

JANUARY 1

The Bible begins in Genesis 1–11 with the dawn of Creation and the early history of the world.

◆ **The Account of Creation** / Genesis 1:1–2:4

¹⁻²First this: God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

³⁻⁵ God spoke: "Light!"
And light appeared.
God saw that light was good
and separated light from dark.
God named the light Day,
he named the dark Night.
It was evening, it was morning—
Day One.

⁶⁻⁸ God spoke: "Sky! In the middle of the waters;
separate water from water!"
God made sky.
He separated the water under sky
from the water above sky.
And there it was:
he named sky the Heavens;
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Two.

⁹⁻¹⁰ God spoke: "Separate!
Water-beneath-Heaven, gather into one place;
Land, appear!"
And there it was.
God named the land Earth.
He named the pooled water Ocean.
God saw that it was good.

¹¹⁻¹³ God spoke: "Earth, green up! Grow all varieties
of seed-bearing plants,
Every sort of fruit-bearing tree."
And there it was.
Earth produced green seed-bearing plants,
all varieties,
And fruit-bearing trees of all sorts.
God saw that it was good.

It was evening, it was morning—
Day Three.

14-15 God spoke: “Lights! Come out!
Shine in Heaven’s sky!
Separate Day from Night.
Mark seasons and days and years,
Lights in Heaven’s sky to give light to Earth.”
And there it was.

16-19 God made two big lights, the larger
to take charge of Day,
The smaller to be in charge of Night;
and he made the stars.
God placed them in the heavenly sky
to light up Earth
And oversee Day and Night,
to separate light and dark.
God saw that it was good.
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Four.

20-23 God spoke: “Swarm, Ocean, with fish and all sea life!
Birds, fly through the sky over Earth!”
God created the huge whales,
all the swarm of life in the waters,
And every kind and species of flying birds.
God saw that it was good.
God blessed them: “Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Ocean!
Birds, reproduce on Earth!”
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Five.

24-25 God spoke: “Earth, generate life! Every sort and kind:
cattle and reptiles and wild animals—all kinds.”
And there it was:
wild animals of every kind,
Cattle of all kinds, every sort of reptile and bug.
God saw that it was good.

26-28 God spoke: “Let us make human beings in our image, make them
reflecting our nature
So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea,
the birds in the air, the cattle,
And, yes, Earth itself,
and every animal that moves on the face of Earth.”
God created human beings;
he created them godlike,
Reflecting God’s nature.
He created them male and female.
God blessed them:
“Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!

Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air,
for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth.”

29-30 Then God said, “I’ve given you
every sort of seed-bearing plant on Earth
And every kind of fruit-bearing tree,
given them to you for food.
To all animals and all birds,
everything that moves and breathes,
I give whatever grows out of the ground for food.”
And there it was.

31 God looked over everything he had made;
it was so good, so very good!
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Six.

2:1 Heaven and Earth were finished,
down to the last detail.

2-4 By the seventh day
God had finished his work.
On the seventh day
he rested from all his work.
God blessed the seventh day.
He made it a Holy Day
Because on that day he rested from his work,
all the creating God had done.
This is the story of how it all started,
of Heaven and Earth when they were created.

◆ **The Man and Woman in Eden** / Genesis 2:5-25

5-7 At the time GOD made Earth and Heaven, before any grasses or shrubs had sprouted from the ground—GOD hadn’t yet sent rain on Earth, nor was there anyone around to work the ground (the whole Earth was watered by underground springs)—GOD formed Man out of dirt from the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life. The Man came alive—a living soul!

8-9 Then GOD planted a garden in Eden, in the east. He put the Man he had just made in it. GOD made all kinds of trees grow from the ground, trees beautiful to look at and good to eat. The Tree-of-Life was in the middle of the garden, also the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil.

10-14 A river flows out of Eden to water the garden and from there divides into four rivers. The first is named Pishon; it flows through Havilah where there is gold. The gold of this land is good. The land is also known for a sweet-scented resin and the onyx stone. The second river is named Gihon; it flows through the land of Cush. The third river is named Hiddekel and flows east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 GOD took the Man and set him down in the Garden of Eden to work the ground and keep it in order.

16-17 GOD commanded the Man, “You can eat from any tree in the garden, except from the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil. Don’t eat from it. The moment you eat from that tree, you’re dead.”

¹⁸⁻²⁰GOD said, “It’s not good for the Man to be alone; I’ll make him a helper, a companion.” So GOD formed from the dirt of the ground all the animals of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the Man to see what he would name them. Whatever the Man called each living creature, that was its name. The Man named the cattle, named the birds of the air, named the wild animals; but he didn’t find a suitable companion.

²¹⁻²²GOD put the Man into a deep sleep. As he slept he removed one of his ribs and replaced it with flesh. GOD then used the rib that he had taken from the Man to make Woman and presented her to the Man.

²³⁻²⁵ The Man said,
 “Finally! Bone of my bone,
 flesh of my flesh!
 Name her Woman
 for she was made from Man.”
 Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and embraces his wife.
 They become one flesh.
 The two of them, the Man and his Wife, were naked, but they felt no shame.

◆ **The Man and Woman Sin** / Genesis 3:1-24

¹The serpent was clever, more clever than any wild animal GOD had made. He spoke to the Woman: “Do I understand that God told you not to eat from any tree in the garden?”

²⁻³The Woman said to the serpent, “Not at all. We can eat from the trees in the garden. It’s only about the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘Don’t eat from it; don’t even touch it or you’ll die.’”

⁴⁻⁵The serpent told the Woman, “You won’t die. God knows that the moment you eat from that tree, you’ll see what’s really going on. You’ll be just like God, knowing everything, ranging all the way from good to evil.”

⁶When the Woman saw that the tree looked like good eating and realized what she would get out of it—she’d know everything!—she took and ate the fruit and then gave some to her husband, and he ate.

⁷Immediately the two of them did “see what’s really going on”—saw themselves naked! They sewed fig leaves together as makeshift clothes for themselves.

⁸When they heard the sound of GOD strolling in the garden in the evening breeze, the Man and his Wife hid in the trees of the garden, hid from GOD.

⁹GOD called to the Man: “Where are you?”

¹⁰He said, “I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked. And I hid.”

¹¹GOD said, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from that tree I told you not to eat from?”

¹²The Man said, “The Woman you gave me as a companion, she gave me fruit from the tree, and, yes, I ate it.”

GOD said to the Woman, “What is this that you’ve done?”

¹³“The serpent seduced me,” she said, “and I ate.”

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ GOD told the serpent:
 “Because you’ve done this, you’re cursed,
 cursed beyond all cattle and wild animals,

Cursed to slink on your belly
and eat dirt all your life.
I'm declaring war between you and the Woman,
between your offspring and hers.
He'll wound your head,
you'll wound his heel."

16 He told the Woman:
"I'll multiply your pains in childbirth;
you'll give birth to your babies in pain.
You'll want to please your husband,
but he'll lord it over you."

17-19 He told the Man:
"Because you listened to your wife
and ate from the tree
That I commanded you not to eat from,
'Don't eat from this tree,'
The very ground is cursed because of you;
getting food from the ground
Will be as painful as having babies is for your wife;
you'll be working in pain all your life long.
The ground will sprout thorns and weeds,
you'll get your food the hard way,
Planting and tilling and harvesting,
sweating in the fields from dawn to dusk,
Until you return to that ground yourself, dead and buried;
you started out as dirt, you'll end up dirt."

²⁰The Man, known as Adam, named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living.

²¹GOD made leather clothing for Adam and his wife and dressed them.

²²GOD said, "The Man has become like one of us, capable of knowing everything, ranging from good to evil. What if he now should reach out and take fruit from the Tree-of-Life and eat, and live forever? Never—this cannot happen!"

²³⁻²⁴So GOD expelled them from the Garden of Eden and sent them to work the ground, the same dirt out of which they'd been made. He threw them out of the garden and stationed angel-cherubim and a revolving sword of fire east of it, guarding the path to the Tree-of-Life.

JANUARY 2

◆ Cain, Abel, and Seth / Genesis 4:1-26

¹Adam slept with Eve his wife. She conceived and had Cain. She said, "I've gotten a man, with GOD's help!"

²Then she had another baby, Abel. Abel was a herdsman and Cain a farmer.

³⁻⁵Time passed. Cain brought an offering to GOD from the produce of his farm. Abel also brought an offering, but from the firstborn animals of his herd, choice cuts of meat. GOD liked Abel and his offering, but Cain and his offering didn't get his approval. Cain lost his temper and went into a sulk.

⁶⁻⁷GOD spoke to Cain: "Why this tantrum? Why the sulking? If you do well,

won't you be accepted? And if you don't do well, sin is lying in wait for you, ready to pounce; it's out to get you, you've got to master it."

⁸Cain had words with his brother. They were out in the field; Cain came at Abel his brother and killed him.

⁹GOD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?"

He said, "How should I know? Am I his babysitter?"

¹⁰⁻¹²GOD said, "What have you done! The voice of your brother's blood is calling to me from the ground. From now on you'll get nothing but curses from this ground; you'll be driven from this ground that has opened its arms to receive the blood of your murdered brother. You'll farm this ground, but it will no longer give you its best. You'll be a homeless wanderer on Earth."

¹³⁻¹⁴Cain said to GOD, "My punishment is too much. I can't take it! You've thrown me off the land and I can never again face you. I'm a homeless wanderer on Earth and whoever finds me will kill me."

¹⁵GOD told him, "No. Anyone who kills Cain will pay for it seven times over." GOD put a mark on Cain to protect him so that no one who met him would kill him.

¹⁶Cain left the presence of GOD and lived in No-Man's-Land, east of Eden.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸Cain slept with his wife. She conceived and had Enoch. He then built a city and named it after his son, Enoch.

Enoch had Irad,

Irad had Mehujael,

Mehujael had Methushael,

Methushael had Lamech.

¹⁹⁻²²Lamech married two wives, Adah and Zillah. Adah gave birth to Jabal, the ancestor of all who live in tents and herd cattle. His brother's name was Jubal, the ancestor of all who play the lyre and flute. Zillah gave birth to Tubal-Cain, who worked at the forge making bronze and iron tools. Tubal-Cain's sister was Naamah.

²³⁻²⁴ Lamech said to his wives,

Adah and Zillah, listen to me;

you wives of Lamech, hear me out:

I killed a man for wounding me,

a young man who attacked me.

If Cain is avenged seven times,

for Lamech it's seventy-seven!

²⁵⁻²⁶Adam slept with his wife again. She had a son whom she named Seth. She said, "God has given me another child in place of Abel whom Cain killed." And then Seth had a son whom he named Enosh.

That's when men and women began praying and worshiping in the name of GOD.

◆ From Adam to Noah / Genesis 5:1-32

¹⁻²This is the family tree of the human race: When God created the human race, he made it godlike, with a nature akin to God. He created both male and female and blessed them, the whole human race.

³⁻⁵When Adam was 130 years old, he had a son who was just like him, his very spirit and image, and named him Seth. After the birth of Seth, Adam lived

another 800 years, having more sons and daughters. Adam lived a total of 930 years. And he died.

⁶⁻⁸When Seth was 105 years old, he had Enosh. After Seth had Enosh, he lived another 807 years, having more sons and daughters. Seth lived a total of 912 years. And he died.

⁹⁻¹¹When Enosh was ninety years old, he had Kenan. After he had Kenan, he lived another 815 years, having more sons and daughters. Enosh lived a total of 905 years. And he died.

¹²⁻¹⁴When Kenan was seventy years old, he had Mahalalel. After he had Mahalalel, he lived another 840 years, having more sons and daughters. Kenan lived a total of 910 years. And he died.

¹⁵⁻¹⁷When Mahalalel was sixty-five years old, he had Jared. After he had Jared, he lived another 830 years, having more sons and daughters. Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years. And he died.

¹⁸⁻²⁰When Jared was 162 years old, he had Enoch. After he had Enoch, he lived another 800 years, having more sons and daughters. Jared lived a total of 962 years. And he died.

²¹⁻²³When Enoch was sixty-five years old, he had Methuselah. Enoch walked steadily with God. After he had Methuselah, he lived another 300 years, having more sons and daughters. Enoch lived a total of 365 years.

²⁴Enoch walked steadily with God. And then one day he was simply gone: God took him.

²⁵⁻²⁷When Methuselah was 187 years old, he had Lamech. After he had Lamech, he lived another 782 years. Methuselah lived a total of 969 years. And he died.

²⁸⁻³¹When Lamech was 182 years old, he had a son. He named him Noah, saying, "This one will give us a break from the hard work of farming the ground that GOD cursed." After Lamech had Noah, he lived another 595 years, having more sons and daughters. Lamech lived a total of 777 years. And he died.

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

◆ 1 Chronicles 1:1-4

- ¹⁻⁴ Adam
- Seth
- Enosh
- Kenan
- Mahalalel
- Jared
- Enoch
- Methuselah
- Lamech
- Noah
- Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

◆ **Noah and the Flood** / Genesis 6:1-22

¹⁻²When the human race began to increase, with more and more daughters being born, the sons of God noticed that the daughters of men were beautiful. They looked them over and picked out wives for themselves.

³Then GOD said, "I'm not going to breathe life into men and women

endlessly. Eventually they're going to die; from now on they can expect a life span of 120 years."

⁴This was back in the days (and also later) when there were giants in the land. The giants came from the union of the sons of God and the daughters of men. These were the mighty men of ancient lore, the famous ones.

⁵⁻⁷GOD saw that human evil was out of control. People thought evil, imagined evil—evil, evil, evil from morning to night. GOD was sorry that he had made the human race in the first place; it broke his heart. GOD said, "I'll get rid of my ruined creation, make a clean sweep: people, animals, snakes and bugs, birds—the works. I'm sorry I made them."

⁸But Noah was different. GOD liked what he saw in Noah.

⁹⁻¹⁰This is the story of Noah: Noah was a good man, a man of integrity in his community. Noah walked with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹⁻¹²As far as God was concerned, the Earth had become a sewer; there was violence everywhere. God took one look and saw how bad it was, everyone corrupt and corrupting—life itself corrupt to the core.

¹³God said to Noah, "It's all over. It's the end of the human race. The violence is everywhere; I'm making a clean sweep.

¹⁴⁻¹⁶"Build yourself a ship from teakwood. Make rooms in it. Coat it with pitch inside and out. Make it 450 feet long, seventy-five feet wide, and forty-five feet high. Build a roof for it and put in a window eighteen inches from the top; put in a door on the side of the ship; and make three decks, lower, middle, and upper.

¹⁷"I'm going to bring a flood on the Earth that will destroy everything alive under Heaven. Total destruction.

¹⁸⁻²¹"But I'm going to establish a covenant with you: You'll board the ship, and your sons, your wife and your sons' wives will come on board with you. You are also to take two of each living creature, a male and a female, on board the ship, to preserve their lives with you: two of every species of bird, mammal, and reptile—two of everything so as to preserve their lives along with yours. Also get all the food you'll need and store it up for you and them."

²²Noah did everything God commanded him to do.

JANUARY 3

◆ **The Flood Covers the Earth** / Genesis 7:1-24

¹Next GOD said to Noah, "Now board the ship, you and all your family—out of everyone in this generation, you're the righteous one.

²⁻⁴"Take on board with you seven pairs of every clean animal, a male and a female; one pair of every unclean animal, a male and a female; and seven pairs of every kind of bird, a male and a female, to insure their survival on Earth. In just seven days I will pour rain on Earth for forty days and forty nights. I'll make a clean sweep of everything that I've made."

⁵Noah did everything GOD commanded him.

⁶⁻¹⁰Noah was 600 years old when the floodwaters covered the Earth. Noah and his wife and sons and their wives boarded the ship to escape the flood. Clean and unclean animals, birds, and all the crawling creatures came in pairs to Noah and to the ship, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. In seven days the floodwaters came.

¹¹⁻¹²It was the six-hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month that it happened: all the underground springs erupted and all the windows of Heaven were thrown open. Rain poured for forty days and forty nights.

¹³⁻¹⁶That's the day Noah and his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, accompanied by his wife and his sons' wives, boarded the ship. And with them every kind of wild and domestic animal, right down to all the kinds of creatures that crawl and all kinds of birds and anything that flies. They came to Noah and to the ship in pairs—everything and anything that had the breath of life in it, male and female of every creature came just as God had commanded Noah. Then GOD shut the door behind him.

¹⁷⁻²³The flood continued forty days and the waters rose and lifted the ship high over the Earth. The waters kept rising, the flood deepened on the Earth, the ship floated on the surface. The flood got worse until all the highest mountains were covered—the high-water mark reached twenty feet above the crest of the mountains. Everything died. Anything that moved—dead. Birds, farm animals, wild animals, the entire teeming exuberance of life—dead. And all people—dead. Every living, breathing creature that lived on dry land died; he wiped out the whole works—people and animals, crawling creatures and flying birds, every last one of them, gone. Only Noah and his company on the ship lived.

²⁴The floodwaters took over for 150 days.

◆ **The Flood Recedes** / Genesis 8:1-22

¹⁻³Then God turned his attention to Noah and all the wild animals and farm animals with him on the ship. God caused the wind to blow and the floodwaters began to go down. The underground springs were shut off, the windows of Heaven closed and the rain quit. Inch by inch the water lowered. After 150 days the worst was over.

⁴⁻⁶On the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the ship landed on the Ararat mountain range. The water kept going down until the tenth month. On the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains came into view. After forty days Noah opened the window that he had built into the ship.

⁷⁻⁹He sent out a raven; it flew back and forth waiting for the floodwaters to dry up. Then he sent a dove to check on the flood conditions, but it couldn't even find a place to perch—water still covered the Earth. Noah reached out and caught it, brought it back into the ship.

¹⁰⁻¹¹He waited seven more days and sent out the dove again. It came back in the evening with a freshly picked olive leaf in its beak. Noah knew that the flood was about finished.

¹²He waited another seven days and sent the dove out a third time. This time it didn't come back.

¹³⁻¹⁴In the six-hundred-first year of Noah's life, on the first day of the first month, the flood had dried up. Noah opened the hatch of the ship and saw dry ground. By the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the Earth was completely dry.

¹⁵⁻¹⁷God spoke to Noah: "Leave the ship, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives. And take all the animals with you, the whole menagerie of birds and mammals and crawling creatures, all that swarming extravagance of life, so they can reproduce and flourish on the Earth."

¹⁸⁻¹⁹Noah disembarked with his sons and wife and his sons' wives. Then all the

animals, crawling creatures, birds—every creature on the face of the Earth—left the ship family by family.

²⁰⁻²¹Noah built an altar to GOD. He selected clean animals and birds from every species and offered them as burnt offerings on the altar. GOD smelled the sweet fragrance and thought to himself, “I’ll never again curse the ground because of people. I know they have this bent toward evil from an early age, but I’ll never again kill off everything living as I’ve just done.

²² For as long as Earth lasts,
planting and harvest, cold and heat,
Summer and winter, day and night
will never stop.”

◆ **God’s Covenant with Noah** / Genesis 9:1-17

¹⁻⁴God blessed Noah and his sons: He said, “Prosper! Reproduce! Fill the Earth! Every living creature—birds, animals, fish—will fall under your spell and be afraid of you. You’re responsible for them. All living creatures are yours for food; just as I gave you the plants, now I give you everything else. Except for meat with its lifeblood still in it—don’t eat that.

⁵“But your own lifeblood I will avenge; I will avenge it against both animals and other humans.

⁶⁻⁷ Whoever sheds human blood,
by humans let his blood be shed,
Because God made humans in his image
reflecting God’s very nature.
You’re here to bear fruit, reproduce,
lavish life on the Earth, live bountifully!”

⁸⁻¹¹Then God spoke to Noah and his sons: “I’m setting up my covenant with you including your children who will come after you, along with everything alive around you—birds, farm animals, wild animals—that came out of the ship with you. I’m setting up my covenant with you that never again will everything living be destroyed by floodwaters; no, never again will a flood destroy the Earth.”

¹²⁻¹⁶God continued, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and everything living around you and everyone living after you. I’m putting my rainbow in the clouds, a sign of the covenant between me and the Earth. From now on, when I form a cloud over the Earth and the rainbow appears in the cloud, I’ll remember my covenant between me and you and everything living, that never again will floodwaters destroy all life. When the rainbow appears in the cloud, I’ll see it and remember the eternal covenant between God and everything living, every last living creature on Earth.”

