesting places and cover it inside and out with tar. ¹⁵This is how you should make it: four hundred fifty feet long, seventy-five feet wide, and forty-five feet high. ¹⁶Make a roof^b for the ark and complete it one foot from the top.^c Put a door in its side. In the hold below, make the second and third decks.

¹⁷“I am now bringing the floodwaters over the earth to destroy everything under the sky that breathes. Everything on earth is about to take its last breath. ¹⁸But I will set up my covenant with you. You will go into the ark together with your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives. ¹⁹From all living things—from



In Genesis humans lived for one hundred and twenty years. That’s an amazing fact, especially since a life span today may be only forty or fifty years in countries where people don’t have access to medical care or healthy living conditions.

As you continue to read stories in the Old Testament, you will read about people’s long life spans. We don’t really know how time was counted when these books were written or if one hundred and twenty years is the same as we count it. In Psalm 90, which was written later than the book of Genesis, a normal lifetime is described as seventy to eighty years.

Another way to make sense of longer life spans is that the biblical numbers refer to a good long life for very important people. 💧

all creatures—you are to bring a pair, male and female, into the ark with you to keep them alive. ²⁰From each kind of bird, from each kind of livestock, and from each kind of everything that crawls on the ground—a pair from each will go in with you to stay alive. ²¹Take some from every kind of food and stow it as food for you and for the animals.”

²²Noah did everything exactly as God commanded him.

did you know?

Imagine a modern-day football stadium. The ark Noah built would take up almost the whole field, stretching from end zone to end zone and from one side of the field to the other. Plus it would be taller than a three-story building. That’s a big boat!

7The LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark with your whole household, because among this generation I’ve seen that you are a moral man. ²From every clean animal, take seven pairs, a male and his mate; and from every unclean animal, take one pair, a male and his mate; ³and from the birds in the sky as well, take seven pairs, male and female, so that their offspring will survive throughout the earth. ⁴In seven days from now I will

^xOr spirit ^yOr the Nephilim ^zHeb Noah ^aOr ark of gopher wood, an unknown species of tree ^bOr window ^cHeb uncertain

send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights. I will wipe off from the fertile land every living thing that I have made.”

⁵Noah did everything the LORD commanded him.

⁶Noah was 600 years old when the floodwaters arrived on earth. ⁷Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him entered the ark to escape the floodwaters. ⁸From the clean and unclean animals, from the birds and everything crawling on the ground,

⁹two of each, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, just as God commanded Noah. ¹⁰After seven days, the floodwaters arrived on the earth. ¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day—on that day all the springs of the deep sea erupted, and the windows in the skies opened. ¹²It rained on the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³That same day Noah, with his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, Noah's wife, and his sons' three wives, went into the ark. ¹⁴They and every kind of animal—every kind of livestock, every kind that crawls on the ground, every kind of bird^d—¹⁵they came to Noah and entered the ark, two of every creature that breathes. ¹⁶Male and female of every creature went in, just as God had commanded him. Then the LORD closed the door behind them.^e

¹⁷The flood remained on the earth for forty days. The waters rose, lifted the ark, and it rode high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters rose and spread out over the earth. The ark floated on the surface of the waters. ¹⁹The waters rose even higher over the earth; they covered all of the highest mountains under the sky. ²⁰The waters rose twenty-three feet high, covering the mountains. ²¹Every creature took its last breath:

the things crawling on the ground, birds, livestock, wild animals, everything swarming on the ground, and every human being. ²²Everything on dry land with life's breath in its nostrils died. ²³God wiped away every living thing that was on the fertile land—from human beings to livestock to crawling things to birds in the sky. They were wiped off the earth. Only Noah and those with him in the ark were left. ²⁴The waters rose over the earth for one hundred fifty days.

8 God remembered Noah, all those alive, and all the animals with him in the ark. God sent a wind over the earth so that the waters receded. ²The springs of the deep sea and the skies^f closed up. The skies held back the rain. ³The waters receded gradually from the earth. After one hundred fifty days, the waters decreased; ⁴and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day, the ark came to rest on the Ararat mountains. ⁵The waters decreased gradually until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the mountain peaks appeared.

⁶After forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made. ⁷He sent out a raven, and it flew back and forth until the waters over the entire earth had dried up. ⁸Then he sent out a dove to see if the waters on all of the fertile land had subsided, ⁹but the dove found no place to set its foot. It returned to him in the ark since waters still covered the entire earth. Noah stretched out his hand, took it, and brought it back into the ark. ¹⁰He waited seven more days and sent the dove out from the ark again. ¹¹The dove came back to him in the evening, grasping a torn olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the waters were subsiding from the earth. ¹²He waited seven more days and sent out the dove, but it didn't come back to him again. ¹³In Noah's six hundred first year, on the first day of the first month, the waters dried up from the earth. Noah removed the ark's hatch and saw that the surface of the fertile land had dried up. ¹⁴In the second month, on the seventeenth day, the earth was dry.

¹⁵God spoke to Noah, ¹⁶“Go out of the ark, you and your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you all the

**Be
you
can**
read
this in 3
minutes.
Ready,
set, go!

did you know? Noah's family spent more than forty days and nights in the ark while it rained. The named days listed in Genesis 7:10, 12, 17 and 8:3, 10, 12 total 293 days. Using the dates the Bible says Noah entered and exited the ark gives us a total of 377 days. That's more than a year on a boat with animals.

^dLXX; MT every bird, every winged thing ^eHeb lacks the door. ^fOr the windows of the skies

animals of every kind—birds, livestock, everything crawling on the ground—so that they may populate the earth, be fertile, and multiply on the earth.”¹⁸ So Noah went out of the ark with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives.¹⁹ All the animals, all the livestock,⁸ all the birds, and everything crawling on the ground, came out of the ark by their families.

God’s promise for the earth

²⁰Noah built an altar to the LORD. He took some of the clean large animals and some of the clean birds, and placed entirely burned offerings on the altar.²¹ The LORD smelled the pleasing scent, and the LORD thought to himself, I will not curse the fertile land anymore because of human beings since the ideas of the human mind are evil from their youth. I will never again destroy every living thing as I have done.

²² As long as the earth exists,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and hot,
summer and autumn,
day and night
will not cease.

God’s covenant with all life

9 God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fertile, multiply, and fill the earth.”² All of the animals on the earth will fear you and dread you—all the birds in the skies, everything crawling on the ground, and all of the sea’s fish. They are in your power.³ Everything that lives and moves will be your food. Just as I gave you the green grasses, I now give you everything.⁴ However, you must not eat meat with its life, its blood, in it.

⁵ I will surely demand your blood
for a human life,
from every living thing I will demand it.
From humans, from a man for his brother,
I will demand something
for a human life.

⁶ Whoever sheds human blood,
by a human his blood will be shed;
for in the divine image
God made human beings.

⁷ As for you, be fertile and multiply.

Populate the earth and multiply in it.”⁸ God said to Noah and to his sons with him,⁹ “I am now setting up my covenant with you, with your descendants,¹⁰ and with every living being with you—with the birds, with the large animals, and with all the animals of the earth, leaving the ark with you.”¹¹ I will set up my covenant with you so that never again will all life be cut off by floodwaters. There will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.”

¹² God said, “This is the symbol of the covenant that I am drawing up between me and you and every living thing with you, on behalf of every future generation.¹³ I have placed my bow in the clouds; it will be the symbol of the covenant between me and the earth.¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds,¹⁵ I will remember the covenant between me and you and every living being among all the creatures. Floodwaters will never again destroy all creatures.¹⁶ The bow will be in the clouds, and upon seeing it I will remember the enduring covenant between God and every living being of all the earth’s creatures.”¹⁷ God said to Noah, “This is the symbol of the covenant that I have set up between me and all creatures on earth.”

LIFE PRESERVER

What is a covenant?

Genesis 9:8-17, 15

Have you ever made a promise to someone? Maybe you have said to a friend, or to your mom or dad, “I promise, I won’t do that again,” or “I promise I will...” A promise is like a covenant. The word *covenant* is used a lot in the Old Testament. After the flood, God made a covenant with Noah. You can read about it in Genesis 9. God promised Noah that God would help protect every living thing on the earth—people, plants, and animals—so they would thrive and not be destroyed.

Another example is in Genesis 15, where God made a covenant with Abraham and promised to give him land for his family. As you continue to read through the Old Testament, you will see this word a lot. Whenever God made a covenant with someone or with the Israelites, God promised to love them and expected them to be faithful and show love in return. 💧



⁸LXX; MT lacks *all the livestock*. ¹¹LXX; MT includes *for all the animals of the earth*.

Shem's blessing and Canaan's curse

¹⁸Noah's sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth came out of the ark. Now Ham was Canaan's father. ¹⁹These were Noah's three sons, and from them the whole earth was populated. ²⁰Noah, a farmer, made a new start and planted a vineyard. ²¹He drank some of the wine, became drunk, and took off his clothes in his tent. ²²Ham, Canaan's father, saw his father naked and told his two brothers who were outside. ²³Shem and Japheth took a robe, threw it over their shoulders, walked backward, and covered their naked father without looking at him because they turned away. ²⁴When Noah woke up from his wine, he discovered what his youngest son had done to him. ²⁵He said,

"Cursed be Canaan:
the lowest servant
he will be for his brothers."

²⁶He also said,

"Bless the LORD,
the God of Shem;
Canaan will be his servant.

²⁷May God give spaceⁱ to Japheth;
he will live in Shem's tents,
and Canaan will be his servant."

²⁸After the flood, Noah lived 350 years.

²⁹In all, Noah lived 950 years; then he died.

Noah's descendants

10 These are the descendants of Noah's sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, to whom children were born after the flood. ²Japheth's

ⁱHeb sounds like *Japheth*.



Rainbows Remind Us to Trust God Genesis 9:12-17

If the sound of thunder exploding over your house makes you cover your ears in fear, you're not alone. Many people are afraid of storms—they can be really loud and scary! Now imagine what it would be like if it rained for more than a month.



Noah and his family had that scary experience. One day God told Noah to build a really big boat, and Noah did what God asked. Noah built an ark that he, his family, and a whole bunch of animals could live in. Then a wild and fierce rain came down. For forty days and nights it rained so hard that the earth flooded and all the humans and animals that were not in the ark died.

When they came out of the ark, God promised rain would never again flood the whole earth. As a sign of this promise, God caused a beautiful rainbow to appear in the sky. From that time, whenever a storm came, the rainbow was a reminder that Noah and his family could trust God and not be afraid.

Has someone ever broken a promise they made to you? People aren't always able to do what they say they will, but God is different. The next time you see a rainbow, remember that when God makes a promise, God will keep it.

What does a rainbow remind you of? Why?

Name two promises God made.

sons: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ³Gomer's sons: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. ⁴Javan's sons: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.^j ⁵From these the island-nations were divided into their own countries, each according to their languages and their clans within their nations.

did you know?

Genesis 10 lists seventy people who were the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of Noah. In Bible times, the number seventy meant perfection. Noah's family is listed as having the perfect number of people to restart life on earth.

⁶Ham's sons: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. ⁷Cush's sons: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. Raamah's sons: Sheba and Dedan. ⁸Cush fathered Nimrod, the first great warrior on earth. ⁹The LORD saw him as a great hunter, and so it is said, "Like Nimrod, whom the LORD saw as a great hunter." ¹⁰The most important cities in his kingdom were Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar. ¹¹Asshur left that land and built Nineveh, Rehoboth City, Calah, ¹²and Resen, the great city between Nineveh and Calah. ¹³Egypt fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, ¹⁴Pathrusim, Casluhim, and Caphtorim,^k from which the Philistines came.

¹⁵Canaan fathered Sidon his oldest son, and Heth, ¹⁶the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, ¹⁷the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, ¹⁸the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. After this the Canaanite clans were dispersed. ¹⁹The Canaanite boundary extends from Sidon by way of Gerar to Gaza and by way of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim to Lasha. ²⁰These are Ham's sons according to their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

²¹Children were also born to Shem the father of all Eber's children and Japheth's older brother.

²²Shem's sons: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram. ²³Aram's sons: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. ²⁴Arpachshad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. ²⁵To Eber were born two sons: The first was named Peleg,^l because during his lifetime the earth was divided. His brother's name was Joktan. ²⁶Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All of these were Joktan's sons. ³⁰Their settlements extended from Mesha by way of Sephar, the eastern mountains. ³¹These are Shem's sons according to their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

³²These are the clans of Noah's sons according to their generations and their nations. From them the earth's nations branched out after the flood.

Origin of languages and cultures

11 All people^m on the earth had one language and the same words. ²When they traveled east,ⁿ they found a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them hard." They used bricks for stones and asphalt for mortar. ⁴They said, "Come, let's build for ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky, and let's make a name for ourselves so that we won't be dispersed over all the earth."

⁵Then the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the humans built. ⁶And the LORD said, "There is now one people and they all have one language. This is what they have begun to do, and now all that they plan to do will be possible for them. ⁷Come, let's go down and mix up their language there so they won't understand each other's language." ⁸Then the LORD dispersed them from there over all of the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹Therefore, it is named Babel, because there the LORD mixed up^o the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD dispersed them over all the earth.

^jLXX, Sam, 1 Chron 1:7; MT Dodanim ^kOr Casluhim, from which the Philistines set out, and Caphtorim ^lOr separation ^mHeb lacks people. ⁿOr from the east ^oHeb balal, wordplay on Babel



LIFE PRESERVER

How did we get to be so different? *Genesis 11:1-9*

You may have heard the story about when people all spoke the same language. They liked this so much they decided to build a city and a tower so they could stay together. But God had a bigger plan. God knew it would be better if everyone on the earth could learn to live with difference—in language, culture, religion, even food. So God mixed up their language and sent the people to many places on earth. In doing this, God hoped they would learn how to listen to each other and live with people who were different from themselves.

In many Bibles this section is called “The Tower of Babel.” Here it is given the title “Origin of languages and cultures,” because it is the first story in the Bible that helps us understand how we got to be so different. 💧

Shem's descendants

¹⁰These are Shem's descendants.

When Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of Arpachshad, two years after the flood. ¹¹After Arpachshad was born, Shem lived 500 years; he had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arpachshad was 35 years old, he became the father of Shelah. ¹³After Shelah was born, Arpachshad lived 403 years; he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴When Shelah was 30 years old, he became the father of Eber. ¹⁵After Eber was born, Shelah lived 403 years; he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber was 34 years old, he became the father of Peleg. ¹⁷After Peleg was born, Eber lived 430 years; he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg was 30 years old, he became the father of Reu. ¹⁹After Reu was

born, Peleg lived 209 years; he had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu was 32 years old, he became the father of Serug. ²¹After Serug was born, Reu lived 207 years; he had other sons and daughters.

²²When Serug was 30 years old, he became the father of Nahor. ²³After Nahor was born, Serug lived 200 years; he had other sons and daughters.

²⁴When Nahor was 29 years old, he became the father of Terah. ²⁵After Terah was born, Nahor lived 119 years; he had other sons and daughters.

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

²⁷These are Terah's descendants. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran became the father of Lot. ²⁸Haran died while with his father Terah in his native land,^p in Ur of the Chaldeans. ²⁹Abram and Nahor both married; Abram's wife was Sarai, and Nahor's wife was Milcah the daughter of Haran, father of both Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰Sarai was unable to have children. ³¹Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (son of Haran), and his son Abram's wife, Sarai his daughter-in-law. They left Ur of the Chaldeans for the land of Canaan, and arriving at Haran, they settled there. ³²Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Haran.

Abram's family moves to Canaan

12 The LORD said to Abram, “Leave your land, your family, and your father's household for the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation and will bless you. I will make your name respected, and you will be a blessing.

³I will bless those who bless you, those who curse you I will curse; all the families of the earth will be blessed because of you.”^q

⁴Abram left just as the LORD told him, and Lot went with him. Now Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran. ⁵Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all of their possessions, and those who became members of their household in Haran; and they set out

did you know? Blessing is a big theme in the book of Genesis. The word *blessing* appears eighty-eight times in Genesis. To bless someone was to wish good would happen to that person.

^pOr birthplace ^qOr will bless themselves because of you; or will find a blessing because of you

for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in Canaan, ⁶Abram traveled through the land as far as the sacred place at Shechem, at the oak of Moreh. The Canaanites lived in the land at that time. ⁷The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I give this land to your descendants," so Abram built an altar there to the LORD who appeared to him. ⁸From there he traveled toward the mountains east of Bethel, and pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and worshipped in the LORD's name. ⁹Then Abram set out toward the arid southern plain, making and breaking camp as he went.

Abram and Sarai visit Egypt

¹⁰When a famine struck the land, Abram went down toward Egypt to live as an immigrant since the famine was so severe in the land. ¹¹Just before he arrived in Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know you are a good-looking woman. ¹²When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife,' and they will kill me but let you live. ¹³So tell them you are my sister so that they will treat me well for your sake, and I will survive because of you."

¹⁴When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw how beautiful his wife was. ¹⁵When Pharaoh's princes saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's household. ¹⁶Things went well for Abram because of her: he acquired flocks, cattle, male donkeys, men servants, women servants, female donkeys, and camels. ¹⁷Then the LORD struck Pharaoh and his household with severe plagues because of Abram's wife Sarai. ¹⁸So Pharaoh summoned Abram and said, "What's this you've done to me? Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say, 'She's my sister,' so that I made her my wife? Now, here's your wife. Take her and go!" ²⁰Pharaoh gave his men orders concerning Abram, and they expelled him with his wife and everything he had.

Abram and Lot separate

13 Abram went up from Egypt toward the arid southern plain with his wife, with everything he had, and with Lot. ²Abram was very wealthy in livestock, silver, and gold. ³Abram traveled, making and breaking camp,

from the arid southern plain to Bethel and to the sacred place there, where he had first pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai, ⁴that is, to the place at which he had earlier built the altar. There he worshipped in the LORD's name. ⁵Now Lot, who traveled with Abram, also had flocks, cattle, and tents. ⁶They had so many possessions between them that the land couldn't support both of them. They could no longer live together. ⁷Conflicts broke out between those herding Abram's livestock and those herding Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites lived in the land.

⁸Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have disputes between me and you and between our herders since we are relatives. ⁹Isn't the whole land in front of you? Let's separate. If you go north, I will go south; and if you go south, I will go north." ¹⁰Lot looked up and saw the entire Jordan Valley. All of it was well irrigated, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as far as Zoar (this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah). ¹¹So Lot chose for himself the entire Jordan Valley. Lot set out toward the east, and they separated from each other. ¹²Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot settled near the cities of the valley and pitched his tent close to Sodom. ¹³The citizens of Sodom were very evil and sinful against the LORD.

SAILBOAT

GENEROUS



Abram Is Generous *Genesis 13:8-12*

Abram trusted God, believing God's promise to give land to him and his descendants forever. Because of this Abram responded to Lot with a generous heart and told Lot to choose the land he wanted. When we trust in God's blessings, it is easier to respond with generosity. 💧

¹⁴After Lot separated from him, the LORD said to Abram, "From the place where you are standing, look up and gaze to the north, south, east, and west, ¹⁵because all the land that you see I give you and your descendants forever. ¹⁶I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth. If someone could count

the bits of dust on the earth, then they could also count your descendants.¹⁷Stand up and walk around through the length and breadth of the land because I am giving it to you.”¹⁸So Abram packed his tent and went and settled by the oaks of Mamre in Hebron. There he built an altar to the LORD.

Abram rescues Lot

14While Amraphel was king of Shinar, Ellasar’s King Arioch, Elam’s King Chedorlaomer, and Goiim’s King Tidal² declared war on Sodom’s King Bera, Gomorrah’s King Birsha, Admah’s King Shinab, Zebaiim’s King Shemeber, and the king of Bela, that is, Zoar.³These latter kings formed an alliance in the Siddim Valley (that is, the Dead Sea^f).⁴For twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they revolted.⁵In the fourteenth year, Chedorlaomer and the kings of his alliance came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim,⁶and the Horites in the mountains of Seir as far as El-paran near the desert.⁷Then they turned back, came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and attacked the territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who lived in Hazazon-tamar.

⁸Then the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zebaiim, and Bera (that is, Zoar) took up battle positions in the Siddim Valley⁹ against King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar, four kings against five.

¹⁰Now the Siddim Valley was filled with tar pits. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah retreated, they fell into them; and the rest fled to the mountains.¹¹They took everything from Sodom and Gomorrah, including its food supplies, and left.¹²They also took Lot, Abram’s nephew who lived in Sodom, and everything he owned, and took off.¹³When a survivor arrived, he told Abram the Hebrew, who lived near the oaks of the Amorite Mamre, who was the brother of Eshcol and Aner, Abram’s treaty partners.

¹⁴When Abram heard that his relative had been captured, he took all of the loyal men born in his household, three hundred

eighteen, and went after them as far as Dan.¹⁵During the night, he and his servants divided themselves up against them, attacked, and chased them to Hobah, north of Damascus.¹⁶He brought back all of the looted property, together with his relative Lot and Lot’s property, wives, and people.

