

AN ECUMENICAL STUDY BIBLE

THE NEW OXFORD  
ANNOTATED BIBLE  
WITH THE  
APOCRYPHA

REVISED STANDARD VERSION

*Containing the Second Edition of the New Testament  
And an Expanded Edition of the Apocrypha*

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NEW YORK   OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

## GENESIS

Genesis, meaning "beginning," covers the times from the creation (i.e. the beginning of history) to the Israelite sojourn in Egypt. The book falls naturally into two main sections: chs. 1–11 deal with primeval history; chs. 12–50 treat the history of the "fathers" of Israel. The latter section tells the stories of Abraham (chs. 12–25), of Isaac and his twin sons Esau and Jacob (chs. 26–36), and of Jacob's family, the chief member of which was Joseph (chs. 37–50).

Unlike the stories of primeval history, those of the patriarchs can be read against the background of the history of the Near East in the early part of the second millennium B.C. (2000–1500), as documented from extra-Biblical sources (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," § 6). The primary purpose of the whole book, however, is to narrate God's dealings with men and, in particular, to interpret Israel's special role in his historical plan. Thus the call of Abraham (12.1–3) is the great turning point. God's creation had been marred by man's persistent wickedness which not even the flood erased. Out of this fallible human material, however, God gradually separated one family line and eventually chose one man, Abraham, promising that he and his people would have a great historical destiny and would be instrumental in bringing divine blessing upon all the dispersed families of mankind.

The book is composed of three main literary traditions (Judean, Ephraimite, and Priestly; see Introduction to Pentateuch) and these, in turn, often preserve ancient oral tradition. Thus the voices of many generations unite in the affirmation that the only true God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose redemptive purpose, like the rainbow of his promise, spans the course of human history from its remote beginning to its unrealized future.

37 Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. <sup>2</sup> This is the history of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought an ill report of them to their father. <sup>3</sup> Now Israel

**37.1–36: Joseph is sold into slavery.** The narratives about Joseph, found in chs. 37; 39–47; and 50, constitute a single literary form or short story. **2:** The Joseph story is regarded as part of the history of Jacob, who died at the end of the saga (49.33). **The sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, 30.1–13.**

## GENESIS 38

him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers heeded him. <sup>28</sup> Then Mid’ianite traders passed by; and they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ish’maelites for twenty shekels of silver; and they took Joseph to Egypt.

29 When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he rent his clothes <sup>30</sup> and returned to his brothers, and said, “The lad is gone; and I, where shall I go?” <sup>31</sup> Then they took Joseph’s robe, and killed a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood; <sup>32</sup> and they sent the long robe with sleeves and brought it to their father, and said, “This we have found; see now whether it is your son’s robe or not.” <sup>33</sup> And he recognized it, and said, “It is my son’s robe; a wild beast has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.” <sup>34</sup> Then Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. <sup>35</sup> All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” Thus his father wept for him. <sup>36</sup> Meanwhile the Mid’ianites had sold him in Egypt to Pot’i-phar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

39 Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Pot’i-phar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ish’maelites who had brought him down there. <sup>2</sup> The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian, <sup>3</sup> and his master

*h* Or cult prostitute   *i* That is *A breach*

saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. <sup>4</sup> So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. <sup>5</sup> From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had, in house and field. <sup>6</sup> So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge; and having him he had no concern for anything but the food which he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking. <sup>7</sup> And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and said, "Lie with me." <sup>8</sup> But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Lo, having me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my hand; <sup>9</sup> he is not greater in this house than I am; nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" <sup>10</sup> And although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie with her or to be with her. <sup>11</sup> But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, <sup>12</sup> she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and got out of the house. <sup>13</sup> And when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and had fled out of the house, <sup>14</sup> she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to insult us; he came in to me to lie

and follows the tradition about the Ishmaelites (37.25). <sup>5:</sup> 30.27–30. <sup>6:</sup> For ritual reasons Potiphar took charge of his own food (43.32). <sup>7–20:</sup> The Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers" also tells how a man rejected the advances of his brother's wife, who then laid false accusations against him and almost brought about his death at the hands of his brother. <sup>21:</sup> Strangely Joseph, a slave, was not executed for alleged adultery, for the LORD was with him, not only in success (v. 2) but also in adversity.

**40.1–23:** Joseph, the interpreter of dreams. <sup>5:</sup> Since, according to ancient belief, dreams were

### *Joseph and Potiphar's wife*

with me, and I cried out with a loud voice; <sup>15</sup> and when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled and got out of the house." <sup>16</sup> Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, <sup>17</sup> and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to insult me; <sup>18</sup> but as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled out of the house."

<sup>19</sup> When his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. <sup>20</sup> And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. <sup>21</sup> But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. <sup>22</sup> And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison; and whatever was done there, he was the doer of it; <sup>23</sup> the keeper of the prison paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.

**40** Some time after this, the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord the king of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker, <sup>3</sup> and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. <sup>4</sup> The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he waited on them; and they continued for some time in custody. <sup>5</sup> And

### *Joseph interprets dreams in prison*

one night they both dreamed—the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—each his own dream, and each dream with its own meaning. <sup>6</sup> When Joseph came to them in the morning and saw them, they were troubled. <sup>7</sup> So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your faces downcast today?" <sup>8</sup> They said to him, "We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, I pray you."

<sup>9</sup> So the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me, <sup>10</sup> and on the vine there were three branches; as soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. <sup>11</sup> Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand." <sup>12</sup> Then Joseph said to him, "This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days; <sup>13</sup> within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his butler. <sup>14</sup> But remember me, when it is well with you, and do me the kindness, I pray you, to make mention of me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. <sup>15</sup> For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

<sup>16</sup> When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream:

there were three cake baskets on my head, <sup>17</sup> and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head." <sup>18</sup> And Joseph answered, "This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days; <sup>19</sup> within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head—from you!—and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat the flesh from you."

<sup>20</sup> On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants, and lifted up the head of the chief butler and the head of the chief baker among his servants.