¹⁷And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I’ve set up between me and everything living on the Earth.”

◆ **Noah’s Sons** / Genesis 9:18-10:1

¹⁸⁻¹⁹The sons of Noah who came out of the ship were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah; from these three the whole Earth was populated.

²⁰⁻²³Noah, a farmer, was the first to plant a vineyard. He drank from its wine, got drunk and passed out, naked in his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw

that his father was naked and told his two brothers who were outside the tent. Shem and Japheth took a cloak, held it between them from their shoulders, walked backward and covered their father's nakedness, keeping their faces turned away so they did not see their father's exposed body.

²⁴⁻²⁷When Noah woke up with his hangover, he learned what his youngest son had done. He said,

Cursed be Canaan! A slave of slaves,
a slave to his brothers!
Blessed be GOD, the God of Shem,
but Canaan shall be his slave.
God prosper Japheth,
living spaciously in the tents of Shem.
But Canaan shall be his slave.

²⁸⁻²⁹Noah lived another 350 years following the flood. He lived a total of 950 years. And he died.

^{10:1}This is the family tree of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. After the flood, they themselves had sons.

◆ **Descendants of Japheth** / Genesis 10:2-5

²The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, Tiras.

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

⁴⁻⁵The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, Rodanim. The seafaring peoples developed from these, each in its own place by family, each with its own language.

◆ 1 Chronicles 1:5-7

⁵Japheth had Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

⁶Gomer had Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁷Javan had Elisha, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.

◆ **Descendants of Ham** / Genesis 10:6-20

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

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

The sons of Raamah: Sheba, Dedan.

⁸⁻¹²Cush also had Nimrod. He was the first great warrior on Earth. He was a great hunter before GOD. There was a saying, "Like Nimrod, a great hunter before GOD." His kingdom got its start with Babel; then Erech, Akkad, and Calneh in the country of Shinar. From there he went up to Asshur and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and the great city Calah.

¹³⁻¹⁴Egypt was ancestor to the Ludim, the Anamim, the Lehabim, the Naphthumim, the Pathrusim, the Casluhim (the origin of the Philistines), and the Kaphtorim.

¹⁵⁻¹⁹Canaan had Sidon his firstborn, Heth, the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Later the Canaanites spread out, going from Sidon toward Gerar, as far south as Gaza, and then east all the way over to Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and on to Lasha.

²⁰These are the descendants of Ham by family, language, country, and nation.

◆ 1 Chronicles 1:8-16

⁸Ham had Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

⁹Cush had Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raamah, and Sabteca.

Raamah had Sheba and Dedan.

¹⁰Cush had Nimrod, the first great hero on earth.

¹¹⁻¹²Mizraim was ancestor to the Ludim, the Anamim, the Lehabim, the Naph-tuhim, the Pathrusim, the Casluhim, and the Caphtorim from whom the Phi-listines descended.

¹³⁻¹⁶Canaan had Sidon (his firstborn) and Heth, and was ancestor to the Jeb-usites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites.

◆ **Descendants of Shem** / Genesis 10:21-30

²¹Shem, the older brother of Japheth, also had sons. Shem was ancestor to all the children of Eber.

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

²³The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, Meshech.

²⁴⁻²⁵Arphaxad had Shelah and Shelah had Eber. Eber had two sons, Peleg (so named because in his days the human race divided) and Joktan.

²⁶⁻³⁰Joktan had Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab—all sons of Joktan. Their land goes from Mesha toward Sephar as far as the mountain ranges in the east.

◆ 1 Chronicles 1:17-23

¹⁷Shem had Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹Arphaxad had Shelah and Shelah had Eber. Eber had two sons: Peleg (Division) because in his time the earth was divided up; his brother was Joktan.

²⁰⁻²³Joktan had Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab—all sons of Joktan.

◆ Genesis 10:31-32

³¹These are the descendants of Shem by family, language, country, and nation.

³²This is the family tree of the sons of Noah as they developed into nations. From them nations developed all across the Earth after the flood.

JANUARY 4

◆ **The Tower of Babel** / Genesis 11:1-9

¹⁻²At one time, the whole Earth spoke the same language. It so happened that as they moved out of the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled down.

³They said to one another, “Come, let’s make bricks and fire them well.” They used brick for stone and tar for mortar.

⁴Then they said, “Come, let’s build ourselves a city and a tower that reaches Heaven. Let’s make ourselves famous so we won’t be scattered here and there across the Earth.”

5GOD came down to look over the city and the tower those people had built.
 6-9GOD took one look and said, “One people, one language; why, this is only a first step. No telling what they’ll come up with next—they’ll stop at nothing! Come, we’ll go down and garble their speech so they won’t understand each other.” Then GOD scattered them from there all over the world. And they had to quit building the city. That’s how it came to be called Babel, because there GOD turned their language into “babble.” From there GOD scattered them all over the world.

◆ **From Shem to Abram** / Genesis 11:10-26

10-11This is the story of Shem. When Shem was 100 years old, he had Arphaxad. It was two years after the flood. After he had Arphaxad, he lived 500 more years and had other sons and daughters.

12-13When Arphaxad was thirty-five years old, he had Shelah. After Arphaxad had Shelah, he lived 403 more years and had other sons and daughters.

14-15When Shelah was thirty years old, he had Eber. After Shelah had Eber, he lived 403 more years and had other sons and daughters.

16-17When Eber was thirty-four years old, he had Peleg. After Eber had Peleg, he lived 430 more years and had other sons and daughters.

18-19When Peleg was thirty years old, he had Reu. After he had Reu, he lived 209 more years and had other sons and daughters.

20-21When Reu was thirty-two years old, he had Serug. After Reu had Serug, he lived 207 more years and had other sons and daughters.

22-23When Serug was thirty years old, he had Nahor. After Serug had Nahor, he lived 200 more years and had other sons and daughters.

24-25When Nahor was twenty-nine years old, he had Terah. After Nahor had Terah, he lived 119 more years and had other sons and daughters.

26When Terah was seventy years old, he had Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

◆ 1 Chronicles 1:24-28

24-28The three main branches in summary: Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, and Abram (Abraham). And Abraham had Isaac and Ishmael.

◆ **The Family of Terah** / Genesis 11:27-31 / 2166 or 2000 BC

Beginning with the history of Terah’s family, two dates are given: a traditional, earlier date and an alternative, later date. All dates are approximate.

27-28This is the story of Terah. Terah had Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Haran had Lot. Haran died before his father, Terah, in the country of his family, Ur of the Chaldees.

29Abram and Nahor each got married. Abram’s wife was Sarai; Nahor’s wife was Milcah, the daughter of his brother Haran. Haran had two daughters, Milcah and Iscah.

30Sarai was barren; she had no children.

31Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran’s son), and Sarai his daughter-in-law (his son Abram’s wife) and set out with them from Ur of the Chaldees for the land of Canaan. But when they got as far as Haran, they settled down there.

◆ **The Call of Abram** / Genesis 12:1-9 / 2091 or 1925 BC

Some years later, when Abram was grown and married and still living with his father in Haran, God called Abram to go to a new land.

¹GOD told Abram: “Leave your country, your family, and your father’s home for a land that I will show you.

²⁻³ I’ll make you a great nation
and bless you.

I’ll make you famous;
you’ll be a blessing.

I’ll bless those who bless you;
those who curse you I’ll curse.

All the families of the Earth
will be blessed through you.”

⁴⁻⁶So Abram left just as GOD said, and Lot left with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot with him, along with all the possessions and people they had gotten in Haran, and set out for the land of Canaan and arrived safe and sound.

Abram passed through the country as far as Shechem and the Oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites occupied the land.

⁷GOD appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your children.” Abram built an altar at the place GOD had appeared to him.

⁸He moved on from there to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent between Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. He built an altar there and prayed to GOD.

⁹Abram kept moving, steadily making his way south, to the Negev.

◆ **Abram and Sarai in Egypt** / Genesis 12:10-20

¹⁰⁻¹³Then a famine came to the land. Abram went down to Egypt to live; it was a hard famine. As he drew near to Egypt, he said to his wife, Sarai, “Look. We both know that you’re a beautiful woman. When the Egyptians see you they’re going to say, ‘Aha! That’s his wife!’ and kill me. But they’ll let you live. Do me a favor: tell them you’re my sister. Because of you, they’ll welcome me and let me live.”

¹⁴⁻¹⁵When Abram arrived in Egypt, the Egyptians took one look and saw that his wife was stunningly beautiful. Pharaoh’s princes raved over her to Pharaoh. She was taken to live with Pharaoh.

¹⁶⁻¹⁷Because of her, Abram got along very well: he accumulated sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, men and women servants, and camels. But GOD hit Pharaoh hard because of Abram’s wife Sarai; everybody in the palace got seriously sick.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹Pharaoh called for Abram, “What’s this that you’ve done to me? Why didn’t you tell me that she’s your wife? Why did you say, ‘She’s my sister’ so that I’d take her as my wife? Here’s your wife back—take her and get out!”

²⁰Pharaoh ordered his men to get Abram out of the country. They sent him and his wife and everything he owned on their way.

◆ **Abram and Lot Separate** / Genesis 13:1-18

¹⁻²So Abram left Egypt and went back to the Negev, he and his wife and everything he owned, and Lot still with him. By now Abram was very rich, loaded with cattle and silver and gold.

3-4 He moved on from the Negev, camping along the way, to Bethel, the place he had first set up his tent between Bethel and Ai and built his first altar. Abram prayed there to GOD.

5-7 Lot, who was traveling with Abram, was also rich in sheep and cattle and tents. But the land couldn't support both of them; they had too many possessions. They couldn't both live there—quarrels broke out between Abram's shepherds and Lot's shepherds. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living on the land at the time.

8-9 Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have fighting between us, between your shepherds and my shepherds. After all, we're family. Look around. Isn't there plenty of land out there? Let's separate. If you go left, I'll go right; if you go right, I'll go left."

10-11 Lot looked. He saw the whole plain of the Jordan spread out, well watered (this was before GOD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah), like GOD's garden, like Egypt, and stretching all the way to Zoar. Lot took the whole plain of the Jordan. Lot set out to the east.

11-12 That's how they came to part company, uncle and nephew. Abram settled in Canaan; Lot settled in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent near Sodom.

13 The people of Sodom were evil—flagrant sinners against GOD.

14-17 After Lot separated from him, GOD said to Abram, "Open your eyes, look around. Look north, south, east, and west. Everything you see, the whole land spread out before you, I will give to you and your children forever. I'll make your descendants like dust—counting your descendants will be as impossible as counting the dust of the Earth. So—on your feet, get moving! Walk through the country, its length and breadth; I'm giving it all to you."

18 Abram moved his tent. He went and settled by the Oaks of Mamre in Hebron. There he built an altar to GOD.

◆ **Abram Rescues Lot** / Genesis 14:1-16

1-2 Then this: Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim went off to war to fight Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, that is, Zoar.

3-4 This second group of kings, the attacked, came together at the Valley of Siddim, that is, the Salt Sea. They had been under the thumb of Kedorlaomer for twelve years. In the thirteenth year, they revolted.

5-7 In the fourteenth year, Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him set out and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El Paran on the far edge of the desert. On their way back they stopped at En Mishpat, that is, Kadesh, and conquered the whole region of the Amalekites as well as that of the Amorites who lived in Hazazon Tamar.

8-9 That's when the king of Sodom marched out with the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, that is, Zoar. They drew up in battle formation against their enemies in the Valley of Siddim—against Kedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five.

10-12 The Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, they fell into the tar pits, but the rest escaped into the mountains. The four kings captured all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, all their

food and equipment, and went on their way. They captured Lot, Abram's nephew who was living in Sodom at the time, taking everything he owned with them.

¹³⁻¹⁶A fugitive came and reported to Abram the Hebrew. Abram was living at the Oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and Aner. They were allies of Abram. When Abram heard that his nephew had been taken prisoner, he lined up his servants, all of them born in his household—there were 318 of them—and chased after the captors all the way to Dan. Abram and his men split into small groups and attacked by night. They chased them as far as Hobah, just north of Damascus. They recovered all the plunder along with nephew Lot and his possessions, including the women and the people.

◆ **Melchizedek Blesses Abram** / Genesis 14:17-24

¹⁷⁻²⁰After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and his allied kings, the king of Sodom came out to greet him in the Valley of Shaveh, the King's Valley. Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine—he was priest of The High God—and blessed him:

Blessed be Abram by The High God,
 Creator of Heaven and Earth.
 And blessed be The High God,
 who handed your enemies over to you.

Abram gave him a tenth of all the recovered plunder.

²¹The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me back the people but keep all the plunder for yourself."

²²⁻²⁴But Abram told the king of Sodom, "I swear to GOD, The High God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, this solemn oath, that I'll take nothing from you, not so much as a thread or a shoestring. I'm not going to have you go around saying, 'I made Abram rich.' Nothing for me other than what the young men ate and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; they're to get their share of the plunder."

JANUARY 5

◆ **God's Covenant with Abram** / Genesis 15:1-21

¹After all these things, this word of GOD came to Abram in a vision: "Don't be afraid, Abram. I'm your shield. Your reward will be grand!"

²⁻³Abram said, "GOD, Master, what use are your gifts as long as I'm childless and Eliezer of Damascus is going to inherit everything?" Abram continued, "See, you've given me no children, and now a mere house servant is going to get it all."

⁴Then GOD's Message came: "Don't worry, he won't be your heir; a son from your body will be your heir."

⁵Then he took him outside and said, "Look at the sky. Count the stars. Can you do it? Count your descendants! You're going to have a big family, Abram!"

⁶And he believed! Believed GOD! God declared him "Set-Right-with-God."

⁷GOD continued, "I'm the same GOD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldees and gave you this land to own."

⁸Abram said, "Master GOD, how am I to know this, that it will all be mine?"

⁹GOD said, "Bring me a heifer, a goat, and a ram, each three years old, and a dove and a young pigeon."

¹⁰⁻¹²He brought all these animals to him, split them down the middle, and laid the halves opposite each other. But he didn't split the birds. Vultures swooped down on the carcasses, but Abram scared them off. As the sun went down a deep sleep overcame Abram and then a sense of dread, dark and heavy.

¹³⁻¹⁶GOD said to Abram, "Know this: your descendants will live as outsiders in a land not theirs; they'll be enslaved and beaten down for 400 years. Then I'll punish their slave masters; your offspring will march out of there loaded with plunder. But not you; you'll have a long and full life and die a good and peaceful death. Not until the fourth generation will your descendants return here; sin is still a thriving business among the Amorites."

¹⁷⁻²¹When the sun was down and it was dark, a smoking firepot and a flaming torch moved between the split carcasses. That's when GOD made a covenant with Abram: "I'm giving this land to your children, from the Nile River in Egypt to the River Euphrates in Assyria—the country of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaim, Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites, and Jebusites."

◆ **The Birth of Ishmael** / Genesis 16:1-16 / 2080 or 1914 BC

¹⁻²Sarai, Abram's wife, hadn't yet produced a child.

She had an Egyptian maid named Hagar. Sarai said to Abram, "GOD has not seen fit to let me have a child. Sleep with my maid. Maybe I can get a family from her." Abram agreed to do what Sarai said.

³⁻⁴So Sarai, Abram's wife, took her Egyptian maid Hagar and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife. Abram had been living ten years in Canaan when this took place. He slept with Hagar and she got pregnant. When Hagar learned she was pregnant, she looked down on her mistress.

⁵Sarai told Abram, "It's all your fault that I'm suffering this abuse. I put my maid in bed with you and the minute she knows she's pregnant, she treats me like I'm nothing. May GOD decide which of us is right."

⁶"You decide," said Abram. "Your maid is your business."

Sarai was abusive to Hagar and Hagar ran away.

⁷⁻⁸An angel of GOD found her beside a spring in the desert; it was the spring on the road to Shur. He said, "Hagar, maid of Sarai, what are you doing here?" She said, "I'm running away from Sarai my mistress."

⁹⁻¹²The angel of GOD said, "Go back to your mistress. Put up with her abuse." He continued, "I'm going to give you a big family, children past counting.

From this pregnancy, you'll get a son: Name him Ishmael;
for GOD heard you, GOD answered you.
He'll be a bucking bronco of a man,
a real fighter, fighting and being fought,
Always stirring up trouble,
always at odds with his family."

¹³She answered GOD by name, praying to the God who spoke to her, "You're the God who sees me!

"Yes! He saw me; and then I saw him!"

¹⁴That's how that desert spring got named "God-Alive-Sees-Me Spring." That spring is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶Hagar gave Abram a son. Abram named him Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar gave him his son, Ishmael.

◆ **Abram Is Named Abraham** / Genesis 17:1-8 / 2067 or 1901 BC

¹⁻²When Abram was ninety-nine years old, GOD showed up and said to him, “I am The Strong God, live entirely before me, live to the hilt! I’ll make a covenant between us and I’ll give you a huge family.”

³⁻⁸Overwhelmed, Abram fell flat on his face.

Then God said to him, “This is my covenant with you: You’ll be the father of many nations. Your name will no longer be Abram, but Abraham, meaning that ‘I’m making you the father of many nations.’ I’ll make you a father of fathers—I’ll make nations from you, kings will issue from you. I’m establishing my covenant between me and you, a covenant that includes your descendants, a covenant that goes on and on and on, a covenant that commits me to be your God and the God of your descendants. And I’m giving you and your descendants this land where you’re now just camping, this whole country of Canaan, to own forever. And I’ll be their God.”

◆ **The Sign of Circumcision** / Genesis 17:9-14

⁹⁻¹⁴God continued to Abraham, “And you: You will honor my covenant, you and your descendants, generation after generation. This is the covenant that you are to honor, the covenant that pulls in all your descendants: Circumcise every male. Circumcise by cutting off the foreskin of the penis; it will be the sign of the covenant between us. Every male baby will be circumcised when he is eight days old, generation after generation—this includes house-born slaves and slaves bought from outsiders who are not blood kin. Make sure you circumcise both your own children and anyone brought in from the outside. That way my covenant will be cut into your body, a permanent mark of my permanent covenant. An uncircumcised male, one who has not had the foreskin of his penis cut off, will be cut off from his people—he has broken my covenant.”

◆ **Sarai Is Named Sarah** / Genesis 17:15-27

¹⁵⁻¹⁶God continued speaking to Abraham, “And Sarai your wife: Don’t call her Sarai any longer; call her Sarah. I’ll bless her—yes! I’ll give you a son by her! Oh, how I’ll bless her! Nations will come from her; kings of nations will come from her.”

¹⁷Abraham fell flat on his face. And then he laughed, thinking, “Can a hundred-year-old man father a son? And can Sarah, at ninety years, have a baby?”

¹⁸Recovering, Abraham said to God, “Oh, keep Ishmael alive and well before you!”

¹⁹But God said, “That’s not what I mean. Your wife, Sarah, will have a baby, a son. Name him Isaac (Laughter). I’ll establish my covenant with him and his descendants, a covenant that lasts forever.

²⁰⁻²¹“And Ishmael? Yes, I heard your prayer for him. I’ll also bless him; I’ll make sure he has plenty of children—a huge family. He’ll father twelve princes; I’ll make him a great nation. But I’ll establish my covenant with Isaac whom Sarah will give you about this time next year.”

²²God finished speaking with Abraham and left.

²³Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all his servants, whether house-born or purchased—every male in his household—and circumcised them, cutting off their foreskins that very day, just as God had told him.

²⁴⁻²⁷Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised. His son

Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised. Abraham and Ishmael were circumcised the same day together with all the servants of his household, those born there and those purchased from outsiders—all were circumcised with him.

JANUARY 6

◆ **A Son Promised to Sarah** / Genesis 18:1-15 / 2067 or 1901 BC

¹⁻²GOD appeared to Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance of his tent. It was the hottest part of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing. He ran from his tent to greet them and bowed before them.

³⁻⁵He said, “Master, if it please you, stop for a while with your servant. I’ll get some water so you can wash your feet. Rest under this tree. I’ll get some food to refresh you on your way, since your travels have brought you across my path.”

They said, “Certainly. Go ahead.”

⁶Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. He said, “Hurry. Get three cups of our best flour; knead it and make bread.”

⁷⁻⁸Then Abraham ran to the cattle pen and picked out a nice plump calf and gave it to the servant who lost no time getting it ready. Then he got curds and milk, brought them with the calf that had been roasted, set the meal before the men, and stood there under the tree while they ate.