Abram blessed by Melchizedek

¹⁷After Abram returned from his attack on Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom came out to the Shaveh Valley (that is, the King’s Valley) to meet him.¹⁸Now Melchizedek the king of Salem and the priest of El Elyon^g had brought bread and wine,¹⁹and he blessed him,

“Bless Abram by El Elyon,
creator of heaven and earth;
²⁰bless El Elyon,
who gave you the victory
over your enemies.”

Abram gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything.²¹Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the people and take the property for yourself.”



Giving Back to God *Genesis 14:17-21*

An important part of many church services is the offering, when people give money to be used for God’s service. Giving an offering is a way to express thanks and gratitude for all that God has done. In this passage, Abram gave King Melchizedek one-tenth of everything. We still follow this model today by giving to the church one-tenth of what we have. With each offering we show our thanks to God and are part of creating God’s kingdom here on earth. ◆

²²But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I promised the LORD, El Elyon, creator of heaven and earth,²³that I wouldn’t take even a thread or a sandal strap from anything that was yours so that you couldn’t say, ‘I’m the one who made Abram rich.’²⁴The only exception is that the young men may keep whatever they have taken to eat, and the men who

^fOr Salt Sea ^gOr God Most High

went with me—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre—may keep their share.”

God's covenant with Abram

15 After these events, the LORD's word came to Abram in a vision, “Don't be afraid, Abram. I am your protector.^t Your reward will be very great.”

²But Abram said, “LORD God, what can you possibly give me, since I still have no children? The head of my household is Eliezer, a man from Damascus.”^u ³He continued, “Since you haven't given me any children, the head of my household will be my heir.”

⁴The LORD's word came immediately to him, “This man will not be your heir. Your heir will definitely be your very own biological child.” ⁵Then he brought Abram outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars if you think you can count them.” He continued, “This is how many children you will have.” ⁶Abram trusted the LORD, and the LORD recognized Abram's high moral character.

⁷He said to Abram, “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession.”

⁸But Abram said, “LORD God, how do I know that I will actually possess it?”

⁹He said, “Bring me a three-year-old female calf, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a dove, and a young

did you know? The vessel with the flame that passed between the split-open animals showed Abram that God would keep God's promise. Jeremiah 34:18-20 says when someone sealed a promise by walking between the two parts of an animal that had been killed and then split in half it meant, “May I die and be torn in two if I break this promise.”

pigeon.” ¹⁰He took all of these animals, split them in half, and laid the halves facing each other, but he didn't split the birds. ¹¹When vultures swooped down on the carcasses, Abram waved them off. ¹²After the sun set, Abram slept deeply. A terrifying and deep darkness settled over him.

LIFE PRESERVER



Does a covenant last forever? *Genesis 15*

Covenants between God and God's people were always started by God. In a covenant with Abram, God promised to give Abram many descendants and to give those descendants land.

Abram agreed to leave on a long journey with his family, not knowing what would happen or where he would end up. He did this because he believed and trusted God. In response to his trust, God made a covenant with Abram and his descendants.

Each time God made a covenant with God's people, God promised to be their God and they would be God's people (Exod 6:7; Deut 29:13). No matter how many times God's people forgot God, God always remembered the covenant God had made with them. God renewed this promise many times and continued to love all humankind just as God loves us today. 💧

¹³Then the LORD said to Abram, “Have no doubt that your descendants will live as immigrants in a land that isn't their own, where they will be oppressed slaves for four hundred years. ¹⁴But after I punish the nation they serve, they will leave it with great wealth. ¹⁵As for you, you will join your ancestors in peace and be buried after a good long life. ¹⁶The fourth generation will return here since the Amorites' wrongdoing won't have reached its peak until then.”

¹⁷After the sun had set and darkness had deepened, a smoking vessel with a fiery flame passed between the split-open animals. ¹⁸That day the LORD cut a covenant with Abram: “To your descendants I give this land, from Egypt's river to the great Euphrates, ¹⁹together with the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girschashites, and the Jebusites.”

Hagar and the Ishmaelites' origins

16 Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to have children. Since she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar, ²Sarai said to Abram, “The LORD has kept me from giving birth, so go to my servant. Maybe she will provide me

^tOr shield or benefactor ^uHeb uncertain

with children.” Abram did just as Sarai said.³ After Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram’s wife Sarai took her Egyptian servant Hagar and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife. “He slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when she realized that she was pregnant, she no longer respected her mistress.”⁵ Sarai said to Abram, “This harassment is your fault. I allowed you to embrace my servant, but when she realized she was pregnant, I lost her respect. Let the LORD decide who is right, you or me.”

⁶ Abram said to Sarai, “Since she’s your servant, do whatever you wish to her.” So Sarai treated her harshly, and she ran away from Sarai.

⁷ The LORD’s messenger found Hagar at a spring in the desert, the spring on the road to Shur,⁸ and said, “Hagar! Sarai’s servant! Where did you come from and where are you going?”

She said, “From Sarai my mistress. I’m running away.”

⁹ The LORD’s messenger said to her, “Go back to your mistress. Put up with her harsh treatment of you.”¹⁰ The LORD’s messenger also said to her,

“I will give you many children,
so many they can’t be counted!”

¹¹ The LORD’s messenger said to her,
“You are now pregnant
and will give birth to a son.

You will name him Ishmael^v
because the LORD has heard about your
harsh treatment.

¹² He will be a wild mule of a man;
he will fight everyone,
and they will fight him.
He will live at odds
with all his relatives.^w

¹³ Hagar named the LORD who spoke to her, “You are El Roi^x because she said, “Can I still see after he saw me?”^y ¹⁴ Therefore, that well is called Beer-lahai-roi;^z it’s the well between Kadesh and Bered. ¹⁵ Hagar gave birth to a son for Abram, and Abram named him Ishmael. ¹⁶ Abram was 86 years old when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael for Abram.

UMBRELLA

JEALOUSY

Misery Genesis 16:5

Things were not working out as Sarai had thought they would. She longed to have a baby, but as each year passed that seemed more and more unlikely. To make matters worse, her servant Hagar became pregnant. Sarai felt angry and jealous. Hagar had what Sarai wanted more than anything else. In her anger and sadness, Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she ran away. A poor servant, Hagar had nowhere to go. When we are filled with jealousy or anger, we are in danger of doing things we will deeply regret. 💧



God’s covenant with Abraham

17 When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am El Shaddai.^a Walk with me and be trustworthy. ² I will make a covenant between us and I will give you many, many descendants.”³ Abram fell on his face, and God said to him, ⁴ “But me, my covenant is with you; you will be the ancestor of many nations. ⁵ And because I have made you the ancestor of many nations, your name will no longer be Abram^b but Abraham.^c ⁶ I will make you very fertile. I will produce nations from you, and kings will come from you. ⁷ I will set up my covenant with you and your descendants after you in every generation as an enduring covenant. I will be your God and your descendants’ God after you. ⁸ I will give you and your descendants the land in which you are immigrants, the whole land of Canaan, as an enduring possession. And I will be their God.”

⁹ God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants in every generation. ¹⁰ This is my covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Circumcise every male. ¹¹ You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it will be a symbol of the covenant between us. ¹² On the eighth day after birth, every male

^vOr God hears ^wOr he will live at odds with all his kin; or he will reside near all his relatives ^xOr God who sees or God whom I’ve seen ^yHeb uncertain; or Have I really seen God and survived? ^zOr the Well of the Living One who sees me or whom I’ve seen

^aOr God Almighty or God of the Mountain ^bOr exalted ancestor ^cOr ancestor of a multitude

in every generation must be circumcised, including those who are not your own children: those born in your household and those purchased with silver from foreigners. ¹³Be sure you circumcise those born in your household and those purchased with your silver. Your flesh will embody my covenant as an enduring covenant. ¹⁴Any uncircumcised male whose flesh of his foreskin remains uncircumcised will be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant."

¹⁵God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, you will no longer call her Sarai. Her name will now be Sarah. ¹⁶I will bless her and even give you a son from her. I will bless her so that she will become nations, and kings of peoples will come from her."

^dOr he laughs

¹⁷Abraham fell on his face and laughed. He said to himself, Can a 100-year-old man become a father, or Sarah, a 90-year-old woman, have a child? ¹⁸To God Abraham said, "If only you would accept Ishmael!"

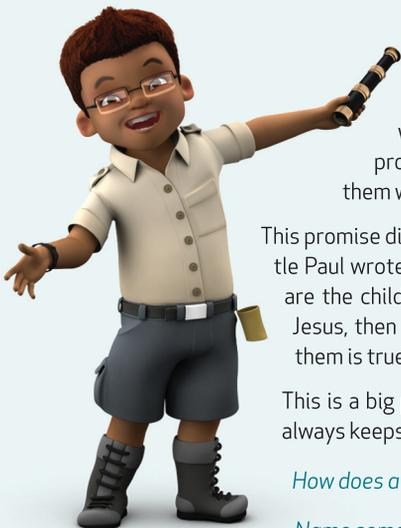
¹⁹But God said, "No, your wife Sarah will give birth to a son for you, and you will name him Isaac.^d I will set up my covenant with him and with his descendants after him as an enduring covenant. ²⁰As for Ishmael, I've heard your request. I will bless him and make him fertile and give him many, many descendants. He will be the ancestor of twelve tribal leaders, and I will make a great nation of him. ²¹But I will set up my covenant with Isaac, who will be born to Sarah at this time next year." ²²When God finished speaking to him, God ascended, leaving Abraham alone.



Big Promises from a Big God *Genesis 17:1-18*

God made promises to Noah, Abraham, and many other people in the Bible. Some of those promises are also meant for us today.

One promise God made was to be with Abraham and be his God. From that time on, God took care of Abraham, just like a good parent would. Even when Abraham made mistakes or disobeyed, God helped Abraham and didn't give up on him.



Another promise God made was that Abraham's family members would be God's people. This meant God would be with Abraham's son Isaac, his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, and so on. Just like with Abraham, God took care of Abraham's family. God provided for their needs, protected them, and corrected them when they made mistakes.

This promise didn't stop with Abraham's family. In the letter the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Galatia, he said, "Those who believe are the children of Abraham" (Gal 3:7). If we believe in God's son Jesus, then we're part of Abraham's family and God's promise to them is true for us. God will be with us and care for us always.

This is a big promise! You're the child of a big and loving God who always keeps promises.

How does a good parent take care of a child?

Name some promises God will keep.

²³Abraham took his son Ishmael, all those born in his household, and all those purchased with his silver—that is, every male in Abraham’s household—and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that same day, just as God had told him to do. ²⁴Abraham was 99 years old when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, ²⁵and his son Ishmael was 13 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised. ²⁶That same day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. ²⁷All the men of his household, those born in his household and those purchased with silver from foreigners, were circumcised with him.

Isaac’s birth announced

18 The LORD appeared to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre while he sat at the entrance of his tent in the day’s heat. ²He looked up and suddenly saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from his tent entrance to greet them and bowed deeply. ³He said, “Sirs, if you would be so kind, don’t just pass by your servant. ⁴Let a little water be brought so you may wash your feet and refresh yourselves under the tree. ⁵Let me offer you a little bread so you will feel stronger, and after that you may leave your servant and go on your way—since you have visited your servant.”

They responded, “Fine. Do just as you have said.”

⁶So Abraham hurried to Sarah at his tent and said, “Hurry! Knead three seahs^e of the finest flour and make some baked goods!” ⁷Abraham ran to the cattle, took a healthy young calf, and gave it to a young servant, who prepared it quickly. ⁸Then Abraham took butter, milk, and the calf that had been prepared, put the food in front of them, and stood under the tree near them as they ate.

⁹They said to him, “Where’s your wife Sarah?”

And he said, “Right here in the tent.”

¹⁰Then one of the men said, “I will

definitely return to you about this time next year. Then your wife Sarah will have a son!”

Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. ¹¹Now Abraham and Sarah were both very old. Sarah was no longer menstruating. ¹²So Sarah laughed to herself, thinking, “I’m no longer able to have children and my husband’s old.”

¹³The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Me give birth? At my age?’ ¹⁴Is anything too difficult for the LORD? When I return to you about this time next year, Sarah will have a son.”

¹⁵Sarah lied and said, “I didn’t laugh,” because she was frightened.

But he said, “No, you laughed.”

Abraham pleads for Sodom

¹⁶The men got up from there and went over to look down on Sodom. Abraham was walking along with them to send them off ¹⁷when the LORD said, “Will I keep from Abraham what I’m about to do? ¹⁸Abraham will certainly become a great populous nation, and all the earth’s nations will be blessed because of him. ¹⁹I have formed a relationship with him so that he will instruct his children and his household after him. And they will keep to the LORD’s path, being moral and just so that the LORD can do for Abraham everything he said he would.” ²⁰Then the LORD said, “The cries of injustice from Sodom and Gomorrah are countless, and their sin is very serious! ²¹I will go down now to examine the cries of injustice that have reached me. Have they really done all this? If not, I want to know.”

²²The men turned away and walked toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing in front of the LORD.^f ²³Abraham approached and said, “Will you really sweep away the innocent^g with the guilty?^h ²⁴What if there are fifty innocent people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not save the place for the sake of the fifty innocent people in it? ²⁵It’s not like you to do this, killing the innocent with the guilty as if there were no difference. It’s not like you! Will the judge of all the earth not act justly?”

^eOne seah is seven and a half quarts. ^fSome ancient manuscripts read *but the LORD remained standing in front of Abraham*.

^gOr righteous ^hOr wicked



LIFE PRESERVER

What happened to Sodom and Gomorrah?

Genesis 18:16-33

God heard cries of injustice from people in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and decided to destroy those cities because of the sins of the people. The people in those two cities didn't care for each other and weren't living as God wanted them to. They weren't kind or welcoming, and they acted violently toward others. When Abraham learned of God's decision, he tried to change God's mind. God listened and agreed that if there were ten faithful people, the cities would be saved. But ten faithful people could not be found, and so the cities were destroyed.

Even more than the story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, this story reveals the reality of evil and punishment. It teaches about the nature of God, who is both a God of compassion and care and a God of judgment. The kind of violence that happened in Sodom and Gomorrah still happens today. God sees our lives and actions and is sad when we don't act kindly toward each other. 💧



²⁶The LORD said, "If I find fifty innocent people in the city of Sodom, I will save it because of them."

²⁷Abraham responded, "Since I've already decided to speak with my Lord, even though I'm just soil and ash, ²⁸what if there are five fewer innocent people than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city over just five?"

The LORD said, "If I find forty-five there, I won't destroy it."

²⁹Once again Abraham spoke, "What if forty are there?"

The LORD said, "For the sake of forty, I will do nothing."

³⁰He said, "Don't be angry with me, my Lord, but let me speak. What if thirty are there?"

The LORD said, "I won't do it if I find thirty there."

³¹Abraham said, "Since I've already decided to speak with my Lord, what if twenty are there?"

The LORD said, "I won't do it, for the sake of twenty."

³²Abraham said, "Don't be angry with me, my Lord, but let me speak just once more. What if there are ten?"

And the LORD said, "I will not destroy it

because of those ten." ³³When the LORD finished speaking with Abraham, he left; but Abraham stayed there in that place.

Lot leaves Sodom

19 The two messengers entered Sodom in the evening. Lot, who was sitting at the gate of Sodom, saw them, got up to greet them, and bowed low. ²He said, "Come to your servant's house, spend the night, and wash your feet. Then you can get up early and go on your way."

But they said, "No, we will spend the night in the town square." ³He pleaded earnestly with them, so they went with him and entered his house. He made a big meal for them, even baking unleavened bread, and they ate.

⁴Before they went to bed, the men of the city of Sodom—everyone from the youngest to the oldest—surrounded the house ⁵and called to Lot, "Where are the men who arrived tonight? Bring them out to us so that we may have sex with them."

⁶Lot went out toward the entrance, closed the door behind him, ⁷and said, "My brothers, don't do such an evil thing. ⁸I've got two daughters who are virgins. Let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them whatever you wish. But don't do anything to these men because they are now under the protection of my roof."

⁹They said, "Get out of the way!" And they continued, "Does this immigrant want to judge us? Now we will hurt you more than we will hurt them." They pushed Lot back and came close to breaking down the door. ¹⁰The men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house with them and slammed the door. ¹¹Then the messengers blinded the men near the entrance of the house, from the youngest to the oldest, so that they groped around trying to find the entrance.

¹²The men said to Lot, "Who's still with you here? Take away from this place your sons-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and everyone else you have in the city ¹³because we are about to destroy this place. The LORD has found the cries of injustice so serious that the LORD sent us to destroy it."

¹⁴Lot went to speak to his sons-in-law, married to his daughters, and said, "Get up and get out of this place because the LORD is

about to destroy the city.” But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

¹⁵When dawn broke, the messengers urged Lot, “Get up and take your wife and your two daughters who are here so that you are not swept away because of the evil in this city.” ¹⁶He hesitated, but because the LORD intended to save him, the men grabbed him, his wife, and two daughters by the hand, took him out, and left him outside the city.

¹⁷After getting them out, the men said, “Save your lives! Don’t look back! And don’t stay in the valley. Escape to the mountains so that you are not swept away.”

¹⁸But Lot said to them, “No, my lords, please. ¹⁹You’ve done me a favor and have been so kind to save my life. But I can’t escape to the mountains since the catastrophe might overtake me there and I’d die. ²⁰This city here is close enough to flee to, and it’s small. It’s small, right? Let me escape there, and my life will be saved.”

²¹He said to Lot, “I’ll do this for you as well, I won’t overthrow the city that you have described. ²²Hurry! Escape to it! I can’t do anything until you get there.” That is why the name of the city is Zoar.ⁱ

Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed

²³As the sun rose over the earth, Lot arrived in Zoar; ²⁴and the LORD rained down burning asphalt from the skies onto Sodom and Gomorrah. ²⁵The LORD destroyed these cities, the entire valley, everyone who lived in the cities, and all of the fertile land’s vegetation. ²⁶When Lot’s wife looked back, she turned into a pillar of salt.

²⁷Abraham set out early for the place where he had stood with the LORD,²⁸ and looked out over Sodom and Gomorrah and over all the land of the valley. He saw the smoke from the land rise like the smoke from a kiln.

Origin of Moab and Ammon

²⁹When God destroyed the cities in the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot away from the disaster that overtook the cities in which Lot had lived. ³⁰Since Lot had become fearful of living in Zoar, he and his two daughters headed up from Zoar and settled in



A Pillar of Salt *Genesis 19:19-20, 26*

Lot, his wife, and daughters fled from everything that was familiar. Abraham told them that God would save them from destruction. However they must not look back. Lot’s wife couldn’t resist one last look at all that she knew, at all that she would never see again. Though she had been instructed not to look, she disobeyed. She glanced back and immediately became a pillar of salt. This story reminds us that it is important to obey directions when someone we trust tells us not to do something, even if we don’t understand why. 💧



the mountains where he and his two daughters lived in a cave. ³¹The older daughter said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there are no men in the land to sleep with us as is the custom everywhere. ³²Come on, let’s give our father wine to drink, lie down with him, and we’ll have children from our father.” ³³That night they served their father wine, and the older daughter went in and lay down with her father, without him noticing when she lay down or got up. ³⁴The next day the older daughter said to the younger, “Since I lay down with our father last night, let’s serve him wine tonight too, and you go in and lie down with him so that we will both have children from our father.” ³⁵They served their father wine that night also, and the younger daughter lay down with him, without him knowing when she lay down or got up. ³⁶Both of Lot’s daughters became pregnant by their father. ³⁷The older daughter gave birth to a son and named him Moab. He is the ancestor of today’s Moabites. ³⁸The younger daughter also gave birth to a son and named him Ben-ammi.^j He is the ancestor of today’s Ammonites.

Abraham and Sarah visit Gerar

20 Abraham traveled from there toward the land of the arid southern plain, and he settled as an immigrant in

ⁱOr small ^jOr son of my people

Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur. ²Abraham said of his wife Sarah, “She’s my sister.” So King Abimelech of Gerar took her into his household.

³But God appeared to Abimelech that night in a dream and said to him, “You are as good as dead because of this woman you have taken. She is a married woman.”

⁴Now Abimelech hadn’t gone near her, and he said, “Lord, will you really put an innocent nation to death? ⁵Didn’t he say to me, ‘She’s my sister,’ and didn’t she—even she—say, ‘He’s my brother’? My intentions were pure, and I acted innocently when I did this.”

⁶God said to him in the dream, “I know that your intentions were pure when you did this. In fact, I kept you from sinning against me. That’s why I didn’t allow you to touch her. ⁷Now return the man’s wife. He’s a prophet; he will pray for you so you may live. But if you don’t return her, know that you and everyone with you will die!”

⁸Abimelech got up early in the morning and summoned all of his servants. When he told them everything that had happened, the men were terrified. ⁹Then Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? What sin did I commit against you that you have brought this terrible sin to me and my kingdom, by doing to me something that simply isn’t done?” ¹⁰Abimelech said to Abraham, “What were you thinking when you did this thing?”