<sup>21</sup> He restored the chief butler to his butlership, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand; <sup>22</sup> but he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. <sup>23</sup> Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

**41** After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, <sup>2</sup> and behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows sleek and fat, and they fed in the reed grass. <sup>3</sup> And behold, seven other cows, gaunt and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. <sup>4</sup> And the gaunt and thin cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. And Pharaoh awoke. <sup>5</sup> And he fell asleep and dreamed a second time; and behold, seven ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stalk. <sup>6</sup> And behold, after them sprouted seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind.

<sup>7</sup> And the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. <sup>8</sup> So in the morning his spirit

a channel of divine communication (1 Sam.28.6), the wise interpreter of dreams could discern the course of the future (37.5–10; Dan.2.26–28). <sup>6–8:</sup> Professional interpreters of dreams were unnecessary (41.16), for *interpretations belong to God* who knows and controls the events of the future. <sup>13:</sup> Lift up your head, i.e. graciously free you from prison (2 Kg.25.27). The same phrase is humorously applied to the baker's fate in v. 19. <sup>15:</sup> Stolen, 37.28.

**41.1–57:** Joseph's elevation as a result of his successful interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams. <sup>1–2:</sup> Egypt's fertility, symbolized by the sacred cows, was dependent upon the Nile. <sup>6:</sup> The east wind, the sirocco, a burning wind from the desert which withers vegetation (Hos.13.15). <sup>8:</sup> The narrator intends to demonstrate the superiority of Israel's God over heathen magic and wisdom

was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men; and Pharaoh told them his dream, but there was none who could interpret it to Pharaoh.

9 Then the chief butler said to Pharaoh, "I remember my faults today. <sup>10</sup> When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, <sup>11</sup> we dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own meaning. <sup>12</sup> A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard; and when we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each man according to his dream. <sup>13</sup> And as he interpreted to us, so it came to pass; I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged."

14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. <sup>15</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it; and I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." <sup>16</sup> Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer." <sup>17</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, in my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile; <sup>18</sup> and seven cows, fat and sleek, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass; <sup>19</sup> and seven other cows came up after them, poor and very gaunt and thin, such as I had never seen in all the land of Egypt. <sup>20</sup> And the thin and gaunt cows ate up the first seven fat cows, <sup>21</sup> but when they had eaten them no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were still as gaunt as at the beginning. Then I awoke. <sup>22</sup> I also saw in my dream seven ears growing on one stalk, full and good;

j Gk: Heb them

37 This proposal seemed good to

(Ex.3.18-19; 9.11; Dan.2.2-19; 5.8,15-28). <sup>16</sup> Joseph denies having any occult art and ascribes his skill solely to God (see 40.6-8 n.). <sup>32</sup>: Two dreams with the same meaning (v. 25) show that the event is *fixed* or predestined by God. Note that this sense of God's overruling sovereignty does not evoke a fatalistic resignation but a practical plan of action (vv. 33-36). <sup>38</sup>: *The Spirit*

<sup>23</sup> and seven ears, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them, <sup>24</sup> and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. And I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me."

25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dream of Pharaoh is one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. <sup>26</sup> The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dream is one. <sup>27</sup> The seven lean and gaunt cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine. <sup>28</sup> It is as I told Pharaoh, God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. <sup>29</sup> There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, <sup>30</sup> but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the famine will consume the land, <sup>31</sup> and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of that famine which will follow, for it will be very grievous. <sup>32</sup> And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. <sup>33</sup> Now therefore let Pharaoh select a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. <sup>34</sup> Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land, and take the fifth part of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plenteous years. <sup>35</sup> And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and lay up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. <sup>36</sup> That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine which are to befall the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine."

37 This proposal seemed good to

j Gk: Heb them

Pharaoh and to all his servants. <sup>38</sup> And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a man as this, in whom is the Spirit of God?" <sup>39</sup> So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are; <sup>40</sup> you shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command; only as regards the throne will I be greater than you." <sup>41</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." <sup>42</sup> Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in garments of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; <sup>43</sup> and he made him to ride in his second chariot; and they cried before him, "Bow the knee!"<sup>k</sup> Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. <sup>44</sup> Moreover Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." <sup>45</sup> And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaph'enath-pane'ah; and he gave him in marriage As'enath, the daughter of Poti'phera priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

46 Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went through all the land of Egypt. <sup>47</sup> During the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth abundantly, <sup>48</sup> and he gathered up all the food of the seven years when there was plenty in the land of Egypt, and stored up food in the cities; he stored up in every city the food from the fields around it. <sup>49</sup> And Joseph stored up grain in great

abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

50 Before the year of famine came, Joseph had two sons, whom As'enath, the daughter of Poti'phera priest of On, bore to him. <sup>51</sup> Joseph called the name of the first-born Manas'seh,<sup>m</sup> "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house." <sup>52</sup> The name of the second he called E'phraim,<sup>n</sup> "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

53 The seven years of plenty that prevailed in the land of Egypt came to an end; <sup>54</sup> and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. <sup>55</sup> When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do." <sup>56</sup> So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses,<sup>o</sup> and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. <sup>57</sup> Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

**42** When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?"<sup>p</sup> And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live, and not die." <sup>3</sup> So ten-

k Abrek, probably an Egyptian word similar in sound to the Hebrew word meaning to kneel

l Sam Gk: Heb which were

m That is Making to forget

n From a Hebrew word meaning to be fruitful

o Gk Vg Compare Syr: Heb all that was in them

of God, the source of extraordinary powers (Ex.31.3; Num.27.18; Dan.5.11,14). <sup>39-41</sup>: Joseph was made prime minister, second only to Pharaoh in authority. During the period of Hyksos ascendancy in Egypt (about 1720-1550 B.C.), when the land was under pro-Semitic rule, conditions were favorable for a Hebrew to rise to such a position of leadership. <sup>42</sup>: *The signet ring* (see 38.18 n.) empowered Joseph to act as Pharaoh's representative (compare Est.3.10; 8.2). <sup>45</sup>: The installation rites, typically Egyptian, culminated with the bestowal of an Egyptian name. Joseph's adoption into the Egyptian court is further indicated by his marriage into the leading priesthood of On or Heliopolis. *Potiphera*, see 37.36 n. <sup>46</sup>: Joseph's slavery and imprisonment lasted thirteen years (37.2-3).