⁹The men said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?”

He said, “In the tent.”

¹⁰One of them said, “I’m coming back about this time next year. When I arrive, your wife Sarah will have a son.” Sarah was listening at the tent opening, just behind the man.

¹¹⁻¹²Abraham and Sarah were old by this time, very old. Sarah was far past the age for having babies. Sarah laughed within herself, “An old woman like me? Get pregnant? With this old man of a husband?”

¹³⁻¹⁴GOD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh saying, ‘Me? Have a baby? An old woman like me?’ Is anything too hard for GOD? I’ll be back about this time next year and Sarah will have a baby.”

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

But he said, “Yes you did; you laughed.”

◆ **Abraham Intercedes for Sodom** / Genesis 18:16-33

¹⁶When the men got up to leave, they set off for Sodom. Abraham walked with them to say good-bye.

¹⁷⁻¹⁹Then GOD said, “Shall I keep back from Abraham what I’m about to do? Abraham is going to become a large and strong nation; all the nations of the world are going to find themselves blessed through him. Yes, I’ve settled on him as the one to train his children and future family to observe GOD’s way of life, live kindly and generously and fairly, so that GOD can complete in Abraham what he promised him.”

²⁰⁻²¹GOD continued, “The cries of the victims in Sodom and Gomorrah are deafening; the sin of those cities is immense. I’m going down to see for myself, see if what they’re doing is as bad as it sounds. Then I’ll know.”

²²The men set out for Sodom, but Abraham stood in GOD’s path, blocking his way.

²³⁻²⁵Abraham confronted him, “Are you serious? Are you planning on getting

rid of the good people right along with the bad? What if there are fifty decent people left in the city; will you lump the good with the bad and get rid of the lot? Wouldn't you spare the city for the sake of those fifty innocents? I can't believe you'd do that, kill off the good and the bad alike as if there were no difference between them. Doesn't the Judge of all the Earth judge with justice?"

²⁶GOD said, "If I find fifty decent people in the city of Sodom, I'll spare the place just for them."

²⁷⁻²⁸Abraham came back, "Do I, a mere mortal made from a handful of dirt, dare open my mouth again to my Master? What if the fifty fall short by five—would you destroy the city because of those missing five?"

He said, "I won't destroy it if there are forty-five."

²⁹Abraham spoke up again, "What if you only find forty?"

"Neither will I destroy it if for forty."

³⁰He said, "Master, don't be irritated with me, but what if only thirty are found?"

"No, I won't do it if I find thirty."

³¹He pushed on, "I know I'm trying your patience, Master, but how about for twenty?"

"I won't destroy it for twenty."

³²He wouldn't quit, "Don't get angry, Master—this is the last time. What if you only come up with ten?"

"For the sake of only ten, I won't destroy the city."

³³When GOD finished talking with Abraham, he left. And Abraham went home.

◆ **Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed** / Genesis 19:1-29

¹⁻²The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening. Lot was sitting at the city gate. He saw them and got up to welcome them, bowing before them and said, "Please, my friends, come to my house and stay the night. Wash up. You can rise early and be on your way refreshed."

They said, "No, we'll sleep in the street."

³But he insisted, wouldn't take no for an answer; and they relented and went home with him. Lot fixed a hot meal for them and they ate.

⁴⁻⁵Before they went to bed, men from all over the city of Sodom, young and old, descended on the house from all sides and boxed them in. They yelled to Lot, "Where are the men who are staying with you for the night? Bring them out so we can have our sport with them!"

⁶⁻⁸Lot went out, barring the door behind him, and said, "Brothers, please, don't be vile! Look, I have two daughters, virgins; let me bring them out; you can take their pleasure with them, but don't touch these men—they're my guests."

⁹They said, "Get lost! You drop in from nowhere and now you're going to tell us how to run our lives. We'll treat you worse than them!" And they charged past Lot to break down the door.

¹⁰⁻¹¹But the two men reached out and pulled Lot inside the house, locking the door. Then they struck blind the men who were trying to break down the door, both leaders and followers, leaving them groping in the dark.

¹²⁻¹³The two men said to Lot, "Do you have any other family here? Sons, daughters—anybody in the city? Get them out of here, and now! We're going to destroy this place. The outcries of victims here to GOD are deafening; we've been sent to blast this place into oblivion."

¹⁴Lot went out and warned the fiancés of his daughters, "Evacuate this place;

GOD is about to destroy this city!” But his daughters’ would-be husbands treated it as a joke.

¹⁵At break of day, the angels pushed Lot to get going, “Hurry. Get your wife and two daughters out of here before it’s too late and you’re caught in the punishment of the city.”

¹⁶⁻¹⁷Lot was dragging his feet. The men grabbed Lot’s arm, and the arms of his wife and daughters—GOD was so merciful to them!—and dragged them to safety outside the city. When they had them outside, Lot was told, “Now run for your life! Don’t look back! Don’t stop anywhere on the plain—run for the hills or you’ll be swept away.”

¹⁸⁻²⁰But Lot protested, “No, masters, you can’t mean it! I know that you’ve taken a liking to me and have done me an immense favor in saving my life, but I can’t run for the mountains—who knows what terrible thing might happen to me in the mountains and leave me for dead. Look over there—that town is close enough to get to. It’s a small town, hardly anything to it. Let me escape there and save my life—it’s a mere wide place in the road.”

²¹⁻²²“All right, Lot. If you insist. I’ll let you have your way. And I won’t stamp out the town you’ve spotted. But hurry up. Run for it! I can’t do anything until you get there.” That’s why the town was called Zoar, that is, Smalltown.

²³The sun was high in the sky when Lot arrived at Zoar.

²⁴⁻²⁵Then GOD rained brimstone and fire down on Sodom and Gomorrah—a river of lava from GOD out of the sky!—and destroyed these cities and the entire plain and everyone who lived in the cities and everything that grew from the ground.

²⁶But Lot’s wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt.

²⁷⁻²⁸Abraham got up early the next morning and went to the place he had so recently stood with GOD. He looked out over Sodom and Gomorrah, surveying the whole plain. All he could see was smoke belching from the Earth, like smoke from a furnace.

²⁹And that’s the story: When God destroyed the Cities of the Plain, he was mindful of Abraham and first got Lot out of there before he blasted those cities off the face of the Earth.

◆ **Lot and His Daughters** / Genesis 19:30-38

³⁰Lot left Zoar and went into the mountains to live with his two daughters; he was afraid to stay in Zoar. He lived in a cave with his daughters.

³¹⁻³²One day the older daughter said to the younger, “Our father is getting old and there’s not a man left in the country by whom we can get pregnant. Let’s get our father drunk with wine and lie with him. We’ll get children through our father—it’s our only chance to keep our family alive.”

³³⁻³⁵They got their father drunk with wine that very night. The older daughter went and lay with him. He was oblivious, knowing nothing of what she did. The next morning the older said to the younger, “Last night I slept with my father. Tonight, it’s your turn. We’ll get him drunk again and then you sleep with him. We’ll both get a child through our father and keep our family alive.” So that night they got their father drunk again and the younger went in and slept with him. Again he was oblivious, knowing nothing of what she did.

³⁶⁻³⁸Both daughters became pregnant by their father, Lot. The older daughter had a son and named him Moab, the ancestor of the present-day Moabites. The

younger daughter had a son and named him Ben-Ammi, the ancestor of the present-day Ammonites.

◆ **Abraham Deceives Abimelech** / Genesis 20:1-18

¹⁻²Abraham traveled from there south to the Negev and settled down between Kadesh and Shur. While he was camping in Gerar, Abraham said of his wife Sarah, “She’s my sister.”

²⁻³So Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent for Sarah and took her. But God came to Abimelech in a dream that night and told him, “You’re as good as dead—that woman you took, she’s a married woman.”

⁴⁻⁵Now Abimelech had not yet slept with her, hadn’t so much as touched her. He said, “Master, would you kill an innocent man? Didn’t he tell me, ‘She’s my sister’? And didn’t she herself say, ‘He’s my brother’? I had no idea I was doing anything wrong when I did this.”

⁶⁻⁷God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know your intentions were pure, that’s why I kept you from sinning against me; I was the one who kept you from going to bed with her. So now give the man’s wife back to him. He’s a prophet and will pray for you—pray for your life. If you don’t give her back, know that it’s certain death both for you and everyone in your family.”

⁸⁻⁹Abimelech was up first thing in the morning. He called all his house servants together and told them the whole story. They were shocked. Then Abimelech called in Abraham and said, “What have you done to us? What have I ever done to you that you would bring on me and my kingdom this huge offense? What you’ve done to me ought never to have been done.”

¹⁰Abimelech went on to Abraham, “Whatever were you thinking of when you did this thing?”

¹¹⁻¹³Abraham said, “I just assumed that there was no fear of God in this place and that they’d kill me to get my wife. Besides, the truth is that she is my half sister; she’s my father’s daughter but not my mother’s. When God sent me out as a wanderer from my father’s home, I told her, ‘Do me a favor; wherever we go, tell people that I’m your brother.’”

¹⁴⁻¹⁵Then Abimelech gave Sarah back to Abraham, and along with her sent sheep and cattle and servants, both male and female. He said, “My land is open to you; live wherever you wish.”

¹⁶And to Sarah he said, “I’ve given your brother a thousand pieces of silver—that clears you of even a shadow of suspicion before the eyes of the world. You’re vindicated.”

¹⁷⁻¹⁸Then Abraham prayed to God and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his maidservants, and they started having babies again. For GOD had shut down every womb in Abimelech’s household on account of Sarah, Abraham’s wife.

◆ **The Birth of Isaac** / Genesis 21:1-7 / 2066 or 1900 BC

¹⁻⁴GOD visited Sarah exactly as he said he would; GOD did to Sarah what he promised: Sarah became pregnant and gave Abraham a son in his old age, and at the very time God had set. Abraham named him Isaac. When his son was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him just as God had commanded.

⁵⁻⁶Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born.

Sarah said,

God has blessed me with laughter
and all who get the news will laugh with me!

7She also said,

Whoever would have suggested to Abraham
that Sarah would one day nurse a baby!
Yet here I am! I've given the old man a son!

JANUARY 7

◆ **Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away** / Genesis 21:8-21 / *ca. 2062 or 1896 BC*

8The baby grew and was weaned. Abraham threw a big party on the day Isaac was weaned.

9-10One day Sarah saw the son that Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, poking fun at her son Isaac. She told Abraham, “Get rid of this slave woman and her son. No child of this slave is going to share inheritance with my son Isaac!”

11-13The matter gave great pain to Abraham—after all, Ishmael was his son. But God spoke to Abraham, “Don’t feel badly about the boy and your maid. Do whatever Sarah tells you. Your descendants will come through Isaac. Regarding your maid’s son, be assured that I’ll also develop a great nation from him—he’s your son, too.”

14-16Abraham got up early the next morning, got some food together and a canteen of water for Hagar, put them on her back and sent her away with the child. She wandered off into the desert of Beersheba. When the water was gone, she left the child under a shrub and went off, fifty yards or so. She said, “I can’t watch my son die.” As she sat, she broke into sobs.

17-18Meanwhile, God heard the boy crying. The angel of God called from Heaven to Hagar, “What’s wrong, Hagar? Don’t be afraid. God has heard the boy and knows the fix he’s in. Up now; go get the boy. Hold him tight. I’m going to make of him a great nation.”

19Just then God opened her eyes. She looked. She saw a well of water. She went to it and filled her canteen and gave the boy a long, cool drink.

20-21God was on the boy’s side as he grew up. He lived out in the desert and became a skilled archer. He lived in the Paran wilderness. And his mother got him a wife from Egypt.

◆ **A Treaty with Abimelech** / Genesis 21:22-34

22-23At about that same time, Abimelech and the captain of his troops, Phicol, spoke to Abraham: “No matter what you do, God is on your side. So swear to me that you won’t do anything underhanded to me or any of my family. For as long as you live here, swear that you’ll treat me and my land as well as I’ve treated you.”

24Abraham said, “I swear it.”

25-26At the same time, Abraham confronted Abimelech over the matter of a well of water that Abimelech’s servants had taken. Abimelech said, “I have no idea who did this; you never told me about it; this is the first I’ve heard of it.”

27-28So the two of them made a covenant. Abraham took sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech. Abraham set aside seven sheep from his flock.

29Abimelech said, “What does this mean? These seven sheep you’ve set aside.”

30Abraham said, “It means that when you accept these seven sheep, you take it as proof that I dug this well, that it’s my well.”

31-32That’s how the place got named Beersheba (the Oath-Well), because the two of them swore a covenant oath there. After they had made the covenant

at Beersheba, Abimelech and his commander, Phicol, left and went back to Philistine territory.

³³⁻³⁴Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and worshiped GOD there, praying to the Eternal God. Abraham lived in Philistine country for a long time.

◆ **Abraham's Obedience Tested** / Genesis 22:1-24

¹After all this, God tested Abraham. God said, "Abraham!"

"Yes?" answered Abraham. "I'm listening."

²He said, "Take your dear son Isaac whom you love and go to the land of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I'll point out to you."

³⁻⁵Abraham got up early in the morning and saddled his donkey. He took two of his young servants and his son Isaac. He had split wood for the burnt offering. He set out for the place God had directed him. On the third day he looked up and saw the place in the distance. Abraham told his two young servants, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I are going over there to worship; then we'll come back to you."

⁶Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and gave it to Isaac his son to carry. He carried the flint and the knife. The two of them went off together.

⁷Isaac said to Abraham his father, "Father?"

"Yes, my son."

"We have flint and wood, but where's the sheep for the burnt offering?"

⁸Abraham said, "Son, God will see to it that there's a sheep for the burnt offering." And they kept on walking together.

⁹⁻¹⁰They arrived at the place to which God had directed him. Abraham built an altar. He laid out the wood. Then he tied up Isaac and laid him on the wood. Abraham reached out and took the knife to kill his son.

¹¹Just then an angel of GOD called to him out of Heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Yes, I'm listening."

¹²"Don't lay a hand on that boy! Don't touch him! Now I know how fearlessly you fear God; you didn't hesitate to place your son, your dear son, on the altar for me."

¹³Abraham looked up. He saw a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. Abraham took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

¹⁴Abraham named that place GOD-Yireh (GOD-Sees-to-It). That's where we get the saying, "On the mountain of GOD, he sees to it."

¹⁵⁻¹⁸The angel of GOD spoke from Heaven a second time to Abraham: "I swear—GOD's sure word!—because you have gone through with this, and have not refused to give me your son, your dear, dear son, I'll bless you—oh, how I'll bless you! And I'll make sure that your children flourish—like stars in the sky! like sand on the beaches! And your descendants will defeat their enemies. All nations on Earth will find themselves blessed through your descendants because you obeyed me."

¹⁹Then Abraham went back to his young servants. They got things together and returned to Beersheba. Abraham settled down in Beersheba.



²⁰⁻²³After all this, Abraham got the news: "Your brother Nahor is a father! Milcah has given him children: Uz, his firstborn, his brother Buz, Kemuel (he

was the father of Aram), Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.” (Bethuel was the father of Rebekah.) Milcah gave these eight sons to Nahor, Abraham’s brother.

²⁴His concubine, Reumah, gave him four more children: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

◆ **The Burial of Sarah** / Genesis 23:1-20

¹⁻²Sarah lived 127 years. Sarah died in Kiriath Arba, present-day Hebron, in the land of Canaan. Abraham mourned for Sarah and wept.

³⁻⁴Then Abraham got up from mourning his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites: “I know I’m only an outsider here among you, but sell me a burial plot so that I can bury my dead decently.”

⁵⁻⁶The Hittites responded, “Why, you’re no mere outsider here with us, you’re a prince of God! Bury your dead wife in the best of our burial sites. None of us will refuse you a place for burial.”

⁷⁻⁹Then Abraham got up, bowed respectfully to the people of the land, the Hittites, and said, “If you’re serious about helping me give my wife a proper burial, intercede for me with Ephron son of Zohar. Ask him to sell me the cave of Machpelah that he owns, the one at the end of his land. Ask him to sell it to me at its full price for a burial plot, with you as witnesses.”

¹⁰⁻¹¹Ephron was part of the local Hittite community. Then Ephron the Hittite spoke up, answering Abraham with all the Hittites who were part of the town council listening: “Oh no, my master! I couldn’t do that. The field is yours—a gift. I’ll give it and the cave to you. With my people as witnesses, I give it to you. Bury your deceased wife.”

¹²⁻¹³Abraham bowed respectfully before the assembled council and answered Ephron: “Please allow me—I want to pay the price of the land; take my money so that I can go ahead and bury my wife.”

¹⁴⁻¹⁵Then Ephron answered Abraham, “If you insist, master. What’s four hundred silver shekels between us? Now go ahead and bury your wife.”

¹⁶Abraham accepted Ephron’s offer and paid out the sum that Ephron had named before the town council of Hittites—four hundred silver shekels at the current exchange rate.

¹⁷⁻²⁰That’s how Ephron’s field next to Mamre—the field, its cave, and all the trees within its borders—became Abraham’s property. The town council of Hittites witnessed the transaction. Abraham then proceeded to bury his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah that is next to Mamre, present-day Hebron, in the land of Canaan. The field and its cave went from the Hittites into Abraham’s possession as a burial plot.

◆ **The Death of Terah** / Genesis 11:32 / 2031 or 1865 BC

³²Terah lived 205 years. He died in Haran.

◆ **Isaac Marries Rebekah** / Genesis 24:1-67 / 2026 or 1860 BC

¹Abraham was now an old man. GOD had blessed Abraham in every way.

²⁻⁴Abraham spoke to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of everything he had, “Put your hand under my thigh and swear by GOD—God of Heaven, God of Earth—that you will not get a wife for my son from among the young women of the Canaanites here, but will go to the land of my birth and get a wife for my son Isaac.”

⁵The servant answered, “But what if the woman refuses to leave home and come with me? Do I then take your son back to your home country?”

⁶⁻⁸Abraham said, “Oh no. Never. By no means are you to take my son back there. GOD, the God of Heaven, took me from the home of my father and from the country of my birth and spoke to me in solemn promise, ‘I’m giving *this* land to your descendants.’ This God will send his angel ahead of you to get a wife for my son. And if the woman won’t come, you are free from this oath you’ve sworn to me. But under no circumstances are you to take my son back there.”

⁹So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and gave his solemn oath.

¹⁰⁻¹⁴The servant took ten of his master’s camels and, loaded with gifts from his master, traveled to Aram Naharaim and the city of Nahor. Outside the city, he made the camels kneel at a well. It was evening, the time when the women came to draw water. He prayed, “O GOD, God of my master Abraham, make things go smoothly this day; treat my master Abraham well! As I stand here by the spring while the young women of the town come out to get water, let the girl to whom I say, ‘Lower your jug and give me a drink,’ and who answers, ‘Drink, and let me also water your camels’—let her be the woman you have picked out for your servant Isaac. Then I’ll know that you’re working graciously behind the scenes for my master.”

¹⁵⁻¹⁷It so happened that the words were barely out of his mouth when Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel whose mother was Milcah the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, came out with a water jug on her shoulder. The girl was stunningly beautiful, a pure virgin. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came back up. The servant ran to meet her and said, “Please, can I have a sip of water from your jug?”

¹⁸⁻²¹She said, “Certainly, drink!” And she held the jug so that he could drink. When he had satisfied his thirst she said, “I’ll get water for your camels, too, until they’ve drunk their fill.” She promptly emptied her jug into the trough and ran back to the well to fill it, and she kept at it until she had watered all the camels.

The man watched, silent. Was this GOD’s answer? Had GOD made his trip a success or not?

²²⁻²³When the camels had finished drinking, the man brought out gifts, a gold nose ring weighing a little over a quarter of an ounce and two arm bracelets weighing about four ounces, and gave them to her. He asked her, “Tell me about your family? Whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father’s house for us to stay the night?”

²⁴⁻²⁵She said, “I’m the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah and Nahor. And there’s plenty of room in our house for you to stay—and lots of straw and feed besides.”

²⁶⁻²⁷At this the man bowed in worship before GOD and prayed, “Blessed be GOD, God of my master Abraham: How generous and true you’ve been to my master; you’ve held nothing back. You led me right to the door of my master’s brother!”

²⁸And the girl was off and running, telling everyone in her mother’s house what had happened.