¹¹Abraham said, “I thought to myself, No one reveres God here and they will kill me to get my wife. ¹²She is, truthfully, my sister—my father’s daughter but not my mother’s daughter—and she’s now my wife. ¹³When God led me away from my father’s household, I said to her, ‘This is the loyalty I expect from you: in each place we visit, tell them, ‘He is my brother.’”

did you know? Abraham and Sarah named their son *Isaac*, which means “laughter.” Both Abraham, 100, and Sarah, 90, laughed when they heard they were going to have a baby at such an old age.

¹⁴Abimelech took flocks, cattle, male servants, and female servants, and gave them to Abraham; and Abimelech returned his wife Sarah. ¹⁵Abimelech said, “My land is here available to you. Live wherever you wish.” ¹⁶To Sarah, he said, “I’ve given your brother one thousand pieces of silver. It means that neither you nor anyone with you has done anything wrong. Everything has been set right.” ¹⁷Abraham prayed to God; and God restored Abimelech, his wife, and his women servants to health, and they were able to have children. ¹⁸Because of the incident with Abraham’s wife Sarah, the LORD had kept all of the women in Abimelech’s household from having children.



Abraham Does It Again! Genesis 20:2-12

More than one time, Abraham put his wife Sarah in harm’s way in an effort to protect himself. Even though God reminded him many times of God’s blessing and promise, Abraham’s fear still overcame his faith and good judgment. The story of Abraham reminds us that even though we may be afraid and make bad choices, God won’t give up on us, just as God didn’t give up on Abraham. 💧

Isaac’s birth

21 The LORD was attentive to Sarah just as she had said, and the LORD carried out just what he had promised her. ²She became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham when he was old, at the very time God had told him. ³Abraham named his son—the one Sarah bore him—Isaac. ⁴Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old just as God had commanded him. ⁵Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born. ⁶Sarah said, “God has given me laughter. Everyone who hears about it will laugh with me.” ⁷She said, “Who could have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse sons? But now I’ve given birth to a son when he was old!”

^kOr he laughs ^lOr God has made a joke of me. Everyone who hears about it will laugh at me.

Hagar and Ishmael evicted

⁸The boy grew and stopped nursing. On the day he stopped nursing, Abraham prepared a huge banquet. ⁹Sarah saw Hagar's son laughing, the one Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham. ¹⁰So she said to Abraham, "Send this servant away with her son! This servant's son won't share the inheritance with my son Isaac."

¹¹This upset Abraham terribly because the boy was his son. ¹²God said to Abraham, "Don't be upset about the boy and your servant. Do everything Sarah tells you to do because your descendants will be traced through Isaac. ¹³But I will make of your servant's son a great nation too, because he is also your descendant." ¹⁴Abraham got up early in the morning, took some bread and a flask of water, and gave it to Hagar. He put the boy in her shoulder sling and sent her away.

She left and wandered through the desert near Beer-sheba. ¹⁵Finally the water in the flask ran out, and she put the boy down under one of the desert shrubs. ¹⁶She walked away from him about as far as a bow shot and sat down, telling herself, I can't bear to see the boy die. She sat at a distance, cried out in grief, and wept.

¹⁷God heard the boy's cries, and God's messenger called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "Hagar! What's wrong? Don't be afraid. God has heard the boy's cries over there. ¹⁸Get

up, pick up the boy, and take him by the hand because I will make of him a great nation." ¹⁹Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well. She went over, filled the water flask, and gave the boy a drink. ²⁰God remained with the boy; he grew up, lived in the desert, and became an expert archer. ²¹He lived in the Paran desert, and his mother found him an Egyptian wife.

Abraham's treaty with the Philistines

²²At that time Abimelech, and Phicol commander of his forces, said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything that you do. ²³So give me your word under God that you won't cheat me, my children, or my descendants. Just as I have treated you fairly, so you must treat me and the land in which you are an immigrant."

²⁴Abraham said, "I give you my word." ²⁵Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well that Abimelech's servants had seized.

²⁶Abimelech said, "I don't know who has done this, and you didn't tell me. I didn't even hear about it until today." ²⁷Abraham took flocks and cattle, gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them drew up a treaty.^m ²⁸Abraham set aside, by themselves, seven female lambs from the flock. ²⁹So Abimelech said to Abraham, "What are these seven lambs you've set apart?"

³⁰Abraham said, "These seven lambs that you take from me will attest that I dug this well." ³¹Therefore, the name of that place is Beer-shebaⁿ because there they gave each other their word. ³²After they drew up a treaty^o at Beer-sheba, Abimelech, and Phicol commander of his forces, returned to the land of the Philistines. ³³Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and he worshipped there in the name of the LORD, El Olam.^p ³⁴Abraham lived as an immigrant in the Philistines' land for a long time.

Binding of Isaac

22 After these events, God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!"

Abraham answered, "I'm here."

²God said, "Take your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of



UMBRELLA

HOPELESS

Never Without Hope Genesis 21:17

Sometimes bad things happen in our lives. This was true for people in the Bible too. Hagar and Ishmael were forced to leave their family and live in the desert. Before long they were out of water and food. Hagar lost hope and was scared that her son wouldn't survive. But the Bible tells us God showed her a well she hadn't seen before. When we feel hopeless and afraid, God comes to us and shows us a way to survive. With God we are never without hope. 💧

^mOr covenant ⁿOr Well of seven; or Well of giving one's word ^oOr covenant ^pOr the eternal God



LIFE PRESERVER

Why did Abraham almost kill his son Isaac? *Genesis 22:1-14*

If an adult you trust ever told you to do something you just didn't understand, you know a little how Isaac and Abraham might have felt when God told Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. In that ancient time, a few people sacrificed children to their gods, but this was never part of the culture of God's people. God's command must have seemed just as strange to Abraham as it does to us.

But even though it didn't make sense, both Abraham and Isaac chose to be completely obedient to God. Abraham risked everything, including the symbol of God's promise, and Isaac risked his life. The result of their absolute trust in God was that God provided a substitute sacrifice. Although this story is extreme, it shows how important obedience and trust are to God. 💧

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Moriah. Offer him up as an entirely burned offering there on one of the mountains that I will show you."³ Abraham got up early in the morning, harnessed his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, together with his son Isaac. He split the wood for the entirely burned offering, set out, and went to the place God had described to him.

⁴On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place at a distance. ⁵Abraham said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will walk up there, worship, and then come back to you."

⁶Abraham took the wood for the entirely burned offering and laid it on his son Isaac. He took the fire and the knife in his hand, and the two of them walked on together. ⁷Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father?"

Abraham said, "I'm here, my son."

Isaac said, "Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the entirely burned offering?"

⁸Abraham said, "The lamb for the entirely burned offering? God will see to it,⁹ my son." The two of them walked on together.

⁹They arrived at the place God had described to him. Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He tied up his

son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. ¹⁰Then Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. ¹¹But the LORD's messenger called out to Abraham from heaven, "Abraham? Abraham?"

Abraham said, "I'm here."

¹²The messenger said, "Don't stretch out your hand against the young man, and don't do anything to him. I now know that you revere God and didn't hold back your son, your only son, from me."¹³ Abraham looked up and saw a single ram[†] caught by its horns in the dense underbrush. Abraham went over, took the ram, and offered it as an entirely burned offering instead of his son. ¹⁴Abraham named that place "the LORD sees."⁹ That is the reason people today say, "On this mountain the LORD is seen."[†]

¹⁵The LORD's messenger called out to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶and said, "I give my word as the LORD that because you did this and didn't hold back your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will bless you richly and I will give you countless descendants, as many as the stars in the sky and as the grains of sand on the seashore. They will conquer their enemies' cities. ¹⁸All the nations of the earth will be blessed because of your descendants, because you obeyed me."¹⁹ After Abraham returned to the young men, they got up and went to Beer-sheba where Abraham lived.

Abraham's nephews in Syria

²⁰After these events, Abraham was told: "Milchah has now also given birth to sons for your brother Nahor. ²¹They are Uz his oldest son, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, ²²Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel."²³ Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. These are the eight Milchah bore for Nahor, Abraham's brother. ²⁴His secondary wife's name was Reumah, and she gave birth to Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

Sarah's death and burial site

23 Sarah lived to be 127 years old; this was how long she lived. ²She died in

⁹Or God will see; or God will provide [†]LXX, Sam, Syr, Tg; MT a ram behind ⁹Or the LORD is seen; or the LORD provides [†]Or the LORD sees; or on the LORD's mountain, it will be provided



UMBRELLA

MOURNING

Weeping and Remembering Genesis 23:2

When someone we love dies, we feel really sad. We remember all the things we did together. One thing that can help in these times is sharing stories about the person you loved so much. Abraham and Sarah probably told stories about their lives to their son Isaac. They may have told him again and again how they laughed when they found out they were going to become parents at such an old age. Isaac and his wife Rebekah probably told this story to their children, who then told it to their children. Stories about Sarah were told so many times that someone eventually wrote them down, so no one would ever forget how Sarah was part of God's family. Sharing our stories reminds us that God is still with us even when we're sad. 💧

Kiriath-arba, that is, in Hebron, in the land of Canaan; and Abraham cried out in grief and wept for Sarah. ³After he got up from embracing his deceased wife, he spoke with the Hittites: ⁴"I am an immigrant and a temporary resident with you. Give me some property for a burial plot among you so that I can bury my deceased wife near me."

⁵The Hittites responded to Abraham, ⁶"Listen to us, sir. You are an eminent man of God among us. Bury your dead in one of our own select burial sites. None of us will keep our own burial plots from you to bury your dead."

⁷Abraham rose, bowed to the local citizens the Hittites, ⁸and spoke with them: "If you yourselves allow me to bury my dead near me, listen to me and ask Ephron, Zohar's son, ⁹to give me his own cave in Machpelah at the edge of his field. Let him give it to me for the full price, to be witnessed by you, as my own burial property."

¹⁰Now Ephron was a native Hittite. So Ephron the Hittite responded to Abraham publicly in order that the Hittites and everyone at his city's gate could hear: ¹¹"No, sir. Listen, I will give you the field, and I will give you the cave in it. In front of my people's witnesses, I will give it to you. Bury your dead!"

¹²Abraham bowed before the local citizens ¹³and spoke to Ephron publicly in the

presence of the local citizens: "If only you would accept my offer. I will give you the price of the field. Take it from me so that I can bury my dead there."

¹⁴Ephron responded to Abraham, ¹⁵"Sir, what is four hundred shekels of silver between me and you for the land so that you can bury your dead?" ¹⁶Abraham accepted Ephron's offer and weighed out for Ephron the silver he requested publicly before the Hittites: four hundred shekels of silver at the current rate of exchange.

¹⁷So the field of Ephron in Machpelah near Mamre—the field and the cave in it, and all the trees within the field's boundaries—was officially transferred ¹⁸to Abraham as his property in the presence of the Hittites and of everyone at his city's gate. ¹⁹After this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre, that is, Hebron, in the land of Canaan. ²⁰The field and the cave in it were officially transferred from the Hittites to Abraham as his burial property.

Isaac marries Rebekah

24 As the days went by and Abraham became older, the LORD blessed Abraham in every way. ²Abraham said to the oldest servant of his household, who was in charge of everything he owned, "Put your hand under my thigh. ³By the LORD, God of heaven and earth, give me your word that you won't choose a wife for my son from the Canaanite women among whom I live. ⁴Go to my land and my family and find a wife for my son Isaac there."

⁵The servant said to him, "What if the woman doesn't agree to come back with me to this land? Shouldn't I take your son back to the land you left?"

⁶Abraham said to him, "Be sure you don't take my son back there. ⁷The LORD, God of heaven—who took me from my father's household and from my family's land, who spoke with me and who gave me his word, saying, 'I will give this land to your descendants'—he will send his messenger in front of you, and you will find a wife for my son there. ⁸If the woman won't agree to come back with you, you will be free from this obligation to me. Only don't take my son back

there.”⁹ So the servant put his hand under his master Abraham’s thigh and gave him his word about this mission.

¹⁰The servant took ten of his master’s camels and all of his master’s best provisions, set out, and traveled to Nahor’s city in Aram-naharaim. ¹¹He had the camels kneel down outside the city at the well in the evening, when women come out to draw water. ¹²He said, “LORD, God of my master Abraham, make something good happen for me today and be loyal to my master Abraham. ¹³I will stand here by the spring while the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water. ¹⁴When I say to a young woman, ‘Hand me your water jar so I can drink,’ and she says to me, ‘Drink, and I will give your camels water too,’ may she be the one you’ve selected for your servant Isaac. In this way I will know that you’ve been loyal to my master.” ¹⁵Even before he finished speaking, Rebekah—daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother—was coming out with a water jar on her shoulder. ¹⁶The young woman was very beautiful, old enough to be married, and hadn’t known a man intimately. She went down to the spring, filled her water jar, and came back up.

¹⁷The servant ran to meet her and said, “Give me a little sip of water from your jar.”

¹⁸She said, “Drink, sir.” Then she quickly lowered the water jar with her hands and gave him some water to drink. ¹⁹When she finished giving him a drink, she said, “I’ll draw some water for your camels too, till they’ve had enough to drink.” ²⁰She emptied her water jar quickly into the watering trough, ran to the well again to draw water, and drew water for all of the camels. ²¹The man stood gazing at her, wondering silently if the LORD had made his trip successful or not.

²²As soon as the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold ring, weighing a half shekel,¹¹ and two gold bracelets for her arms, weighing ten shekels. ²³He said, “Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?”

²⁴She responded, “I’m the daughter of Bethuel, who is the son of Milcah and Nahor.”

²⁵She continued, “We have plenty of straw and feed for the camels, and a place to spend the night.”

²⁶The man bowed down and praised the LORD: ²⁷“Bless the LORD, God of my master Abraham, who hasn’t given up his loyalty and his faithfulness to my master. The LORD has shown me the way to the household of my master’s brother.”

²⁸The young woman ran and told her mother’s household everything that had happened. ²⁹Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and Laban ran to the man outside by the spring. ³⁰When he had seen the ring and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, and when he had heard his sister Rebekah say, “This is what the man said to me,” he went to the man, who was still standing by the spring with his camels. ³¹Laban said, “Come in, favored one of the LORD! Why are you standing outside? I’ve prepared the house and a place for the camels.” ³²So the man entered the house. Then Laban unbridled the camels, provided straw and feed for them and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men with him, ³³and set out a meal for him.

But the man said, “I won’t eat until I’ve said something.”

Laban replied, “Say it.”

³⁴The man said, “I am Abraham’s servant.”

³⁵The LORD has richly blessed my master, has made him a great man, and has given him flocks, cattle, silver, gold, men servants, women servants, camels, and donkeys. ³⁶My master’s wife Sarah gave birth to a son for my master in her old age, and he’s given him everything he owns. ³⁷My master made me give him my word: ‘Don’t choose a wife for my son from the Canaanite women, in whose land I’m living.’ ³⁸No, instead, go to my father’s household and to my relatives and choose a wife for my son.’ ³⁹I said to my master, ‘What if the woman won’t come back with me?’ ⁴⁰He said to me, ‘The LORD, whom I’ve traveled with everywhere, will send his messenger with you and make your trip successful; and you will choose a wife for my son from my relatives and from my father’s household.’ ⁴¹If you go to my relatives, you will be free from your obligation

¹¹Heb beqa

to me. Even if they provide no one for you, you will be free from your obligation to me.’

⁴²“Today I arrived at the spring, and I said, ‘LORD, God of my master Abraham, if you wish to make the trip I’m taking successful,⁴³ when I’m standing by the spring and the young woman who comes out to draw water and to whom I say, “Please give me a little drink of water from your jar,”⁴⁴ and she responds to me, “Drink, and I will draw water for your camels too,” may she be the woman the LORD has selected for my master’s son.’⁴⁵ Before I finished saying this to myself, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder and went down to the spring to draw water. And I said to her, ‘Please give me something to drink.’⁴⁶ She immediately lowered her water jar and said, ‘Drink, and I will give your camels something to drink too.’ So I drank and she also gave water to the camels.⁴⁷ Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ And she said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son whom Milcah bore him.’ I put a ring in her nose and bracelets on her arms.⁴⁸ I bowed and worshipped the LORD and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who led me in the right direction to choose the granddaughter of my master’s brother for his son.⁴⁹ Now if you’re loyal and faithful to my master, tell me. If not, tell me so I will know where I stand either way.”

⁵⁰Laban and Bethuel both responded, “This is all the LORD’s doing. We have nothing to say about it.⁵¹ Here is Rebekah, right in front of you. Take her and go. She will be the wife of your master’s son, just as the LORD said.”⁵² When Abraham’s servant heard what they said, he bowed low before the LORD.⁵³ The servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and clothing and gave them to Rebekah. To her brother and to her mother he gave the finest gifts.⁵⁴ He and the men with him ate and drank and spent the night.

When they got up in the morning, the servant said, “See me off to my master.”

⁵⁵Her brother and mother said, “Let the young woman stay with us not more than ten days, and after that she may go.”

⁵⁶But he said to them, “Don’t delay me. The LORD has made my trip successful. See me off so that I can go to my master.”

⁵⁷They said, “Summon the young woman, and let’s ask her opinion.”⁵⁸ They called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?”

She said, “I will go.”

⁵⁹So they sent off their sister Rebekah, her nurse, Abraham’s servant, and his men.⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah, saying to her,

“May you, our sister, become
thousands of ten thousand;
may your children possess
their enemies’ cities.”

⁶¹Rebekah and her young women got up, mounted the camels, and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

⁶²Now Isaac had come from the region of Beer-lahai-roi and had settled in the arid southern plain.⁶³ One evening, Isaac went out to inspect the pasture,⁶⁴ and while staring he saw camels approaching.⁶⁵ Rebekah stared at Isaac. She got down from the camel⁶⁶ and said to the servant, “Who is this man walking through the pasture to meet us?”

The servant said, “He’s my master.” So she took her headscarf and covered herself.⁶⁷ The servant told Isaac everything that had happened.⁶⁸ Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah’s tent. He received Rebekah as his wife and loved her. So Isaac found comfort after his mother’s death.

Abraham and Keturah’s children

25 Abraham married another wife, named Keturah.² The children she bore him were Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.³ Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan. Dedan’s sons were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim.⁴ Midian’s sons were Ephah, Epher, Enoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All of these were Keturah’s sons.⁵ Abraham gave everything he owned to Isaac.⁶ To the sons of Abraham’s secondary wives, Abraham gave gifts and, while he was still living, sent them away from his son Isaac to land in the east.

Abraham’s death

⁷Abraham lived to the age of 175.⁸ Abraham took his last breath and died after a good long life, a content old man, and he was placed with his ancestors.⁹ His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave in Machpelah,

^VHeb uncertain; LXX through the desert of ^WHeb uncertain; possibly to walk around in the pasture or to meditate in the pasture

which is in the field of Zohar's son Ephron the Hittite, near Mamre.¹⁰ Thus Abraham and his wife Sarah were both buried in the field Abraham had purchased from the Hittites.¹¹ After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac, and Isaac lived in Beer-lahai-roi.

Ishmael's descendants

¹²These are the descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's servant, bore for Abraham.¹³ These are the names of Ishmael's sons, by their names and according to their birth order: Nebaioth, Ishmael's oldest son; Kedar; Adbeel; Mibsam;¹⁴ Mishma; Dumah; Massa;¹⁵ Hadad; Tema; Jetur; Naphish; and Kedemah.¹⁶ These are Ishmael's sons. These are their names by their villages and their settlements: twelve tribal leaders according to their tribes.¹⁷ Ishmael lived to the age of 137. He took his last breath and died, and was placed with his ancestors.¹⁸ He established camps^x from Havilah to Shur, which is near Egypt on the road to Assyria. He died^y among all of his brothers.

did you know? In Bible times, the oldest son received most of his father's land, animals, and wealth when his father died. This was called a *birthright*. When Esau sold his birthright to his younger brother Jacob, he gave Jacob the right to receive the larger part of their father Isaac's possessions when Isaac died.

Jacob and Esau are born

¹⁹These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham became the father of Isaac.²⁰ Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean and the sister of Laban the Aramean, from Paddan-aram.²¹ Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, since she was unable to have children. The LORD was moved by his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.²² But the boys pushed against each other inside of her, and she said, "If this is what it's like, why did it happen to me?"^z

So she went to ask the LORD.²³ And the LORD said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb; two different peoples will emerge from your body.

One people will be stronger than the other; the older will serve the younger."

²⁴When she reached the end of her pregnancy, she discovered that she had twins.²⁵ The first came out red all over, clothed with hair, and she named him Esau.²⁶ Immediately afterward, his brother came out gripping Esau's heel, and she named him Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when they were born.

Jacob acquires the oldest son's rights

²⁷When the young men grew up, Esau became an outdoorsman who knew how to hunt, and Jacob became a quiet man who stayed at home.²⁸ Isaac loved Esau because he enjoyed eating game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.²⁹ Once when Jacob was boiling stew, Esau came in from the field hungry³⁰ and said to Jacob, "I'm starving! Let me devour some of this red stuff." That's why his name is Edom.^a

³¹Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright^b today."

³²Esau said, "Since I'm going to die anyway, what good is my birthright to me?"

³³Jacob said, "Give me your word today." And he did. He sold his birthright to Jacob.³⁴ So Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew. He ate, drank, got up, and left, showing just how little he thought of his birthright.