**42.1-38**: Joseph's brothers journey to Egypt during the famine. **5**: See 12.10 n. **6**: *Bowed them-*

of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt.<sup>4</sup> But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might befall him.<sup>5</sup> Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6 Now Joseph was governor over the land; he it was who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came, and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground.<sup>7</sup> Joseph saw his brothers, and knew them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. "Where do you come from?" he said. They said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food."<sup>8</sup> Thus Joseph knew his brothers, but they did not know him.<sup>9</sup> And Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed of them; and he said to them, "You are spies, you have come to see the weakness of the land."<sup>10</sup> They said to him, "No, my lord, but to buy food have your servants come.<sup>11</sup> We are all sons of one man, we are honest men, your servants are not spies."<sup>12</sup> He said to them, "No, it is the weakness of the land that you have come to see."<sup>13</sup> And they said, "We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is no more."<sup>14</sup> But Joseph said to them, "It is as I said to you, you are spies.<sup>15</sup> By this you shall be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here.<sup>16</sup> Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain in prison, that your words may be tested, whether

### *Joseph's brothers come to Egypt for grain*

there is truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies."<sup>17</sup> And he put them all together in prison for three days.

18 On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: <sup>19</sup> if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined in your prison, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households,<sup>20</sup> and bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so.<sup>21</sup> Then they said to one another, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us and we would not listen; therefore is this distress come upon us."<sup>22</sup> And Reuben answered them, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the lad? But you would not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood."<sup>23</sup> They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them.<sup>24</sup> Then he turned away from them and wept; and he returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.<sup>25</sup> And Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, and to replace every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them.

26 Then they loaded their asses with their grain, and departed.<sup>27</sup> And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender at the lodging place, he saw his money in the mouth of his sack;<sup>28</sup> and he said to his brothers, "My money has been put back; here it is in the mouth of my sack!" At this their hearts failed them, and they

*selves before him*, thereby unwittingly fulfilling the prediction of Joseph's dream (v. 9; see 37.5-11 n.). **9-14:** The charge of espionage was natural, for Egypt's frontier, facing Canaan, was vulnerable to attack (Ex.1.10). **15-17:** The "testing" involved not only the verification of the brothers' words but also a discipline of suffering which would purge the evil of their hearts (compare v. 21). **By the life of Pharaoh**, an oath in the name of Pharaoh, who was revered as divine in Egypt. **21-22:** Once again the brothers have to announce to their father that misfortune has befallen one of his sons (compare ch. 37). Though they do not yet recognize Joseph, the similarity of the two situations evokes a feeling of guilt for their former behavior. **28:** They sense that divine retribution is behind the mysterious events. **38:** *Sheol*, see 37.35 n.

### *Joseph's brothers return to Egypt*

turned trembling to one another, saying, "What is this that God has done to us?"

29 When they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had befallen them, saying,<sup>30</sup> "The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly to us, and took us to be spies of the land.<sup>31</sup> But we said to him, 'We are honest men, we are not spies;<sup>32</sup> we are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.'<sup>33</sup> Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, 'By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, and take grain for the famine of your households, and go your way.<sup>34</sup> Bring your youngest brother to me; then I shall know that you are not spies but honest men, and I will deliver to you your brother, and you shall trade in the land.'<sup>35</sup>

35 As they emptied their sacks, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were dismayed.<sup>36</sup> And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin; all this has come upon me."

**37** Then Reuben said to his father, "Slay my two sons if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you."<sup>38</sup> But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he only is left. If harm should befall him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol."

**43** Now the famine was severe in the land.<sup>2</sup> And when they had eaten the grain which they had brought from Egypt, their father said

to them, "Go again, buy us a little food."<sup>3</sup> But Judah said to him, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.'<sup>4</sup> If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food;<sup>5</sup> but if you will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.'<sup>6</sup> Israel said, "Why did you treat me so ill as to tell the man that you had another brother?"<sup>7</sup> They replied, "The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' What we told him was in answer to these questions; could we in any way know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"<sup>8</sup>

**8** And Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones.<sup>9</sup> I will be surety for him; of my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame for ever;<sup>10</sup> for if we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice."

**11** Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man a present, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds.<sup>12</sup> Take double the money with you; carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight.<sup>13</sup> Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man;<sup>14</sup> may God Almighty<sup>15</sup> grant you mercy before the man, that he may send back your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."<sup>16</sup> So the men took the present, and they took double

p. Heb El Shaddai

**43.1-34: The second journey to Egypt.** **1-2:** Simeon, left as a hostage in Egypt (vv. 14,23), is apparently forgotten, for the brothers return only when more grain is needed. **3-7:** 42.29-34. **13: God Almighty**, see 17.1 n.

the money with them, and Benjamin; and they arose and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon." 17 The man did as Joseph bade him, and brought the men to Joseph's house. 18 And the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house, and they said, "It is because of the money, which was replaced in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may seek occasion against us and fall upon us, to make slaves of us and seize our asses." 19 So they went up to the steward of Joseph's house, and spoke with him at the door of the house, 20 and said, "Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food; 21 and when we came to the lodging place we opened our sacks, and there was every man's money in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it again with us, 22 and we have brought other money down in our hand to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." 23 He replied, "Rest assured, do not be afraid; your God and the God of your father must have put treasure in your sacks for you; I received your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them. 24 And when the man had brought the men into Joseph's house, and given them water, and they had washed their feet, and when he had given their asses provender, 25 they made ready the present for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they should eat bread there.

26 When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present which they had with them, and bowed down to him to the ground.

23: The steward's words again stress the fundamental motif of the story: the working of divine providence. 29-30: Joseph's heart *yearned* for Benjamin, his only full brother through Rachel.

32: Laws of ritual purity required that Egyptians eat apart from foreigners.

