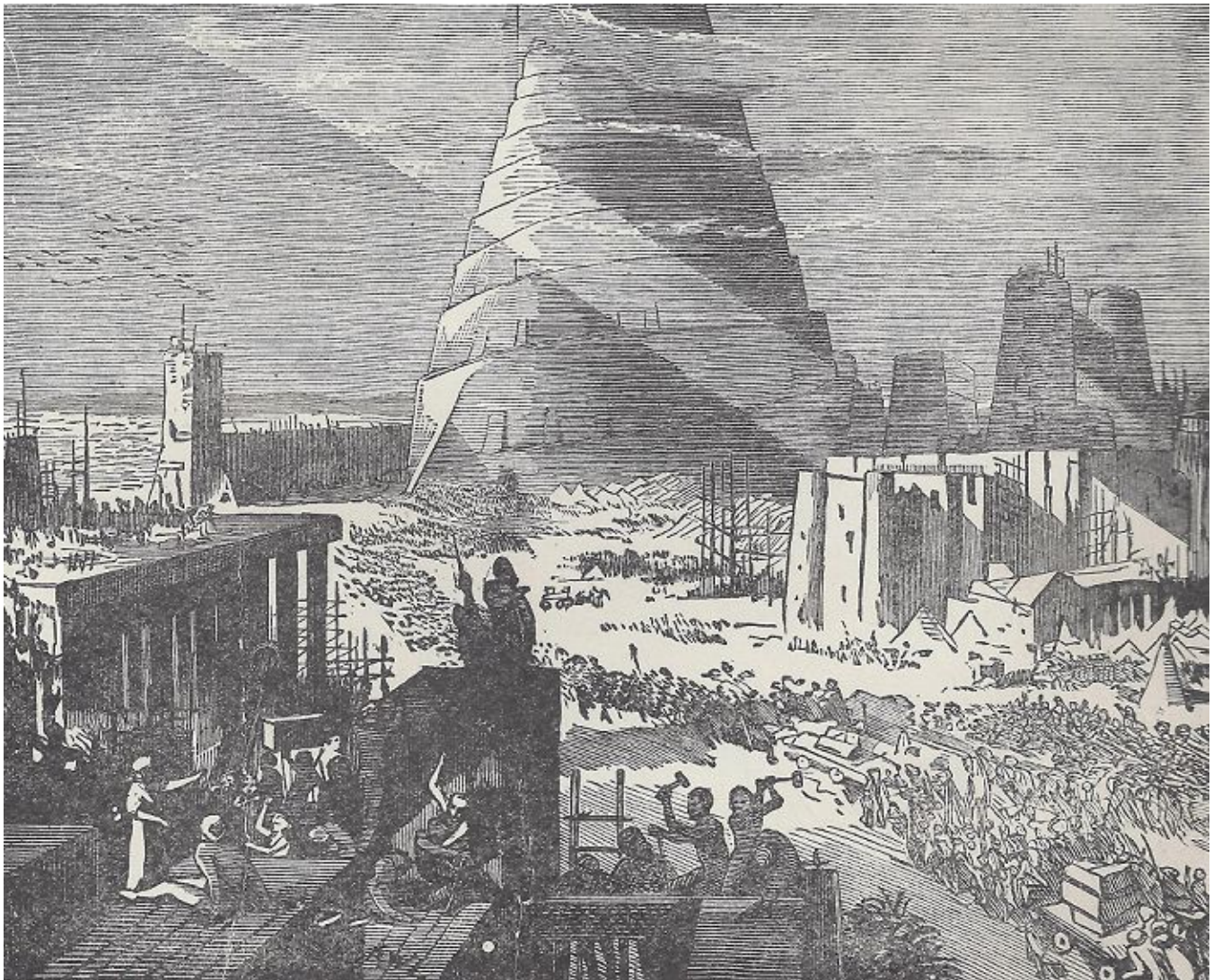


The Sacred History of the Jews

Part I: Creation and the Patriarchal Period



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Student Handouts
World History Workbook Series

Introduction

This workbook gives an overview of earliest Jewish history, covering the time period from the Judeo-Christian date for the world's creation to the time the ancient Jews spent in Egypt. This includes the patriarchal age, when the core beliefs and practices of Judaism crystallized. The term *patriarch* refers to the male leader of a family or tribe. Technically, Abraham is held to have been the first patriarch of the Jews, the other two being his son, Isaac, and grandson, Jacob.