UMBRELLA

TEMPTED

A Costly Bowl of Soup Genesis 25:29-33

Jacob came to Esau with a delicious bowl of soup right at mealtime. The soup smelled good, and Esau was hungry. But before Jacob gave Esau the soup, he told Esau to sell him his birthright, which Esau did. Esau gave away something very important and long-lasting for the temporary joy of a full belly. There are times when it's important to practice self-control and wait for what we want. This can be hard to do, but waiting for what matters is important. It's much better than making an impulsive decision that has no lasting value. 💧

^xLXX; MT they established camps ^yOr He fell ^zHeb uncertain ^aOr red ^bOr oldest son's rights

Isaac and Rebekah visit Gerar

26 When a famine gripped the land, a different one from the first famine that occurred in Abraham's time, Isaac set out toward Gerar and toward King Abimelech of the Philistines. ²The LORD appeared to him and said, "Don't go down to Egypt but settle temporarily in the land that I will show you. ³Stay in this land as an immigrant, and I will be with you and bless you because I will give all of these lands to you and your descendants. I will keep my word, which I gave to your father Abraham. ⁴I will give you as many descendants as the stars in the sky, and I will give your descendants all of these lands. All of the nations of the earth will be blessed because of your descendants. ⁵I will do this because Abraham obeyed me and kept my orders, my commands, my statutes, and my instructions."

⁶So Isaac lived in Gerar. ⁷When the men who lived there asked about his wife, he said, "She's my sister," because he was afraid to say, "my wife," thinking, The men who live there will kill me for Rebekah because she's very beautiful. ⁸After Isaac had lived there for some time, the Philistines' King Abimelech looked out his window and saw Isaac laughing together with his wife Rebekah.

⁹So Abimelech summoned Isaac and said, "She's your wife, isn't she? How could you say, 'She's my sister?'"

Isaac responded, "Because I thought that I might be killed because of her."

¹⁰Abimelech said, "What are you trying to do to us? Before long, one of the people would have slept

with your wife; and you would have made us guilty." ¹¹Abimelech gave orders to all of the people, "Anyone who touches this man or his wife will be put to death!"

Isaac's treaty with the Philistines

¹²Isaac planted grain in that land and reaped one hundred shearm^c that year because the LORD had blessed him. ¹³Isaac grew richer and richer until he was extremely wealthy. ¹⁴He had livestock, both flocks and cattle, and many servants. As a result, the Philistines envied him. ¹⁵The Philistines closed up and filled with dirt all of the wells that his father's servants had dug during his father Abraham's lifetime. ¹⁶Abimelech said to Isaac, "Move away from us because you have become too powerful among us."

¹⁷So Isaac moved away from there, camped in the valley of Gerar, and lived there. ¹⁸Isaac dug out again the wells that were dug during the lifetime of his father Abraham. The Philistines had closed them up after Abraham's death. Isaac gave them the same names his father had given them. ¹⁹Isaac's servants dug wells in the valley and found a well there with fresh water. ²⁰Isaac's shepherds argued with Gerar's shepherds, each claiming, "This is our water." So Isaac named the well Esek^d because they quarreled with him. ²¹They dug another well and argued about it too, so he named it Sitnah.^e ²²He left there and dug another well, but they didn't argue about it, so he named it Rehoboth^f and said, "Now the LORD has made an open space for us and has made us fertile in the land."

²³Then he went up from Gerar to Beersheba. ²⁴The LORD appeared to him that night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Don't be afraid because I am with you. I will bless you, and I will give you many children for my servant Abraham's sake." ²⁵So Isaac built an altar there and worshipped in the LORD's name. Isaac pitched his tent there, and his servants dug a well.

²⁶But Abimelech set out toward him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his ally and Phicol the commander of his forces. ²⁷Isaac said to him, "Why have you come after me? You resented me and sent me away from you."

SAILBOAT**HONEST AND TRUE****Act with Honesty** *Genesis 26:9-11*

Abimelech is someone who acted with wisdom and honesty. He was observant and trusted his instincts. If something didn't seem right, he found out more about the situation. Abimelech didn't hesitate to confront Isaac and took quick action to end Isaac's lies. Because Abimelech acted with honesty and courage, he saved many people from harm. 💧

^cAn unknown measure of grain ^dOr quarrel ^eOr accusation ^fOr open spaces

²⁸They said, “We now see that the LORD was with you. We propose that there be a formal agreement between us and that we draw up a treaty^g with you.” ²⁹“You must not treat us badly since we haven’t harmed you and since we have treated you well at all times. Then we will send you away peacefully, for you are now blessed by the LORD.” ³⁰Isaac prepared a banquet for them, and they ate and drank. ³¹They got up early in the morning, and they gave each other their word. Isaac sent them off, and they left peacefully.

³²That day Isaac’s servants informed him about the well that they had been digging and said to him, “We found water.” ³³He called it Shibah;^h therefore, the city’s name has been Beer-shebaⁱ until today.

Esau’s wives

³⁴When Esau was 40 years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. ³⁵They made life very difficult for Isaac and Rebekah.

Jacob acquires his father’s blessing

27When Isaac had grown old and his eyesight was failing, he summoned his older son Esau and said to him, “My son?”

And Esau said, “I’m here.”

²He said, “I’m old and don’t know when I will die. ³So now, take your hunting gear, your bow and quiver of arrows, go out to the field, and hunt game for me. ⁴Make me the delicious food that I love and bring it to me so I can eat. Then I can bless you before I die.”

⁵Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau went out to the field to hunt game to bring back, ⁶Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “I just heard your father saying to your brother Esau, ⁷‘Bring me some game and make me some delicious food so I can eat, and I will bless you in the LORD’s presence before I die.’ ⁸Now, my son, listen to me, to what I’m telling you to do. ⁹Go to the flock and get me two healthy young goats so I can prepare them as the delicious food your father loves. ¹⁰You can bring it to your father, he will eat, and then he will bless you before he dies.”

¹¹Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, “My

brother Esau is a hairy man, but I have smooth skin. ¹²What if my father touches me and thinks I’m making fun of him? I will be cursed instead of blessed.”

¹³His mother said to him, “Your curse will be on me, my son. Just listen to me: go and get them for me.” ¹⁴So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made the delicious food that his father loved. ¹⁵Rebekah took her older son Esau’s favorite clothes that were in the house with her, and she put them on her younger son Jacob. ¹⁶On his arms and smooth neck she put the hide of young goats, ¹⁷and the delicious food and the bread she had made she put into her son’s hands.

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

And he said, “I’m here. Who are you, my son?”

¹⁹Jacob said to his father, “I’m Esau your oldest son. I’ve made what you asked me to. Sit up and eat some of the game so you can bless me.”

²⁰Isaac said to his son, “How could you find this so quickly, my son?”

He said, “The LORD your God led me right to it.”^j

²¹Isaac said to Jacob, “Come here and let me touch you, my son. Are you my son Esau or not?” ²²So Jacob approached his father Isaac, and Isaac touched him and said, “The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the arms are Esau’s arms.”

²³Isaac didn’t recognize him because his arms were hairy like Esau’s arms, so he blessed him.

²⁴Isaac said, “Are you really my son Esau?”

And he said, “I am.”

²⁵Isaac said, “Bring some food here and let me eat some of my son’s game so I can bless you.” Jacob put it before him and he ate, and he brought him wine and he drank. ²⁶His father Isaac said to him, “Come here and kiss me, my son.” ²⁷So he came close and kissed him. When Isaac smelled the scent of his clothes, he blessed him,

“See, the scent of my son

is like the scent of the field

that the LORD has blessed.

²⁸May God give you showers from the sky,

^gOr covenant ^hOr giving one’s word or seven ⁱOr Well of giving one’s word or Well of seven ^jOr made something good happen for me

olive oil from the earth,
 plenty of grain and new wine.
²⁹May the nations serve you,
 may peoples bow down to you.
 Be the most powerful man
 among your brothers,
 and may your mother's sons
 bow down to you.
 Those who curse you will be cursed,
 and those who bless you
 will be blessed."

Esau receives a secondary blessing

³⁰After Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and just as Jacob left his father Isaac, his brother Esau came back from his hunt. ³¹He too made some delicious food, brought it to his father, and said, "Let my father sit up and eat from his son's game so that you may bless me."

^kHeb *ya'acob*, a wordplay on Jacob

³²His father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I'm your son, your oldest son, Esau."

³³Isaac was so shocked that he trembled violently. He said, "Who was the hunter just here with game? He brought me food, and I ate all of it before you came. I blessed him, and he will stay blessed!"

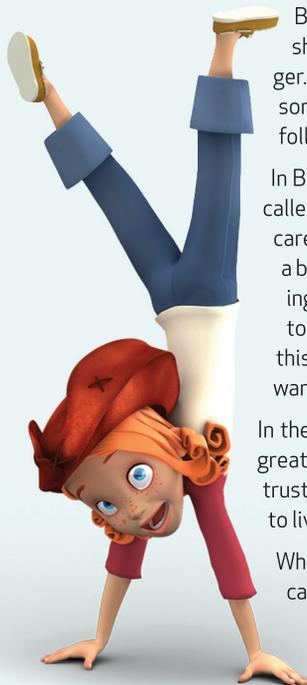
³⁴When Esau heard what his father said, he let out a loud agonizing cry and wept bitterly. He said to his father, "Bless me! Me too, my father!"

³⁵Isaac said, "Your brother has already come deceitfully and has taken your blessing."

³⁶Esau said, "Isn't this why he's called Jacob? He's taken me^k twice now: he took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing." He continued, "Haven't you saved a blessing for me?"



God's Way Instead of Your Way *Genesis 27:1-46*



Before Jacob and Esau were born, God told their mother Rebekah she would have twins and that the older child would serve the younger. Rebekah told her husband Isaac—and maybe even her younger son Jacob—about what God had said. Instead of trusting God and following God's way, however, everyone tried to get their own way.

In Bible times, the oldest son inherited special rights and privileges, called a birthright. Even though Esau was the older brother, he didn't care about his birthright and gave it to his younger brother Jacob for a bowl of stew. When Isaac tried to give his son Esau a special blessing, his wife Rebekah tricked her husband by having Jacob pretend to be Esau to receive the blessing instead. Jacob went along with this plan. He wasn't concerned that they lied to his father. All he wanted was Isaac's blessing.

In the end, Jacob got the birthright and his father's blessing, but at a great cost. Esau hated Jacob and threatened to kill him. Rebekah didn't trust God to protect Jacob and talked Isaac into sending Jacob away to live with her family.

When God tells us something will happen, we don't have to worry. We can trust that God's way is always better than our way.

Have you ever tried to force your own way?

Were you happy with the results? Why or why not?

³⁷Isaac replied to Esau, "I've already made him more powerful than you, and I've made all of his brothers his servants. I've made him strong with grain and wine. What can I do for you, my son?"

³⁸Esau said to his father, "Do you really have only one blessing, Father? Bless me too, my father!" And Esau wept loudly.

³⁹His father Isaac responded and said to him,

"Now, you will make a home
far away from the olive groves
of the earth,
far away from the showers
of the sky above.

⁴⁰You will live by your sword;
you will serve your brother.
But when you grow restless,¹
you will tear away his harness
from your neck."

Jacob sent away for protection

⁴¹Esau was furious at Jacob because his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "When the period of mourning for the death of my father is over, I will kill my brother.

⁴²Rebekah was told what her older son Esau was planning, so she summoned her younger son Jacob and said to him, "Esau your brother is planning revenge. He plans to kill you. ⁴³So now, my son, listen to me: Get up and escape to my brother Laban in Haran. ⁴⁴Live with him for a short while until your brother's rage subsides, ⁴⁵until your brother's anger at you goes away and he forgets what you did to him. Then I will send for you and bring you back from there. Why should I suffer the loss of both of you on one day?"

⁴⁶Rebekah then said to Isaac, "I really loathe these Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women, like the women of this land, why should I go on living?"

28 So Isaac summoned Jacob, blessed him, and gave him these orders: "Don't marry a Canaanite woman. ²Get up and go to Paddan-aram, to the household of Bethuel, your mother's father, and once there, marry one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's

brother. ³God Almighty^m will bless you, make you fertile, and give you many descendants so that you will become a large group of peoples. ⁴He will give you and your descendants Abraham's blessing so that you will own the land in which you are now immigrants, the land God gave to Abraham." ⁵So Isaac sent Jacob off, and he traveled to Paddan-aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean and brother of Rebekah, Jacob and Esau's mother.

⁶Esau understood that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-aram to marry a woman from there. He recognized that, when Isaac blessed Jacob, he had ordered him, "Don't marry a Canaanite woman," ⁷and that Jacob had listened to his father and mother and gone to Paddan-aram. ⁸Esau realized that his father Isaac considered Canaanite women unacceptable. ⁹So he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth, in addition to his other wives.

Jacob's dream at Bethel

¹⁰Jacob left Beer-sheba and set out for Haran. ¹¹He reached a certain place and spent the night there. When the sun had set, he took one of the stones at that place and put it near his head. Then he lay down there. ¹²He dreamed and saw a raised staircase, its foundation on earth and its top touching the sky, and God's messengers were ascending and descending on it. ¹³Suddenly the LORD was standing on itⁿ and saying, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. ¹⁴Your descendants will become like the dust of the earth; you will spread out to the west, east, north, and south. Every family of earth will be blessed because of you and your descendants. ¹⁵I am with you now, I will protect you everywhere you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done everything that I have promised you."

¹⁶When Jacob woke from his sleep, he thought to himself, "The LORD is definitely in this place, but I didn't know it. ¹⁷He was terrified and thought, 'This sacred place is awesome. It's none other than God's house and the

¹Heb uncertain ^mHeb *El Shaddai* or *God of the Mountain* ⁿOr *beside it* or *beside him*

entrance to heaven.¹⁸ After Jacob got up early in the morning, he took the stone that he had put near his head, set it up as a sacred pillar, and poured oil on the top of it.¹⁹ He named that sacred place Bethel,^o though Luz was the city's original name.²⁰ Jacob made a solemn promise: "If God is with me and protects me on this trip I'm taking, and gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear,²¹ and I return safely to my father's household, then the LORD will be my God.²² This stone that I've set up as a sacred pillar will be God's house, and of everything you give me I will give a tenth back to you."

LIGHTHOUSE

RESPECT FOR GOD



This Sacred Place Is Awesome!

Genesis 28:16-22

Jacob had an amazing experience of God. One night he woke up and realized he was in a place filled with God's presence. To mark the place and experience, he set up a stone as a sacred pillar, pouring oil on top of it. That experience gave Jacob the courage and resolve to go on his way, knowing God would be with him wherever he went. 

Jacob meets Rachel

29 Jacob got to his feet and set out for the land of the easterners.² He saw a well in the field in front of him, near which three flocks of sheep were lying down. That well was their source for water because the flocks drank from that well. A huge stone covered the well's opening.³ When all of the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the well's opening, water the sheep, and return the stone to its place at the well's opening.⁴ Jacob said to them, "Where are you from, my brothers?"

They said, "We're from Haran."

⁵ Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?"

They said, "We know him."

⁶ He said to them, "Is he well?"

They said, "He's fine. In fact, this is his daughter Rachel now, coming with the flock."

⁷ He said to them, "It's now only the middle

of the day. It's not time yet to gather the animals. Water the flock, and then go, put them out to pasture."

⁸ They said to him, "We can't until all the herds are gathered, and then we^p roll the stone away from the well's opening and water the flock."

⁹ While he was still talking to them, Rachel came with her father's flock since she was its shepherd.¹⁰ When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his uncle, and the flock of Laban, Jacob came up, rolled the stone from the well's opening, and watered the flock of his uncle Laban.¹¹ Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud.¹² Jacob told Rachel that he was related to her father and that he was Rebekah's son. She then ran to tell her father.¹³ When Laban heard about Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him. Laban embraced him, kissed him, and invited him into his house, where Jacob recounted to Laban everything that had happened.¹⁴ Laban said to him, "Yes, you are my flesh and blood."

Jacob marries Leah and Rachel

After Jacob had stayed with Laban for a month,¹⁵ Laban said to Jacob, "You shouldn't have to work for free just because you are my relative. Tell me what you would like to be paid."

¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters: the older was named Leah and the younger Rachel.¹⁷ Leah had delicate eyes,^q but Rachel had a beautiful figure and was good-looking.¹⁸ Jacob loved Rachel and said, "I will work for you for seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter."

¹⁹ Laban said, "I'd rather give her to you than to another man. Stay with me."

²⁰ Jacob worked for Rachel for seven years, but it seemed like a few days because he loved her.²¹ Jacob said to Laban, "The time has come. Give me my wife so that I may sleep with her."

²² So Laban invited all the people of that place and prepared a banquet.²³ However, in the evening, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and she slept with her.

²⁴ Laban had given his servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her servant.²⁵ In the morning, there she was—Leah! Jacob said to Laban,

^oOr God's house ^pOr they ^qHeb uncertain; perhaps Leah had poor eyesight

"What have you done to me? Didn't I work for you to have Rachel? Why did you betray me?"

²⁶Laban said, "Where we live, we don't give the younger woman before the oldest." ²⁷Complete the celebratory week with this woman. Then I will give^f you this other woman too for your work, if you work for me seven more years." ²⁸So that is what Jacob did. He completed the celebratory week with this woman, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. ²⁹Laban had given his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her servant. ³⁰Jacob slept with Rachel, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. He worked for Laban seven more years.

Jacob's sons are born

³¹When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, he opened her womb; but Rachel was unable to have children. ³²Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben^g because she said, "The LORD saw my harsh treatment, and now my husband will love me." ³³She became pregnant again and gave birth to a son. She said, "The LORD heard that I was unloved, so he gave me this son too," and she named him Simeon.^h ³⁴She became pregnant again and gave birth to a son. She said, "Now, this time my husband will embrace me," since I have given birth to three sons for him." So she named him Levi.ⁱ ³⁵She became pregnant again and gave birth to a son. She said, "This time I will praise the LORD." So she named him Judah.^j Then she stopped bearing children.

30 When Rachel realized that she could bear Jacob no children, Rachel became jealous of her sister and said to Jacob, "Give me children! If you don't, I may as well be dead."

²Jacob was angry at Rachel and said, "Do you think I'm God? God alone has kept you from giving birth!"

³She said, "Here's my servant Bilhah. Sleep with her, and she will give birth for me. Because of her, I will also have children." ⁴So Rachel gave her servant Bilhah to Jacob as his

wife, and he slept with her. ⁵Bilhah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Jacob. ⁶Rachel said, "God has judged in my favor, heard my voice, and given me a son." So she named him Dan.^k ⁷Rachel's servant Bilhah became pregnant again and gave birth to a second son for Jacob. ⁸Rachel said, "I've competed fiercely with my sister, and now I've won." So she named him Naphtali.^l

⁹When Leah realized that she had stopped bearing children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as his wife. ¹⁰Leah's servant Zilpah gave birth to a son for Jacob, ¹¹and Leah said, "What good luck!" So she named him Gad.^m ¹²Leah's servant Zilpah gave birth to a second son for Jacob, ¹³and Leah said, "I'm happy now because women call me happy." So she named him Asher.ⁿ

¹⁴During the wheat harvest, Reuben found some erotic herbs^b in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Give me your son's erotic herbs."

¹⁵Leah replied, "Isn't it enough that you've taken my husband? Now you want to take my son's erotic herbs too?"

Rachel said, "For your son's erotic herbs, Jacob^c may sleep with you tonight."

¹⁶When Jacob came back from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must sleep with me because I've paid for you with my son's erotic herbs." So he slept with her that night.

¹⁷God responded to Leah. She became pregnant and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob. ¹⁸Leah said, "God gave me what I paid for, what I deserved for giving my servant to my husband." So she named him Issachar.^d ¹⁹Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob, ²⁰and she said, "God has given me a wonderful gift. Now my husband will honor me since I've borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulun.^e ²¹After this, she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

²²Then God remembered Rachel, responded to her, and let her conceive. ²³She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, "God has taken away my shame." ²⁴She named

^fLXX, Sam, Syr, Tg, Vulg; MT *we will give* ^gOr *see, a son* ^hSounds like the Heb verb *hear* ⁱOr *be connected to me* ^jSounds like the Heb verb *embrace, or connect* ^kSounds like the Heb verb *praise* ^lOr *he judged* ^mOr *my competition or my wrestling* ⁿOr *good fortune* ^oOr *happy* ^pOr *mandrakes* ^qOr *he* ^rOr *there is payment* ^sOr *honor*

him Joseph,^f saying to herself, May the LORD give me another son.

God blesses Jacob and Laban

²⁵After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Send me off so that I can go to my own place and my own country. ²⁶Give me my wives and children whom I’ve worked for, and I will go. You know the work I’ve done for you.”

²⁷Laban said to him, “Do me this favor. I’ve discovered by a divine sign that the LORD has blessed me because of you, ²⁸so name your price and I will pay it.”

²⁹Jacob said to him, “You know how I’ve worked for you, and how well your livestock have done with me. ³⁰While in my care, what little you had has multiplied a great deal. The LORD blessed you wherever I took your livestock.^g Now, when will I be able to work for my own household too?”

³¹Laban said, “What will I pay you?”