²⁹⁻³¹Rebekah had a brother named Laban. Laban ran outside to the man at the spring. He had seen the nose ring and the bracelets on his sister and had heard her say, “The man said this and this and this to me.” So he went to the man and

there he was, still standing with his camels at the spring. Laban welcomed him: “Come on in, blessed of GOD! Why are you standing out here? I’ve got the house ready for you; and there’s also a place for your camels.”

³²⁻³³So the man went into the house. The camels were unloaded and given straw and feed. Water was brought to bathe the feet of the man and the men with him. Then Laban brought out food. But the man said, “I won’t eat until I tell my story.”

Laban said, “Go ahead; tell us.”

³⁴⁻⁴¹The servant said, “I’m the servant of Abraham. GOD has blessed my master—he’s a great man; GOD has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, servants and maidservants, camels and donkeys. And then to top it off, Sarah, my master’s wife, gave him a son in her old age and he has passed everything on to his son. My master made me promise, ‘Don’t get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I live. No, go to my father’s home, back to my family, and get a wife for my son there.’ I said to my master, ‘But what if the woman won’t come with me?’ He said, ‘GOD before whom I’ve walked faithfully will send his angel with you and he’ll make things work out so that you’ll bring back a wife for my son from my family, from the house of my father. Then you’ll be free from the oath. If you go to my family and they won’t give her to you, you will also be free from the oath.’

⁴²⁻⁴⁴“Well, when I came this very day to the spring, I prayed, ‘GOD, God of my master Abraham, make things turn out well in this task I’ve been given. I’m standing at this well. When a young woman comes here to draw water and I say to her, Please, give me a sip of water from your jug, and she says, Not only will I give you a drink, I’ll also water your camels—let that woman be the wife GOD has picked out for my master’s son.’

⁴⁵⁻⁴⁸“I had barely finished offering this prayer, when Rebekah arrived, her jug on her shoulder. She went to the spring and drew water and I said, ‘Please, can I have a drink?’ She didn’t hesitate. She held out her jug and said, ‘Drink; and when you’re finished I’ll also water your camels.’ I drank, and she watered the camels. I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel whose parents were Nahor and Milcah.’ I gave her a ring for her nose, bracelets for her arms, and bowed in worship to GOD. I praised GOD, the God of my master Abraham who had led me straight to the door of my master’s family to get a wife for his son.

⁴⁹“Now, tell me what you are going to do. If you plan to respond with a generous *yes*, tell me. But if not, tell me plainly so I can figure out what to do next.”

⁵⁰⁻⁵¹Laban and Bethuel answered, “This is undeniably from GOD. We have no say in the matter, either *yes* or no. Rebekah is yours: Take her and go; let her be the wife of your master’s son, as GOD has made plain.”

⁵²⁻⁵⁴When Abraham’s servant heard their decision, he bowed in worship before GOD. Then he brought out gifts of silver and gold and clothing and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave expensive gifts to her brother and mother. He and his men had supper and spent the night. But first thing in the morning they were up. He said, “Send me back to my master.”

⁵⁵Her brother and mother said, “Let the girl stay a while, say another ten days, and then go.”

⁵⁶He said, “Oh, don’t make me wait! GOD has worked everything out so well—send me off to my master.”

⁵⁷They said, “We’ll call the girl; we’ll ask her.”

They called Rebekah and asked her, “Do you want to go with this man?”

⁵⁸She said, “I’m ready to go.”

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

You’re our sister—live bountifully!
And your children, triumphantly!

⁶¹Rebekah and her young maids mounted the camels and followed the man. The servant took Rebekah and set off for home.

⁶²⁻⁶⁵Isaac was living in the Negev. He had just come back from a visit to Beer Lahai Roi. In the evening he went out into the field; while meditating he looked up and saw camels coming. When Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac, she got down from her camel and asked the servant, “Who is that man out in the field coming toward us?”

“That is my master.”

She took her veil and covered herself.

⁶⁶⁻⁶⁷After the servant told Isaac the whole story of the trip, Isaac took Rebekah into the tent of his mother Sarah. He married Rebekah and she became his wife and he loved her. So Isaac found comfort after his mother’s death.

JANUARY 8

◆ Abraham’s Descendants / Genesis 25:1-4

What follows took place sometime after Sarah’s death (Gen 23:1-20, page 25).

¹⁻²Abraham married a second time; his new wife was named Keturah. She gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

³Jokshan had Sheba and Dedan.

Dedan’s descendants were the Asshurim, the Letushim, and the Leummim.

⁴Midian had Ephah, Ephher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah—all from the line of Keturah.

◆ 1 Chronicles 1:32-33

³²⁻³³Keturah, Abraham’s concubine, gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Then Jokshan had Sheba and Dedan. And Midian had Ephah, Ephher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah. These made up the Keturah branch.

◆ Genesis 25:5-6

⁵⁻⁶But Abraham gave everything he possessed to Isaac. While he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons he had by his concubines, but then sent them away to the country of the east, putting a good distance between them and his son Isaac.

◆ Ishmael’s Descendants / Genesis 25:12-18

¹²This is the family tree of Ishmael son of Abraham, the son that Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah’s maid, bore to Abraham.

¹³⁻¹⁶These are the names of Ishmael’s sons in the order of their births: Nebaioth, Ishmael’s firstborn, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah—all the sons of Ishmael. Their settlements and encampments were named after them. Twelve princes with their twelve tribes.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸Ishmael lived 137 years. When he breathed his last and died he was buried with his family. His children settled down all the way from Havilah near Egypt eastward to Shur in the direction of Assyria. The Ishmaelites didn't get along with any of their kin.

◆ 1 Chronicles 1:29-31

²⁹⁻³¹Abraham's family tree developed along these lines: Ishmael had Nebaioth (his firstborn), then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah—the Ishmael branch.

◆ **Isaac's Descendants** / 1 Chronicles 1:34

³⁴Abraham had Isaac, and Isaac had Esau and Israel (Jacob).

◆ **The Births of Jacob and Esau** / Genesis 25:19-26 / 2006 or 1840 BC

¹⁹⁻²⁰This is the family tree of Isaac son of Abraham: Abraham had Isaac. Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan Aram. She was the sister of Laban the Aramean.

²¹⁻²³Isaac prayed hard to GOD for his wife because she was barren. GOD answered his prayer and Rebekah became pregnant. But the children tumbled and kicked inside her so much that she said, "If this is the way it's going to be, why go on living?" She went to GOD to find out what was going on. GOD told her,

Two nations are in your womb,
two peoples butting heads while still in your body.
One people will overpower the other,
and the older will serve the younger.

²⁴⁻²⁶When her time to give birth came, sure enough, there were twins in her womb. The first came out reddish, as if snugly wrapped in a hairy blanket; they named him Esau (Hairy). His brother followed, his fist clutched tight to Esau's heel; they named him Jacob (Heel). Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.

◆ **The Death of Abraham** / Genesis 25:7-11 / 1991 or 1825 BC

When Esau and Jacob were about fifteen years old, their grandfather Abraham died (compare Gen 21:4-5, page 22; and Gen 25:26, above).

⁷⁻¹¹Abraham lived 175 years. Then he took his final breath. He died happy at a ripe old age, full of years, and was buried with his family. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, next to Mamre. It was the field that Abraham had bought from the Hittites. Abraham was buried next to his wife Sarah. After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac. Isaac lived at Beer Lahai Roi.

JANUARY 9

◆ **Esau Sells His Birthright** / Genesis 25:27-34

²⁷⁻²⁸The boys grew up. Esau became an expert hunter, an outdoorsman. Jacob was a quiet man preferring life indoors among the tents. Isaac loved Esau because he loved his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹⁻³⁰One day Jacob was cooking a stew. Esau came in from the field, starved.

Esau said to Jacob, “Give me some of that red stew—I’m starved!” That’s how he came to be called Edom (Red).

³¹Jacob said, “Make me a trade: my stew for your rights as the firstborn.”

³²Esau said, “I’m starving! What good is a birthright if I’m dead?”

³³⁻³⁴Jacob said, “First, swear to me.” And he did it. On oath Esau traded away his rights as the firstborn. Jacob gave him bread and the stew of lentils. He ate and drank, got up and left. That’s how Esau shrugged off his rights as the firstborn.

◆ **Isaac Deceives Abimelech** / Genesis 26:1-11

¹There was a famine in the land, as bad as the famine during the time of Abraham. And Isaac went down to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, in Gerar.

²⁻⁵GOD appeared to him and said, “Don’t go down to Egypt; stay where I tell you. Stay here in this land and I’ll be with you and bless you. I’m giving you and your children all these lands, fulfilling the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. I’ll make your descendants as many as the stars in the sky and give them all these lands. All the nations of the Earth will get a blessing for themselves through your descendants. And why? Because Abraham obeyed my summons and kept my charge—my commands, my guidelines, my teachings.”

⁶So Isaac stayed put in Gerar.

⁷The men of the place questioned him about his wife. He said, “She’s my sister.” He was afraid to say “She’s my wife.” He was thinking, “These men might kill me to get Rebekah, she’s so beautiful.”

⁸⁻⁹One day, after they had been there quite a long time, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out his window and saw Isaac fondling his wife Rebekah. Abimelech sent for Isaac and said, “So, she’s your wife. Why did you tell us ‘She’s my sister’?”

Isaac said, “Because I thought I might get killed by someone who wanted her.”

¹⁰Abimelech said, “But think of what you might have done to *us*! Given a little more time, one of the men might have slept with your wife; you would have been responsible for bringing guilt down on us.”

¹¹Then Abimelech gave orders to his people: “Anyone who so much as lays a hand on this man or his wife dies.”

◆ **Conflict over Water Rights** / Genesis 26:12-25

¹²⁻¹⁵Isaac planted crops in that land and took in a huge harvest. GOD blessed him. The man got richer and richer by the day until he was very wealthy. He accumulated flocks and herds and many, many servants, so much so that the Philistines began to envy him. They got back at him by throwing dirt and debris into all the wells that his father’s servants had dug back in the days of his father Abraham, clogging up all the wells.

¹⁶Finally, Abimelech told Isaac: “Leave. You’ve become far too big for us.”

¹⁷⁻¹⁸So Isaac left. He camped in the valley of Gerar and settled down there. Isaac dug again the wells which were dug in the days of his father Abraham but had been clogged up by the Philistines after Abraham’s death. And he renamed them, using the original names his father had given them.

¹⁹⁻²⁴One day, as Isaac’s servants were digging in the valley, they came on a well of spring water. The shepherds of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s shepherds, claiming, “This water is ours.” So Isaac named the well Esek (Quarrel) because they quarreled over it. They dug another well and there was a difference over

that one also, so he named it Sitnah (Accusation). He went on from there and dug yet another well. But there was no fighting over this one so he named it Rehoboth (Wide-Open Spaces), saying, “Now GOD has given us plenty of space to spread out in the land.” From there he went up to Beersheba. That very night GOD appeared to him and said,

I am the God of Abraham your father;
don't fear a thing because I'm with you.
I'll bless you and make your children flourish
because of Abraham my servant.

²⁵Isaac built an altar there and prayed, calling on GOD by name. He pitched his tent and his servants started digging another well.

◆ **A Treaty with Abimelech** / Genesis 26:26-35

²⁶⁻²⁷Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his advisor and Phicol the head of his troops. Isaac asked them, “Why did you come to me? You hate me; you threw me out of your country.”

²⁸⁻²⁹They said, “We've realized that GOD is on your side. We'd like to make a deal between us—a covenant that we maintain friendly relations. We haven't bothered you in the past; we treated you kindly and let you leave us in peace. So—GOD's blessing be with you!”

³⁰⁻³¹Isaac laid out a feast and they ate and drank together. Early in the morning they exchanged oaths. Then Isaac said good-bye and they parted as friends.

³²⁻³³Later that same day, Isaac's servants came to him with news about the well they had been digging, “We've struck water!” Isaac named the well Sheba (Oath), and that's the name of the city, Beersheba (Oath-Well), to this day.



³⁴⁻³⁵When Esau was forty years old he married Judith, daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath, daughter of Elon the Hittite. They turned out to be thorns in the sides of Isaac and Rebekah.

◆ **Jacob Steals Esau's Blessing** / Genesis 27:1-40

¹When Isaac had become an old man and was nearly blind, he called his eldest son, Esau, and said, “My son.”

“Yes, Father?”

²⁻⁴“I'm an old man,” he said; “I might die any day now. Do me a favor: Get your quiver of arrows and your bow and go out in the country and hunt me some game. Then fix me a hearty meal, the kind that you know I like, and bring it to me to eat so that I can give you my personal blessing before I die.”

⁵⁻⁷Rebekah was eavesdropping as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. As soon as Esau had gone off to the country to hunt game for his father, Rebekah spoke to her son Jacob. “I just overheard your father talking with your brother, Esau. He said, ‘Bring me some game and fix me a hearty meal so that I can eat and bless you with GOD's blessing before I die.’”

⁸⁻¹⁰“Now, my son, listen to me. Do what I tell you. Go to the flock and get me two young goats. Pick the best; I'll prepare them into a hearty meal, the kind that your father loves. Then you'll take it to your father, he'll eat and bless you before he dies.”

¹¹⁻¹²“But Mother,” Jacob said, “my brother Esau is a hairy man and I have

smooth skin. What happens if my father touches me? He'll think I'm playing games with him. I'll bring down a curse on myself instead of a blessing."

¹³"If it comes to that," said his mother, "I'll take the curse on myself. Now, just do what I say. Go and get the goats."

¹⁴So he went and got them and brought them to his mother and she cooked a hearty meal, the kind his father loved so much.

¹⁵⁻¹⁷Rebekah took the dress-up clothes of her older son Esau and put them on her younger son Jacob. She took the goatskins and covered his hands and the smooth nape of his neck. Then she placed the hearty meal she had fixed and fresh bread she'd baked into the hands of her son Jacob.

¹⁸He went to his father and said, "My father!"

"Yes?" he said. "Which son are you?"

¹⁹Jacob answered his father, "I'm your firstborn son Esau. I did what you told me. Come now; sit up and eat of my game so you can give me your personal blessing."

²⁰Isaac said, "So soon? How did you get it so quickly?"

"Because your GOD cleared the way for me."

²¹Isaac said, "Come close, son; let me touch you—are you really my son Esau?"

²²⁻²³So Jacob moved close to his father Isaac. Isaac felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice but the hands are the hands of Esau." He didn't recognize him because his hands were hairy, like his brother Esau's.

²³⁻²⁴But as he was about to bless him he pressed him, "You're sure? *You* are my son Esau?"

"Yes. I am."

²⁵Isaac said, "Bring the food so I can eat of my son's game and give you my personal blessing." Jacob brought it to him and he ate. He also brought him wine and he drank.

²⁶Then Isaac said, "Come close, son, and kiss me."

²⁷⁻²⁹He came close and kissed him and Isaac smelled the smell of his clothes. Finally, he blessed him,

Ahhh. The smell of my son
is like the smell of the open country
blessed by GOD.

May God give you
of Heaven's dew
and Earth's bounty of grain and wine.

May peoples serve you
and nations honor you.

You will master your brothers,
and your mother's sons will honor you.

Those who curse you will be cursed,
those who bless you will be blessed.

³⁰⁻³¹And then right after Isaac had blessed Jacob and Jacob had left, Esau showed up from the hunt. He also had prepared a hearty meal. He came to his father and said, "Let my father get up and eat of his son's game, that he may give me his personal blessing."

³²His father Isaac said, "And who are you?"

"I am your son, your firstborn, Esau."

³³Isaac started to tremble, shaking violently. He said, "Then who hunted

game and brought it to me? I finished the meal just now, before you walked in. And I blessed him—he's blessed for good!"

³⁴Esau, hearing his father's words, sobbed violently and most bitterly, and cried to his father, "My father! Can't you also bless me?"

³⁵"Your brother," he said, "came here falsely and took your blessing."

³⁶Esau said, "Not for nothing was he named Jacob, the Heel. Twice now he's tricked me: first he took my birthright and now he's taken my blessing."

He begged, "Haven't you kept back any blessing for me?"

³⁷Isaac answered Esau, "I've made him your master, and all his brothers his servants, and lavished grain and wine on him. I've given it all away. What's left for you, my son?"

³⁸"But don't you have just one blessing for me, Father? Oh, bless me my father! Bless me!" Esau sobbed inconsolably.

³⁹⁻⁴⁰Isaac said to him,

You'll live far from Earth's bounty,
remote from Heaven's dew.

You'll live by your sword, hand-to-mouth,
and you'll serve your brother.

But when you can't take it any more
you'll break loose and run free.

◆ **Jacob Flees to Paddan Aram** / Genesis 27:41–28:5 / 1929 or 1763 BC

⁴¹Esau seethed in anger against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him; he brooded, "The time for mourning my father's death is close. And then I'll kill my brother Jacob."

⁴²⁻⁴⁵When these words of her older son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she called her younger son Jacob and said, "Your brother Esau is plotting vengeance against you. He's going to kill you. Son, listen to me. Get out of here. Run for your life to Haran, to my brother Laban. Live with him for a while until your brother cools down, until his anger subsides and he forgets what you did to him. I'll then send for you and bring you back. Why should I lose both of you the same day?"

⁴⁶Rebekah spoke to Isaac, "I'm sick to death of these Hittite women. If Jacob also marries a native Hittite woman, why live?"

^{28:1-2}So Isaac called in Jacob and blessed him. Then he ordered him, "Don't take a Canaanite wife. Leave at once. Go to Paddan Aram to the family of your mother's father, Bethuel. Get a wife for yourself from the daughters of your uncle Laban.

³⁻⁴"And may The Strong God bless you and give you many, many children, a congregation of peoples; and pass on the blessing of Abraham to you and your descendants so that you will get this land in which you live, this land God gave Abraham."

⁵So Isaac sent Jacob off. He went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah who was the mother of Jacob and Esau.

JANUARY 10

◆ **Esau Marries Ishmael's Daughter** / Genesis 28:6-9 / 1929 or 1763 BC

⁶⁻⁹Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan Aram to

get a wife there, and while blessing him commanded, “Don’t marry a Canaanite woman,” and that Jacob had obeyed his parents and gone to Paddan Aram. When Esau realized how deeply his father Isaac disliked the Canaanite women, he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael, Abraham’s son. This was in addition to the wives he already had.

◆ **Jacob’s Dream at Bethel** / Genesis 28:10-22

¹⁰⁻¹²Jacob left Beersheba and went to Haran. He came to a certain place and camped for the night since the sun had set. He took one of the stones there, set it under his head and lay down to sleep. And he dreamed: A stairway was set on the ground and it reached all the way to the sky; angels of God were going up and going down on it.

¹³⁻¹⁵Then GOD was right before him, saying, “I am GOD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. I’m giving the ground on which you are sleeping to you and to your descendants. Your descendants will be as the dust of the Earth; they’ll stretch from west to east and from north to south. All the families of the Earth will bless themselves in you and your descendants. Yes. I’ll stay with you, I’ll protect you wherever you go, and I’ll bring you back to this very ground. I’ll stick with you until I’ve done everything I promised you.”

¹⁶⁻¹⁷Jacob woke up from his sleep. He said, “GOD is in this place—truly. And I didn’t even know it!” He was terrified. He whispered in awe, “Incredible. Wonderful. Holy. This is God’s House. This is the Gate of Heaven.”

¹⁸⁻¹⁹Jacob was up first thing in the morning. He took the stone he had used for his pillow and stood it up as a memorial pillar and poured oil over it. He christened the place Bethel (God’s House). The name of the town had been Luz until then.

²⁰⁻²²Jacob vowed a vow: “If God stands by me and protects me on this journey on which I’m setting out, keeps me in food and clothing, and brings me back in one piece to my father’s house, *this* GOD will be my God. This stone that I have set up as a memorial pillar will mark this as a place where God lives. And everything you give me, I’ll return a tenth to you.”

◆ **Jacob Arrives at Paddan Aram** / Genesis 29:1-14a

¹⁻³Jacob set out again on his way to the people of the east. He noticed a well out in an open field with three flocks of sheep bedded down around it. This was the common well from which the flocks were watered. The stone over the mouth of the well was huge. When all the flocks were gathered, the shepherds would roll the stone from the well and water the sheep; then they would return the stone, covering the well.

⁴Jacob said, “Hello friends. Where are you from?”

They said, “We’re from Haran.”

⁵Jacob asked, “Do you know Laban son of Nahor?”