44.1-34: Joseph puts his brothers to a final test. 1-2: The reference to the money harks back to the same motif in 42.25-28; here the real object of interest is Joseph's cup (v. 5). 5: The

### Joseph meets Benjamin

27 And he inquired about their welfare, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" 28 They said, "Your servant our father is well, he is still alive." And they bowed their heads and made obeisance. 29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!" 30 Then Joseph made haste, for his heart yearned for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his chamber and wept there. 31 Then he washed his face and came out; and controlling himself he said, "Let food be served." 32 They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. 33 And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked at one another in amazement. 34 Portions were taken to them from Joseph's table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

44 Then he commanded the steward of his house, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack, 2 and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph told him. 3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their asses. 4 When they had gone but a short distance from the city, Joseph said to his steward, "Up, follow after the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you returned evil for good? Why have you

### Joseph's cup found

stolen my silver cup?<sup>q</sup> 5 Is it not from this that my lord drinks, and by this that he divines? You have done wrong in so doing."

6 When he overtook them, he spoke to them these words. 7 They said to him, "Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants that they should do such a thing! 8 Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan; how then should we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? 9 With whomever of your servants it be found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves." 10 He said, "Let it be as you say: he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and the rest of you shall be blameless." 11 Then every man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and every man opened his sack. 12 And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13 Then they rent their clothes, and every man loaded his ass, and they returned to the city.

14 When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there; and they fell before him to the ground. 15 Joseph said to them, "What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed divine?" 16 And Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants; behold, we are my lord's slaves, both we and he also in whose hand the cup has been found." 17 But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so! Only the man in whose

hand the cup was found shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father."

18 Then Judah went up to him and said, "O my lord, let your servant, I pray you, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant; for you are like Pharaoh himself. 19 My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father, or a brother?' 20 And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children; and his father loves him.' 21 Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes upon him.' 22 We said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' 23 Then you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.' 24 When we went back to your servant my father we told him the words of my lord. 25 And when our father said, 'Go again, buy us a little food,' 26 we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother goes with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' 27 Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; 28 one left me, and I said, Surely he has been torn to pieces; and I have never seen him since. 29 If you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to Sheol.' 30 Now therefore, when

<sup>q</sup> Gk Compare Vg; Heb lacks *Why have you stolen my silver cup?*

cup was a sacred vessel used for divination, i.e. for magical prediction by observing the effects created when objects were thrown into the water contained therein. 15: Having been initiated into Egyptian wisdom, Joseph can claim to practice divination, by which means the theft was discovered. 16: Since the brothers acknowledge their collective guilt, Judah's words may refer not only to the theft but to their treatment of Joseph in his youth. 17: Joseph tests his brothers to see whether, as in his case once, they will let Benjamin go into slavery and return to their father to justify the loss of another of his sons. 18-34: Judah's speech, one of the finest prose pieces from Israel's early tradition, summarizes and epitomizes the whole sequence of events. 20: The tragedy of Joseph's supposed death heightens the pathos; for of Jacob's two sons by Rachel, only Benjamin is left and Jacob's life is bound up in the lad's life (v. 30).

I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, then, as his life is bound up in the lad's life,<sup>31</sup> when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will die; and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol.<sup>32</sup> For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame in the sight of my father all my life.'<sup>33</sup> Now therefore, let your servant, I pray you, remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord; and let the lad go back with his brothers.<sup>34</sup> For how can I go back to my father if the lad is not with me? I fear to see the evil that would come upon my father.'

**45** Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him; and he cried, "Make every one go out from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.<sup>2</sup> And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it.<sup>3</sup> And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.

4 So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.<sup>5</sup> And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.<sup>6</sup> For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing

### Joseph makes himself known

nor harvest.<sup>7</sup> And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.<sup>8</sup> So it was not you who sent me here, but God; and he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.<sup>9</sup> Make haste and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry;<sup>10</sup> you shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have;<sup>11</sup> and there I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come; lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty.'<sup>12</sup> And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you.<sup>13</sup> You must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Make haste and bring my father down here."<sup>14</sup> Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.<sup>15</sup> And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

16 When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, "Joseph's brothers have come," it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well.<sup>17</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go back to the land of Canaan;<sup>18</sup> and take your father and your households, and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall

**45.1-28: Joseph makes himself known to his brothers. 7-8:** This passage sets forth the central theme of the Joseph story: events were directed by God's hand, not by human purposes. God graciously contrives to bring good out of evil; for the brothers, in selling Joseph into slavery, had unwittingly carried out God's will. **7:** Through Joseph God acted to preserve life (v. 5; 50.20), not only the life of famine-stricken Egyptians but also that of a remnant, that is, the family which is the bearer of the promise given to Abraham (12.2-3; 50.24). **8: A father to Pharaoh,** a title of the chief minister (Is.22.21; compare 1 Macc.11.32). **10: The land of Goshen,** the present Wadi Tumilat, a narrow strip of grazing land in the Delta. Since the settlers would be near Joseph, the assumption is that Pharaoh's capital was in the Delta region; this was the case during the Hyksos period (see 41.39-41 n.). **16-20:** According to Egyptian sources, it was not unusual for Pharaoh to permit Asiatics to settle in his country in time of famine.

### Jacob's journey to Egypt

eat the fat of the land.'<sup>19</sup> Command them also, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.<sup>20</sup> Give no thought to your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'

**21** The sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey.<sup>22</sup> To each and all of them he gave festal garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five festal garments.<sup>23</sup> To his father he sent as follows: ten asses loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten sheasses loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey.<sup>24</sup> Then he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the way."<sup>25</sup> So they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob.<sup>26</sup> And they told him, "Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." And his heart fainted, for he did not believe them.<sup>27</sup> But when they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived;<sup>28</sup> and Israel said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive; I will go and see him before I die."

**46** So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.<sup>2</sup> And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here am I."<sup>3</sup> Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father;

do not be afraid to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation.<sup>4</sup> I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again; and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."<sup>5</sup> Then Jacob set out from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.<sup>6</sup> They also took their cattle and their goods, which they had gained in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him,<sup>7</sup> his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters; all his offspring he brought with him into Egypt.

8 Now these are the names of the descendants of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons. Reuben, Jacob's first-born,<sup>9</sup> and the sons of Reuben: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.<sup>10</sup> The sons of Simeon: Jemu'-el, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanitish woman.