Jacob said, “Don’t pay me anything. If you will do this for me, I will take care of your flock again, and keep a portion.^h ³²I will go through the entire flock today, taking out all of the speckled and spotted sheep, all of the black male lambs, and all of the spotted and speckled female goats. That will be my price. ³³I will be completely honest with you: when you come to check on our agreement, every female goat with me that isn’t speckled or spotted and every male lamb with me that isn’t black will be considered stolen.”

³⁴Laban said, “All right; let’s do it.” ³⁵However, on that very day Laban took out the striped and spotted male goats and all of the speckled and spotted female goats—any with some white in it—and all of the black male lambs, and gave them to his sons. ³⁶He put a three-day trip between himself and Jacob, while Jacob was watching the rest of Laban’s flock.

³⁷Then Jacob took new branches from poplar, almond, and plane trees; and he peeled white stripes on them, exposing the branches’ white color. ³⁸He set the branches that he had peeled near the watering troughs so that they were in front of the flock when they drank,

because they often mated when they came to drink. ³⁹When the flock mated in front of the branches, they gave birth to striped, speckled, and spotted young. ⁴⁰Jacob sorted out the lambs, turning the flock to face the striped and black ones in Laban’s flock but keeping his flock separate, setting them apart from Laban’s flock. ⁴¹Whenever the strongest of the flock mated, Jacob put the branches in front of them near the watering troughs so that they mated near the branches. ⁴²But he didn’t put branches up for the weakest of the flock. So the weakest became Laban’s and the strongest Jacob’s. ⁴³The man Jacob became very, very rich: he owned large flocks, female and male servants, camels, and donkeys.

LIFE PRESERVER

How was Jacob able to have more than one wife?

Genesis 30

When you read about Jacob and his wives Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah, you may wonder why he had so many of them. Jacob met and fell in love with Rachel first, but her father made him work seven years before he could marry her. Then he tricked Jacob into marrying Leah instead. Jacob had to work seven more years before he could marry Rachel.

Being married to more than one woman might sound very strange today, because women are now equal to men. But in Jacob’s time a family’s survival depended on having many children to help with the work. They also didn’t have medicine and doctors like we do, so not all babies lived to become adults. It was common and accepted in that culture for a man to have several wives.

When Rachel had no children, she felt a sense of failure. In that culture, one way Rachel could be respected as a woman was to allow her servant to become another one of Jacob’s wives so that they could have children. Any children Rachel’s servant had would be Jacob’s children and hers as well.

Fortunately, Rachel’s story had a happy ending. She finally had a son, whom she named Joseph. More important, all the sons born to Jacob and his wives were important to the future of the Israelites. Each of his twelve sons became an ancestor of a tribe of Israel. 💧

^fOr he adds ^gOr them ^hHeb uncertain

Jacob's household leaves Laban

31 Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying, "Jacob took everything our father owned and from it he produced all of this wealth."² And Jacob saw that Laban no longer liked him as much as he used to.

³Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Go back to the land of your ancestors and to your relatives, and I will be with you."

⁴So Jacob sent for Rachel and Leah and summoned them into the field where his flock was.⁵ He said to them, "I am aware that your father no longer likes me as much as he used to. But my father's God has been with me.⁶ You know that I've worked for your father as hard as I could.⁷ But your father cheated me and changed my payment ten times. Yet God didn't let him harm me.⁸ If he said, 'The speckled ones will be your payment,' the whole flock gave birth to speckled young. And if he said, 'The striped ones will be your payment,' the whole flock gave birth to striped young.⁹ God took away your father's livestock and gave them to me.¹⁰ When the flocks were mating, I looked up and saw in a dream that the male goats that mounted the flock were striped, speckled, and spotted.¹¹ In the dream, God's messenger said to me, 'Jacob!' and I said, 'I'm here.'¹² He said, 'Look up and watch all the striped, speckled, and spotted male goats mounting the flock. I've seen everything that Laban is doing to you.'¹³ I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a sacred pillar and where you made a solemn promise to me. Now, get up and leave this country and go back to the land of your relatives."

¹⁴Rachel and Leah answered him, "Is there any share or inheritance left for us in our father's household?¹⁵ Doesn't he think of us as foreigners since he sold us and has even used up the payment he received for us?¹⁶ All of the wealth God took from our father belongs to us and our children. Now, do everything God told you to do."

¹⁷So Jacob got up, put his sons and wives on the camels,¹⁸ and set out with all of his livestock and all of his possessions that he had acquiredⁱ in Paddan-aram in order to return to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.¹⁹ Now, while Laban was out shearing

his sheep, Rachel stole the household's divine images that belonged to her father.²⁰ Moreover, Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not sending word to him that he was leaving.²¹ So Jacob and his entire household left. He got up, crossed the river, and set out directly for the mountains of Gilead.

²²Three days later, Laban found out that Jacob had gone,²³ so Laban took his brothers with him, chased Jacob for seven days, and caught up with him in the mountains of Gilead.²⁴ That night, God appeared to Laban the Aramean in a dream and said, "Be careful and don't say anything hastily to Jacob one way or the other."

²⁵Laban reached Jacob after Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains. So Laban and his brothers also pitched theirs in the mountains of Gilead.²⁶ Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done? You have deceived me and taken off with my daughters as if they were prisoners of war.²⁷ Why did you leave secretly, deceiving me, and not letting me know? I would've sent you off with a celebration, with songs and tambourines and harps.²⁸ You didn't even let me kiss my sons and my daughters good-bye. Now you've acted like a fool,²⁹ and I have the power to punish you. However, your father's God told me yesterday, 'Be careful and don't say anything hastily to Jacob one way or the other.'³⁰ You've rushed off now because you missed your father's household so much, but why did you steal my gods?"

³¹Jacob responded to Laban, "I was afraid and convinced myself that you would take your daughters away from me.³² Whomever you find with your divine images won't live. Identify whatever I have that is yours, in front of your brothers, and take it." Jacob didn't know that Rachel had stolen them.³³ Laban went into Jacob's tent, Leah's tent, and her two servants' tent and didn't find them.

So he left Leah's tent and went into Rachel's.³⁴ Now Rachel had taken the divine images and put them into the camel's saddlebag and sat on them. Laban felt around in the whole tent but couldn't find them.³⁵ Rachel said to her father, "Sir, don't be angry with me because I can't get up for you; I'm having

ⁱLXX; MT includes *he had acquired, the livestock in his possession.*

my period.” He searched but couldn’t find the divine images.

³⁶Jacob was angry and complained to Laban, “What have I done wrong and what’s my crime that you’ve tracked me down like this?” ³⁷You’ve now felt through all of my baggage, and what have you found from your household’s belongings? Put it in front of our relatives, and let them decide between us. ³⁸For these twenty years I’ve been with you, your female sheep and goats haven’t miscarried, and I haven’t eaten your flock’s rams. ³⁹When animals were killed, I didn’t bring them to you but took the loss myself. You demanded compensation from me for any animals poached during the day or night. ⁴⁰The dry heat consumed me during the day, and the frost at night; I couldn’t sleep. ⁴¹I’ve now spent twenty years in your household. I worked for fourteen years for your two daughters and for six years for your flock, and you changed my pay ten times. ⁴²If the God of my father—the God of Abraham and the awesome one of Isaac—hadn’t been with me, you’d have no doubt sent me away without anything. God saw my harsh treatment and my hard work and reprimanded you yesterday.”

Jacob and Laban’s treaty

⁴³Laban responded and told Jacob, “The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks. Everything you see is mine. But what can I do now about my daughters and about their sons?” ⁴⁴Come, let’s make a treaty, you and me, and let something be our witness.^j

⁴⁵So Jacob took a stone, set it up as a sacred pillar, ⁴⁶and said to his relatives, “Gather stones.” So they took stones, made a mound, and ate there near the mound. ⁴⁷Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha,^k but Jacob called it Galeed.^l

⁴⁸Laban said, “This mound is our witness today,” and, therefore, he too named it Galeed. ⁴⁹He also named it Mizpah,^m because he said, “The LORD will observe both of us when we are separated from each other. ⁵⁰If you treat my daughters badly and if you marry other women, though we aren’t there, know that God observed our witness.”

⁵¹Laban said to Jacob, “Here is this mound and here is the sacred pillar that I’ve set up for us. ⁵²This mound and the sacred pillar are witnesses that I won’t travel beyond this mound and that you won’t travel beyond this mound and this pillar to do harm. ⁵³The God of Abraham and the God of Nahorⁿ will keep order between us.” So Jacob gave his word in the name of the awesome one of his father Isaac. ⁵⁴Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and invited his relatives to a meal. They ate together and spent the night on the mountain. ⁵⁵^oLaban got up early in the morning, kissed his sons and daughters, blessed them, and left to go back to his own place.

Jacob prepares to meet Esau

32 Jacob went on his way, and God’s messengers approached him. ²When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is God’s camp,” and he named that sacred place Mahanaim.^p ³Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, toward the land of Seir, the open country of Edom. ⁴He gave them these orders: “Say this to my master Esau. This is the message of your servant Jacob: ‘I’ve lived as an immigrant with Laban, where I’ve stayed till now. ⁵I own cattle, donkeys, flocks, men servants, and women servants. I’m sending this message to my master now to ask that he^q be kind.’”

⁶The messengers returned to Jacob and said, “We went out to your brother Esau, and he’s coming to meet you with four hundred men.”

⁷Jacob was terrified and felt trapped, so he divided the people with him, and the flocks, cattle, and camels, into two camps. ⁸He thought, “If Esau meets the first camp and attacks it, at least one camp will be left to escape.”

⁹Jacob said, “LORD, God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your relatives, and I’ll make sure things go well for you,’ ¹⁰I don’t deserve how loyal and truthful you’ve been to your servant. I went away across the Jordan with just my staff, but now I’ve become two camps. ¹¹Save me from my brother Esau! I’m afraid he will come and kill me, the mothers, and their children. ¹²You were the one who told me, ‘I will make sure things go well for

^jOr covenant or testimony ^kOr mound of witness (Aram) ^lOr mound of witness ^mOr observation ⁿLXX, MT includes their father’s God. ^o32:1 in Heb ^pOr two camps ^qOr you

you, and I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, so many you won't be able to count them."¹³

¹³Jacob spent that night there. From what he had acquired, he set aside a gift for his brother Esau: ¹⁴two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes

did you know? Because Jacob wrestled all night with God and refused to let go until God blessed him, God gave Jacob the new name Israel. The name *Israel* means "one who struggles with God."

and twenty rams, ¹⁵thirty nursing camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. ¹⁶He separated these herds and gave them to his servants. He said to them, "Go ahead of me and put some distance between each of the herds." ¹⁷He ordered the first group, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, 'Who are you with? Where are you going? And whose herds are these in front of you?' ¹⁸say, 'They are your servant Jacob's, a gift sent to my master Esau. And Jacob is actually right behind us.'" ¹⁹He also ordered the second group, the third group, and everybody following the herds, "Say exactly the same thing to Esau when you find him. ²⁰Say also, 'Your servant Jacob is right behind us.'" Jacob thought, I may be able to pacify Esau with the gift I'm sending ahead. When I meet him, perhaps he will be kind to me. ²¹So Jacob sent the gift ahead of him, but he spent that night in the camp.

Jacob wrestles with God

²²Jacob got up during the night, took his two wives, his two women servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed the Jabbok River's shallow water. ²³He took them and everything that belonged to him, and he helped them cross the river. ²⁴But Jacob stayed apart by himself, and a man wrestled with him until dawn broke. ²⁵When the man saw that he couldn't defeat Jacob, he grabbed Jacob's thigh and tore a muscle in Jacob's thigh as he wrestled with him. ²⁶The man said, "Let me go because the dawn is breaking."

But Jacob said, "I won't let you go until you bless me."

²⁷He said to Jacob, "What's your name?" and he said, "Jacob." ²⁸Then he said, "Your name won't be Jacob any longer, but Israel,[†] because you struggled with God and with men and won."

²⁹Jacob also asked and said, "Tell me your name."

But he said, "Why do you ask for my name?" and he blessed Jacob there. ³⁰Jacob named the place Peniel,[‡] "because I've seen God face-to-face, and my life has been saved."³¹The sun rose as Jacob passed Penuel, limping because of his thigh. ³²Therefore, Israelites don't eat the tendon attached to the thigh muscle to this day, because he grabbed Jacob's thigh muscle at the tendon.

Esau forgives Jacob

33Jacob looked up and saw Esau approaching with four hundred men. Jacob divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two women servants. ²He put the servants and their children first, Leah and her children after them, and Rachel and Joseph last. ³He himself went in front of them and bowed to the ground seven times as he was approaching his brother. ⁴But Esau ran to meet him, threw his arms around his neck, kissed him, and they wept. ⁵Esau looked up and saw the women and children and said, "Who are these with you?"

Jacob said, "The children that God generously gave your servant." ⁶The women

LIFE PRESERVER

Who was Jacob wrestling?

Genesis 32:22-32

Jacob was traveling with his family to meet his brother Esau when he met a man one night and wrestled with him. Jacob was winning until the man tore one of Jacob's muscles. That's when he realized he was wrestling with God and asked for a blessing. The blessing God gave Jacob was a new name, Israel. Jacob knew he hadn't been wrestling a stranger but had actually seen God face-to-face. 💧

[†]Or God struggles or one who struggles with God [‡]Or face of God

servants and their children came forward and bowed down. ⁷Then Leah and her servants also came forward and bowed, and afterward Joseph and Rachel came forward and bowed.

⁸Esau said, "What's the meaning of this entire group of animals that I met?"

Jacob said, "To ask for my master's kindness."

⁹Esau said, "I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what's yours."

¹⁰Jacob said, "No, please, do me the kindness of accepting my gift. Seeing your face is like seeing God's face, since you've accepted me so warmly. ¹¹Take this present that I've brought because God has been generous to me, and I have everything I need." So Jacob persuaded him, and he took it.



Unexpected Joy *Genesis 33:4, 11*

Jacob expected to be killed for the ways in which he had wronged his brother Esau. Instead, Esau ran to meet Jacob and gave him a big hug. If you've ever expected to be punished for something you did wrong but were forgiven instead, you know how Jacob must have felt. Being welcomed with forgiveness when we expect anger or punishment is an unexpected joy. Forgiveness is an amazing gift both to offer and to receive. 💧

¹²Esau said, "Let's break camp and set out, and I'll go with you."

¹³But Jacob said to him, "My master knows that the children aren't strong and that I am responsible for the nursing flocks and cattle. If I push them hard for even one day, all of the flocks will die. ¹⁴My master, go on ahead of your servant, but I've got to take it easy, going only as fast as the animals in front of me and the children are able to go, until I meet you in Seir."

¹⁵Esau said, "Let me leave some of my people with you."

But Jacob said, "Why should you do this since my master has already been so kind to me?" ¹⁶That day Esau returned on the road to Seir, ¹⁷but Jacob traveled to Succoth. He built

a house for himself but made temporary shelters for his animals; therefore, he named the place Succoth.[†]

Dinah and the conflict at Shechem

¹⁸Jacob arrived safely at the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan on his trip from Paddan-aram, and he camped in front of the city. ¹⁹He bought the section of the field where he pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred qesitahs.[‡] ²⁰Then he set up an altar there and named it El Elohe Israel.[‡]

34 Dinah, the daughter whom Leah had borne to Jacob, went out to meet the women of that country. ²When Shechem the son of the Hivite Hamor and the country's prince saw her, he took her, slept with her, and humiliated her. ³He was drawn to Dinah, Jacob's daughter. He loved the young woman and tried to win her heart. ⁴Shechem said to his father Hamor, "Get this girl for me as my wife."⁵ Now Jacob heard that Shechem defiled his daughter Dinah; but his sons were with the animals in the countryside, so he decided to keep quiet until they got back. ⁶Meanwhile, Hamor, Shechem's father, went out to Jacob to speak with him. ⁷Just then, Jacob's sons got back from the countryside. When they heard what had happened, they were deeply offended and very angry, because Shechem had disgraced Israel by sleeping with Jacob's daughter. Such things are simply not done.

⁸Hamor said to them, "My son Shechem's heart is set on your daughter. Please let him marry her. ⁹Arrange marriages with us: give us your daughters and take our daughters for yourselves. ¹⁰Live with us. The land is available to you: settle down, travel through it, and buy property in it."

¹¹Shechem said to Dinah's father and brothers, "If you approve of me, tell me what you want, and I will give it to you. ¹²Make the bride price and marriage gifts as large as you like, and I will pay whatever you tell me. Then let me marry the young woman."

¹³Jacob's sons responded deviously to Shechem and his father Hamor because Shechem defiled their sister Dinah. ¹⁴They

[†]Or temporary shelters [‡]A monetary weight [‡]Or El, God of Israel



LIFE PRESERVER

**Dinah, Jacob's daughter,
is hurt** *Genesis 34*

In a very violent story, Jacob's only daughter Dinah was attacked by a man who wanted to marry her. This behavior is just as hard to hear about and understand in the Bible as it is when violent acts happen to people today. It's important to understand that the same questions and emotions we have when bad things happen were also present in Bible times. And just as we would today, people close to Dinah wanted revenge. However, Jacob didn't believe violence would resolve conflict, so he didn't allow his sons, Simeon and Levi, to inherit his estate because he knew they had violently attacked the man who hurt their sister.

The world Dinah lived in was dominated by men. Fathers, brothers, or husbands were responsible for the care of wives, daughters, and sisters. All we hear in this story is a description of what happened and the response of Dinah's family. We're left to wonder what this woman thought and how she reacted to this situation. But we can be sure she experienced emotions as varied and deep as our own. 💧



said to them, "We can't do this, allowing our sisters to marry uncircumcised men, because it's disgraceful to us. ¹⁵We can only agree to do this if you circumcise every male as we do. ¹⁶Then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves. We will live with you and be one people. ¹⁷But if you don't listen to us and become circumcised, we will take our daughter and leave."

¹⁸Their idea seemed like a good one to Hamor and Hamor's son Shechem. ¹⁹The young man didn't waste any time doing this because he liked Jacob's daughter so much. He was more respected than anyone else in his father's household. ²⁰Hamor and his son Shechem went to their city's gate and spoke to the men of their city. ²¹"These men want peace with us. Let them live in the land and travel through it; there's plenty of land for them. We will marry their daughters and give them our daughters. ²²But the men will agree to live with us and become one people only if we circumcise every male just as they do. ²³Their livestock, their property, and all of their animals—won't they be ours? Let's agree with them and let them live with

us." ²⁴Everyone at the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem, so every able-bodied male in the city was circumcised.

²⁵On the third day, when they were still in pain, two of Jacob's sons and Dinah's brothers Simeon and Levi took their swords, came into the city, which suspected nothing, and killed every male. ²⁶They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with their swords, took Dinah from Shechem's household, and left. ²⁷When Jacob's other sons discovered the dead, they looted the city that had defiled their sister. ²⁸They took their flocks, their cattle, and their donkeys, whether in the city or in the fields nearby. ²⁹They carried off their property, their children, and their wives. They looted the entire place. ³⁰Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You've put me in danger by making me offensive to those who live here in the land, to the Canaanites and the Perizzites. I have only a few men. They may join forces, attack me, and destroy me, me and my household."

³¹They said, "But didn't he treat our sister like a prostitute?"

Jacob establishes worship at Bethel

35 God said to Jacob, "Get up, go to Bethel, and live there. Build an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you ran away from your brother Esau."

²Jacob said to his household and to everyone who was with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you. Clean yourselves and change your clothes. ³Then let's rise and go up to Bethel so that I can build an altar there to the God who answered me when I was in trouble and

SAILBOAT

OBEDIENCE

New Purpose *Genesis 35:1-7*

God told Jacob to go to Bethel, live there, and build an altar. Jacob did what God asked. With a renewed sense of purpose he did everything he could to be obedient to God, who had done so much for him. Not only did Jacob become more obedient to God, he also made sure everyone in his household did the same. In the past Jacob had been full of tricks and cheating, but in this story he was ready to live in obedience to God and follow God's commands. 💧



who has been with me wherever I've gone.”⁴ So they gave Jacob all of the foreign gods they had, as well as the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the terebinth at Shechem.⁵ When they set out, God made all of the surrounding cities fearful so that they didn't pursue Jacob's sons. ⁶Jacob and all of the people with him arrived in Luz, otherwise known as Bethel, in the land of Canaan. ⁷He built an altar there and named the place El-bethel,^w because God had revealed himself to him there when he ran away from his brother. ⁸Rebekah's nurse Deborah died and was buried at Bethel under the oak, and Jacob named it Allon-bacuth.^x

did you know?

Jacob, also called Israel, had twelve sons who became the foundation of the twelve tribes of Israel. Ishmael, Jacob's uncle and Abraham's oldest son, also had twelve sons. Jesus had twelve disciples. In Bible times, the number twelve meant that something was complete.