The text of this workbook combines knowledge from the historical and

archaeological record as well as biblical accounts of events. Although adherents to Judeo-Christian faiths may find this booklet useful in religious instruction, it is not designed as a book to be used for the purpose of indoctrination or instruction. This workbook is principally aimed at those students raised within other ideological systems, and is designed to familiarize readers with the motifs, stories, and beliefs that permeate so much of western civilization's culture, history, art, and literature. Biblical dates for births and deaths are left unquestioned, while supplemental information is included where appropriate.

Sacred History of the Ancient Jews: The Patriarchal Period

Adam and Eve

The sacred history of the Jewish people begins with an account of the creation of the world and of humankind by a single god. This god's name is Yahweh (often misrepresented as "Jehovah"), although it is considered by many Jews to be profane to speak or write this name; even the name "God" is often written as "G-d" by many Jews today.

The Bible assigns no date for these events, but modern Jewish rabbis place this creation in the year commonly known as 3761 B.C.E. The Bible does not attempt to furnish any system of chronology other than that God created the earth in six days, and rested on the seventh day. It teaches simply that the

world and humankind were created by God, for a definite purpose, and that the human race is descended from one original pair—the first man and the first woman created by God—Adam and Eve.

1. **According to the Bible, the earth was created in how many days?**
 - a. 4
 - b. 5
 - c. 6
 - d. 7

Adam was created first. Eve was created later, using one of Adam's ribs, as a companion for him. There are several popular Jewish stories which list a woman named Lilith as Adam's first wife, stating that Lilith was created at the same time as Adam, but left the Garden

of Eden because she refused to be subservient to him. However, these Lilith legends date to the Middle Ages and have had a moot impact in the development of mainstream Judeo-Christian beliefs regarding creation.

2. Who was created from Adam’s rib?

- a. Beelzebub
- b. Eve
- c. Lilith
- d. Rachel

According to religious tradition, the human race is believed to have begun its existence in Asia. The most popular location for the Garden of Eden is in some portion of the vast region lying between the mountains in which the Amoo and the Indus rivers take their rise, on the east, and the mountains in which rise the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers, on the west.

It was in this delightful and fertile land that the great religious trial of humankind’s obedience, and its fatal surrender to evil, occurred. Tempted into eating forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil by a serpent, Adam and Eve committed the first sin. The identity of this fruit remains unknown, but it is commonly depicted as an apple.

Driven from this Eden, the couple was condemned to painful and arduous labor, as the condition of their existence. Hitherto, their labor had been pleasant. A similar story to that of Adam and Eve can be found in the Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, dated to the 18th century B.C.E., with characters named Enkidu and Shamhat.

3. The Garden of Eden is believed to have existed where?

- a. Africa
- b. Asia
- c. Europe
- d. Siberia

4. The forbidden fruit was located on what tree?

Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. The first led an agricultural (farming), and the latter a pastoral (shepherding) life—two modes of existence which are thus shown to be humanity’s oldest, after hunting and gathering. Becoming jealous of what was perceived as the greater purity of Abel’s life, Cain slew him, and thus became biblical history’s first recorded murderer.

Upon hearing his sentence of punishment from the lips of God, Cain became an exile with his family, and wandered into the country to the east of Eden. Here Cain built the first city, which he called “Enoch,” after his firstborn. Cain had a numerous posterity, to whom the Bible attributes the invention of the industrial arts and music.