<sup>11</sup> The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merar'i.<sup>12</sup> The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan); and the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.<sup>13</sup> The sons of Is'sachar: Tola, Puvah, Iob, and Shimron.<sup>14</sup> The sons of Zeb'ulun: Sered, Elon, and Jah'leel<sup>15</sup> (these are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, together with his daughter Dinah; altogether his sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three).

<sup>16</sup> The sons of Gad: Ziph'ion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Aro'di, and Are'l'i.<sup>17</sup> The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah,

r Compare Gk Vg: Heb you are commanded

**46.1-27: Jacob's migration to Egypt. 1:** From Hebron (37.14) Jacob went first to Beer-sheba, the shrine associated with Isaac (26.23-25; 28.10). **The God of your father,** see 26.24 n. **2-4:** The descent into Egypt, which was to have decisive significance for Israel's history, was prompted not merely by Jacob's desire to see his long-lost son (45.28) but by divine revelation in *visions of the night*. **3:** As on a previous occasion (28.13-15), before Jacob left the land of the promise to go to a foreign land God renewed his promise to make him a *great nation* (12.2; 18.18) in Egypt (Ex.1.7). **4:** Only Jacob's corpse was returned from Egypt (50.4-14). However, according to Hebraic corporate thinking, the words *bring you up again* were fulfilled, for the father lived on in the person of his sons. **8-27:** This section, from a separate priestly tradition, contains a list of Jacob's descendants, based on the traditional number seventy (v. 27; Ex.1.5; Dt.10.22). Most

Ishvi, Beri'ah, with Serah their sister. And the sons of Beri'ah: Heber and Mal'chi-el<sup>18</sup> (these are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to Jacob—sixteen persons).<sup>19</sup> The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin.<sup>20</sup> And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manas'seh and E'phraim, whom As'enath, the daughter of Poti'phera the priest of On, bore to him.<sup>21</sup> And the sons of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Na'amani, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard<sup>22</sup> (these are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob—fourteen persons in all).<sup>23</sup> The sons of Dan: Hushim.<sup>24</sup> The sons of Naph'tali: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem<sup>25</sup> (these are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and these she bore to Jacob—seven persons in all).<sup>26</sup> All the persons belonging to Jacob who came into Egypt, who were his own offspring, not including Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all;<sup>27</sup> and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob, that came into Egypt, were seventy.

28 He sent Judah before him to Joseph, to appear<sup>28</sup> before him in Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. 29 Then Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.<sup>30</sup> Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive."<sup>31</sup> Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him,

of the names of the ancestral clan leaders are found in the priestly list in Num. ch. 26. 27: *Seventy*, the author includes Joseph and his two sons born in Egypt, as well as Jacob himself.

46.28-47.12: *Jacob and his sons settle in Egypt*. 28: Judah is sent ahead because he is the chief spokesman (37.26; 43.3-10; 44.18-34). *Goshen*, see 45.10 n. 31-34: Desiring to have his relatives near him in the Delta, Joseph advised his brothers to testify that they were shepherds; since this occupation was abominable to Egyptians in the interior (v. 34), Pharaoh would see the wisdom of setting them apart in the land of Goshen. 47.1-6: Egyptian sources testify that the pharaohs possessed large herds and gave much attention to cattle-breeding. 7-12: According to this

### *Jacob settles in Goshen*

'My brothers and my father's household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me;<sup>32</sup> and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.'<sup>33</sup> When Pharaoh calls you, and says, 'What is your occupation?'<sup>34</sup> you shall say, 'Your servants have been keepers of cattle from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,' in order that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.'

47 So Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, "My father and my brothers, with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; they are now in the land of Goshen."<sup>2</sup> And from among his brothers he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh.<sup>3</sup> Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, as our fathers were."<sup>4</sup> They said to Pharaoh, "We have come to sojourn in the land; for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan; and now, we pray you, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen."<sup>5</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you.<sup>6</sup> The land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen; and if you know any able men among them, put them in charge of my cattle."

7 Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.<sup>8</sup> And

<sup>2</sup> Sam Syr Compare Gk Vg: Heb to show the way

### *Joseph secures all the land for Pharaoh*

Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many are the days of the years of your life?"<sup>9</sup> And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my sojourning are a hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning."<sup>10</sup> And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the presence of Pharaoh.<sup>11</sup> Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Ramesses, as Pharaoh had commanded.<sup>12</sup> And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their dependents.

13 Now there was no food in all the land; for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished by reason of the famine.<sup>14</sup> And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.<sup>15</sup> And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph, and said, "Give us food; why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone."<sup>16</sup> And Joseph answered, "Give your cattle, and I will give you food in exchange for your cattle, if your money is gone."<sup>17</sup> So they brought their cattle to Joseph; and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the herds, and

priestly tradition, *Jacob blessed Pharaoh*, presumably with the blessing of welfare and long life.

<sup>9</sup>: *The years of my sojourning*, see 17.8 n. Jacob's statement that his years had been *few and evil* reflects the view that there was an increasing shortening and troubling of man's life (see 5.4-32 n.). <sup>11</sup>: *The land of Rameses* (= Goshen), was named after Rameses II (see Ex.1.8,11 n.).

47.13-26: *Joseph's agrarian program*, involving a change in the Egyptian system of land-tenure. 14: First, the people spent all their money for grain (compare 41.56). 15-17: Next, in their desperation they exchanged all their cattle for food. 18-19: Finally, they offered themselves and their lands to Pharaoh. 20-26: The result was that former land-owners became tenants of Pharaoh, farming the land for him and paying him one-fifth of the produce as tax (v. 24). Temple lands were excepted (v. 22). Egyptian sources testify that such a feudalistic system was introduced between 1700-1500 B.C. 25: The narrator does not intend to sanction absolutism but only to praise Joseph for his wisdom in delivering the people.

Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt, and it stands to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; the land of the priests alone did not become Pharaoh's.

27 Thus Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen; and they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly. <sup>28</sup> And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were a hundred and forty-seven years.

29 And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh, and promise to deal loyally and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, <sup>30</sup> but let me lie with my fathers; carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place." He answered, "I will do as you have said." <sup>31</sup> And he said, "Swear to me"; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed.