“We do.”

⁶“Are things well with him?” Jacob continued.

“Very well,” they said. “And here is his daughter Rachel coming with the flock.”

⁷Jacob said, “There’s a lot of daylight still left; it isn’t time to round up the sheep yet, is it? So why not water the flocks and go back to grazing?”

⁸“We can’t,” they said. “Not until all the shepherds get here. It takes all of us to roll the stone from the well. Not until then can we water the flocks.”

⁹⁻¹³While Jacob was in conversation with them, Rachel came up with her father's sheep. She was the shepherd. The moment Jacob spotted Rachel, daughter of Laban his mother's brother, saw her arriving with his uncle Laban's sheep, he went and single-handedly rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the sheep of his uncle Laban. Then he kissed Rachel and broke into tears. He told Rachel that he was related to her father, that he was Rebekah's son. She ran and told her father. When Laban heard the news—Jacob, his sister's son!—he ran out to meet him, embraced and kissed him and brought him home. Jacob told Laban the story of everything that had happened.

^{14a}Laban said, "You're family! My flesh and blood!"

◆ **Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel** / Genesis 29:14b-30

^{14b-15}When Jacob had been with him for a month, Laban said, "Just because you're my nephew, you shouldn't work for me for nothing. Tell me what you want to be paid. What's a fair wage?"

¹⁶⁻¹⁸Now Laban had two daughters; Leah was the older and Rachel the younger. Leah had nice eyes, but Rachel was stunningly beautiful. And it was Rachel that Jacob loved.

So Jacob answered, "I will work for you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."

¹⁹"It is far better," said Laban, "that I give her to you than marry her to some outsider. Yes. Stay here with me."

²⁰So Jacob worked seven years for Rachel. But it only seemed like a few days, he loved her so much.

²¹⁻²⁴Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife; I've completed what we agreed I'd do. I'm ready to consummate my marriage." Laban invited everyone around and threw a big feast. At evening, though, he got his daughter Leah and brought her to the marriage bed, and Jacob slept with her. (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her maid.)

²⁵Morning came: There was Leah in the marriage bed!

Jacob confronted Laban, "What have you done to me? Didn't I work all this time for the hand of Rachel? Why did you cheat me?"

²⁶⁻²⁷"We don't do it that way in our country," said Laban. "We don't marry off the younger daughter before the older. Enjoy your week of honeymoon, and then we'll give you the other one also. But it will cost you another seven years of work."

²⁸⁻³⁰Jacob agreed. When he'd completed the honeymoon week, Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. (Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid.) Jacob then slept with her. And he loved Rachel more than Leah. He worked for Laban another seven years.

◆ **Jacob's Many Children** / Genesis 29:31–30:24

³¹⁻³²When GOD realized that Leah was unloved, he opened her womb. But Rachel was barren. Leah became pregnant and had a son. She named him Reuben (Look-It's-a-Boy!). "This is a sign," she said, "that GOD has seen my misery; and a sign that now my husband will love me."

³³⁻³⁵She became pregnant again and had another son. "GOD heard," she said, "that I was unloved and so he gave me this son also." She named this one Simeon (GOD-Heard). She became pregnant yet again—another son. She said, "Now maybe my husband will connect with me—I've given him three sons!"

That's why she named him Levi (Connect). She became pregnant a final time and had a fourth son. She said, "This time I'll praise GOD." So she named him Judah (Praise-GOD). Then she stopped having children.



30:1 When Rachel realized that she wasn't having any children for Jacob, she became jealous of her sister. She told Jacob, "Give me sons or I'll die!"

2 Jacob got angry with Rachel and said, "Am I God? Am I the one who refused you babies?"

3-5 Rachel said, "Here's my maid Bilhah. Sleep with her. Let her substitute for me so I can have a child through her and build a family." So she gave him her maid Bilhah for a wife and Jacob slept with her. Bilhah became pregnant and gave Jacob a son.

6-8 Rachel said, "God took my side and vindicated me. He listened to me and gave me a son." She named him Dan (Vindication). Rachel's maid Bilhah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son. Rachel said, "I've been in an all-out fight with my sister—and I've won." So she named him Naphtali (Fight).

9-13 When Leah saw that she wasn't having any more children, she gave her maid Zilpah to Jacob for a wife. Zilpah had a son for Jacob. Leah said, "How fortunate!" and she named him Gad (Lucky). When Leah's maid Zilpah had a second son for Jacob, Leah said, "A happy day! The women will congratulate me in my happiness." So she named him Asher (Happy).

14 One day during the wheat harvest Reuben found some mandrakes in the field and brought them home to his mother Leah. Rachel asked Leah, "Could I please have some of your son's mandrakes?"

15 Leah said, "Wasn't it enough that you got my husband away from me? And now you also want my son's mandrakes?"

Rachel said, "All right. I'll let him sleep with you tonight in exchange for your son's mandrakes."

16-21 When Jacob came home that evening from the fields, Leah was there to meet him: "Sleep with me tonight; I've bartered my son's mandrakes for a night with you." So he slept with her that night. God listened to Leah; she became pregnant and gave Jacob a fifth son. She said, "God rewarded me for giving my maid to my husband." She named him Issachar (Bartered). Leah became pregnant yet again and gave Jacob a sixth son, saying, "God has given me a great gift. This time my husband will honor me with gifts—I've given him six sons!" She named him Zebulun (Honor). Last of all she had a daughter and named her Dinah.

22-24 And then God remembered Rachel. God listened to her and opened her womb. She became pregnant and had a son. She said, "God has taken away my humiliation." She named him Joseph (Add), praying, "May GOD add yet another son to me."

JANUARY 11

◆ **Jacob's Wealth Increases** / Genesis 30:25-43 / *ca. 1915 or 1749 BC*

25-26 After Rachel had had Joseph, Jacob spoke to Laban, "Let me go back home. Give me my wives and children for whom I've served you. You know how hard I've worked for you."

27-28 Laban said, "If you please, I have learned through divine inquiry that GOD has blessed me because of you." He went on, "So name your wages. I'll pay you."

²⁹⁻³⁰Jacob replied, “You know well what my work has meant to you and how your livestock has flourished under my care. The little you had when I arrived has increased greatly; everything I did resulted in blessings for you. Isn’t it about time that I do something for my own family?”

³¹⁻³³“So, what should I pay you?”

Jacob said, “You don’t have to pay me a thing. But how about this? I will go back to pasture and care for your flocks. Go through your entire flock today and take out every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb, every spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages. That way you can check on my honesty when you assess my wages. If you find any goat that’s not speckled or spotted or a sheep that’s not black, you will know that I stole it.”

³⁴“Fair enough,” said Laban. “It’s a deal.”

³⁵⁻³⁶But that very day Laban removed all the mottled and spotted billy goats and all the speckled and spotted nanny goats, every animal that had even a touch of white on it plus all the black sheep and placed them under the care of his sons. Then he put a three-day journey between himself and Jacob. Meanwhile Jacob went on tending what was left of Laban’s flock.

³⁷⁻⁴²But Jacob got fresh branches from poplar, almond, and plane trees and peeled the bark, leaving white stripes on them. He stuck the peeled branches in front of the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink. When the flocks were in heat, they came to drink and mated in front of the streaked branches. Then they gave birth to young that were streaked or spotted or speckled. Jacob placed the ewes before the dark-colored animals of Laban. That way he got distinctive flocks for himself which he didn’t mix with Laban’s flocks. And when the sturdier animals were mating, Jacob placed branches at the troughs in view of the animals so that they mated in front of the branches. But he wouldn’t set up the branches before the feebler animals. That way the feeble animals went to Laban and the sturdy ones to Jacob.

⁴³The man got richer and richer, acquiring huge flocks, lots and lots of servants, not to mention camels and donkeys.

◆ **Jacob Flees from Laban** / Genesis 31:1-21 / 1909 or 1743 BC

¹⁻²Jacob learned that Laban’s sons were talking behind his back: “Jacob has used our father’s wealth to make himself rich at our father’s expense.” At the same time, Jacob noticed that Laban had changed toward him. He wasn’t treating him the same.

³That’s when GOD said to Jacob, “Go back home where you were born. I’ll go with you.”

⁴⁻⁹So Jacob sent word for Rachel and Leah to meet him out in the field where his flocks were. He said, “I notice that your father has changed toward me; he doesn’t treat me the same as before. But the God of my father hasn’t changed; he’s still with me. You know how hard I’ve worked for your father. Still, your father has cheated me over and over, changing my wages time and again. But God never let him really hurt me. If he said, ‘Your wages will consist of speckled animals’ the whole flock would start having speckled lambs and kids. And if he said, ‘From now on your wages will be streaked animals’ the whole flock would have streaked ones. Over and over God used your father’s livestock to reward me.

¹⁰⁻¹¹“Once, while the flocks were mating, I had a dream and saw the billy goats, all of them streaked, speckled, and mottled, mounting their mates. In the dream an angel of God called out to me, ‘Jacob!’

“I said, ‘Yes?’

¹²⁻¹³“He said, ‘Watch closely. Notice that all the goats in the flock that are mating are streaked, speckled, and mottled. I know what Laban’s been doing to you. I’m the God of Bethel where you consecrated a pillar and made a vow to me. Now be on your way, get out of this place, go home to your birthplace.”

¹⁴⁻¹⁶Rachel and Leah said, “Has he treated us any better? Aren’t we treated worse than outsiders? All he wanted was the money he got from selling us, and he’s spent all that. Any wealth that God has seen fit to return to us from our father is justly ours and our children’s. Go ahead. Do what God told you.”

¹⁷⁻¹⁸Jacob did it. He put his children and his wives on camels and gathered all his livestock and everything he had gotten, everything acquired in Paddan Aram, to go back home to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

¹⁹⁻²¹Laban was off shearing sheep. Rachel stole her father’s household gods. And Jacob had concealed his plans so well that Laban the Aramean had no idea what was going on—he was totally in the dark. Jacob got away with everything he had and was soon across the Euphrates headed for the hill country of Gilead.

◆ **Laban Pursues Jacob** / Genesis 31:22-42

²²⁻²⁴Three days later, Laban got the news: “Jacob’s run off.” Laban rounded up his relatives and chased after him. Seven days later they caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead. That night God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream and said, “Be careful what you do to Jacob, whether good or bad.”

²⁵When Laban reached him, Jacob’s tents were pitched in the Gilead mountains; Laban pitched his tents there, too.

²⁶⁻³⁰“What do you mean,” said Laban, “by keeping me in the dark and sneaking off, hauling my daughters off like prisoners of war? Why did you run off like a thief in the night? Why didn’t you tell me? Why, I would have sent you off with a great celebration—music, timbrels, flutes! But you wouldn’t permit me so much as a kiss for my daughters and grandchildren. It was a stupid thing for you to do. If I had a mind to, I could destroy you right now, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, ‘Be careful what you do to Jacob, whether good or bad.’ I understand. You left because you were homesick. But why did you steal my household gods?”

³¹⁻³²Jacob answered Laban, “I was afraid. I thought you would take your daughters away from me by brute force. But as far as your gods are concerned, if you find that anybody here has them, that person dies. With all of us watching, look around. If you find anything here that belongs to you, take it.” Jacob didn’t know that Rachel had stolen the gods.

³³⁻³⁵Laban went through Jacob’s tent, Leah’s tent, and the tents of the two maids but didn’t find them. He went from Leah’s tent to Rachel’s. But Rachel had taken the household gods, put them inside a camel cushion, and was sitting on them. When Laban had gone through the tent, searching high and low without finding a thing, Rachel said to her father, “Don’t think I’m being disrespectful, my master, that I can’t stand before you, but I’m having my period.” So even though he turned the place upside down in his search, he didn’t find the household gods.

³⁶⁻³⁷Now it was Jacob’s turn to get angry. He lit into Laban: “So what’s my crime, what wrong have I done you that you badger me like this? You’ve

ransacked the place. Have you turned up a single thing that's yours? Let's see it—display the evidence. Our two families can be the jury and decide between us.

³⁸⁻⁴²“In the twenty years I've worked for you, ewes and she-goats never miscarried. I never feasted on the rams from your flock. I never brought you a torn carcass killed by wild animals but that I paid for it out of my own pocket—actually, you made me pay whether it was my fault or not. I was out in all kinds of weather, from torrid heat to freezing cold, putting in many a sleepless night. For twenty years I've done this: I slaved away fourteen years for your two daughters and another six years for your flock and you changed my wages ten times. If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not stuck with me, you would have sent me off penniless. But God saw the fix I was in and how hard I had worked and last night rendered his verdict.”

◆ **Jacob's Treaty with Laban** / Genesis 31:43-55

⁴³⁻⁴⁴Laban defended himself: “The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flock is my flock—everything you see is mine. But what can I do about my daughters or for the children they've had? So let's settle things between us, make a covenant—God will be the witness between us.”

⁴⁵Jacob took a stone and set it upright as a pillar.

⁴⁶⁻⁴⁷Jacob called his family around, “Get stones!” They gathered stones and heaped them up and then ate there beside the pile of stones. Laban named it in Aramaic, Yegar-sahadutha (Witness Monument); Jacob echoed the naming in Hebrew, Galeed (Witness Monument).

⁴⁸⁻⁵⁰Laban said, “This monument of stones will be a witness, beginning now, between you and me.” (That's why it is called Galeed—Witness Monument.) It is also called Mizpah (Watchtower) because Laban said, “GOD keep watch between you and me when we are out of each other's sight. If you mistreat my daughters or take other wives when there's no one around to see you, God will see you and stand witness between us.”

⁵¹⁻⁵³Laban continued to Jacob, “This monument of stones and this stone pillar that I have set up is a witness, a witness that I won't cross this line to hurt you and you won't cross this line to hurt me. The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor (the God of their ancestor) will keep things straight between us.”

⁵³⁻⁵⁵Jacob promised, swearing by the Fear, the God of his father Isaac. Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and worshiped, calling in all his family members to the meal. They ate and slept that night on the mountain. Laban got up early the next morning, kissed his grandchildren and his daughters, blessed them, and then set off for home.

JANUARY 12

◆ **Jacob Sends Gifts to Esau** / Genesis 32:1-21 / 1909 or 1743 BC

¹⁻²And Jacob went his way. Angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them he said, “Oh! God's Camp!” And he named the place Mahanaim (Campground).

³⁻⁵Then Jacob sent messengers on ahead to his brother Esau in the land of Seir in Edom. He instructed them: “Tell my master Esau this, ‘A message from your servant Jacob: I've been staying with Laban and couldn't get away until now. I've acquired cattle and donkeys and sheep; also men and women servants. I'm telling you all this, my master, hoping for your approval.’”

6The messengers came back to Jacob and said, “We talked to your brother Esau and he’s on his way to meet you. But he has four hundred men with him.”

7-8Jacob was scared. Very scared. Panicked, he divided his people, sheep, cattle, and camels into two camps. He thought, “If Esau comes on the first camp and attacks it, the other camp has a chance to get away.”

9-12And then Jacob prayed, “God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, GOD who told me, ‘Go back to your parents’ homeland and I’ll treat you well.’ I don’t deserve all the love and loyalty you’ve shown me. When I left here and crossed the Jordan I only had the clothes on my back, and now look at me—two camps! Save me, please, from the violence of my brother, my angry brother! I’m afraid he’ll come and attack us all, me, the mothers and the children. You yourself said, ‘I will treat you well; I’ll make your descendants like the sands of the sea, far too many to count.’”

13-16He slept the night there. Then he prepared a present for his brother Esau from his possessions: two hundred female goats, twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty camels with their nursing young, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. He put a servant in charge of each herd and said, “Go ahead of me and keep a healthy space between each herd.”

17-18Then he instructed the first one out: “When my brother Esau comes close and asks, ‘Who is your master? Where are you going? Who owns these?’—answer him like this, ‘Your servant Jacob. They are a gift to my master Esau. He’s on his way.’”

19-20He gave the same instructions to the second servant and to the third—to each in turn as they set out with their herds: “Say ‘Your servant Jacob is on his way behind us.’” He thought, “I will soften him up with the succession of gifts. Then when he sees me face-to-face, maybe he’ll be glad to welcome me.”

21So his gifts went before him while he settled down for the night in the camp.

◆ **Jacob Wrestles with God** / Genesis 32:22-32

22-23But during the night he got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants, and his eleven children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He got them safely across the brook along with all his possessions.

24-25But Jacob stayed behind by himself, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he couldn’t get the best of Jacob as they wrestled, he deliberately threw Jacob’s hip out of joint.

26The man said, “Let me go; it’s daybreak.”

Jacob said, “I’m not letting you go ‘til you bless me.”

27The man said, “What’s your name?”

He answered, “Jacob.”

28The man said, “But no longer. Your name is no longer Jacob. From now on it’s Israel (God-Wrestler); you’ve wrestled with God and you’ve come through.”

29Jacob asked, “And what’s your name?”

The man said, “Why do you want to know my name?” And then, right then and there, he blessed him.

30Jacob named the place Peniel (God’s Face) because, he said, “I saw God face-to-face and lived to tell the story!”

31-32The sun came up as he left Peniel, limping because of his hip. (This is why Israelites to this day don’t eat the hip muscle; because Jacob’s hip was thrown out of joint.)

◆ **Jacob and Esau Make Peace** / Genesis 33:1-20

¹⁻⁴Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming with his four hundred men. He divided the children between Leah and Rachel and the two maidservants. He put the maidservants out in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. He led the way and, as he approached his brother, bowed seven times, honoring his brother. But Esau ran up and embraced him, held him tight and kissed him. And they both wept.

⁵Then Esau looked around and saw the women and children: “And who are these with you?”

Jacob said, “The children that God saw fit to bless me with.”

⁶⁻⁷Then the maidservants came up with their children and bowed; then Leah and her children, also bowing; and finally, Joseph and Rachel came up and bowed to Esau.

⁸Esau then asked, “And what was the meaning of all those herds that I met?” “I was hoping that they would pave the way for my master to welcome me.”

⁹Esau said, “Oh, brother. I have plenty of everything—keep what is yours for yourself.”

¹⁰⁻¹¹Jacob said, “Please. If you can find it in your heart to welcome me, accept these gifts. When I saw your face, it was as the face of God smiling on me. Accept the gifts I have brought for you. God has been good to me and I have more than enough.” Jacob urged the gifts on him and Esau accepted.

¹²Then Esau said, “Let’s start out on our way; I’ll take the lead.”

¹³⁻¹⁴But Jacob said, “My master can see that the children are frail. And the flocks and herds are nursing, making for slow going. If I push them too hard, even for a day, I’d lose them all. So, master, you go on ahead of your servant, while I take it easy at the pace of my flocks and children. I’ll catch up with you in Seir.”

¹⁵Esau said, “Let me at least lend you some of my men.”

“There’s no need,” said Jacob. “Your generous welcome is all I need or want.”

¹⁶So Esau set out that day and made his way back to Seir.

¹⁷And Jacob left for Succoth. He built a shelter for himself and sheds for his livestock. That’s how the place came to be called Succoth (Sheds).

¹⁸⁻²⁰And that’s how it happened that Jacob arrived all in one piece in Shechem in the land of Canaan—all the way from Paddan Aram. He camped near the city. He bought the land where he pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. He paid a hundred silver coins for it. Then he built an altar there and named it El-Elohe-Israel (Mighty Is the God of Israel).

◆ **Revenge against Shechem** / Genesis 34:1-31

¹⁻⁴One day Dinah, the daughter Leah had given Jacob, went to visit some of the women in that country. Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite who was chieftain there, saw her and raped her. Then he felt a strong attraction to Dinah, Jacob’s daughter, fell in love with her, and wooed her. Shechem went to his father Hamor, “Get me this girl for my wife.”

⁵⁻⁷Jacob heard that Shechem had raped his daughter Dinah, but his sons were out in the fields with the livestock so he didn’t say anything until they got home. Hamor, Shechem’s father, went to Jacob to work out marriage arrangements. Meanwhile Jacob’s sons on their way back from the fields heard what had happened. They were outraged, explosive with anger. Shechem’s rape of Jacob’s daughter was intolerable in Israel and not to be put up with.

⁸⁻¹⁰Hamor spoke with Jacob and his sons, “My son Shechem is head over heels in love with your daughter—give her to him as his wife. Intermarry with us. Give your daughters to us and we’ll give our daughters to you. Live together with us as one family. Settle down among us and make yourselves at home. Prosper among us.”