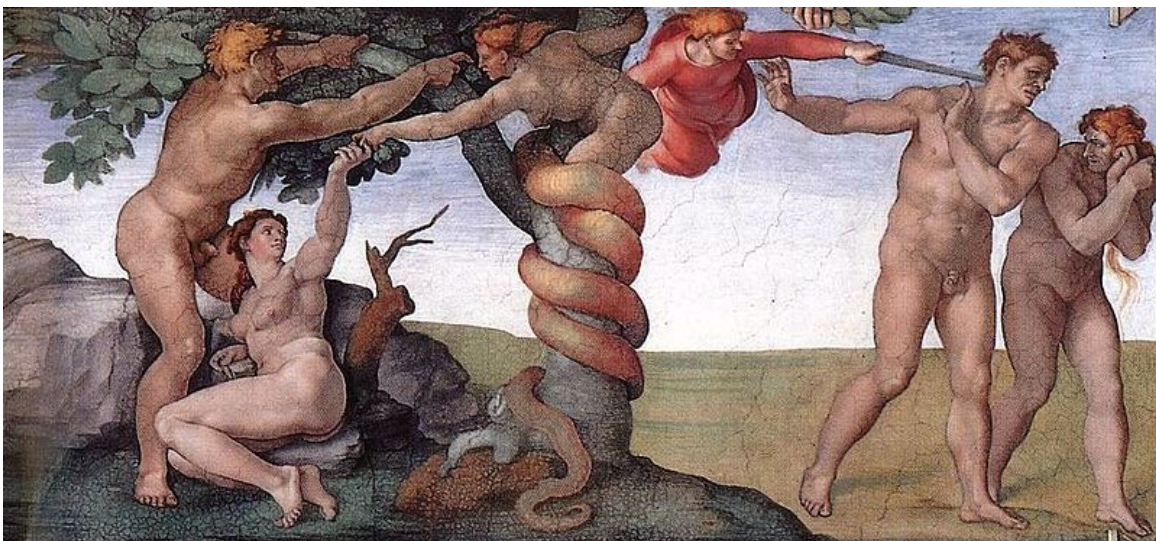
5. Why do you suppose that a pastoral life (shepherding) was considered to be a more pure profession than agriculture (farming) at this time?

Eve had additional children who are not mentioned in the Bible, and that these children married one another. Another answer is that while Adam and Eve were created especially and signaled for life in the Garden of Eden, other human beings were created and settled outside of Eden.

6. Why do you suppose that the origin of Cain and Seth's wives is not mentioned in the Bible?

A third son was born to Adam and Eve after the death of Abel. They named him Seth, and he was the patriarch from whom the Hebrews traced their descent. Seth had a numerous family, and according to the biblical account, lived to the age of 912 years. It was through this family that the traditions of the primitive form of Jewish religion were preserved faithfully down to the time of the biblical deluge.

The origin of the wives of Cain and Abel is a question that is answered largely through conjecture and speculation. Some argue that Adam and



Adam and Eve's fall from grace as depicted by Michelangelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Noah

The eighth in descent from Seth was Noah, whose family retained the monotheistic worship of one God.

According to the Bible, the world had grown desperately wicked, and people had given themselves over to vice of all kinds. So terrible had the condition of the world become, that we are told that “it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.”

To purge the world of its wickedness, God resolved to destroy every living thing upon it with the exception of a certain number of each kind which he designed for the reproduction of their various species.

7. monotheism:

- a. ancient religious rite
- b. belief in multiple gods
- c. belief in one god
- d. disease spread by kissing

“Noah,” we are told, “was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” In consequence of this, Noah was exempted from the general destruction, together with his family. Instead, Noah was ordered to prepare an ark, or floating house, of gopher wood, according to a plan revealed to him by God, who informed him of his purpose to bring a flood upon the world.

When the ark was finished, Noah was ordered to enter it with his family, and to take with him seven couples of every clean and unclean animal, “two of every sort...of every living thing of all flesh.” Noah obeyed the command, and they “went in male and female of all flesh,

as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in.”

8. Noah was ordered to build an ark made of what type of wood?

- a. gopher
- b. maple
- c. oak
- d. poplar



An Islamic look at Noah's ark, depicted in a 16th-century Mogul miniature.

Then the deluge commenced. “The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights... And the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark went upon the face of the waters... And all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the

mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man; all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.” Historians note that the story of the biblical deluge is similar to a story found in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, in which Utnapishtim is warned by the god Ea (Enki) that the other gods are plotting to cause a massive flood.

9. deluge:

- a. hurricane
- b. immersion
- c. massive rainfall
- d. thunderstorm

10.Noah correlates to a character in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* named ____.

- a. Ea
- b. Enki
- c. Gilgamesh
- d. Utnapishtim

At the end of five months the waters went down, and the ark “rested upon the mountains of Ararat.”

“And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the

month, were the tops of the mountains seen. And it came to pass at the end of the forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made; and he sent forth a raven, which went to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. And he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated off the face of the ground. But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark; for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him, into the ark. And he stayed yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out of the ark. And the dove came into him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off; so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more.”

11.Noah’s ark came to rest on what mountain range?

- a. Alps
- b. Ararat
- c. Himalayas
- d. Pyrenees

12.What type of bird does Noah send forth from the ark to learn whether or not the earth is dry?