⁹God appeared to Jacob again, while he was on his way back from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. ¹⁰God said to him, “Your name is Jacob, but your name will be Jacob no longer. No, your name will be Israel.” And he named him Israel. ¹¹God said to him, “I am El Shaddai.^y Be fertile and multiply. A nation, even a large group of nations, will come from you; kings will descend from your own children. ¹²The land I gave to Abraham and to Isaac, I give to you; and I will give the land to your descendants after you.” ¹³Then God ascended, leaving him alone in the place where he spoke to him. ¹⁴So Jacob set up a sacred pillar, a stone pillar, at the place God spoke to him. He poured an offering of wine on it and then poured oil over it. ¹⁵Jacob named the place Bethel where God spoke to him.

Benjamin's birth and Rachel's death

¹⁶They left Bethel, and when they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel went into hard labor. ¹⁷During her difficult labor, the midwife said to her, “Don't be afraid. You have another son.” ¹⁸As her life faded away,

just before she died, she named him Ben-oni,^z but his father named him Benjamin.^a ¹⁹Rachel died and was buried near the road to Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem. ²⁰Jacob set up a pillar on her grave. It's the pillar on Rachel's tomb that's still there today. ²¹Israel continued his trip and pitched his tent farther on near the tower of Eder.

Jacob's family

²²While Israel stayed in that place, Reuben went and slept with Bilhah his father's secondary wife, and Israel heard about it.

Jacob had twelve sons. ²³The sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's oldest son, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. ²⁴The sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁵The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant, were Dan and Naphtali. ²⁶The sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant, were Gad and Asher. These were Jacob's sons born to him in Paddan-aram.

Isaac's death

²⁷Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, that is, Kiriath-arba. This is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac lived as immigrants. ²⁸At the age of 180 years, ²⁹Isaac took his last breath and died. He was buried with his ancestors after a long, satisfying life. His sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Esau's descendants

36 These are the descendants of Esau, that is, Edom. ²Esau married Canaanite women: Adah the daughter of the Hittite Elon; Oholibamah the daughter of Anah son of the Hittite Zibeon,^b ³and Basemath the daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth. ⁴Adah gave birth to Eliphaz for Esau, Basemath gave birth to Reuel, ⁵and Oholibamah gave birth to Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are Esau's sons born to him in the land of Canaan.

⁶Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and everyone in his household, and his livestock, all of his animals, and all of the property he had acquired in the land of Canaan; and he moved away from the land of Canaan^c and from his brother Jacob. ⁷They had so many possessions that they couldn't

^wOr God of Bethel ^xOr oak of weeping ^yOr God Almighty or God of the Mountain ^zOr my suffering son ^aOr right-hand son or strong son ^bLXX, Sam, Syr; MT daughter ^cLXX, Sam; MT to a land

live together. The land where they lived as immigrants couldn't support all of their livestock. ⁸So Esau, that is, Edom, lived in the mountains of Seir.

⁹These are the descendants of Esau, the ancestor of Edom, which lies in the mountains of Seir. ¹⁰These are the names of Edom's sons: Eliphaz son of Esau's wife Adah, and Reuel son of Esau's wife Basemath. ¹¹Eliphaz's sons were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. ¹²Timna was the secondary wife of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she gave birth to Amalek for Eliphaz. These are the sons of Esau's wife Adah. ¹³These are Reuel's sons: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These are the sons of Esau's wife Basemath. ¹⁴These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, Zibeon's son:^d she gave birth to Esau, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

¹⁵These are the tribal chiefs from Esau's sons. The sons of Eliphaz, Esau's oldest son: Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz, ¹⁶Chief Korah, Chief Gatam, and Chief Amalek. These are the tribal chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; they are Adah's sons. ¹⁷These are the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: Chief Nahath, Chief Zerah, Chief Shammah, and Chief Mizzah. These are the tribal chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom; they are the sons of Esau's wife Basemath. ¹⁸These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah: Chief Jeush, Chief Jalam, and Chief Korah. They are the tribal chiefs of Esau's wife Oholibamah the daughter of Anah. ¹⁹These are the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these are their tribal chiefs.

²⁰These are the sons of Seir, the Horite, who live in the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ²¹Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These are the Horite tribal chiefs, Seir's sons, in the land of Edom. ²²Lotan's sons are Hori and Heman, and Lotan's sister was Timna. ²³These are Shobal's sons: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. ²⁴These are Zibeon's sons: Aiah and Anah. Anah is the one who found water^e in the desert while pasturing his father Zibeon's donkeys.

²⁵These are Anah's children: Dishon

and Anah's daughter Oholibamah. ²⁶These are Dishon's^f sons: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. ²⁷These are Ezer's sons: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan. ²⁸These are Dishan's sons: Uz and Aran. ²⁹These are the Horite tribal chiefs: Chiefs Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ³⁰Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These are the Horite tribal chiefs, listed according to their chiefs in the land of Seir.

³¹These are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom before a king ruled over the Israelites. ³²Bela, Beor's son, ruled in Edom; his city's name was Dinhabah. ³³After Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah became king. ³⁴After Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites became king. ³⁵After Husham died, Hadad, Bedad's son who defeated Midian in the countryside of Moab, became king; his city's name was Avith. ³⁶After Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah became king. ³⁷After Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth on the river became king. ³⁸After Shaul died, Baal-hanan, Achbor's son, became king. ³⁹After Baal-hanan, Achbor's son, died, Hadar became king; his city's name was Pau and his wife's name was Mehetabel the daughter of Matred and granddaughter of Me-zahab.

⁴⁰These are the names of Esau's tribal chiefs according to their families, their locations, and their names: Chief Timna, Chief Alvah, Chief Jetheth, ⁴¹Chief Oholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, ⁴²Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, ⁴³Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These are Edom's tribal chiefs according to their settlements in the land they possessed. This is Esau, the ancestor of the Edomites.

Joseph dreams of power

37 Jacob lived in the land of Canaan where his father was an immigrant. ²This is the account of Jacob's descendants. Joseph was 17 years old and tended the flock with his brothers. While he was helping the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives, Joseph told their father unflattering things about them. ³Now Israel loved Joseph more

^dLXX, Sam, Syr; MT daughter ^eSyr; Heb uncertain ^fSam, Syr; MT Dishan's

than any of his other sons because he was born when Jacob was old. Jacob had made for him a long⁵ robe. ⁴When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of his brothers, they hated him and couldn't even talk nicely to him.

⁵Joseph had a dream and told it to his brothers, which made them hate him even more. ⁶He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had. ⁷When we were binding stalks of grain in the field, my stalk got up and stood upright, while your stalks gathered around it and bowed down to my stalk."

⁸His brothers said to him, "Will you really be our king and rule over us?" So they hated him even more because of the dreams he told them.

⁹Then Joseph had another dream and described it to his brothers: "I've just dreamed again, and this time the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

¹⁰When he described it to his father and brothers, his father scolded him and said to him, "What kind of dreams have you dreamed? Am I and your mother and your brothers supposed to come and bow down to the ground in front of you?" ¹¹His brothers were jealous of him, but his father took careful note of the matter.

Joseph's brothers take revenge

¹²Joseph's brothers went to tend their father's flocks near Shechem. ¹³Israel said to Joseph, "Aren't your brothers tending the sheep near Shechem? Come, I'll send you to them."

And he said, "I'm ready."

¹⁴Jacob said to him, "Go! Find out how your brothers are and how the flock is, and report back to me."

So Jacob sent him from the Hebron Valley. When he approached Shechem, ¹⁵a man found him wandering in the field and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

¹⁶Joseph said, "I'm looking for my brothers. Tell me, where are they tending the sheep?"

¹⁷The man said, "They left here. I heard them saying, 'Let's go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

¹⁸They saw Joseph in the distance before

he got close to them, and they plotted to kill him. ¹⁹The brothers said to each other, "Here comes the big dreamer. ²⁰Come on now, let's kill him and throw him into one of the cisterns, and we'll say a wild animal devoured him. Then we will see what becomes of his dreams!"

²¹When Reuben heard what they said, he saved him from them, telling them, "Let's not take his life." ²²Reuben said to them, "Don't spill his blood! Throw him into this desert cistern, but don't lay a hand on him." He intended to save Joseph from them and take him back to his father.

did you know?

Dreams are a big part of Joseph's story. In Joseph's time, people believed dreams showed people truths about themselves or their world. When Joseph's brothers heard his dreams, they were jealous and angry that Joseph thought he would rule over them, so they sold him as a slave.

²³When Joseph reached his brothers, they stripped off Joseph's long robe, ²⁴took him, and threw him into the cistern, an empty cistern with no water in it. ²⁵When they sat down to eat, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with camels carrying sweet resin, medicinal resin, and fragrant resin on their way down to Egypt. ²⁶Judah said to his brothers, "What do we gain if we kill our brother and hide his blood? ²⁷Come on, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites. Let's not harm him because he's our brother; he's family." His brothers agreed. ²⁸When some Midianite traders passed by, they pulled Joseph up out of the cistern. They sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, and they brought Joseph to Egypt.

²⁹When Reuben returned to the cistern and found that Joseph wasn't in it, he tore his clothes. ³⁰Then he returned to his brothers and said, "The boy's gone! And I—where can I go now?"

³¹His brothers took Joseph's robe, slaughtered a male goat, and dipped the robe in the blood. ³²They took the long robe, brought it to their father, and said, "We found this. See if it's your son's robe or not."

³³He recognized it and said, "It's my son's robe! A wild animal has devoured him. Joseph must have been torn to pieces!" ³⁴Then Jacob tore his clothes, put a simple mourning cloth around his waist, and mourned for his son for many days. ³⁵All of his sons and daughters got up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted, telling them, "I'll go to my grave mourning for my son." And Joseph's father wept for him. ³⁶Meanwhile the Midianites had sold Joseph to the Egyptians, to Potiphar, Pharaoh's chief officer, commander of the royal guard.

Tamar's place in Judah's family

38At that time, Judah moved away from his brothers and settled near an Adulamite named Hirah. ²There Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her. After he slept with her, ³she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, whom she^h named Er. ⁴She became

pregnant again, gave birth to a son, and named him Onan. ⁵Then she gave birth to one more son and named him Shelah. She was in Chezib when she gave birth to him.

⁶Judah married his oldest son Er to a woman named Tamar. ⁷But the LORD considered Judah's oldest son Er immoral, and the LORD put him to death. ⁸Judah said to Onan, "Go to your brother's wife, do your duty as her brother-in-law, and provide children for your brother." ⁹Onan knew the children wouldn't be his so when he slept with his brother's wife, he wasted his semen on the ground, so he wouldn't give his brother children. ¹⁰The LORD considered what he did as wrong and put him to death too. ¹¹Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Stay as a widow in your father's household until my son Shelah grows up." He thought Shelah would die like his brothers had. So Tamar went and lived in her father's household.

^hSam, Tg, MT he



The Terrible Power of Jealousy *Genesis 37:1-36*

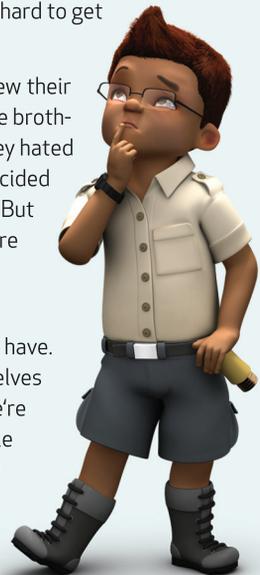
It's not always easy to get along with others. Sometimes it's even hard to get along with people who are close to us, like family or friends.

It was difficult for Joseph and his brothers. Joseph's brothers knew their father Jacob loved Joseph more than he loved them. This made the brothers feel jealous and angry. They wanted the things Joseph had. They hated Joseph so much that they wanted to kill him. In the end, they decided to sell him into slavery and tell their father that Joseph was dead. But instead of making things better at home, the brothers' jealousy tore their family apart and left their father feeling sad, believing that Joseph had died.

It's hard when other people have more talents or things than we have. The Apostle Paul wrote that it isn't wise for us to compare ourselves with others (2 Cor 10:12). It's better to be grateful for the ways we're different from everyone else than to focus on what other people have that we don't. God created each one of us to be different for God's good purpose.

Name two things that are special about you.

How can you use those special things to serve God?





LIFE PRESERVER

What happened to Tamar?

Genesis 38

Many customs described in the Bible sound strange to us because we live in a very different time and place. In the culture Judah and Tamar lived in, women had no legal rights. If a woman's husband died, she had nothing, no way to provide for herself and no way of having children. It was the duty of her husband's closest male relative to take care of her.

When his son died, Judah should have helped his daughter-in-law, Tamar, find a new husband from among his other sons, but he didn't. Tamar got tired of living without rights, so she tricked Judah into sleeping with her so she could get pregnant and have a child. Some months later people told Judah his daughter-in-law was pregnant. When he met with Tamar and heard her story, he realized her situation was his fault.

Though this story may sound strange to us, it provides a glimpse into the life of women in this culture. Tamar's desire to be taken care of, respected as a woman, and have a child were the reasons for her actions. She is recognized as part of the family tree from which David, the second king of Israel, would descend. 💧

12After a long time, Judah's wife the daughter of Shua died. Then, after a period of mourning, he and his neighbor Hirah the Adullamite went up to Timnah, to those who were shearing his sheep. 13Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is now on his way up to Timnah to shear his sheep." 14So Tamar took off the clothing she wore as a widow, covered herself with a veil, put on makeup,¹ and sat down at the entrance to Enaim on the road to Timnah, since she realized that although Shelah had already grown up, she hadn't been given to him as a wife.

15Judah saw her and thought she was a prostitute because she had covered her face. 16He turned to her beside the road and said, "Let me sleep with you," because he didn't know she was his daughter-in-law.

She said, "What will you give me for sleeping with you?"

17He said, "I will give you a kid goat from my flock."

She said, "Only if you give me some deposit, as security to guarantee that you will send it."

18He said, "What kind of deposit should I give you?"

And she said, "Your seal, its cord, and the staff in your hand." He gave these to her, slept with her, and she became pregnant by him.

19Then she got up, left, and took off her veil, dressing once again in the clothing she wore as a widow. 20Judah sent the kid goat with his neighbor the Adullamite so he could take back the deposits from the woman, but he couldn't find her. 21He asked the locals of that place, "Where's the consecrated worker^j who was at Enaim on the road?"

But they said, "There's no consecrated worker here."

22So he went back to Judah and said, "I couldn't find her. The locals even said, 'There's no holy woman here.'"

23Judah said, "Let her keep everything so we aren't laughed at. I did send this kid goat, but you couldn't find her."

24About three months later, Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has become a prostitute and is now pregnant because of it."

And Judah said, "Bring her out so that she may be burned."

25When she was brought out, she sent this message to her father-in-law, "I'm pregnant by the man who owns these things. See if you recognize whose seal, cord, and staff these are."

26Judah recognized them and said, "She's more righteous than I am, because I didn't allow her to marry my son Shelah." Judah never knew her intimately again.

27When she gave birth, she discovered she had twins in her womb. 28At birth, one boy put out his hand, and the midwife took it and tied a red thread on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." 29As soon as he pulled his hand back, his brother came out, and she said, "You've burst out on your own." So he was named Perez.^k 30Afterward, his brother with the red thread on his hand came out, and he was named Zerah.^l

Joseph's rise and betrayal

39When Joseph had been taken down to Egypt, Potiphar, Pharaoh's chief

ⁱOr perfumed herself or wrapped herself up ^jTraditionally cultic prostitute ^kOr bursting out ^lOr dawn

officer, the commander of the royal guard and an Egyptian, purchased him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. ²The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man and served in his Egyptian master's household. ³His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made everything he did successful. ⁴Potiphar thought highly of Joseph, and Joseph became his assistant; he appointed Joseph head of his household and put everything he had under Joseph's supervision. ⁵From the time he appointed Joseph head of his household and of everything he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's household because of Joseph. The LORD blessed everything he had, both in the household and in the field. ⁶So he handed over everything he had to Joseph and didn't pay attention to anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome.

⁷Some time later, his master's wife became attracted to Joseph and said, "Sleep with me."

⁸He refused and said to his master's wife, "With me here, my master doesn't pay attention to anything in his household; he's put everything he has under my supervision. ⁹No one is greater than I am in this household, and he hasn't denied me anything except you, since you are his wife. How could I do this terrible thing and sin against God?" ¹⁰Every single day she tried to convince him, but he wouldn't agree to sleep with her or even to be with her.

¹¹One day when Joseph arrived at the house to do his work, none of the household's men were there. ¹²She grabbed

his garment, saying, "Lie down with me." But he left his garment in her hands and ran outside. ¹³When she realized that he had left his garment in her hands and run outside, ¹⁴she summoned the men of her house and said to them, "Look, my husband brought us a Hebrew to ridicule us. He came to me to lie down with me, but I screamed. ¹⁵When he heard me raise my voice and scream, he left his garment with me and ran outside." ¹⁶She kept his garment with her until Joseph's master came home, ¹⁷and she told him the same thing: "The Hebrew slave whom you brought to us, to ridicule me, came to me; ¹⁸but when I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment with me and ran outside."

¹⁹When Joseph's master heard the thing that his wife told him, "This is what your servant did to me," he was incensed. ²⁰Joseph's master took him and threw him in jail, the place where the king's prisoners were held. While he was in jail, ²¹the LORD was with Joseph and remained loyal to him. He caused the jail's commander to think highly of Joseph. ²²The jail's commander put all of the prisoners in the jail under Joseph's supervision, and he was the one who determined everything that happened there. ²³The jail's commander paid no attention to anything under Joseph's supervision, because the LORD was with him and made everything he did successful.

Joseph interprets dreams in prison

40 Some time later, both the wine steward and the baker for Egypt's king offended their master, the king of Egypt. ²Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief wine steward and the chief baker, ³and he put them under arrest with the commander of the royal guard in the same jail where Joseph was imprisoned. ⁴The commander of the royal guard assigned Joseph to assist them. After they had been under arrest for some time, ⁵both of them—the wine steward and the baker for Egypt's king who were imprisoned in the jail—had dreams one night, and each man's dream had its own meaning. ⁶When Joseph met them in the morning, he saw that they were upset. ⁷He asked the officers of Pharaoh who were under arrest with him in his master's house, "Why do you look so distressed today?"

SAILBOAT

HONEST AND TRUE



Be Responsible Genesis 39:8-12

Potiphar, Pharaoh's top officer, put great trust in Joseph. Joseph was his assistant and supervised Potiphar's entire household. This was a big responsibility and showed Potiphar trusted Joseph. When Potiphar's wife tried to get Joseph to do something wrong, Joseph refused, even though he knew his refusal would cause trouble for him. It takes integrity and a strong character to do what is right, especially if those actions are unpopular with others. 💧

⁸They answered, “We’ve both had dreams, but there’s no one to interpret them.”

Joseph said to them, “Don’t interpretations belong to God? Describe your dreams to me.”

⁹The chief wine steward described his dream to Joseph: “In my dream there was a vine right in front of me, ¹⁰and on the vine were three branches. When it budded, its blossoms appeared, and its clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand, so I took the grapes, crushed them into Pharaoh’s cup, and put the cup in Pharaoh’s hand.”

¹²Joseph said to him, “This is the dream’s interpretation: The three branches are three days. ¹³After three days, Pharaoh will give you an audience and return you to your position. You will put Pharaoh’s cup in his hand, just the way things were before when you were his wine steward. ¹⁴But please, remember me when you are doing well and be loyal to me. Put in a good word for me to Pharaoh, so he sets me free from this prison. ¹⁵I was stolen from the land of the Hebrews, and here too I’ve done nothing to be thrown into this dungeon.”

SAILBOAT

HONEST AND TRUE



Dream On Genesis 40:15

Joseph’s life was about to take another turn. He went from favored son, to servant, to prisoner, but no matter where he was, he did his best to follow God’s ways. Joseph interpreted the dream of the chief wine steward and let him know things were going to work out for him. Even though he was in prison, Joseph didn’t give up. He continued to believe God was with him and trusted things would eventually work out for him too. Because he trusted God, he continued to act with integrity even when it looked like he had been forgotten. 💧

¹⁶When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, “It was the same for me. In my dream, there were three baskets of white bread^m on my head. ¹⁷In the basket on top there were baked goods for Pharaoh’s food, but birds were eating them out of the basket on my head.”

¹⁸Joseph responded, “This is the dream’s interpretation: The three baskets are three days. ¹⁹After three days, Pharaoh will give you an audience and will hang you from a tree where birds will peck your flesh from you.”

²⁰The third day was Pharaoh’s birthday, and he gave a party for all of his servants. Before all of his servants, he gave an audience to the chief wine steward and the chief baker. ²¹He returned the chief wine steward to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh’s hand. ²²But the chief baker he hanged, just as Joseph had said would happen when he interpreted their dreams for them. ²³But the chief wine steward didn’t remember Joseph; he forgot all about him.

Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s dreams

41Two years later, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing near the Nile. ²In front of him, seven healthy-looking, fattened cows climbed up out of the Nile and grazed on the reeds. ³Just then, seven other cows, terrible-looking and scrawny, climbed up out of the Nile after them and stood beside them on the bank of the Nile. ⁴The terrible-looking, scrawny cows devoured the seven healthy-looking, fattened cows. Then Pharaoh woke up. ⁵He went back to sleep and had a second dream, in which seven ears of grain, full and healthy, grew on a single stalk. ⁶Just then, seven ears of grain, scrawny and scorched by the east wind, sprouted after them, ⁷and the scrawny ears swallowed up the full and well-formed ears. Then Pharaoh woke up and realized it was a dream. ⁸In the morning, he was disturbed and summoned all of Egypt’s religious expertsⁿ and all of its advisors. Pharaoh described his dreams^o to them, but they couldn’t interpret them for Pharaoh.