**48** After this Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is ill"; so he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. <sup>2</sup> And it was told to Jacob, "Your son Joseph has come to you"; then Israel summoned his strength, and sat up in bed. <sup>3</sup> And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty" appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, <sup>4</sup> and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful, and multiply you, and I will make of

you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.' <sup>5</sup> And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. <sup>6</sup> And the offspring born to you after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. <sup>7</sup> For when I came from Padan, Rachel to my sorrow died in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

8 When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" <sup>9</sup> Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me, I pray you, that I may bless them." <sup>10</sup> Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him; and he kissed them and embraced them. <sup>11</sup> And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face; and lo, God has let me see your children also." <sup>12</sup> Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. <sup>13</sup> And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. <sup>14</sup> And Israel stretched out

*u* Heb *El Shaddai*

**47.27–48.22: Jacob's adoption and blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh.** **29:** Put your hand under my thigh, see 24.2 n. **31:** Joseph binds himself by oath to bury Jacob in his fathers' burying place, i.e. Machpelah (ch. 23; 49.29–30; 50.12–13). **Jacob bowed himself upon the head of his bed** (compare Heb.11.21), a gesture of reverence or gratitude (1 Kg.1.47). **48.3–4:** Jacob's adoption and blessing of Joseph's two sons are based on the divine promise given at Luz, or Bethel (35.9–13). **5–6:** By adopting his grandsons, Jacob gives them status equal to his eldest sons, Reuben and Simeon. The narrative accounts for the circumstance that "the house of Joseph" (Jos.17.17; 18.5; Jg.1.23,35) came to be divided into two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim, each claiming full rank with the other tribes (49.22–26). **7:** 35.16–20. *Paddan-aram*, see 11.31 n. **12:** An adoption ceremony may be suggested by the boys' having been between or on Jacob's knees. **13–14:** Joseph brings Manasseh, his first-born, for the blessing of the right hand, but Jacob crosses his hands and puts his right hand on Ephraim, thereby giving him precedence. The narrator appeals to the ancient belief in the efficacy of the death-bed blessing (see 27.4 n.) to account for two facts: (1) Manasseh and Ephraim, located in the central hill country, were powerful tribes in early Israelite history; (2) the latter, during the period of the Judges and the

his right hand and laid it upon the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand upon the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands, for Manasseh was the first-born. <sup>15</sup> And he blessed Joseph, and said,

"The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has led me all my life long to this day,

**16** the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and in them let my name be perpetuated, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

17 When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; and he took his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. <sup>18</sup> And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father; for this one is the first-born; put your right hand upon his head." <sup>19</sup> But his father refused, and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; nevertheless his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." <sup>20</sup> So he blessed them that day, saying,

"By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying,

'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh'";

and thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. <sup>21</sup> Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and will bring you again to the land of your fathers. <sup>22</sup> Moreover I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope" which I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow."

**49** Then Jacob called his sons, and said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in days to come.

**2** Assemble and hear, O sons of Jacob, and hearken to Israel your father.

**3** Reuben, you are my first-born, my might, and the first fruits of my strength, pre-eminent in pride and pre-eminent in power.

**4** Unstable as water, you shall not have pre-eminence because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it—you went up to my couch!

**5** Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords.

*v* Heb *shekem*, shoulder *w* Gk Syr Tg: Heb *he*

early monarchy, gained pre-eminence over the "first-born" tribe that once ranked first in leadership. **15–16:** Jacob invokes God by a threefold description: the God before whom his fathers walked (17.1; 24.40), who led (lit. "shepherded"; Ps.23.1) him throughout his life, who redeemed him from evil (Is.48.20). *The angel*, see 16.7 n. According to ancient belief, *the name*, that is, the psychic life of the fathers, was to be perpetuated in the two boys. **20:** Another version of the blessing (compare vv. 15–16). *Israel* here refers not to Jacob but to the people (34.7). *As Ephraim and Manasseh*, i.e. as fruitful with offspring as these tribes. **21:** Joseph died in Egypt and his bones were brought back to Canaan (see 46.4 n.). **22:** In Hebrew *one mountain slope* (or "shoulder") is a play on the name Shechem, the important city which lay in the territory of Joseph (see 12.6 n.). *With my sword and with my bow* reflects a different tradition from that in 33.19–20, which reports Jacob's peaceful coming to Shechem, and ch. 34, which describes his protest against his sons' attack upon the city (34.25–30). *Amorites*, see 10.15–20 n.

**49.1–28: Jacob's blessing on his twelve sons.** This poem, apparently dating from the time of David (see vv. 8–12), portrays the character of the tribes in the person of their ancestor (Dt. ch. 33). Although regarded as Jacob's death-bed blessing (v. 28), this is not an altogether adequate description, for the poet sometimes speaks words of censure or even curse (e.g. v. 7). On death-bed blessings, see 27.4 n. **1–2:** The futuristic language, *what shall befall you in days to come*, is relevant to the Judah oracle (vv. 8–12); the other oracles, however, describe chiefly past events or present circumstances. **3–4:** Reuben the first born, whose territory lay east of the

<sup>6</sup> O my soul, come not into their council;  
O my spirit,<sup>x</sup> be not joined to their company;  
for in their anger they slay men,  
and in their wantonness they hamstring oxen.  
<sup>7</sup> Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;  
and their wrath, for it is cruel!  
I will divide them in Jacob  
and scatter them in Israel.  
<sup>8</sup> Judah, your brothers shall praise you;  
your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies;  
your father's sons shall bow down before you.  
<sup>9</sup> Judah is a lion's whelp;  
from the prey, my son, you have gone up.  
He stooped down, he couched as a lion,  
and as a lioness; who dares rouse him up?  
<sup>10</sup> The scepter shall not depart from Judah,  
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,  
until he comes to whom it belongs;<sup>y</sup>  
and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.  
<sup>11</sup> Binding his foal to the vine  
and his ass's colt to the choice vine,