"Noah's Sacrifice," a mid-19th-century painting by Irish artist Daniel Maclise.

The earth being dry, Noah, his family, and the creatures that were with him, left the ark. Noah's first act was to build an altar and offer a sacrifice to the Lord, who made a covenant with him and his race to never again destroy all life on earth. Noah, his wife, and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, then resumed the cultivation of the earth. According to the Bible, Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood, and died at the age of nine hundred and fifty years.

13. Who were Noah's three sons?

From the three sons of Noah were descended the races which re-peopled the earth after the deluge. The region in which the sons of Noah settled after leaving the ark traditionally is believed to

be the mountain mass of Little Bokhara and Western Tibet, where the great rivers of Asia, the Indus, the Oxus, and the Jaxartes, take their rise. Some generations later, the descendants of Noah, who had increased with great rapidity, wandered westward, and fixed their dwellings on the great plains watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates, in the country originally called Shinar.

Using the information supplied above regarding the river valleys where people lived, as well as a modern map for reference or tracing, create a map that indicates the route of settlement taken by Noah and his descendants.

Here (an area also known as the Fertile Crescent or Mesopotamia) their pride in their numbers and strength led them to believe that they could baffle even God. According to the Bible, they

began the erection of a city, and of a tower the top of which was to reach to heaven, and so enable them to escape any subsequent deluge that might be sent upon the earth. Many historians believe that the type of structure described in the biblical account is a ziggurat, a stepped pyramid-shaped temple common in ancient Mesopotamia.

Up to this time, religious tradition says that all people spoke a common language. God punished their insolence in attempting to reach heaven with the “Tower of Babylon” by confusing their language. Unable to understand each other, they were compelled to discontinue their work, and to disperse. Each family, or group of families, then carried with it its own new language. This is the Judeo-Christian story of how the world’s various languages came into existence. The unfinished tower was called Babel, or, “confusion,” on account of the confusion of languages which took place there. By this dispersion, the descendants of Noah were scattered over the world.

- 14. Historians have noted that descriptions of the Tower of Babylon match what type of ancient religious structure popular in Mesopotamia?**
- a. cathedral
 - b. chapel
 - c. synagogue
 - d. ziggurat

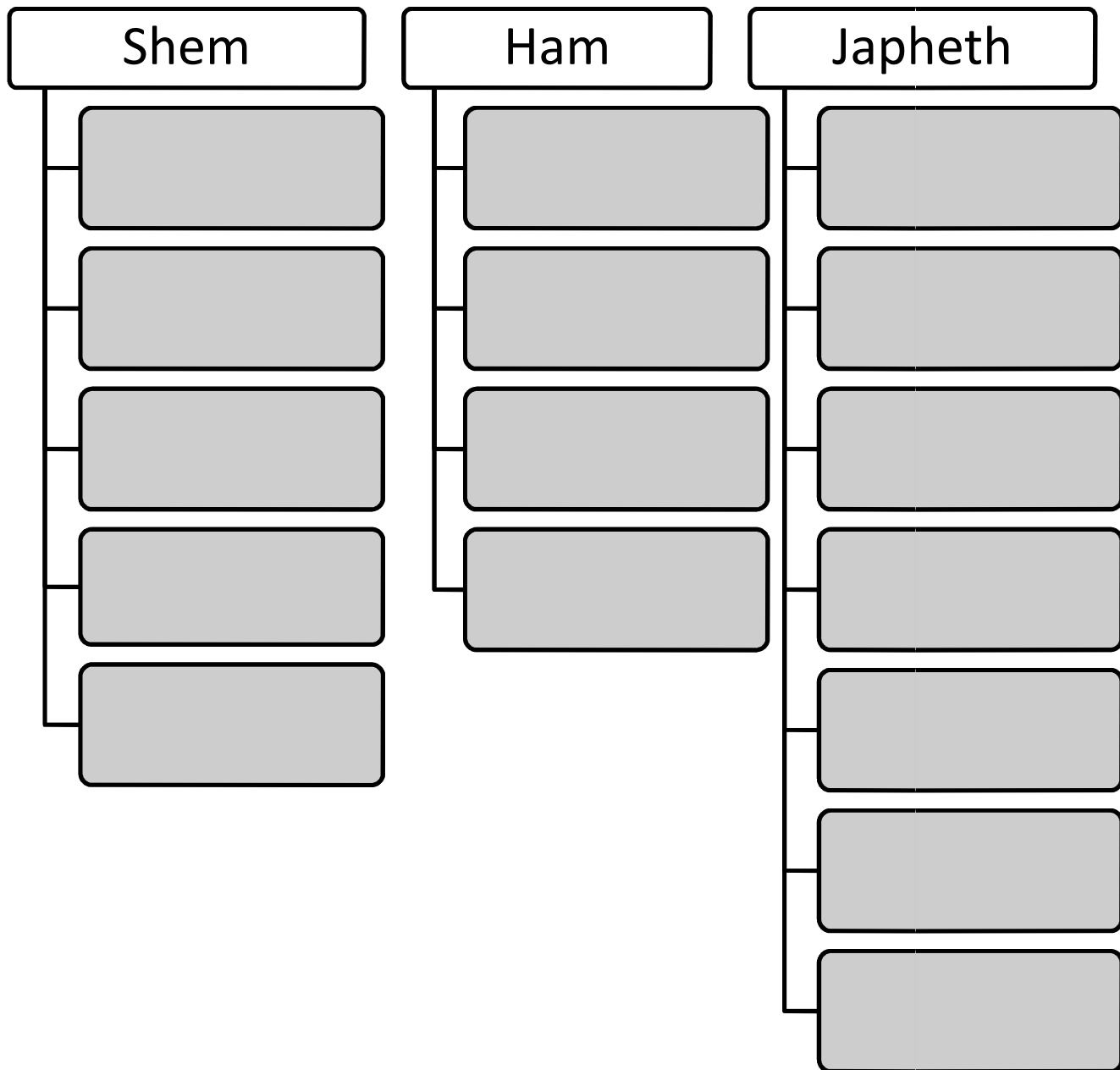
The Bible provides a lineage for each of the world’s peoples then known, linking each group back to a son of Noah.