¹¹⁻¹²Shechem then spoke for himself, addressing Dinah’s father and brothers: “Please, say yes. I’ll pay anything. Set the bridal price as high as you will—the sky’s the limit! Only give me this girl for my wife.”

¹³⁻¹⁷Jacob’s sons answered Shechem and his father with cunning. Their sister, after all, had been raped. They said, “This is impossible. We could never give our sister to a man who was uncircumcised. Why, we’d be disgraced. The only condition on which we can talk business is if all your men become circumcised like us. Then we will freely exchange daughters in marriage and make ourselves at home among you and become one big, happy family. But if this is not an acceptable condition, we will take our sister and leave.”

¹⁸That seemed fair enough to Hamor and his son Shechem.

¹⁹The young man was so smitten with Jacob’s daughter that he proceeded to do what had been asked. He was also the most admired son in his father’s family.

²⁰⁻²³So Hamor and his son Shechem went to the public square and spoke to the town council: “These men like us; they are our friends. Let them settle down here and make themselves at home; there’s plenty of room in the country for them. And, just think, we can even exchange our daughters in marriage. But these men will only accept our invitation to live with us and become one big family on one condition, that all our males become circumcised just as they themselves are. This is a very good deal for us—these people are very wealthy with great herds of livestock and we’re going to get our hands on it. So let’s do what they ask and have them settle down with us.”

²⁴Everyone who was anyone in the city agreed with Hamor and his son, Shechem; every male was circumcised.

²⁵⁻²⁹Three days after the circumcision, while all the men were still very sore, two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each with his sword in hand, walked into the city as if they owned the place and murdered every man there. They also killed Hamor and his son Shechem, rescued Dinah from Shechem’s house, and left. When the rest of Jacob’s sons came on the scene of slaughter, they looted the entire city in retaliation for Dinah’s rape. Flocks, herds, donkeys, belongings—everything, whether in the city or the fields—they took. And then they took all the wives and children captive and ransacked their homes for anything valuable.

³⁰Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You’ve made my name repulsive to the people here, these Canaanites and Perizzites. If they decided to gang up on us and attack, as few as we are we wouldn’t stand a chance; they’d wipe me and my people right off the map.”

³¹They said, “Nobody is going to treat our sister like a whore and get by with it.”

◆ **Jacob’s Return to Bethel** / Genesis 35:1-15

¹God spoke to Jacob: “Go back to Bethel. Stay there and build an altar to the God who revealed himself to you when you were running for your life from your brother Esau.”

²⁻³Jacob told his family and all those who lived with him, “Throw out all the alien gods which you have, take a good bath and put on clean clothes,

we're going to Bethel. I'm going to build an altar there to the God who answered me when I was in trouble and has stuck with me everywhere I've gone since."

⁴⁻⁵They turned over to Jacob all the alien gods they'd been holding on to, along with their lucky-charm earrings. Jacob buried them under the oak tree in Shechem. Then they set out. A paralyzing fear descended on all the surrounding villages so that they were unable to pursue the sons of Jacob.

⁶⁻⁷Jacob and his company arrived at Luz, that is, Bethel, in the land of Canaan. He built an altar there and named it El-Bethel (God-of-Bethel) because that's where God revealed himself to him when he was running from his brother.

⁸And that's when Rebekah's nurse, Deborah, died. She was buried just below Bethel under the oak tree. It was named Allon-Bacuth (Weeping-Oak).

⁹⁻¹⁰God revealed himself once again to Jacob, after he had come back from Paddan Aram and blessed him: "Your name is Jacob (Heel); but that's your name no longer. From now on your name is Israel (God-Wrestler)."

¹¹⁻¹²God continued,

I am The Strong God.
 Have children! Flourish!
 A nation—a whole company of nations!—
 will come from you.
 Kings will come from your loins;
 the land I gave Abraham and Isaac
 I now give to you,
 and pass it on to your descendants.

¹³And then God was gone, ascended from the place where he had spoken with him.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵Jacob set up a stone pillar on the spot where God had spoken with him. He poured a drink offering on it and anointed it with oil. Jacob dedicated the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel (God's-House).

◆ **The Death of Rachel** / Genesis 35:16-27

¹⁶⁻¹⁷They left Bethel. They were still quite a ways from Ephrath when Rachel went into labor—hard, hard labor. When her labor pains were at their worst, the midwife said to her, "Don't be afraid—you have another boy."

¹⁸With her last breath, for she was now dying, she named him Ben-oni (Son-of-My-Pain), but his father named him Ben-jamin (Son-of-Good-Fortune).

¹⁹⁻²⁰Rachel died and was buried on the road to Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem. Jacob set up a pillar to mark her grave. It is still there today, "Rachel's Grave Stone."

* * *

²¹⁻²²Israel kept on his way and set up camp at Migdal Eder. While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went and slept with his father's concubine, Bilhah. And Israel heard of what he did.

* * *

²²⁻²⁶There were twelve sons of Jacob.

The sons by Leah:

Reuben, Jacob's firstborn
 Simeon

Levi
Judah
Issachar
Zebulun.

The sons by Rachel:

Joseph
Benjamin.

The sons by Bilhah, Rachel's maid:

Dan
Naphtali.

The sons by Zilpah, Leah's maid:

Gad
Asher.

These were Jacob's sons, born to him in Paddan Aram.



²⁷Finally, Jacob made it back home to his father Isaac at Mamre in Kiriath Arba, present-day Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac had lived.

JANUARY 13

◆ **Descendants of Esau** / Genesis 36: 1-19

¹This is the family tree of Esau, who is also called Edom.

²⁻³Esau married women of Canaan: Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite; Oholibamah, daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite; and Basemath, daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth.

⁴Adah gave Esau Eliphaz;

Basemath had Reuel;

⁵Oholibamah had Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

⁶⁻⁸Esau gathered up his wives, sons and daughters, and everybody in his household, along with all his livestock—all the animals and possessions he had gotten in Canaan—and moved a considerable distance away from his brother Jacob. The brothers had too many possessions to live together in the same place; the land couldn't support their combined herds of livestock. So Esau ended up settling in the hill country of Seir (Esau and Edom are the same).

⁹⁻¹⁰So this is the family tree of Esau, ancestor of the people of Edom, in the hill country of Seir. The names of Esau's sons:

Eliphaz, son of Esau's wife Adah;

Reuel, son of Esau's wife Basemath.

¹¹⁻¹²The sons of Eliphaz: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. (Eliphaz also had a concubine Timna, who had Amalek.) These are the grandsons of Esau's wife Adah.

¹³And these are the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah—grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath.

¹⁴These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah the son of Zibeon. She gave Esau his sons Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶These are the chieftains in Esau's family tree. From the sons of Eliphaz, Esau's firstborn, came the chieftains Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, Korah,

Gatam, and Amalek—the chieftains of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; all of them sons of Adah.

¹⁷From the sons of Esau's son Reuel came the chieftains Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These are the chieftains of Reuel in the land of Edom; all these were sons of Esau's wife Basemath.

¹⁸These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah: the chieftains Jeush, Jalam, and Korah—chieftains born of Esau's wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah.

¹⁹These are the sons of Esau, that is, Edom, and these are their chieftains.

◆ 1 Chronicles 1:35-37

³⁵⁻³⁷Esau had Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. Eliphaz had Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, Kenaz, Timna, and Amalek. And Reuel had Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

◆ **Original Peoples of Edom** / Genesis 36:20-30

²⁰⁻²¹This is the family tree of Seir the Horite, who were native to that land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These are the chieftains of the Horites, the sons of Seir in the land of Edom.

²²The sons of Lotan were Hori and Homam; Lotan's sister was Timna.

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

²⁴The sons of Zibeon were Aiah and Anah—this is the same Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness while herding his father Zibeon's donkeys.

²⁵The children of Anah were Dishon and his daughter Oholibamah.

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

²⁷The sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.

²⁸The sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

²⁹⁻³⁰And these were the Horite chieftains: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan—the Horite chieftains clan by clan in the land of Seir.

◆ 1 Chronicles 1:38-42

³⁸⁻⁴²Seir then had Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. Lotan had Hori and Homam. Timna was Lotan's sister. Shobal had Alian, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. Zibeon had Aiah and Anah. Anah had Dishon. Dishon had Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran. Ezer had Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan. And Dishan had Uz and Aran.

◆ **Rulers of Edom** / Genesis 36:31-43

³¹⁻³⁹And these are the kings who ruled in Edom before there was a king in Israel: Bela son of Beor was the king of Edom; the name of his city was Dinhabah. When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah became the next king. When Jobab died, he was followed by Hushan from the land of the Temanites. When Hushan died, he was followed by Hadad son of Bedad; he was the king who defeated the Midianites in Moab; the name of his city was Avith. When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah became the next king. When Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth-on-the-River became king. When Shaul died, he was followed by Baal-Hanan son of Acbor. When Baal-Hanan son of Acbor died, Hadad became king; the name of his city was Pau; his wife's name was Mehetabel daughter of Matred, daughter of Me-Zahab.

⁴⁰⁻⁴³And these are the chieftains from the line of Esau, clan by clan, region by region: Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman,

Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram—the chieftains of Edom as they occupied their various regions.

This accounts for the family tree of Esau, ancestor of all Edomites.

◆ 1 Chronicles 1:43-54

⁴³⁻⁵¹A list of the kings who ruled in the country of Edom before Israel had a king:

Bela son of Beor; his city was Dinhabah.

Bela died; Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah was the next king.

Jobab died; Husham from the country of the Temanites was the next king.

Husham died; Hadad son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, was the next king; his city was Avith.

Hadad died; Samlah from Masrekah was the next king.

Samlah died; Shaul from Rehoboth-by-the-River was the next king.

Shaul died; Baal-Hanan son of Acbor was the next king.

Baal-Hanan died; Hadad was the next king; his city was Pau and his wife was Mehetabel daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me-Zahab.

Last of all Hadad died.

⁵¹⁻⁵⁴The chieftains of Edom after that were Chief Timna, Chief Alvah, Chief Jetheth, Chief Oholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These were the chieftains of Edom.

◆ **Descendants of Israel** / 1 Chronicles 2:1-2

¹⁻²Israel's (that is, Jacob's) sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

JANUARY 14

◆ **Joseph's Dreams** / Genesis 37:1-17 / 1898 or 1732 BC

¹Meanwhile Jacob had settled down where his father had lived, the land of Canaan.

²This is the story of Jacob. The story continues with Joseph, seventeen years old at the time, helping out his brothers in herding the flocks. These were his half brothers actually, the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. And Joseph brought his father bad reports on them.

³⁻⁴Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons because he was the child of his old age. And he made him an elaborately embroidered coat. When his brothers realized that their father loved him more than them, they grew to hate him—they wouldn't even speak to him.

⁵⁻⁷Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. He said, "Listen to this dream I had. We were all out in the field gathering bundles of wheat. All of a sudden my bundle stood straight up and your bundles circled around it and bowed down to mine."

⁸His brothers said, "So! You're going to rule us? You're going to boss us around?" And they hated him more than ever because of his dreams and the way he talked.

⁹He had another dream and told this one also to his brothers: "I dreamed another dream—the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to me!"

¹⁰⁻¹¹When he told it to his father and brothers, his father reprimanded him: "What's with all this dreaming? Am I and your mother and your brothers all

supposed to bow down to you?” Now his brothers were really jealous; but his father brooded over the whole business.

¹²⁻¹³His brothers had gone off to Shechem where they were pasturing their father’s flocks. Israel said to Joseph, “Your brothers are with flocks in Shechem. Come, I want to send you to them.”

Joseph said, “I’m ready.”

¹⁴He said, “Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are doing and bring me back a report.” He sent him off from the valley of Hebron to Shechem.

¹⁵A man met him as he was wandering through the fields and asked him, “What are you looking for?”

¹⁶“I’m trying to find my brothers. Do you have any idea where they are grazing their flocks?”

¹⁷The man said, “They’ve left here, but I overheard them say, ‘Let’s go to Dothan.’” So Joseph took off, tracked his brothers down, and found them in Dothan.

◆ **Joseph Sold into Slavery** / Genesis 37:18-36

¹⁸⁻²⁰They spotted him off in the distance. By the time he got to them they had cooked up a plot to kill him. The brothers were saying, “Here comes that dreamer. Let’s kill him and throw him into one of these old cisterns; we can say that a vicious animal ate him up. We’ll see what his dreams amount to.”

²¹⁻²²Reuben heard the brothers talking and intervened to save him, “We’re not going to kill him. No murder. Go ahead and throw him in this cistern out here in the wild, but don’t hurt him.” Reuben planned to go back later and get him out and take him back to his father.

²³⁻²⁴When Joseph reached his brothers, they ripped off the fancy coat he was wearing, grabbed him, and threw him into a cistern. The cistern was dry; there wasn’t any water in it.

²⁵⁻²⁷Then they sat down to eat their supper. Looking up, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites on their way from Gilead, their camels loaded with spices, ointments, and perfumes to sell in Egypt. Judah said, “Brothers, what are we going to get out of killing our brother and concealing the evidence? Let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites, but let’s not kill him—he is, after all, our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed.

²⁸By that time the Midianite traders were passing by. His brothers pulled Joseph out of the cistern and sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites who took Joseph with them down to Egypt.

²⁹⁻³⁰Later Reuben came back and went to the cistern—no Joseph! He ripped his clothes in despair. Beside himself, he went to his brothers. “The boy’s gone! What am I going to do!”

³¹⁻³²They took Joseph’s coat, butchered a goat, and dipped the coat in the blood. They took the fancy coat back to their father and said, “We found this. Look it over—do you think this is your son’s coat?”

³³He recognized it at once. “My son’s coat—a wild animal has eaten him. Joseph torn limb from limb!”

³⁴⁻³⁵Jacob tore his clothes in grief, dressed in rough burlap, and mourned his son a long, long time. His sons and daughters tried to comfort him but he refused their comfort. “I’ll go to the grave mourning my son.” Oh, how his father wept for him.

³⁶In Egypt the Midianites sold Joseph to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, manager of his household affairs.

◆ **Judah and Tamar** / Genesis 38: 1-30

¹⁻⁵About that time, Judah separated from his brothers and went to stay with a man in Adullam named Hirah. While there, Judah met the daughter of a Canaanite named Shua. He married her, they went to bed, she became pregnant and had a son named Er. She got pregnant again and had a son named Onan. She had still another son; she named this one Shelah. They were living at Kezib when she had him.

⁶⁻⁷Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn. Her name was Tamar. But Judah's firstborn, Er, grievously offended GOD and GOD took his life.

⁸⁻¹⁰So Judah told Onan, "Go and sleep with your brother's widow; it's the duty of a brother-in-law to keep your brother's line alive." But Onan knew that the child wouldn't be his, so whenever he slept with his brother's widow he spilled his semen on the ground so he wouldn't produce a child for his brother. GOD was much offended by what he did and also took his life.

¹¹So Judah stepped in and told his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow at home with your father until my son Shelah grows up." He was worried that Shelah would also end up dead, just like his brothers. So Tamar went to live with her father.

¹²Time passed. Judah's wife, Shua's daughter, died. When the time of mourning was over, Judah with his friend Hirah of Adullam went to Timnah for the sheep shearing.

¹³⁻¹⁴Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law has gone to Timnah to shear his sheep." She took off her widow's clothes, put on a veil to disguise herself, and sat at the entrance to Enaim which is on the road to Timnah. She realized by now that even though Shelah was grown up, she wasn't going to be married to him.

¹⁵Judah saw her and assumed she was a prostitute since she had veiled her face. He left the road and went over to her. He said, "Let me sleep with you." He had no idea that she was his daughter-in-law.

¹⁶She said, "What will you pay me?"

¹⁷"I'll send you," he said, "a kid goat from the flock."

She said, "Not unless you give me a pledge until you send it."

¹⁸"So what would you want in the way of a pledge?"

She said, "Your personal seal-and-cord and the staff you carry."

He handed them over to her and slept with her. And she got pregnant.

¹⁹She then left and went home. She removed her veil and put her widow's clothes back on.

²⁰⁻²¹Judah sent the kid goat by his friend from Adullam to recover the pledge from the woman. But he couldn't find her. He asked the men of that place, "Where's the prostitute that used to sit by the road here near Enaim?"

They said, "There's never been a prostitute here."

²²He went back to Judah and said, "I couldn't find her. The men there said there never has been a prostitute there."

²³Judah said, "Let her have it then. If we keep looking, everyone will be poking fun at us. I kept my part of the bargain—I sent the kid goat but you couldn't find her."

²⁴Three months or so later, Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law has been playing the whore—and now she's a pregnant whore."

Judah yelled, "Get her out here. Burn her up!"

²⁵As they brought her out, she sent a message to her father-in-law, "I'm

pregnant by the man who owns these things. Identify them, please. Who's the owner of the seal-and-cord and the staff?"

²⁶Judah saw they were his. He said, "She's in the right; I'm in the wrong—I wouldn't let her marry my son Shelah." He never slept with her again.

²⁷⁻³⁰When her time came to give birth, it turned out that there were twins in her womb. As she was giving birth, one put his hand out; the midwife tied a red thread on his hand, saying, "This one came first." But then he pulled it back and his brother came out. She said, "Oh! A breakout!" So she named him Perez (Breakout). Then his brother came out with the red thread on his hand. They named him Zerah (Bright).

◆ **Descendants of Judah** / 1 Chronicles 2:3-8

³⁻⁸Judah had Er, Onan, and Shelah; their mother was Bathshua the Canaanite. Er, Judah's firstborn, was so bad before GOD that GOD killed him. Judah also had Perez and Zerah by his daughter-in-law Tamar—a total of five sons. Perez had Hezron and Hamul; Zerah had Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Darda—five sons. Carmi had Achar, who brought doom on Israel when he violated a holy ban. Ethan's son was Azariah.

◆ **Joseph in Potiphar's House** / Genesis 39:1-18

¹After Joseph had been taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelites, Potiphar an Egyptian, one of Pharaoh's officials and the manager of his household, bought him from them.

²⁻⁶As it turned out, GOD was with Joseph and things went very well with him. He ended up living in the home of his Egyptian master. His master recognized that GOD was with him, saw that GOD was working for good in everything he did. He became very fond of Joseph and made him his personal aide. He put him in charge of all his personal affairs, turning everything over to him. From that moment on, GOD blessed the home of the Egyptian—all because of Joseph. The blessing of GOD spread over everything he owned, at home and in the fields, and all Potiphar had to concern himself with was eating three meals a day.

⁶⁻⁷Joseph was a strikingly handsome man. As time went on, his master's wife became infatuated with Joseph and one day said, "Sleep with me."

⁸⁻⁹He wouldn't do it. He said to his master's wife, "Look, with me here, my master doesn't give a second thought to anything that goes on here—he's put me in charge of everything he owns. He treats me as an equal. The only thing he hasn't turned over to me is you. You're his wife, after all! How could I violate his trust and sin against God?"

¹⁰She pestered him day after day after day, but he stood his ground. He refused to go to bed with her.

¹¹⁻¹⁵On one of these days he came to the house to do his work and none of the household servants happened to be there. She grabbed him by his cloak, saying, "Sleep with me!" He left his coat in her hand and ran out of the house. When she realized that he had left his coat in her hand and run outside, she called to her house servants: "Look—this Hebrew shows up and before you know it he's trying to seduce us. He tried to make love to me but I yelled as loud as I could. With all my yelling and screaming, he left his coat beside me here and ran outside."

¹⁶⁻¹⁸She kept his coat right there until his master came home. She told him

the same story. She said, “The Hebrew slave, the one you brought to us, came after me and tried to use me for his plaything. When I yelled and screamed, he left his coat with me and ran outside.”

◆ **Joseph Put in Prison** / Genesis 39:19-23

¹⁹⁻²³When his master heard his wife’s story, telling him, “These are the things your slave did to me,” he was furious. Joseph’s master took him and threw him into the jail where the king’s prisoners were locked up. But there in jail GOD was still with Joseph: He reached out in kindness to him; he put him on good terms with the head jailer. The head jailer put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners—he ended up managing the whole operation. The head jailer gave Joseph free rein, never even checked on him, because GOD was with him; whatever he did GOD made sure it worked out for the best.