Dead Sea, was once a leading tribe but in early times was overcome by the Moabites (Jg.5.15-16; Dt.33.6). **4:** *Your father's bed*, a reference to the ancestor's act of immorality (35.22), which typifies the tribe's moral weakness and instability. **5-7:** Simeon and Levi are considered together, for they led in the attack against Shechem with *weapons of violence* (34.25-30). Levi, once a full tribe, came to be a priestly class (Ex.32.26-29; Dt.10.8-9). Simeon was eventually absorbed into the tribe of Judah. **8-12:** This oracle reflects a situation, like that in David's time, when Judah had pre-eminence over the tribes. **10:** The first part of the verse portrays Judah as a sovereign; the second part, however, is very obscure (see note *y*). *To whom it belongs* refers to the *scepter*, *the ruler's staff* (Num.24.17). *Until he comes* may mean that after the kingdom of Judah has lasted for an indefinite time there will arise a messianic ruler who will command *the obedience of the peoples* (Is.11.1-9). **11-12:** A picture of the marvelous fertility that will ensue. **13:** Zebulun will have a favorable position, no longer shut up in the interior (Jos.19.10-16) but with access to the Mediterranean Sea. Expansion into Asher's territory is assumed. **14-15:** Issachar is compared to a domesticated beast of burden, contented with a comfortable land and willing to surrender political independence in subservience to the Canaanites. **16-18:** Dan will rise to full tribal prestige by judging (i.e. getting justice for) his people. The Hebrew verb "judge" involves a play on the word *Dan*. The comparison with *a serpent in the way* portrays the insidious warfare of a small tribe in its rise to power. **19:** Gad, settled east of the Jordan just above Reuben, is cited for bravery in repelling Ammonite and desert marauders (Jg. ch. 11). **20:** Asher's land, situated on the coastal strip between Mount Carmel and Phoenicia, was so

*Jacob's blessing on his sons*

he washes his garments in wine  
and his vesture in the blood of grapes;  
<sup>12</sup> his eyes shall be red with wine,  
and his teeth white with milk.  
<sup>13</sup> Zeb'ulun shall dwell at the shore  
of the sea;  
he shall become a haven for ships,  
and his border shall be at Sidon.  
<sup>14</sup> Is'sachar is a strong ass,  
crouching between the sheep-folds;  
<sup>15</sup> he saw that a resting place was good,  
and that the land was pleasant;  
so he bowed his shoulder to bear,  
and became a slave at forced labor.  
<sup>16</sup> Dan shall judge his people  
as one of the tribes of Israel.  
<sup>17</sup> Dan shall be a serpent in the way,  
a viper by the path,  
that bites the horse's heels  
so that his rider falls backward.  
<sup>18</sup> I wait for thy salvation, O LORD.  
<sup>19</sup> Raiders<sup>z</sup> shall raid Gad,  
but he shall raid at their heels.  
<sup>20</sup> Asher's food shall be rich,  
and he shall yield royal dainties.

<sup>x</sup> Or *glory*   <sup>y</sup> Syr Compare Tg: Heb *until Shiloh comes or until he comes to Shiloh*   <sup>z</sup> Heb *gedud, a raiding troop*

*The death of Jacob*

<sup>21</sup> Naph'tali is a hind let loose,  
that bears comely fawns.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>22</sup> Joseph is a fruitful bough,  
a fruitful bough by a spring;  
his branches run over the wall.  
<sup>23</sup> The archers fiercely attacked him,  
shot at him, and harassed him sorely;  
<sup>24</sup> yet his bow remained unmoved,  
his arms <sup>b</sup> were made agile  
by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob  
(by the name of the Shepherd,  
the Rock of Israel),  
<sup>25</sup> by the God of your father who will help you,  
by God Almighty<sup>u</sup> who will bless you  
with blessings of heaven above,  
blessings of the deep that couches beneath,  
blessings of the breasts and of the womb.  
<sup>26</sup> The blessings of your father  
are mighty beyond the blessings  
of the eternal mountains,<sup>c</sup>  
the bounties of the everlasting hills;  
may they be on the head of Joseph,  
and on the brow of him who was separate from his brothers.  
<sup>27</sup> Benjamin is a ravenous wolf,  
in the morning devouring the prey,  
and at even dividing the spoil."

28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel; and this is what their father said to them as he blessed them, blessing

rich that it yielded *royal dainties* (Dt.33.24). **21:** The comparison of Naphtali to *a hind let loose* suggests the idea of freedom, agility, and vitality (compare Dt.33.23). **22-26:** A picture of the prosperity and strength of the populous tribe of Joseph, apparently harking back to a time before "the house of Joseph" was divided into the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, as in Dt.33.13-17 (see Gen. ch. 48). **24:** *The Mighty One of Jacob*, a title of "the God of the fathers" (v. 25a; Is.1.24; 49.26). **25:** *God Almighty*, see 17.1 n. *Blessings of heaven*, i.e. rain, dew, sun. *The deep that couches beneath* (Dt.33.13), an allusion to the subterranean ocean (see 1.2,6), believed to be the source of fertility (see 2.6 n.). **26:** The ancestral blessing surpasses even the majesty and fertility of the hills of Ephraim. *Separate*, i.e. set apart by prestige and position.

**49.29-50.26:** *The death of Jacob and the final days of Joseph.* **30-32:** *Machpelah*, see ch. 23. **50.2-3:** Embalming, an ancient Egyptian custom, was necessary if Jacob's body was to be carried back to Canaan. Egyptians are said to have mourned for a king seventy-two days; thus, out of respect for Joseph, Jacob was given a royal funeral. **5:** According to this fragment

each with the blessing suitable to him. **29:** Then he charged them, and said to them, "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, <sup>30</sup> in the cave that is in the field at Mach-pe'lah, to the east of Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place. <sup>31</sup> There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah— <sup>32</sup> the field and the cave that is in it were purchased from the Hittites." <sup>33</sup> When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed, and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

**50** Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed him. **2** And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel; **3** forty days were required for it, for so many are required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days.