The descendants of Shem were, among others: the Persians, whose progenitor was Elam; the Assyrians, who were descended from Asshur; the Hebrews and the Arabs, who sprang from Arphaxad; the Lydians, who were the descendants of Lud; and the Arameans, who were descended from Aram. The descendants of Ham included: the Ethiopians, who sprang from Cush; the Egyptians, who sprang from Misraim; the Libyans, who sprang from Phut; and the Phoenicians, who sprang from Canaan. The children of Japheth were: Gomer, from whom were descended the Germans, Scandinavians, and Gauls in Europe, and the Armenians in Asia; Magog, from whom sprang the great Turanian race, usually divided into the Urgo-Finnish and the Dravidian branches; Madai, from whom were descended the Medes; Turbal, from whom sprang the inhabitants of the valleys of the Caucasus; Meshech, the ancestor of the nations of Asia Minor; Tiras, the ancestor of the Thracians; and Javan, the progenitor of the Ionian Greeks.

This enumeration of the world’s peoples and their origins is attributed to Moses, who is credited with writing the Jewish Torah, which corresponds to the first five books of the Christian Old Testament.

- 15. According to tradition, who wrote the Torah?**

Complete the family tree descendants chart below based on the information provided above, noting the grandsons of Noah, and the peoples these grandsons are believed to have created.



Abraham

The tenth patriarch from Noah, in the line of Shem, was Abram, the great ancestor of the Hebrews. His father was Terah, who dwelt in “Ur of the Chaldees” with his family and kindred. Some writers have identified the ancient city of Ur with Offah, in the highlands of Mesopotamia (Aram), which unite the tableland of Armenia to the valley of the Euphrates. In later ages the city was called Edessa by the Greeks.

While living there, Abram was called by God to leave his home and go into a land which God would show him. In consequence of this call, the family of Terah quitted Ur and removed to Haran, or, as it is called in the New Testament, Charran, east of the Euphrates. Here Terah died, after a residence of some years, and here Nahor, his son, pleased with the beauty and fertility of the country, took up his permanent abode.

16. Why did the family of Terah leave Ur?

Meanwhile Abram, as soon as his father was buried, and, it would seem, in obedience to a second call from God, took leave of his brother Nahor, and continued his journey with Sarai, his wife, and his nephew Lot. Abram went out in implicit reliance upon the divine promise, his future home being merely described to him by God as “a land that I will show thee.” Crossing the Euphrates, he separated himself entirely from the land

of his birth. Hence the Canaanites called him the “Hebrew,” “the man who had crossed the river,” “the emigrant from Mesopotamia.”