JANUARY 15

◆ **Joseph Interprets Two Dreams** / Genesis 40:1-23 / 1887 or 1721 BC

¹⁻⁴As time went on, it happened that the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt crossed their master, the king of Egypt. Pharaoh was furious with his two officials, the head cupbearer and the head baker, and put them in custody under the captain of the guard; it was the same jail where Joseph was held. The captain of the guard assigned Joseph to see to their needs.

⁴⁻⁷After they had been in custody for a while, the king’s cupbearer and baker, while being held in the jail, both had a dream on the same night, each dream having its own meaning. When Joseph arrived in the morning, he noticed that they were feeling low. So he asked them, the two officials of Pharaoh who had been thrown into jail with him, “What’s wrong? Why the long faces?”

⁸They said, “We dreamed dreams and there’s no one to interpret them.”

Joseph said, “Don’t interpretations come from God? Tell me the dreams.”

⁹⁻¹¹First the head cupbearer told his dream to Joseph: “In my dream there was a vine in front of me with three branches on it: It budded, blossomed, and the clusters ripened into grapes. I was holding Pharaoh’s cup; I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh’s cup, and gave the cup to Pharaoh.”

¹²⁻¹⁵Joseph said, “Here’s the meaning. The three branches are three days. Within three days, Pharaoh will get you out of here and put you back to your old work—you’ll be giving Pharaoh his cup just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. Only remember me when things are going well with you again—tell Pharaoh about me and get me out of this place. I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews. And since I’ve been here, I’ve done nothing to deserve being put in this hole.”

¹⁶⁻¹⁷When the head baker saw how well Joseph’s interpretation turned out, he spoke up: “My dream went like this: I saw three wicker baskets on my head; the top basket had assorted pastries from the bakery and birds were picking at them from the basket on my head.”

¹⁸⁻¹⁹Joseph said, “This is the interpretation: The three baskets are three days; within three days Pharaoh will take off your head, impale you on a post, and the birds will pick your bones clean.”

²⁰⁻²²And sure enough, on the third day it was Pharaoh’s birthday and he threw a feast for all his servants. He set the head cupbearer and the head baker in places of honor in the presence of all the guests. Then he restored the head

cupbearer to his cupbearing post; he handed Pharaoh his cup just as before. And then he impaled the head baker on a post, following Joseph's interpretations exactly.

²³But the head cupbearer never gave Joseph another thought; he forgot all about him.

◆ **The Death of Isaac** / Genesis 35:28-29 / 1886 or 1720 BC

²⁸⁻²⁹Isaac was now 180 years old. Isaac breathed his last and died—an old man full of years. He was buried with his family by his sons Esau and Jacob.

◆ **Pharaoh's Dreams** / Genesis 41:1-36 / 1885 or 1719 BC

Two years had passed since Joseph had interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's head cupbearer and head baker.

¹⁻⁴Two years passed and Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile River. Seven cows came up out of the Nile, all shimmering with health, and grazed on the marsh grass. Then seven other cows, all skin and bones, came up out of the river after them and stood by them on the bank of the Nile. The skinny cows ate the seven healthy cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

⁵⁻⁷He went back to sleep and dreamed a second time: Seven ears of grain, full-bodied and lush, grew out of a single stalk. Then seven more ears grew up, but these were thin and dried out by the east wind. The thin ears swallowed up the full, healthy ears. Then Pharaoh woke up—another dream.

⁸When morning came, he was upset. He sent for all the magicians and sages of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but they couldn't interpret them to him.

⁹⁻¹³The head cupbearer then spoke up and said to Pharaoh, "I just now remembered something—I'm sorry, I should have told you this long ago. Once when Pharaoh got angry with his servants, he locked me and the head baker in the house of the captain of the guard. We both had dreams on the same night, each dream with its own meaning. It so happened that there was a young Hebrew slave there with us; he belonged to the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams and he interpreted them for us, each dream separately. Things turned out just as he interpreted. I was returned to my position and the head baker was impaled."

¹⁴Pharaoh at once sent for Joseph. They brought him on the run from the jail cell. He cut his hair, put on clean clothes, and came to Pharaoh.

¹⁵"I dreamed a dream," Pharaoh told Joseph. "Nobody can interpret it. But I've heard that just by hearing a dream you can interpret it."

¹⁶Joseph answered, "Not I, but God. God will set Pharaoh's mind at ease."

¹⁷⁻²¹Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile. Seven cows, shimmering with health, came up out of the river and grazed on the marsh grass. On their heels seven more cows, all skin and bones, came up. I've never seen uglier cows anywhere in Egypt. Then the seven skinny, ugly cows ate up the first seven healthy cows. But you couldn't tell by looking—after eating them up they were just as skinny and ugly as before. Then I woke up.

²²⁻²⁴"In my second dream I saw seven ears of grain, full-bodied and lush, growing out of a single stalk, and right behind them, seven other ears, shriveled, thin, and dried out by the east wind. And the thin ears swallowed up the full ears. I've told all this to the magicians but they can't figure it out."

²⁵⁻²⁷Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Pharaoh’s two dreams both mean the same thing. God is telling Pharaoh what he is going to do. The seven healthy cows are seven years and the seven healthy ears of grain are seven years—they’re the same dream. The seven sick and ugly cows that followed them up are seven years and the seven scrawny ears of grain dried out by the east wind are the same—seven years of famine.

²⁸⁻³²“The meaning is what I said earlier: God is letting Pharaoh in on what he is going to do. Seven years of plenty are on their way throughout Egypt. But on their heels will come seven years of famine, leaving no trace of the Egyptian plenty. As the country is emptied by famine, there won’t be even a scrap left of the previous plenty—the famine will be total. The fact that Pharaoh dreamed the same dream twice emphasizes God’s determination to do this and do it soon.

³³⁻³⁶“So, Pharaoh needs to look for a wise and experienced man and put him in charge of the country. Then Pharaoh needs to appoint managers throughout the country of Egypt to organize it during the years of plenty. Their job will be to collect all the food produced in the good years ahead and stockpile the grain under Pharaoh’s authority, storing it in the towns for food. This grain will be held back to be used later during the seven years of famine that are coming on Egypt. This way the country won’t be devastated by the famine.”

◆ **Joseph Made Ruler of Egypt** / Genesis 41:37-57

³⁷This seemed like a good idea to Pharaoh and his officials.

³⁸Then Pharaoh said to his officials, “Isn’t this the man we need? Are we going to find anyone else who has God’s spirit in him like this?”

³⁹⁻⁴⁰So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “You’re the man for us. God has given you the inside story—no one is as qualified as you in experience and wisdom. From now on, you’re in charge of my affairs; all my people will report to you. Only as king will I be over you.”

⁴¹⁻⁴³So Pharaoh commissioned Joseph: “I’m putting you in charge of the entire country of Egypt.” Then Pharaoh removed his signet ring from his finger and slipped it on Joseph’s hand. He outfitted him in robes of the best linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He put the second-in-command chariot at his disposal, and as he rode people shouted “Bravo!”

Joseph was in charge of the entire country of Egypt.

⁴⁴Pharaoh told Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but no one in Egypt will make a single move without your stamp of approval.”

⁴⁵Then Pharaoh gave Joseph an Egyptian name, Zaphenath-Paneah (God Speaks and He Lives). He also gave him an Egyptian wife, Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On (Heliopolis).

And Joseph took up his duties over the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶Joseph was thirty years old when he went to work for Pharaoh the king of Egypt. As soon as Joseph left Pharaoh’s presence, he began his work in Egypt.



⁴⁷⁻⁴⁹During the next seven years of plenty the land produced bumper crops. Joseph gathered up the food of the seven good years in Egypt and stored the food in cities. In each city he stockpiled surplus from the surrounding fields. Joseph collected so much grain—it was like the sand of the ocean!—that he finally quit keeping track.

⁵⁰⁻⁵²Joseph had two sons born to him before the years of famine came. Asenath, daughter of Potiphera the priest of On, was their mother. Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh (Forget), saying, “God made me forget all my hardships and my parental home.” He named his second son Ephraim (Double Prosperity), saying, “God has prospered me in the land of my sorrow.”

⁵³⁻⁵⁴Then Egypt’s seven good years came to an end and the seven years of famine arrived, just as Joseph had said. All countries experienced famine; Egypt was the only country that had bread.

⁵⁵When the famine spread throughout Egypt, the people called out in distress to Pharaoh, calling for bread. He told the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph. Do what he tells you.”

⁵⁶⁻⁵⁷As the famine got worse all over the country, Joseph opened the storehouses and sold emergency supplies to the Egyptians. The famine was very bad. Soon the whole world was coming to buy supplies from Joseph. The famine was bad all over.

JANUARY 16

♦ **Joseph’s Brothers Go to Egypt** / Genesis 42:1-38 / *ca. 1877 or 1711 BC*

¹⁻²When Jacob learned that there was food in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why do you sit around here and look at one another? I’ve heard that there is food in Egypt. Go down there and buy some so that we can survive and not starve to death.”

³⁻⁵Ten of Joseph’s brothers went down to Egypt to get food. Jacob didn’t send Joseph’s brother Benjamin with them; he was afraid that something bad might happen to him. So Israel’s sons joined everyone else that was going to Egypt to buy food, for Canaan, too, was hit hard by the famine.

⁶⁻⁷Joseph was running the country; he was the one who gave out rations to all the people. When Joseph’s brothers arrived, they treated him with honor, bowing to him. Joseph recognized them immediately, but treated them as strangers and spoke roughly to them.

He said, “Where do you come from?”

“From Canaan,” they said. “We’ve come to buy food.”

⁸Joseph knew who they were, but they didn’t know who he was.

⁹Joseph, remembering the dreams he had dreamed of them, said, “You’re spies. You’ve come to look for our weak spots.”

¹⁰⁻¹¹“No, master,” they said. “We’ve only come to buy food. We’re all the sons of the same man; we’re honest men; we’d never think of spying.”

¹²He said, “No. You’re spies. You’ve come to look for our weak spots.”

¹³They said, “There were twelve of us brothers—sons of the same father in the country of Canaan. The youngest is with our father, and one is no more.”

¹⁴⁻¹⁶But Joseph said, “It’s just as I said, you’re spies. This is how I’ll test you. As Pharaoh lives, you’re not going to leave this place until your younger brother comes here. Send one of you to get your brother while the rest of you stay here in jail. We’ll see if you’re telling the truth or not. As Pharaoh lives, I say you’re spies.”

¹⁷Then he threw them into jail for three days.

¹⁸⁻²⁰On the third day, Joseph spoke to them. “Do this and you’ll live. I’m a God-fearing man. If you’re as honest as you say you are, one of your brothers will stay here in jail while the rest of you take the food back to your hungry families.

But you have to bring your youngest brother back to me, confirming the truth of your speech—and not one of you will die.” They agreed.

²¹Then they started talking among themselves. “Now we’re paying for what we did to our brother—we saw how terrified he was when he was begging us for mercy. We wouldn’t listen to him and now we’re the ones in trouble.”

²²Reuben broke in. “Didn’t I tell you, ‘Don’t hurt the boy’? But no, you wouldn’t listen. And now we’re paying for his murder.”

²³⁻²⁴Joseph had been using an interpreter, so they didn’t know that Joseph was understanding every word. Joseph turned away from them and cried. When he was able to speak again, he took Simeon and had him tied up, making a prisoner of him while they all watched.

²⁵Then Joseph ordered that their sacks be filled with grain, that their money be put back in each sack, and that they be given rations for the road. That was all done for them.

²⁶They loaded their food supplies on their donkeys and set off.

²⁷⁻²⁸When they stopped for the night, one of them opened his sack to get food for his donkey; there at the mouth of his bag was his money. He called out to his brothers, “My money has been returned; it’s right here in my bag!” They were puzzled—and frightened. “What’s God doing to us?”

²⁹⁻³²When they got back to their father Jacob, back in the land of Canaan, they told him everything that had happened, saying, “The man who runs the country spoke to us roughly and accused us of being spies. We told him, ‘We are honest men and in no way spies. There were twelve of us brothers, sons of one father; one is gone and the youngest is with our father in Canaan.’”

³³⁻³⁴“But the master of the country said, ‘Leave one of your brothers with me, take food for your starving families, and go. Bring your youngest brother back to me, proving that you’re honest men and not spies. And then I’ll give your brother back to you and you’ll be free to come and go in this country.’”

³⁵As they were emptying their food sacks, each man came on his purse of money. On seeing their money, they and their father were upset.

³⁶Their father said to them, “You’re taking everything I’ve got! Joseph’s gone, Simeon’s gone, and now you want to take Benjamin. If you have your way, I’ll be left with nothing.”

³⁷Reuben spoke up: “I’ll put my two sons in your hands as hostages. If I don’t bring Benjamin back, you can kill them. Trust me with Benjamin; I’ll bring him back.”

³⁸But Jacob refused. “My son will not go down with you. His brother is dead and he is all I have left. If something bad happens to him on the road, you’ll put my gray, sorrowing head in the grave.”

◆ **The Brothers Return to Egypt** / Genesis 43:1-18 / 1876 or 1710 BC

By this time two full years of famine had passed (Gen 41:54, page 53; 45:11, page 57).

¹⁻²The famine got worse. When they had eaten all the food they had brought back from Egypt, their father said, “Go back and get some more food.”

³⁻⁵But Judah said, “The man warned us most emphatically, ‘You won’t so much as see my face if you don’t have your brother with you.’ If you’re ready to release our brother to go with us, we’ll go down and get you food. But if you’re not ready, we aren’t going. What would be the use? The man told us, ‘You won’t so much as see my face if you don’t have your brother with you.’”

⁶Israel said, “Why are you making my life so difficult! Why did you ever tell the man you had another brother?”

⁷They said, “The man pressed us hard, asking pointed questions about our family: ‘Is your father alive? Do you have another brother?’ So we answered his questions. How did we know that he’d say, ‘Bring your brother here?’”

⁸⁻¹⁰Judah pushed his father Israel. “Let the boy go; I’ll take charge of him. Let us go and be on our way—if we don’t get going, we’re all going to starve to death—we and you and our children, too! I’ll take full responsibility for his safety; it’s my life on the line for his. If I don’t bring him back safe and sound, I’m the guilty one; I’ll take all the blame. If we had gone ahead in the first place instead of procrastinating like this, we could have been there and back twice over.”

¹¹⁻¹⁴Their father Israel gave in. “If it has to be, it has to be. But do this: stuff your packs with the finest products from the land you can find and take them to the man as gifts—some balm and honey, some spices and perfumes, some pistachios and almonds. And take plenty of money—pay back double what was returned to your sacks; that might have been a mistake. Take your brother and get going. Go back to the man. And may The Strong God give you grace in that man’s eyes so that he’ll send back your other brother along with Benjamin. For me, nothing’s left; I’ve lost everything.”

¹⁵⁻¹⁶The men took the gifts, double the money, and Benjamin. They lost no time in getting to Egypt and meeting Joseph. When Joseph saw that they had Benjamin with them, he told his house steward, “Take these men into the house and make them at home. Butcher an animal and prepare a meal; these men are going to eat with me at noon.”

¹⁷⁻¹⁸The steward did what Joseph had said and took them inside. But they became anxious when they were brought into Joseph’s home, thinking, “It’s the money; he thinks we ran off with the money on our first trip down here. And now he’s got us where he wants us—he’s going to turn us into slaves and confiscate our donkeys.”

◆ **A Feast at Joseph’s House** / Genesis 43:19-34

¹⁹⁻²²So they went up to Joseph’s house steward and talked to him in the doorway. They said, “Listen, master. We came down here one other time to buy food. On our way home, the first night out we opened our bags and found our money at the mouth of the bag—the exact amount we’d paid. We’ve brought it all back and have plenty more to buy more food with. We have no idea who put the money in our bags.”

²³The steward said, “Everything’s in order. Don’t worry. Your God and the God of your father must have given you a bonus. I was paid in full.” And with that, he presented Simeon to them.

²⁴⁻²⁵He then took them inside Joseph’s house and made them comfortable—gave them water to wash their feet and saw to the feeding of their donkeys. The brothers spread out their gifts as they waited for Joseph to show up at noon—they had been told that they were to have dinner with him.

²⁶When Joseph got home, they presented him with the gifts they had brought and bowed respectfully before him.

²⁷Joseph welcomed them and said, “And your old father whom you mentioned to me, how is he? Is he still alive?”

²⁸They said, “Yes—your servant our father is quite well, very much alive.” And they again bowed respectfully before him.

²⁹Then Joseph picked out his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son. He asked, "And is this your youngest brother that you told me about?" Then he said, "God be gracious to you, my son."

³⁰⁻³¹Deeply moved on seeing his brother and about to burst into tears, Joseph hurried out into another room and had a good cry. Then he washed his face, got a grip on himself, and said, "Let's eat."

³²⁻³⁴Joseph was served at his private table, the brothers off by themselves and the Egyptians off by themselves (Egyptians won't eat at the same table with Hebrews; it's repulsive to them). The brothers were seated facing Joseph, arranged in order of their age, from the oldest to the youngest. They looked at one another wide-eyed, wondering what would happen next. When the brothers' plates were served from Joseph's table, Benjamin's plate came piled high, far more so than his brothers. And so the brothers feasted with Joseph, drinking freely.

◆ **Joseph's Silver Chalice** / Genesis 44:1-17

¹⁻²Joseph ordered his house steward: "Fill the men's bags with food—all they can carry—and replace each one's money at the top of the bag. Then put my chalice, my silver chalice, in the top of the bag of the youngest, along with the money for his food." He did as Joseph ordered.

³⁻⁵At break of day the men were sent off with their donkeys. They were barely out of the city when Joseph said to his house steward, "Run after them. When you catch up with them, say, 'Why did you pay me back evil for good? This is the chalice my master drinks from; he also uses it for divination. This is outrageous!'"

⁶He caught up with them and repeated all this word for word.

⁷⁻⁹They said, "What is my master talking about? We would never do anything like that! Why, the money we found in our bags earlier, we brought back all the way from Canaan—do you think we'd turn right around and steal it back from your master? If that chalice is found on any of us, he'll die; and the rest of us will be your master's slaves."

¹⁰The steward said, "Very well then, but we won't go that far. Whoever is found with the chalice will be my slave; the rest of you can go free."

¹¹⁻¹²They outdid each other in putting their bags on the ground and opening them up for inspection. The steward searched their bags, going from oldest to youngest. The chalice showed up in Benjamin's bag.

¹³They ripped their clothes in despair, loaded up their donkeys, and went back to the city.

¹⁴Joseph was still at home when Judah and his brothers got back. They threw themselves down on the ground in front of him.

¹⁵Joseph accused them: "How can you have done this? You have to know that a man in my position would have discovered this."

¹⁶Judah as spokesman for the brothers said, "What can we say, master? What is there to say? How can we prove our innocence? God is behind this, exposing how bad we are. We stand guilty before you and ready to be your slaves—we're all in this together, the rest of us as guilty as the one with the chalice."

¹⁷"I'd never do that to you," said Joseph. "Only the one involved with the chalice will be my slave. The rest of you are free to go back to your father."

◆ **Judah Speaks for His Brothers** / Genesis 44:18-34

¹⁸⁻²⁰Judah came forward. He said, "Please, master; can I say just one thing to you? Don't get angry. Don't think I'm presumptuous—you're the same as

Pharaoh as far as I'm concerned. You, master, asked us, 'Do you have a father and a brother?' And we answered honestly, 'We have a father who is old and a younger brother who was born to him in his old age. His brother is dead and he is the only son left from that mother. And his father loves him more than anything.'

²¹⁻²² "Then you told us, 'Bring him down here so I can see him.' We told you, master, that it was impossible: 'The boy can't leave his father; if he leaves, his father will die.'

²³ "And then you said, 'If your youngest brother doesn't come with you, you won't be allowed to see me.'

²⁴⁻²⁶ "When we returned to our father, we told him everything you said to us. So when our father said, 'Go back and buy some more food,' we told him flatly, 'We can't. The only way we can go back is if our youngest brother is with us. We aren't allowed to even see the man if our youngest brother doesn't come with us.'

²⁷⁻²⁹ "Your servant, my father, told us, 'You know very well that my wife gave me two sons. One turned up missing. I concluded that he'd been ripped to pieces. I've never seen him since. If you now go and take this one and something bad happens to him, you'll put my old gray, grieving head in the grave for sure.'