**4** And when the days of weeping for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, <sup>5</sup> My father made me swear, saying, 'I am about to die: in my tomb which I hewed out for myself in the land of Canaan, there shall you

<sup>a</sup> Or *who gives beautiful words*

<sup>b</sup> Heb *the arms of his hands*

<sup>c</sup> Heb *El Shaddai*

<sup>u</sup> Compare Gk: Heb *of my progenitors to*

bury me.' Now therefore let me go up, I pray you, and bury my father; then I will return." <sup>6</sup> And Pharaoh answered, "Go up, and bury your father, as he made you swear." <sup>7</sup> So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, <sup>8</sup> as well as all the household of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's household; only their children, their flocks, and their herds were left in the land of Goshen. <sup>9</sup> And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen; it was a very great company. <sup>10</sup> When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a very great and sorrowful lamentation; and he made a mourning for his father seven days. <sup>11</sup> When the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning on the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians." Therefore the place was named A'bel-mizraim; <sup>d</sup> it is beyond the Jordan. <sup>12</sup> Thus his sons did for him as he had commanded them; <sup>13</sup> for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field at Mach-pe'lah, to the east of Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite, to possess as a burying place. <sup>14</sup> After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father.

15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and

pay us back for all the evil which we did to him." <sup>16</sup> So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died, <sup>17</sup> 'Say to Joseph, Forgive, I pray you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.' And now, we pray you, forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. <sup>18</sup> His brothers also came and fell down before him, and said, "Behold, we are your servants." <sup>19</sup> But Joseph said to them, "Fear not, for am I in the place of God?" <sup>20</sup> As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. <sup>21</sup> So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he reassured them and comforted them.

22 So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's house; and Joseph lived a hundred and ten years. <sup>23</sup> And Joseph saw E'phraim's children of the third generation; the children also of Machir the son of Manas'seh were born upon Joseph's knees. <sup>24</sup> And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die; but God will visit you, and bring you up out of this land to the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." <sup>25</sup> Then Joseph took an oath of the sons of Israel, saying, "God will visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." <sup>26</sup> So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

<sup>d</sup> That is meadow (or mourning) of Egypt

of tradition, Jacob hewed out a tomb for himself east of the Jordan (v. 10) and was buried there rather than at Machpelah (vv. 12-13). This explains why the funeral cortege detoured to Transjordan (vv. 10-11), though a main road led from Egypt along the coast to Beer-sheba. **18:** A recapitulation of the motif introduced at the beginning of the Joseph story (see 37.5-11 n.). **19-20:** The heart and climax of the Joseph story: Joseph asserts that only God can forgive and heal man's guilt, and he testifies to God's overruling providence which has already turned man's evil purposes to a good end (45.4-7). **23:** The children of *Machir*, Joseph's grandson, were *born upon his knees*, i.e. adopted as his descendants. Machir was the ancestor of a warlike clan of Manasseh which laid claim to Gilead (Num.32.39-40; Dt.3.15; Jg.5.14). **24:** An anticipation of the Exodus, based on the promise to the fathers. **25-26:** See Ex.13.19. According to tradition, Joseph was buried in Shechem (Jos.24.32; compare Gen.33.19; Acts 7.16).

## EXODUS

In Israel's historical traditions the crucial event is the Exodus. Although Egyptian records make no reference to this border incident, there can be no doubt that Israel's faith rests upon an actual historical occurrence. Various lines of evidence point to the period of the 19th Dynasty (about 1350-1200 B.C.) as the most probable historical setting (see Ex.1.8 n.). The story unfolds against the background of Egyptian imperialism which motivated ambitious pharaohs to use Hebrew slaves as pawns in their scheme of world politics (see "Survey of . . . Bible Lands," § 7).

The book of Exodus bears witness to the religious meaning of what took place; namely, God's action to deliver a people from bondage and to bind them to himself in covenant. The book discloses an interweaving of traditions which preserve both the original Mosaic tradition and the interpretations of subsequent generations (see Introduction to Pentateuch). It falls into two major sections: (1) Israel's emancipation from Egyptian bondage and the pilgrimage to Sinai (chs. 1-18) and (2) Israel's sojourn at Sinai, where the covenant was made and the laws governing life and worship were promulgated (chs. 19-40).

At the center of the event stood Moses who was called to be the agent in delivering Israel from slavery, to be the interpreter of God's redemptive work, and to be the mediator of the covenant. Each tradition portrays him in a somewhat different light, but the whole account testifies to his massive influence upon subsequent history. Indeed, it was Moses who laid down the spiritual foundations of Israel's faith upon which later generations built.

**T**HESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: <sup>2</sup> Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, <sup>3</sup> Is'sachar, Zeb'u'lun, and Benjamin, <sup>4</sup> Dan and Naph'tali, Gad and Asher. <sup>5</sup> All the offspring of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt. <sup>6</sup> Then Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all that generation. <sup>7</sup> But the descendants of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong; so that the land was filled with them.

**8** Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup> And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. <sup>10</sup> Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war befall us, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." <sup>11</sup> Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens; and they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Ra'am'ses. <sup>12</sup> But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and

**1.1-22: Israel's bondage in Egypt.** In spite of oppression, Abraham's descendants multiplied and prospered, in fulfilment of the divine promise (Gen.12.2; 15.5). **1-7:** Gen.35.23-26; 50.26. **5: Seventy persons,** Gen.46.8-27; Dt.10.22. The book of Exodus reflects the memory of decisive events with which Israel as a people identified itself in faith. The twelve-tribe confederacy was formed later and embraced tribes that had not been in Egypt (Jos. ch. 24). **6:** Over four centuries elapsed since Joseph's death (12.40; compare Gen.15.13). **7:** The promise concerning Abraham's numerous posterity was being fulfilled (Gen.17.1-8; see Ex.12.37 n.). **The land**, see Gen.45.10 n.; 47.11 n. **8:** Probably the allusion is to the new regime at the beginning of the 19th Dynasty under Seti I (1308-1290 B.C.) and Rameses II (1290-1224 B.C.). Hoping to regain Egypt's lost Asiatic empire, the pharaohs moved their capital from Thebes, where it had been during the 18th Dynasty, to the Delta. **9-10:** The presence of the Hebrews on Egypt's frontier was regarded as a security risk. **11: Store cities**, an allusion to the fortification of the area. The new capital, *Raam'ses* or *Rameses* (Zoan; Ps.78.12), was the former Hyksos capital (Avaris or Tanis) of Joseph's time (see Gen.45.10 n.; Num.13.22). As in the case of the pyramids, the work was carried out with the corvée (compare 1 Kg.5.13). **15: Hebrew**, an older and broader term