⁹Then the chief wine steward spoke to Pharaoh: “Today I’ve just remembered my mistake. ¹⁰Pharaoh was angry with his servants and put me and the chief baker under arrest with the commander of the royal guard. ¹¹We both dreamed one night, he and I, and each of our dreams had its own interpretation. ¹²A young Hebrew man, a servant of the commander of the royal guard, was with us. We described our dreams to him,

^mHeb uncertain ⁿOr magicians ^oSam; MT dream

and he interpreted our dreams for us, giving us an interpretation for each dream. ¹³His interpretations came true exactly: Pharaoh restored me to my position but hanged him.”

¹⁴So Pharaoh summoned Joseph, and they quickly brought him from the dungeon. He shaved, changed clothes, and appeared before Pharaoh. ¹⁵Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I had a dream, but no one could interpret it. Then I heard that when you hear a dream, you can interpret it.”

¹⁶Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It’s not me. God will give Pharaoh a favorable response.”

SAILBOAT

HUMILITY

It’s Not Me, It’s God *Genesis 41:16*

Two years had passed since Joseph, who was in prison, had interpreted a dream of the chief wine steward. The wine steward remembered this when Pharaoh needed someone to interpret his strange dreams. Joseph was able to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams correctly. Joseph could have taken credit for this ability, but he was humble and acknowledged it came from God. When we receive praise for doing something very well, we can be tempted to be proud. But all our abilities come from God. 💧

¹⁷So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile. ¹⁸In front of me, seven fattened, stout cows climbed up out of the Nile and grazed on the reeds. ¹⁹Just then, seven other cows, weak and frail and thin, climbed up after them. I’ve never seen such awful cows in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰Then the thin, frail cows devoured the first seven, fattened cows. ²¹But after they swallowed them whole, no one would have known it. They looked just as bad as they had before. Then I woke up. ²²I went to sleep again^p and saw in my dream seven full and healthy ears of grain growing on one stalk. ²³Just then, seven hard and thin ears of grain, scorched by the east wind, sprouted after them, ²⁴and the thin ears swallowed up the healthy ears. I told the religious experts,^q but they couldn’t explain it to me.”

²⁵Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Pharaoh has actually had one dream. God has announced to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁶The seven healthy cows are seven years, and the seven healthy ears of grain are seven years. It’s actually one dream. ²⁷The seven thin and frail cows, climbing up after them, are seven years. The seven thin ears of grain, scorched by the east wind, are seven years of famine. ²⁸It’s just as I told Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹Seven years of great abundance are now coming throughout the entire land of Egypt. ³⁰After them, seven years of famine will appear, and all of the abundance in the land of Egypt will be forgotten. The famine will devastate the land. ³¹No one will remember the abundance in the land because the famine that follows will be so very severe. ³²The dream occurred to Pharaoh twice because God has determined to do it, and God will make it happen soon.

Joseph’s rise to power

³³Now Pharaoh should find an intelligent, wise man and give him authority over the land of Egypt. ³⁴Then Pharaoh should appoint administrators over the land and take one-fifth of all the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. ³⁵During the good years that are coming, they should collect all such food and store the grain under Pharaoh’s control, protecting the food in the cities. ³⁶This food will be reserved for the seven years of famine to follow in the land of Egypt so that the land won’t be ravaged by the famine.”

³⁷This advice seemed wise to Pharaoh and all his servants, ³⁸and Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man with more God-given gifts^r than this one?” ³⁹Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, no one is as intelligent and wise as you are. ⁴⁰You will be in charge of my kingdom,^s and all my people will obey^t your command. Only as the enthroned king will I be greater than you.” ⁴¹Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Know this: I’ve given you authority over the entire land of Egypt.” ⁴²Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on

^pLXX, Syr, Vulg, MT lacks *I went to sleep again*. ^qOr magicians ^rOr like this one, in whom is the spirit of God ^sOr house

^tLXX; Heb uncertain, perhaps *submit themselves to your command*

Joseph's hand, he dressed him in linen clothes, and he put a gold necklace around his neck. ⁴³He put Joseph on the chariot of his second-in-command, and everyone in front of him cried out, "Attention!"^u So Pharaoh installed him over the entire land of Egypt. ⁴⁴Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh; no one will do anything or go anywhere in all the land of Egypt without your permission." ⁴⁵Pharaoh renamed Joseph, Zaphenath-paneah, and married him to Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera the priest of Heliopolis.^v

Then Joseph assumed control of the land of Egypt. ⁴⁶Joseph was 30 years old when he began to serve Pharaoh, Egypt's king, when he left Pharaoh's court and traveled through the entire land of Egypt. ⁴⁷During the seven years of abundance, the land produced plentifully. ⁴⁸He collected all of the food during the seven years of abundance^w in the land of Egypt, and stored the food in cities. In each city, he stored the food from the fields surrounding it. ⁴⁹Joseph amassed grain like the sand of the sea. There was so much that he stopped trying to measure it because it was beyond measuring. ⁵⁰Before the years of famine arrived, Asenath the daughter of Potiphera, priest of Heliopolis,^x gave birth to two sons for Joseph. ⁵¹Joseph named the oldest son Manasseh,^y "because," he said, "God has helped me forget all of my troubles and everyone in my father's household." ⁵²He named the second Ephraim,^z "because," he said, "God has given me children in the land where I've been treated harshly."

⁵³The seven years of abundance in the land of Egypt came to an end, ⁵⁴and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. The famine struck every country, but the entire land of Egypt had bread. ⁵⁵When the famine ravaged the entire land of Egypt and the people pleaded to Pharaoh for bread, Pharaoh said to all of the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph. Do whatever he tells you." ⁵⁶The famine covered every part of the land, and Joseph opened all of the granaries^a and sold grain to the Egyptians. In the land of Egypt, the famine became more and more severe. ⁵⁷Every country came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because in

did you know?

Pharaoh gave Joseph his signet ring. When Pharaoh made a law, he used this ring to make an impression in wax at the bottom of the scroll. This sign showed that the law came from Pharaoh. With Pharaoh's ring, Joseph had the power to make laws and rule the people.

every country the famine had also become more severe.

Joseph's brothers arrive in Egypt

42 When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why are you staring blankly at each other? ²I've just heard that there's grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us so that we can survive and not starve to death." ³So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. ⁴However, Jacob didn't send Joseph's brother Benjamin along with his brothers because he thought something bad might happen to him. ⁵Israel's sons came to buy grain with others who also came since the famine had spread to the land of Canaan.

⁶As for Joseph, he was the land's governor, and he was the one selling grain to all the land's people. When Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him, their faces to the ground. ⁷When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he acted like he didn't know them. He spoke to them with a harsh tone and said, "Where have you come from?"

And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."

⁸Joseph recognized his brothers, but they didn't recognize him. ⁹Joseph remembered the dreams he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "You are spies. You've come to look for the country's weaknesses."

¹⁰They said to him, "No, Master. Your servants have just come to buy food. ¹¹We are all sons of one man. We are honest men. Your servants aren't spies."

¹²He said to them, "No. You've come to look for the country's weaknesses."

¹³They said, "We, your servants, are twelve brothers, sons of one man in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, but one is gone."

^uAn Egyptian loanword similar to the Heb word *kneel* ^vHeb On ^wLXX; MT lacks *of abundance*. ^xHeb On ^yOr *making forget*

^zSounds like *has given me children*. ^aLXX, Syr; MT *what was in them*

¹⁴Joseph said to them, "It's just as I've said to you. You are spies!" ¹⁵But here is how to prove yourselves: As Pharaoh lives, you won't leave here until your youngest brother arrives. ¹⁶Send one of you to get your brother, but the rest of you will stay in prison. We will find out if your words are true. If not, as Pharaoh lives, you are certainly spies."

Joseph's brothers return to Canaan

¹⁷He put them all in prison for three days. ¹⁸On the third day, Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I'm a God-fearing man. ¹⁹If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay in prison, and the rest of you, go, take grain back to those in your households who are hungry. ²⁰But bring your youngest brother back to me so that your words will prove true and you won't die."

So they prepared to do this. ²¹The brothers said to each other, "We are clearly guilty

for what we did to our brother when we saw his life in danger and when he begged us for mercy, but we didn't listen. That's why we're in this danger now."

²²Reuben responded to them, "Didn't I tell you, 'Don't do anything wrong to the boy?' But you wouldn't listen. So now this is payback for his death." ²³They didn't know that Joseph was listening to them because they were using an interpreter. ²⁴He stepped away from them and wept. When he returned, he spoke with them again. Then he took Simeon from them and tied him up in front of them.

²⁵Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put back each man's silver into his own sack, and to give them provisions for their trip, and it was done. ²⁶They loaded their grain onto their donkeys, and they set out. ²⁷When they stopped to spend the night, one of them opened his sack to feed his donkey, and he saw his silver at the top of his



Planting and Harvesting *Genesis 42:1-25*

If you planted a green bean seed would it grow into a tomato? Of course not. God created all things—flowers, trees, birds, fish, animals, and people—to grow from their own types. A sunflower seed grows into a sunflower. A baby lion grows into an adult lion. This same idea is also true for our actions. Small acts of kindness, which we could call seeds, grow into large acts of kindness, which we could call plants.

Joseph's brothers had hatred in their hearts. Their hatred may have started small, like a seed, but it grew much, much bigger. Joseph's brothers' hatred grew so large that they sold him into slavery, which was hurtful to Joseph and also bad for their family. Years later they feared losing another brother as payback for what they had done!

Have you ever done or said something unkind to someone else? Did anything good come from those words or actions? The Apostle Paul wrote about planting and harvesting. He said that whatever we plant in selfishness—like when we're unkind to someone else—will result in a bad harvest. When we plant good things for God, we'll reap a harvest of eternal life (Gal 6:7-8).



Name two things you're planting in your heart.

What will grow from these things?

sack. ²⁸He said to his brothers, "My silver's been returned. It's right here in my sack." Their hearts stopped. Terrified, they said to each other, "What has God done to us?"

LIGHTHOUSE

CHANGED HEART AND LIFE



Time to Change *Genesis 42:17-28*

Joseph's brothers were in a difficult situation. They didn't recognize their brother Joseph, and they were in jail so Joseph could find out more about their motives. While in prison they expressed deep regret for what they had done to Joseph. When Joseph heard their words of regret, he cried. When we realize we've done something wrong, it's important to seek forgiveness and see if there is a way to make things right. 💧

²⁹When they got back to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they described to him everything that had happened to them: ³⁰"The man, the country's governor, spoke to us with a harsh tone and accused us of being spies in the country. ³¹We told him, 'We're honest men, not spies. ³²We are twelve brothers, all our father's sons. One of us is gone, but the youngest is right now with our father in the land of Canaan.' ³³The man, the country's governor, told us, 'This is how I will know you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers with me, take grain for those in your households who are hungry, and go. ³⁴But bring back your youngest brother to me. Then I will know that you are not spies but honest men. I will give your brother back to you, and you may travel throughout the country.'"

³⁵When they opened their sacks, each man found a pouch of his silver in his sack. When they and their father saw their pouches of silver, they were afraid. ³⁶Their father Jacob said to them, "You've taken my children from me. Joseph's gone. Simeon's gone. And you are taking Benjamin. All this can't really be happening to me!"

³⁷Reuben said to his father, "You may put both of my sons to death if I don't bring him back to you. Make him my responsibility, and I will make sure he returns to you."

³⁸But Jacob said to him, "My son won't go down with you because his brother's dead and he's been left all alone. If anything were to happen to him on the trip you are taking, you would send me—old as I am—to my grave in grief."

Joseph's brothers return with Benjamin

43 The famine was severe in the land, ²and when they had eaten all the grain that they brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go back and buy us a little food."

³Judah said to him, "The man was absolutely serious when he said, 'You may not see me again without your brother with you.' ⁴If you agree to send our brother with us, then we will go down and buy you food. ⁵But if you don't agree to send him, then we can't go down because the man said to us, 'You may not see me again without your brother with you.'"

⁶Israel said, "Why have you caused me such pain by telling the man you had another brother?"

⁷They said, "The man asked us pointedly about our family: 'Is your father still alive? Do you have a brother?' So we told him just what we've said. How were we to know he'd say, 'Bring your brother down here?'"

⁸Judah said to his father Israel, "Send the young man with me. Let's get ready to leave so that we can stay alive and not die—we, you, and our children. ⁹I will guarantee his safety; you can hold me responsible. If I don't bring him back to you and place him here in front of you, it will be my fault forever. ¹⁰If we hadn't waited so long, we would've returned twice by now."

¹¹Their father Israel said to them, "If it has to be, then do this. Take in your bags some of the land's choice produce, and bring it down to the man as a gift: a little medicinal resin, a little honey, gum, resin, pistachios, and almonds. ¹²Take twice as much silver with you, and take back the silver returned in the top of your sacks. It might have been a mistake. ¹³And take your brother, get ready, and go back to the man. ¹⁴May God Almighty^b make the man compassionate toward you so that he may send back our other brother and Benjamin with you. But me, if I'm left childless, then I'm left childless."

^bHeb *El Shaddai* or *God of the Mountain*

¹⁵So the men took this gift. They took twice as much silver with them, together with Benjamin. They left, traveled down to Egypt, and received an audience with Joseph. ¹⁶When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the manager of his household, "Bring the men to the house and slaughter an animal and prepare it because the men will have dinner with me at noon."¹⁷The man did as Joseph told him and brought the men to Joseph's house.

SAILBOAT

HONEST AND TRUE



Honesty Is the Best Policy Genesis 43:12

Joseph's brothers went back home unaware that the Egyptian they had met was their brother Joseph. They explained what had happened to their father, who now went by the name Israel, instead of Jacob. Israel encouraged his sons to do everything that was asked of them and more. Israel believed being honest and truthful would make this unknown man show them mercy. 

¹⁸When they were brought to Joseph's house, the men were frightened and said, "We've been brought here because of the silver put back in our sacks on our first trip so he can overpower us, capture us, make slaves of us, and take our donkeys."

¹⁹They approached the man who was Joseph's household manager and spoke to him at the house's entrance: ²⁰"Please, Master, we came down the first time just to buy food, ²¹but when we stopped to spend the night and opened our sacks, there was the exact amount of each man's silver at the top of his sack. We've brought it back with us, ²²and we've brought down with us additional silver to buy food. We don't know who put our silver in our sacks."

²³He said, "You are fine. Don't be afraid. Your God and your father's God must have hidden a treasure in your sacks. I received your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

²⁴The manager brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water to wash their feet and feed for their donkeys. ²⁵They prepared the gift, anticipating Joseph's

arrival at noon, since they had heard that they would have a meal there. ²⁶When Joseph came into the house, they presented him the gift they had brought with them into the house, and they bowed low in front of him. ²⁷He asked them how they were and said, "How is your elderly father, about whom you spoke? Is he still alive?"

²⁸They said, "Your servant our father is fine. He's still alive." And they bowed down again with deep respect.

²⁹Joseph looked up and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son, and he said, "Is this your youngest brother whom you told me about? God be gracious to you, my son."

³⁰Joseph's feelings for his brother were so strong he was about to weep, so he rushed to another room and wept there. ³¹He washed his face, came back, pulled himself together, and said, "Set out the dinner." ³²So they set out his food by himself, their food by themselves, and the Egyptians' who ate with him by themselves because Egyptians don't allow themselves to eat with Hebrews; the Egyptians think it beneath their dignity. ³³They were seated in front of him from the oldest to the youngest in their exact birth order, and the men looked at each other with amazement. ³⁴Portions of food from Joseph's table were brought to them, but Benjamin's portion was five times as large as theirs. So they drank together and were at ease.

Joseph tests his brothers

44 Joseph gave commands to his household manager: "Fill the men's sacks with as much food as they'll hold, and put each man's silver at the top of his sack. ²Put my cup, the silver cup, on top of the youngest brother's sack, together with the silver for his grain." So he did just as Joseph told him to do.

³At dawn, the men and their donkeys were sent off. ⁴They had left the city but hadn't gone far when Joseph said to his household manager, "Get ready, go after the men and catch up with them! Ask them, 'Why have you repaid hospitality with ingratitude?' ⁵Isn't this the cup^d my master drinks from and uses to discover God's plans?^e What you've done is despicable."

^cLXX adds *Why have you stolen my silver cup?* ^dSyr; MT lacks *cup*. ^eOr uses for divination

⁶When he caught up to them, he repeated these words. ⁷They replied, “Why does my master talk to us like this? Your servants would never do such a thing. ⁸The silver that we found at the top of our sacks, we’ve just brought back to you from the land of Canaan. We didn’t steal silver or gold from your master’s house. ⁹Whoever of your servants is found with it will be put to death, and we’ll be my master’s slaves.”

¹⁰He said, “Fine. We’ll do just as you’ve said. Whoever is found with it will be my slave, and the rest of you will go free.” ¹¹Everyone quickly lowered their sacks down to the ground and each opened his sack. ¹²He searched the oldest first and the youngest last, and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. ¹³At this, they tore their clothing. Then everyone loaded their donkeys, and they returned to the city.

¹⁴When Judah and his brothers arrived at Joseph’s house, he was still there, and they fell to the ground in front of him. ¹⁵Joseph said to them, “What’s this you’ve done? Didn’t you know someone like me can discover God’s plans?”^f

¹⁶Judah replied, “What can we say to my master? What words can we use? How can we prove we are innocent? God has found your servants guilty. We are now your slaves, all of us, including the one found with the cup.”

¹⁷Joseph said, “I’d never do such a thing. Only the man found with the cup will be my slave. As for the rest of you, you are free to go back to your father.”

Judah appeals for Benjamin

¹⁸Judah approached him and said, “Please, my master, allow your servant to say something to my master without getting angry with your servant since you are like Pharaoh himself. ¹⁹My master asked his servants, ‘Do you have a father or brother?’ ²⁰And we said to my master, ‘Yes, we have an elderly father and a young brother, born when he was old. His brother is dead and he’s his mother’s only child. But his father loves him.’ ²¹You told your servants, ‘Bring him down to me so I can see him.’ ²²And we said to my master, ‘The young man can’t leave his father. If he leaves, his father will die.’ ²³You said to your servants,

‘If your youngest brother doesn’t come down with you, you’ll never see my face again.’

²⁴“When we went back to my father your servant, we told him what you said. ²⁵Our father told us, ‘Go back and buy for us a little food.’ ²⁶But we said, ‘We can’t go down. We will go down only if our youngest brother is with us. We won’t be able to gain an audience with the man without our youngest brother with us.’ ²⁷Your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife gave birth to two sons for me. ²⁸One disappeared and I said, ‘He must have been torn up by a wild animal,’ and I haven’t seen him since. ²⁹And if you take this one from me too, something terrible will happen to him, and you will send me—old as I am—to my grave in despair.’ ³⁰When I now go back to your servant my father without the young man—whose life is so bound up with his—³¹and when he sees that the young man isn’t with us,^g he will die, and your servants will have sent our father your servant—old as he is—to his grave in grief. ³²I, your servant, guaranteed the young man’s safety to my father, telling him, ‘If I don’t bring him back to you, it will be my fault forever.’ ³³Now, please let your servant stay as your slave instead of the young man so that he can go back with his brothers. ³⁴How can I go back to my father without the young man? I couldn’t bear to see how badly my father would be hurt.”

Joseph reveals his identity

45 Joseph could no longer control himself in front of all his attendants, so he declared, “Everyone, leave now!” So no one stayed with him when he revealed his identity to his brothers. ²He wept so loudly that the Egyptians and Pharaoh’s household heard him. ³Joseph said to his brothers, “I’m Joseph! Is my father really still alive?” His brothers couldn’t respond because they were terrified before him.

⁴Joseph said to his brothers, “Come closer to me,” and they moved closer. He said, “I’m your brother Joseph! The one you sold to Egypt. ⁵Now, don’t be upset and don’t be angry with yourselves that you sold me here. Actually, God sent me before you to save lives. ⁶We’ve already had two years of famine in the

^fOr can practice divination ^gSam, LXX; MT lacks with us.

land, and there are five years left without planting or harvesting. ⁷God sent me before you to make sure you'd survive^h and to rescue your lives in this amazing way. ⁸You didn't send me here; it was God who made me a father to Pharaoh, master of his entire household, and ruler of the whole land of Egypt.

⁹Hurry! Go back to your father. Tell him this is what your son Joseph says: 'God has made me master of all of Egypt. Come down to me. Don't delay. ¹⁰You may live in the land of Goshen, so you will be near me, your children, your grandchildren, your flocks, your herds, and everyone with you. ¹¹I will support you there, so you, your household, and everyone with you won't starve, since the famine will still last five years.' ¹²You and my brother Benjamin have seen with your own eyes that I'm speaking to you. ¹³Tell my father about my power in Egypt and about everything you've seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.' ¹⁴He threw his arms around his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his shoulder. ¹⁵He kissed all of his brothers and wept, embracing them. After that, his brothers were finally able to talk to him.