³⁰⁻³² "And now, can't you see that if I show up before your servant, my father, without the boy, this son with whom his life is so bound up, the moment he realizes the boy is gone, he'll die on the spot. He'll die of grief and we, your servants who are standing here before you, will have killed him. And that's not all. I got my father to release the boy to show him to you by promising, 'If I don't bring him back, I'll stand condemned before you, Father, all my life.'

³³⁻³⁴ "So let me stay here as your slave, not this boy. Let the boy go back with his brothers. How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? Oh, don't make me go back and watch my father die in grief!"

◆ Joseph Reveals His Identity / Genesis 45:1-15

¹⁻² Joseph couldn't hold himself in any longer, keeping up a front before all his attendants. He cried out, "Leave! Clear out—everyone leave!" So there was no one with Joseph when he identified himself to his brothers. But his sobbing was so violent that the Egyptians couldn't help but hear him. The news was soon reported to Pharaoh's palace.

³ Joseph spoke to his brothers: "I am Joseph. Is my father really still alive?" But his brothers couldn't say a word. They were speechless—they couldn't believe what they were hearing and seeing.

⁴⁻⁸ "Come closer to me," Joseph said to his brothers. They came closer. "I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into Egypt. But don't feel badly, don't blame yourselves for selling me. God was behind it. God sent me here ahead of you to save lives. There has been a famine in the land now for two years; the famine will continue for five more years—neither plowing nor harvesting. God sent me on ahead to pave the way and make sure there was a remnant in the land, to save your lives in an amazing act of deliverance. So you see, it wasn't you who sent me here but God. He set me in place as a father to Pharaoh, put me in charge of his personal affairs, and made me ruler of all Egypt.

⁹⁻¹¹ "Hurry back to my father. Tell him, 'Your son Joseph says: I'm master of all of Egypt. Come as fast as you can and join me here. I'll give you a place to live in Goshen where you'll be close to me—you, your children, your grandchildren, your flocks, your herds, and anything else you can think of. I'll take care of you

there completely. There are still five more years of famine ahead; I'll make sure all your needs are taken care of, you and everyone connected with you—you won't want for a thing.'

¹²⁻¹³"Look at me. You can see for yourselves, and my brother Benjamin can see for himself, that it's me, my own mouth, telling you all this. Tell my father all about the high position I hold in Egypt, tell him everything you've seen here, but don't take all day—hurry up and get my father down here."

¹⁴⁻¹⁵Then Joseph threw himself on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. He then kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Only then were his brothers able to talk with him.

JANUARY 17

◆ **Pharaoh Invites Jacob to Egypt** / Genesis 45:16-28 / 1876 or 1710 BC

¹⁶The story was reported in Pharaoh's palace: "Joseph's brothers have come." It was good news to Pharaoh and all who worked with him.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'This is the plan: Load up your pack animals; go to Canaan, get your father and your families and bring them back here. I'll settle you on the best land in Egypt—you'll live off the fat of the land.'

¹⁹⁻²⁰"Also tell them this: 'Here's what I want you to do: Take wagons from Egypt to carry your little ones and your wives and load up your father and come back. Don't worry about having to leave things behind; the best in all of Egypt will be yours.'"

²¹⁻²³And they did just that, the sons of Israel. Joseph gave them the wagons that Pharaoh had promised and food for the trip. He outfitted all the brothers in brand-new clothes, but he gave Benjamin three hundred pieces of silver and several suits of clothes. He sent his father these gifts: ten donkeys loaded with Egypt's best products and another ten donkeys loaded with grain and bread, provisions for his father's journey back.

²⁴Then he sent his brothers off. As they left he told them, "Take it easy on the journey; try to get along with each other."

²⁵⁻²⁸They left Egypt and went back to their father Jacob in Canaan. When they told him, "Joseph is still alive—and he's the ruler over the whole land of Egypt!" he went numb; he couldn't believe his ears. But the more they talked, telling him everything that Joseph had told them and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him back, the blood started to flow again—their father Jacob's spirit revived. Israel said, "I've heard enough—my son Joseph is still alive. I've got to go and see him before I die."

◆ **Jacob's Journey to Egypt** / Genesis 46:1-27

¹So Israel set out on the journey with everything he owned. He arrived at Beersheba and worshiped, offering sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

²God spoke to Israel in a vision that night: "Jacob! Jacob!"

"Yes?" he said. "I'm listening."

³⁻⁴God said, "I am the God of your father. Don't be afraid of going down to Egypt. I'm going to make you a great nation there. I'll go with you down to Egypt; I'll also bring you back here. And when you die, Joseph will be with you; with his own hand he'll close your eyes."

⁵⁻⁷Then Jacob left Beersheba. Israel's sons loaded their father and their little

ones and their wives on the wagons Pharaoh had sent to carry him. They arrived in Egypt with the livestock and the wealth they had accumulated in Canaan. Jacob brought everyone in his family with him—sons and grandsons, daughters and granddaughters. Everyone.

⁸These are the names of the Israelites, Jacob and his descendants, who went to Egypt:

Reuben, Jacob's firstborn.

⁹Reuben's sons: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

¹⁰Simeon's sons: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman.

¹¹Levi's sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹²Judah's sons: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (Er and Onan had already died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

¹³Issachar's sons: Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron.

¹⁴Zebulun's sons: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

¹⁵These are the sons that Leah bore to Jacob in Paddan Aram. There was also his daughter Dinah. Altogether, sons and daughters, they numbered thirty-three.

¹⁶Gad's sons: Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

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

¹⁸These are the children that Zilpah, the maid that Laban gave to his daughter Leah, bore to Jacob—sixteen of them.

¹⁹⁻²¹The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph was the father of two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, from his marriage to Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. They were born to him in Egypt. Benjamin's sons were Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huphim, and Ard.

²²These are the children born to Jacob through Rachel—fourteen.

²³Dan's son: Hushim.

²⁴Naphtali's sons: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

²⁵These are the children born to Jacob through Bilhah, the maid Laban had given to his daughter Rachel—seven.

²⁶⁻²⁷Summing up, all those who went down to Egypt with Jacob—his own children, not counting his sons' wives—numbered sixty-six. Counting in the two sons born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family who ended up in Egypt numbered seventy.

◆ **Jacob's Family Arrives in Goshen** / Genesis 46:28-34

²⁸⁻²⁹Jacob sent Judah on ahead to get directions to Goshen from Joseph. When they got to Goshen, Joseph gave orders for his chariot and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. The moment Joseph saw him, he threw himself on his neck and wept. He wept a long time.

³⁰Israel said to Joseph, "I'm ready to die. I've looked into your face—you are indeed alive."

³¹⁻³⁴Joseph then spoke to his brothers and his father's family. "I'll go and tell Pharaoh, 'My brothers and my father's family, all of whom lived in Canaan, have come to me. The men are shepherds; they've always made their living by raising livestock. And they've brought their flocks and herds with them, along with everything else they own.' When Pharaoh calls you in and asks what kind of work you do, tell him, 'Your servants have always kept livestock

for as long as we can remember—we and our parents also.’ That way he’ll let you stay apart in the area of Goshen—for Egyptians look down on anyone who is a shepherd.”

◆ **Jacob Blesses Pharaoh** / Genesis 47:1-12

1 Joseph went to Pharaoh and told him, “My father and brothers with their flocks and herds and everything they own have come from Canaan. Right now they are in Goshen.”

2-3 He had taken five of his brothers with him and introduced them to Pharaoh. Pharaoh asked them, “What kind of work do you do?”

3-4 “Your servants are shepherds, the same as our fathers were. We have come to this country to find a new place to live. There is no pasture for our flocks in Canaan. The famine has been very bad there. Please, would you let your servants settle in the region of Goshen?”

5-6 Pharaoh looked at Joseph. “So, your father and brothers have arrived—a reunion! Egypt welcomes them. Settle your father and brothers on the choicest land—yes, give them Goshen. And if you know any among them that are especially good at their work, put them in charge of my own livestock.”

7-8 Next Joseph brought his father Jacob in and introduced him to Pharaoh. Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Pharaoh asked Jacob, “How old are you?”

9-10 Jacob answered Pharaoh, “The years of my sojourning are 130—a short and hard life and not nearly as long as my ancestors were given.” Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and left.

11-12 Joseph settled his father and brothers in Egypt, made them proud owners of choice land—it was the region of Rameses (that is, Goshen)—just as Pharaoh had ordered. Joseph took good care of them—his father and brothers and all his father’s family, right down to the smallest baby. He made sure they had plenty of everything.

◆ **Joseph’s Leadership in the Famine** / Genesis 47:13-28

13-15 The time eventually came when there was no food anywhere. The famine was very bad. Egypt and Canaan alike were devastated by the famine. Joseph collected all the money that was to be found in Egypt and Canaan to pay for the distribution of food. He banked the money in Pharaoh’s palace. When the money from Egypt and Canaan had run out, the Egyptians came to Joseph. “Food! Give us food! Are you going to watch us die right in front of you? The money is all gone.”

16-17 Joseph said, “Bring your livestock. I’ll trade you food for livestock since your money’s run out.” So they brought Joseph their livestock. He traded them food for their horses, sheep, cattle, and donkeys. He got them through that year in exchange for all their livestock.

18-19 When that year was over, the next year rolled around and they were back, saying, “Master, it’s no secret to you that we’re broke: our money’s gone and we’ve traded you all our livestock. We’ve nothing left to barter with but our bodies and our farms. What use are our bodies and our land if we stand here and starve to death right in front of you? Trade us food for our bodies and our land. We’ll be slaves to Pharaoh and give up our land—all we ask is seed for survival, just enough to live on and keep the farms alive.”

20-21 So Joseph bought up all the farms in Egypt for Pharaoh. Every Egyptian sold his land—the famine was that bad. That’s how Pharaoh ended up owning

all the land and the people ended up slaves; Joseph reduced the people to slavery from one end of Egypt to the other.

²²Joseph made an exception for the priests. He didn't buy their land because they received a fixed salary from Pharaoh and were able to live off of that salary. So they didn't need to sell their land.

²³⁻²⁴Joseph then announced to the people: "Here's how things stand: I've bought you and your land for Pharaoh. In exchange I'm giving you seed so you can plant the ground. When the crops are harvested, you must give a fifth to Pharaoh and keep four-fifths for yourselves, for seed for yourselves and your families—you're going to be able to feed your children!"

²⁵They said, "You've saved our lives! Master, we're grateful and glad to be slaves to Pharaoh."

²⁶Joseph decreed a land law in Egypt that is still in effect, *A Fifth Goes to Pharaoh*. Only the priests' lands were not owned by Pharaoh.



²⁷⁻²⁸And so Israel settled down in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property and flourished. They became a large company of people. Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen years. In all, he lived 147 years.

JANUARY 18

◆ **Jacob's Death Draws Near** / Genesis 47:29-31 / 1859 or 1693 BC

²⁹⁻³⁰When the time came for Israel to die, he called his son Joseph and said, "Do me this favor. Put your hand under my thigh, a sign that you're loyal and true to me to the end. Don't bury me in Egypt. When I lie down with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me alongside them."

"I will," he said. "I'll do what you've asked."

³¹Israel said, "Promise me." Joseph promised.

Israel bowed his head in submission and gratitude from his bed.

◆ **Jacob Blesses Manasseh and Ephraim** / Genesis 48:1-22

¹⁻²Some time after this conversation, Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." He took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and went to Jacob. When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come," he roused himself and sat up in bed.

³⁻⁷Jacob said to Joseph, "The Strong God appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me. He said, 'I'm going to make you prosperous and numerous, turn you into a congregation of tribes; and I'll turn this land over to your children coming after you as a permanent inheritance.' I'm adopting your two sons who were born to you here in Egypt before I joined you; they have equal status with Reuben and Simeon. But any children born after them are yours; they will come after their brothers in matters of inheritance. I want it this way because, as I was returning from Paddan, your mother Rachel, to my deep sorrow, died as we were on our way through Canaan when we were only a short distance from Ephrath, now called Bethlehem."

⁸Just then Jacob noticed Joseph's sons and said, "Who are these?"

⁹⁻¹¹Joseph told his father, "They are my sons whom God gave to me in this place."

"Bring them to me," he said, "so I can bless them." Israel's eyesight was poor from old age; he was nearly blind. So Joseph brought them up close. Old Israel

kissed and embraced them and then said to Joseph, “I never expected to see your face again, and now God has let me see your children as well!”

¹²⁻¹⁶Joseph took them from Israel’s knees and bowed respectfully, his face to the ground. Then Joseph took the two boys, Ephraim with his right hand setting him to Israel’s left, and Manasseh with his left hand setting him to Israel’s right, and stood them before him. But Israel crossed his arms and put his right hand on the head of Ephraim who was the younger and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, the firstborn. Then he blessed them:

The God before whom walked
 my fathers Abraham and Isaac,
 The God who has been my shepherd
 all my life long to this very day,
 The Angel who delivered me from every evil,
 Bless the boys.
 May my name be echoed in their lives,
 and the names of Abraham and Isaac, my fathers,
 And may they grow
 covering the Earth with their children.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸When Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand on Ephraim’s head, he thought he had made a mistake, so he took hold of his father’s hand to move it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s, saying, “That’s the wrong head, Father; the other one is the firstborn; place your right hand on his head.”

¹⁹⁻²⁰But his father wouldn’t do it. He said, “I know, my son; but I know what I’m doing. He also will develop into a people, and he also will be great. But his younger brother will be even greater and his descendants will enrich nations.” Then he blessed them both:

Israel will use your names to give blessings:
 May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.

In that he made it explicit: he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

²¹⁻²²Israel then said to Joseph, “I’m about to die. God be with you and give you safe passage back to the land of your fathers. As for me, I’m presenting you, as the first among your brothers, the ridge of land I took from Amorites with my sword and bow.”

◆ **Jacob Blesses His Sons** / Genesis 49:1-28

¹Jacob called his sons and said, “Gather around. I want to tell you what you can expect in the days to come.”

² Come together, listen sons of Jacob,
 listen to Israel your father.

³⁻⁴ Reuben, you’re my firstborn,
 my strength, first proof of my manhood,
 at the top in honor and at the top in power,
 But like a bucket of water spilled,
 you’ll be at the top no more,
 Because you climbed into your father’s marriage bed,
 mounting that couch, and you defiled it.

- 5-6 Simeon and Levi are two of a kind,
 ready to fight at the drop of a hat.
 I don't want anything to do with their vendettas,
 want no part in their bitter feuds;
 They kill men in fits of temper,
 slash oxen on a whim.
- 7 A curse on their uncontrolled anger,
 on their indiscriminate wrath.
 I'll throw them out with the trash;
 I'll shred and scatter them like confetti throughout Israel.
- 8-12 You, Judah, your brothers will praise you:
 Your fingers on your enemies' throat,
 while your brothers honor you.
 You're a lion's cub, Judah,
 home fresh from the kill, my son.
 Look at him, crouched like a lion, king of beasts;
 who dares mess with him?
 The scepter shall not leave Judah;
 he'll keep a firm grip on the command staff
 Until the ultimate ruler comes
 and the nations obey him.
 He'll tie up his donkey to the grapevine,
 his purebred prize to a sturdy branch.
 He will wash his shirt in wine
 and his cloak in the blood of grapes,
 His eyes will be darker than wine,
 his teeth whiter than milk.
- 13 Zebulun settles down on the seashore;
 he's a safe harbor for ships,
 right alongside Sidon.
- 14-15 Issachar is one tough donkey
 crouching between the corrals;
 When he saw how good the place was,
 how pleasant the country,
 He gave up his freedom
 and went to work as a slave.
- 16-17 Dan will handle matters of justice for his people;
 he will hold his own just fine among the tribes of Israel.
 Dan is only a small snake in the grass,
 a lethal serpent in ambush by the road
 When he strikes a horse in the heel,
 and brings its huge rider crashing down.
- 18 I wait in hope
 for your salvation, GOD.
- 19 Gad will be attacked by bandits,
 but he will trip them up.

20 Asher will become famous for rich foods,
candies and sweets fit for kings.

21-26 Naphtali is a deer running free
that gives birth to lovely fawns.

Joseph is a wild donkey,
a wild donkey by a spring,
spirited donkeys on a hill.

The archers with malice attacked,
shooting their hate-tipped arrows;

But he held steady under fire,
his bow firm, his arms limber,

With the backing of the Champion of Jacob,
the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel.

The God of your father—may he help you!

And may The Strong God—may he give you his blessings,

Blessings tumbling out of the skies,
blessings bursting up from the Earth—
blessings of breasts and womb.

May the blessings of your father
exceed the blessings of the ancient mountains,
surpass the delights of the eternal hills;

May they rest on the head of Joseph,
on the brow of the one consecrated among his brothers.

27 Benjamin is a ravenous wolf;
all morning he gorges on his kill,
at evening divides up what's left over.

28 All these are the tribes of Israel, the twelve tribes. And this is what their father said to them as he blessed them, blessing each one with his own special farewell blessing.

◆ **Jacob's Death and Burial** / Genesis 49:29–50:13 / 1859 or 1693 BC

29-32 Then he instructed them: "I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave which is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, the cave in the field of Machpelah facing Mamre in the land of Canaan, the field Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite for a burial plot. Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried there; Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried there; I also buried Leah there. The field and the cave were bought from the Hittites."

33 Jacob finished instructing his sons, pulled his feet into bed, breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

50:1 Joseph threw himself on his father, wept over him, and kissed him.



2-3 Joseph then instructed the physicians in his employ to embalm his father. The physicians embalmed Israel. The embalming took forty days, the period required for embalming. There was public mourning by the Egyptians for seventy days.

4-5 When the period of mourning was completed, Joseph petitioned Pharaoh's

court: “If you have reason to think kindly of me, present Pharaoh with my request: My father made me swear, saying, ‘I am ready to die. Bury me in the grave plot that I prepared for myself in the land of Canaan.’ Please give me leave to go up and bury my father. Then I’ll come back.”

⁶Pharaoh said, “Certainly. Go and bury your father as he made you promise under oath.”

⁷⁻⁹So Joseph left to bury his father. And all the high-ranking officials from Pharaoh’s court went with him, all the dignitaries of Egypt, joining Joseph’s family—his brothers and his father’s family. Their children and flocks and herds were left in Goshen. Chariots and horsemen accompanied them. It was a huge funeral procession.

¹⁰Arriving at the Atad Threshing Floor just across the Jordan River, they stopped for a period of mourning, letting their grief out in loud and lengthy lament. For seven days, Joseph engaged in these funeral rites for his father.

¹¹When the Canaanites who lived in that area saw the grief being poured out at the Atad Threshing Floor, they said, “Look how deeply the Egyptians are mourning.” That is how the site at the Jordan got the name Abel Mizraim (Egyptian Lament).

¹²⁻¹³Jacob’s sons continued to carry out his instructions to the letter. They took him on into Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah facing Mamre, the field that Abraham had bought as a burial plot from Ephron the Hittite.

◆ **Joseph Reassures His Brothers** / Genesis 50:14-21

¹⁴⁻¹⁵After burying his father, Joseph went back to Egypt. All his brothers who had come with him to bury his father returned with him. After the funeral, Joseph’s brothers talked among themselves: “What if Joseph is carrying a grudge and decides to pay us back for all the wrong we did him?”

¹⁶⁻¹⁷So they sent Joseph a message, “Before his death, your father gave this command: Tell Joseph, ‘Forgive your brothers’ sin—all that wrongdoing. They did treat you very badly.’ Will you do it? Will you forgive the sins of the servants of your father’s God?”

When Joseph received their message, he wept.

¹⁸Then the brothers went in person to him, threw themselves on the ground before him and said, “We’ll be your slaves.”

¹⁹⁻²¹Joseph replied, “Don’t be afraid. Do I act for God? Don’t you see, you planned evil against me but God used those same plans for my good, as you see all around you right now—life for many people. Easy now, you have nothing to fear; I’ll take care of you and your children.” He reassured them, speaking with them heart-to-heart.

◆ **The Death of Joseph** / Genesis 50:22-26 / 1805 or 1639 BC

²²⁻²³Joseph continued to live in Egypt with his father’s family. Joseph lived 110 years. He lived to see Ephraim’s sons into the third generation. The sons of Makir, Manasseh’s son, were also recognized as Joseph’s.

²⁴At the end, Joseph said to his brothers, “I am ready to die. God will most certainly pay you a visit and take you out of this land and back to the land he so solemnly promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

²⁵Then Joseph made the sons of Israel promise under oath, “When God makes his visitation, make sure you take my bones with you as you leave here.”