SAILBOAT

FORGIVENESS



At Long Last *Genesis 45:15*

When Joseph finally revealed himself to his brothers, he had completely forgiven them for selling him into slavery many years before. In fact, he told them that God had sent him to Egypt to save their lives. Joseph looked at the high points and the low points of his life and saw that God was with him through all of it. Because of that understanding, he was able to truly forgive his brothers. 💧

Joseph's brothers return for Jacob

¹⁶When Pharaoh's household heard the message "Joseph's brothers have arrived," both Pharaoh and his servants were pleased. ¹⁷Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Give your brothers these instructions: Load your pack animals and go back to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸Get your father and your households and come back to me. Let me provide you with good things

from the land of Egypt so that you may eat the land's best food. ¹⁹Give them these instructions too: Take wagons from the land of Egypt for your children and wives, and pick up your father and come back. ²⁰Don't worry about your possessions because you will have good things from the entire land of Egypt."

²¹So Israel's sons did that. Joseph gave them wagons as Pharaoh instructed, and he gave them provisions for the road. ²²To all of them he gave a change of clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of clothing. ²³To his father he sent ten male donkeys carrying goods from Egypt, ten female donkeys carrying grain and bread, and rations for his father for the road. ²⁴He sent his brothers off; and as they were leaving, he told them, "Don't be worried about the trip."ⁱ

²⁵So they left Egypt and returned to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. ²⁶They announced to him, "Joseph's still alive! He's actually ruler of all the land of Egypt!" Jacob's heart nearly failed, and he didn't believe them.

²⁷When they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the wagons Joseph had sent to carry him, Jacob recovered. ²⁸Then Israel said, "This is too much! My son Joseph is still alive! Let me go and see him before I die."

Jacob's household moves to Egypt

46 Israel packed up everything he owned and traveled to Beer-sheba. There he offered sacrifices to his father Isaac's God. ²God said to Israel in a vision at night, "Jacob! Jacob!" and he said, "I'm here." ³He said, "I am El,^j your father's God. Don't be afraid to go down to Egypt because I will make a great nation of you there. ⁴I will go down to Egypt with you, and I promise to bring you out again. Joseph will close your eyes when you die."⁵ Then Jacob left Beer-sheba. Israel's sons put their father Jacob, their children, and their wives on the wagons Pharaoh had sent to carry him. ⁶They took their livestock and their possessions that they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and arrived in Egypt, Jacob and all of his children with him. ⁷His sons and grandsons, his daughters and his granddaughters—all

^hOr survive on earth ⁱOr Don't quarrel during the trip. ^jOr God

of his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.

⁸These are the names of the Israelites who went to Egypt, including Jacob and his sons. Jacob's oldest son was Reuben. ⁹Reuben's sons were Hanoah, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. ¹⁰Simeon's sons were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, whose mother was a Canaanite. ¹¹Levi's sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹²Judah's sons were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. Er and Onan both died in the land of Canaan. Perez's sons were Hezron and Hamul. ¹³Issachar's sons were Tola, Puvah, Iob, and Shimron. ¹⁴Zebulun's sons were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel. ¹⁵These are the sons Leah bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram. Her daughter was Dinah. All of these persons, including his sons and daughters, totaled 33.

¹⁶Gad's sons were Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. ¹⁷Asher's sons were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. Beriah's sons were Heber and Malchiel. ¹⁸These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah. She bore these to Jacob, a total of 16 persons.

¹⁹The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁰To Joseph, in the land of Egypt, were born Manasseh and Ephraim. Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of Heliopolis,^k bore them to him. ²¹Benjamin's sons were Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard. ²²These are Rachel's sons who were born to Jacob, a total of 14 persons.

²³Dan's son^l was Hushim. ²⁴Naphtali's sons were Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shilem. ²⁵These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel. She bore these to Jacob, a total of 7 persons.

did you know? Years with little rain meant there wasn't enough water to grow food, which led to famines where people went hungry. When this happened in Canaan, Joseph's family moved to Egypt. Even though there hadn't been enough rain in Egypt, Joseph's leadership was able to provide food.

²⁶All of the persons going to Egypt with Jacob—his own children, excluding Jacob's sons' wives—totaled 66 persons. ²⁷Joseph's sons born to him in Egypt were 2 persons. Thus, all of the persons in Jacob's household going to Egypt totaled 70.

²⁸Israel had sent Judah ahead to Joseph so that Joseph could explain the way to Goshen. Then they arrived in the land of Goshen. ²⁹Joseph hitched up his chariot and went to meet his father Israel in Goshen. When he arrived, he threw his arms around his neck and wept, embracing him for a long time. ³⁰Israel said to Joseph, "I can die now after seeing your face. You are really still alive!"

Jacob's household settles in Egypt

³¹Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "Let me go up and inform Pharaoh and tell him, 'My brothers and my father's household who were in the land of Canaan have arrived. ³²The men are shepherds, because they own livestock. They've brought with them their flocks and herds and everything they own.' ³³When Pharaoh summons you and says, 'What do you do?' ³⁴say, 'Your servants have owned livestock since we were young, both we and our ancestors,' so that you will be able to settle in the land of Goshen, since Egyptians think all shepherds are beneath their dignity."

47 Joseph went to inform Pharaoh and said, "My father and brothers with their flocks, herds, and everything they own have come from the land of Canaan and are now in the land of Goshen." ²From all of his brothers, he selected five men and presented them before Pharaoh.

³Pharaoh said to Joseph's brothers, "What do you do?"

They said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and our ancestors." ⁴They continued, "We've come to the land as immigrants because the famine is so severe in the land of Canaan that there are no more pastures for your servants' flocks. Please allow your servants to settle in the land of Goshen."

⁵Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since your father and brothers have arrived, ⁶the land of Egypt

^kHeb On ^lOr sons

is available to you. Settle your father and brothers in the land's best location. Let them live in the land of Goshen. And if you know capable men among them, put them in charge of my own livestock."

⁷Joseph brought his father Jacob and gave him an audience with Pharaoh. Jacob blessed Pharaoh,⁸ and Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old are you?"

⁹Jacob said to Pharaoh, "I've been a traveler for 130 years. My years have been few and difficult. They don't come close to the years my ancestors lived during their travels."

¹⁰Jacob blessed Pharaoh and left Pharaoh's presence. ¹¹Joseph settled his father and brothers and gave them property in the land of Egypt, in the best location in the land of Rameses, just as Pharaoh had ordered. ¹²Joseph provided food for his father, his brothers, and his father's entire household, in proportion to the number of children.

Joseph centralizes power in Egypt

¹³There was no food in the land because the famine was so severe. The land of Egypt and the land of Canaan dried up from the famine. ¹⁴Joseph collected all of the silver to be found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the grain, which people came to buy, and he deposited it in Pharaoh's treasury. ¹⁵The silver from the land of Egypt and from the land of Canaan had been spent, and all of the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes, just because the silver is gone?"

¹⁶Joseph said, "Give me your livestock, and I will give you food for your livestock if the silver is gone." ¹⁷So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food for the horses, flocks, cattle, and donkeys. He got them through that year with food in exchange for all of their livestock.

¹⁸When that year was over, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We can't hide from my master that the silver is spent and that we've given the livestock to my master. All that's left for my master is our corpses and our farmland. ¹⁹Why should we die before your eyes, we and our farmland too? Buy us and our farms for food, and we and our farms

will be under Pharaoh's control. Give us seed so that we can stay alive and not die, and so that our farmland won't become unproductive." ²⁰So Joseph bought all of Egypt's farmland for Pharaoh because every Egyptian sold his field when the famine worsened. So the land became Pharaoh's. ²¹He moved the people to the cities^m from one end of Egypt to the other. ²²However, he didn't buy the farmland of the priests because Pharaoh allowed the priests a subsidy, and they were able to eat from the subsidy Pharaoh gave them. Therefore, they didn't have to sell their farmland.

²³Joseph said to the people, "Since I've now purchased you and your farmland for Pharaoh, here's seed for you. Plant the seed on the land. ²⁴When the crop comes in, you must give one-fifth to Pharaoh. You may keep four-fifths for yourselves, for planting fields, and for feeding yourselves, those in your households, and your children."

²⁵The people said, "You've saved our lives. If you wish, we will be Pharaoh's slaves." ²⁶So Joseph made a law that still exists today: Pharaoh receives one-fifth from Egypt's farmland. Only the priests' farmland didn't become Pharaoh's.

Jacob blesses Ephraim and Manasseh

²⁷Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. They settled in it, had many children, and became numerous. ²⁸After Jacob had lived in the land of Egypt for seventeen years, and after he had lived a total of 147 years, ²⁹Israel's death approached. He summoned his son Joseph and said to him, "If you would be so kind, lay your hand under my thigh, and be loyal and true to me. Don't bury me in Egypt. ³⁰When I lie down with my fathers, carry me from Egypt and bury me in their grave."

Joseph said, "I will do just as you say."

³¹Israel said, "Give me your word!" and Joseph gave his word. Then Israel slumped down at the head of the bed.

48After this happened, Joseph was told,ⁿ "Your father is getting weaker," so he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim

^mSam, LXX he made the people slaves ⁿLXX, Syr, Tg, Vulg; MT he told

with him. ²When Jacob was informed,^o “Your son Joseph is here now,” he^p pulled himself together and sat up in bed. ³Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty^q appeared to me in Luz in the land of Canaan. He blessed me ⁴and said to me, ‘I am about to give you many children, to increase your numbers, and to make you a large group of peoples. I will give this land to your descendants following you as an enduring possession.’ ⁵Now, your two sons born to you in the land of Egypt before I arrived in Egypt are my own. Ephraim and Manasseh are just like Reuben and Simeon to me. ⁶Your family who is born to you after them are yours, but their inheritance will be determined under their brothers’ names. ⁷When I came back from Paddan-aram,^r Rachel died, to my sorrow, on the road in the land of Canaan, with some distance yet to go to Ephrathah, so I buried her there near the road to Ephrathah,^s which is Bethlehem.”

⁸When Israel saw Joseph’s sons, he said, “Who are these?”

⁹Joseph told his father, “They’re my sons, whom God gave me here.”

Israel said, “Bring them to me and I will bless them.” ¹⁰Because Israel’s eyesight had failed from old age and he wasn’t able to see, Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed and embraced them.

¹¹Israel said to Joseph, “I didn’t expect I’d see your face, but now God has shown me your children too.” ¹²Then Joseph took them from Israel’s knees, and he bowed low with his face to the ground. ¹³Joseph took both of them, Ephraim in his right hand at Israel’s left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand at Israel’s right hand, and brought them close to him. ¹⁴But Israel put out his right hand and placed it on the head of Ephraim, the younger one, and his left hand on Manasseh’s head, crossing his hands because Manasseh was the oldest son. ¹⁵He blessed them^t and said,

“May the God before whom my fathers
Abraham and Isaac walked,
may the God who was my shepherd
from the beginning until this day,

¹⁶ may the divine messenger
who protected me from all harm,
bless the young men.

Through them may my name be kept alive
and the names of my fathers
Abraham and Isaac.

May they grow into a great multitude
throughout the land.”

¹⁷When Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand on Ephraim’s head, he was upset and grasped his father’s hand to move it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. ¹⁸Joseph said to his father, “No, my father! This is the oldest son. Put your right hand on his head.”

¹⁹But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know. He’ll become a people too, and he’ll also be great. But his younger brother will be greater than he will, and his descendants will become many nations.” ²⁰Israel blessed them that day, saying,

“Through you, Israel will
pronounce blessings, saying,
‘May God make you
like Ephraim and Manasseh.’”

So Israel put Ephraim before Manasseh. ²¹Then Israel said to Joseph, “I’m about to die. God will be with you and return you to the land of your fathers. ²²I’m giving you one portion more than to your brothers,^u a portion that I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow.”

Jacob reveals his sons’ destinies

49 Jacob summoned his sons and said, “Gather around so that I can tell you what will happen to you in the coming days.

² Assemble yourselves and listen,
sons of Jacob;
listen to Israel your father.

³ Reuben, you are my oldest son,
my strength and my first contender,^v
superior in status and superior in might.

⁴ As wild as the waters, you won’t endure,
for you went up to your father’s bed,
you went up^w and violated my couch.

⁵ Simeon and Levi are brothers,
weapons of violence their stock in trade.

⁶ May I myself never enter their council.
May my honor never be linked
to their group;

^oLXX; MT he informed ^pHeb Israel ^qHeb El Shaddai or God of the Mountain ^rSam, LXX, Syr; MT lacks aram. ^sSam; MT Ephrath ^tLXX; MT Joseph ^uHeb uncertain ^vOr first of my power ^wLXX; MT he went up

- for when they were angry,
they killed men,
and whenever they wished,
they maimed oxen.
- ⁷ Cursed be their anger; it is violent,
their rage; it is relentless.
I'll divide them up within Jacob
and disperse them within Israel.
- ⁸ Judah, you are the one
your brothers will honor;
your hand will be
on the neck of your enemies;
your father's sons
will bow down to you.
- ⁹ Judah is a lion's cub;
from the prey, my son, you rise up.
He lies down and crouches like a lion;
like a lioness—
who dares disturb him?
- ¹⁰ The scepter won't depart from Judah,
nor the ruler's staff
from among his banners.^x
Gifts will be brought to him;
people will obey him.
- ¹¹ He ties his male donkey to the vine,
the colt of his female donkey
to the vine's branches.
He washes his clothes in wine,
his garments in the blood of grapes.
- ¹² His eyes are darker than wine,
and his teeth whiter than milk.
- ¹³ Zebulun will live at the seashore;
he'll live at the harbor of ships,
his border will be at Sidon.
- ¹⁴ Issachar is a sturdy donkey,
bedding down
beside the village hearths.^y
- ¹⁵ He saw that a resting place was good
and that the land was pleasant.
He lowered his shoulder to haul loads
and joined the work gangs.
- ¹⁶ Dan^z will settle disputes for his people,
as one of Israel's tribes.
- ¹⁷ Dan will be a snake on the road,
a serpent on the path,
biting a horse's heels,
so its rider falls backward.
- ¹⁸ I long for your victory, LORD.
- ¹⁹ Gad^a will be attacked by attackers,
but he'll attack their back.
- ²⁰ Asher^b grows fine foods,
and he will supply
the king's delicacies.
- ²¹ Naphtali is a wild doe
that gives birth to beautiful fawns.^c
- ²² Joseph is a young bull,^d
a young bull by a spring,
who strides with oxen.^e
- ²³ They attacked him fiercely
and fired arrows;
the archers attacked him furiously.
- ²⁴ But his bow stayed strong,
and his forearms were nimble,^f
by the hands of the strong one
of Jacob,
by the name of the shepherd,
the rock of Israel,
²⁵ by God, your father,
who supports you,
by the Almighty^g who blesses you
with blessings from the skies above
and blessings from the deep sea below,
blessings from breasts and womb.
- ²⁶ The blessings of your father exceed
the blessings of the eternal mountains,^h
the wealth of the everlasting hills.
May they all rest on Joseph's head,
on the forehead of the one
set apart from his brothers.
- ²⁷ Benjamin is a wolf who hunts:
in the morning he devours the prey;
in the evening he divides the plunder.ⁱ
- ²⁸ These are the twelve tribes of Israel,
and this is what their father said to them. He
blessed them by giving each man his own par-
ticular blessing.

^xSam; MT his feet ^yOr stubbornly lying beneath its saddlebags ^zOr he judges, or settles disputes ^aOr he attacks or good fortune ^bLXX, Syr, Vulg; MT from Asher ^cOr who gives beautiful words ^dHeb uncertain ^eHeb uncertain ^fHeb uncertain; or flexible ^gHeb Shaddai or the Mountain One ^hLXX; Heb uncertain

UMBRELLA

MOURNING



Joseph Weeps *Genesis 49:29–50:14*

When Joseph was finally reunited with his beloved father, he had very little time with him before his father's death. Even though that made him sad, Joseph was thankful his father lived long enough to learn he was alive and doing great things. Losing a close friend or family member, no matter their age, is always sad and calls for a time of grief. Joseph prepared a funeral that allowed him and everyone who loved Israel to grieve the loss. 💧

Jacob's death and burial

²⁹Jacob ordered them, "I am soon to join my people. Bury me with my ancestors in the cave that's in the field of Ephron the Hittite; ³⁰in the cave that's in the field of Machpelah near Mamre in the land of Canaan that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite as a burial property. ³¹That is where Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried, and where Isaac and his wife Rebekah are buried, and where I buried Leah. ³²It is the field and the cave in it that belonged to the Hittites." ³³After he finished giving orders to his sons, he put his feet up on the bed, took his last breath, and joined his people.

50 Joseph fell across his father's body, wept over him, and kissed him. ²Joseph then ordered the physicians in his service to embalm his father, and the physicians embalmed Israel. ³They mourned for him forty days because that is the period required for embalming. Then the Egyptians mourned him for seventy days. ⁴After the period of mourning had passed, Joseph spoke to Pharaoh's household: "If you approve my request, give Pharaoh this message: ⁵My father made me promise, telling me, 'I'm about to die. You must bury me in the tomb I dug for myself in the land of Canaan.' Now, let me leave and let me bury my father, and then I will return."

⁶Pharaoh replied, "Go, bury your father as you promised."

⁷So Joseph left to bury his father. All of Pharaoh's servants went with him, together with the elder statesmen in his household and all of the elder statesmen in the land of Egypt, ⁸Joseph's entire household, his brothers, and his father's household. Only the children, flocks, and cattle remained in the land of Goshen. ⁹Even chariots and horsemen went with him; it was a huge collection of people. ¹⁰When they arrived at the threshing floor of Atad on the other side of the Jordan River, they observed a solemn, deeply sorrowful period of mourning. He grieved seven days for his father.

¹¹When the Canaanites who lived in the land saw the observance of grief on Atad's threshing floor, they said, "This is a solemn observance of grief by the Egyptians." Therefore, its name is Abel-mizraim.ⁱ It is on the other side of the Jordan River. ¹²Israel's sons did for him just as he had ordered. ¹³His sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre, which Abraham had purchased as burial property from Ephron the Hittite. ¹⁴Then^j Joseph returned to Egypt, he, his brothers, and everyone who left with him to bury his father.

Joseph and his brothers in Egypt

¹⁵When Joseph's brothers realized that their father was now dead, they said, "What if Joseph bears a grudge against us, and wants to pay us back seriously for all of the terrible things we did to him?" ¹⁶So they approached^k Joseph and said, "Your father gave orders before he died, telling us, ¹⁷'This is what you should say to Joseph. 'Please, forgive your brothers' sins and misdeeds, for they did terrible things to you. Now, please forgive the sins of the servants of your father's God.'"^l Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

¹⁸His brothers wept^l too, fell down in front of him, and said, "We're here as your slaves."

¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I God? ²⁰You planned something bad for me, but God produced something good from it, in order to save the lives of many people, just as

Memorize
Gen 50:20



ⁱOr the Egyptians' observance of grief ^jLXX; MT includes after he buried his father. ^kLXX, Syr; MT they commanded ^lOr came

he's doing today. ²¹Now, don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your children." So he put them at ease and spoke reassuringly to them.

²²Thus Joseph lived in Egypt, he and his father's household. Joseph lived 110 years ²³and saw Ephraim's grandchildren. The children of Machir, Manasseh's son, were also born on Joseph's knees. ²⁴Joseph said to his brothers, "I'm about to die. God will certainly take care of you and bring you out of this land to the land he promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." ²⁵Joseph made Israel's sons promise, "When God takes care of you,

you must bring up my bones out of here." ²⁶Joseph died when he was 110 years old. They embalmed him and placed him in a coffin in Egypt.

did you know?

Joseph promised Israel's sons they would one day return to Canaan. He made them promise to take his bones back to Canaan when he died. Exodus 13:19 says when Moses and the Israelites left Egypt they kept this promise and took Joseph's bones with them. Years later the bones were buried in Shechem (Josh 24:32).



God Used Bad for Good *Genesis 50:20*

Bad things happened to Joseph. His brothers hated him. He was sold into slavery, lied about, and thrown into prison. Joseph had every reason to be angry toward the people who did those things to him. Eventually he was in a position to get back at them, but he didn't.

Joseph realized God had taken care of him during every moment in his life. That didn't mean everything was good or easy. When Potiphar's wife lied about him, Joseph couldn't defend himself. Being thrown in to prison was harder than being a slave. But Joseph didn't give up. During all that time, Joseph remembered God loved him, and he trusted that love.

Joseph's situation looked really bad, but nothing is impossible for God. God used the things that were bad in Joseph's life as a way to bring about good. During his time in prison, Joseph's ability to interpret dreams made it possible for him to meet Pharaoh, the man who ruled Egypt at the time. Because of this, Joseph became Pharaoh's second-in-command, which allowed Joseph to save his family at a time when they had no food.

Sometimes bad things happen to our family, our friends, or us. But just like Joseph, we can remember God promised never to leave us. If we trust God, God will take those bad things and turn them into something good.

Name two times when something bad happened to you.

How did God take care of you during those times?



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