17. reliance:

- a. confusion
- b. enmity
- c. religion
- d. trust



“Abraham’s Journey from Ur to Canaan” (1850) by the Hungarian artist József Molnár.

Passing through the Syrian desert, Abram seems to have tarried a while at Damascus, which was even then a city. Here he appears to have met his faithful servant Eliezer, whom he made “steward of his house.” From Damascus he journeyed farther south, crossed the Jordan and entered the “Promised Land,” making his first halt in the Valley of Sichem, or Shechem. Here God appeared to him again and renewed his promise that this land should be the home of the patriarch’s descendants; and here Abram erected the first altar that was set up to God in Palestine.

18. What servant did Abram acquire in Damascus?

The country at this time was occupied by the Canaanites, who (according to religious tradition) were the descendants of Canaan, the fourth son of Ham. Abram took up his abode in the mountain region, which though it protected him from the Canaanites, who occupied the more fertile plains below, gave him but scanty pasture for his cattle. He continued to move southward until the scarcity of food, caused by a severe drought, forced him to enter Egypt.

Fearing that the Egyptian king would be tempted by Sarai's beauty to kill him in order to get possession of her, Abram passed her off as his sister. Supposing her to be an unmarried woman, the Egyptian monarch took her to him as his own, and heaped wealth and honors upon Abram. The king was warned of his mistake by plagues sent upon him and his household, and he at once restored Sarai to her husband, rebuked him for his deceit, and sent him out of Egypt with the wealth he had acquired.

19. Why did Abram pretend that Sarai was his sister?



This 17th-century illustration by Wenceslas Hollar depicts the separation of Lot and Abraham.

Abram moved back through Palestine to his old encampment at Bethel, where he again established the worship of God (Yahweh, whose full name it is a Jewish taboo to say or write). Here he and Lot became involved in quarrels about their cattle, and separated, Abram remaining in the mountains, and Lot descending to the fertile plain near Sodom. Abram then removed southward to the "oaks of Mamre," near Hebron. This place became from this time his usual abode.

20. Why did Abram and Lot part ways?

- a. Abram worried that Lot coveted Sarai's beauty
- b. Lot preferred life in the big, exciting city of Sodom
- c. Quarrels over livestock
- d. Religious differences

Shortly afterwards, Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam, and chief of a great empire in Western Asia, invaded Southern Palestine, and conquered the five cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (afterwards called Zoar), which had revolted against him. In this war, Lot and all his cattle were captured and carried off by the victors.

As soon as he heard of this, Abram collected a band of 318 of his own people and a force of his Amorite allies and pursued the forces of Chedorlaomer. Abram overtook them near Damascus, and defeated them, rescued Lot, and recovered all the spoil that had been taken from the five cities.

21. Whose forces were defeated by Abram near Damascus?

22. Despite their quarrel, why do you suppose that Abraham rescued Lot?

Some time after this, it pleased God to make a solemn covenant with the patriarch, and on this occasion God revealed himself to Abram by his name Yahweh, and renewed his promise to make “Abram the father of a great nation.”

“Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless....and...one born in my house is mine heir,” said the patriarch.

The divine answer was prompt: “Look now toward heaven and tell the stars if thou be able to number them; and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.”

The childless man believed the promise of God, “and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

The promise was as specific as it was solemn. It included: (i) the bondage of the Hebrews in a strange land for 400 years; (ii) their delivery, with great wealth, and amid judgments on their oppressors; and (iii) their return to the promised land in the fourth generation, when the iniquity of its inhabitants should be full. It was somewhat later that God renewed this covenant with Abram, and added the sign of circumcision to it.

23. God promises Abram that:

- a. He will live forever, free from the burden of pesky children
- b. His progeny will be as plentiful as the stars in the sky
- c. The Canaanites will be eradicated from the face of the earth
- d. The Hebrews will see joy and prosperity in a new land for 400 years

After a sojourn of ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai began to despair of becoming the mother of the patriarch’s heir, and advised Abram to take as his wife her servant Hagar, and Egyptian woman. Abram followed Sarai’s advice, and had a son by Hagar.

24. Who suggests that Abram have a child with Hagar?

- a. Abram
- b. Hagar
- c. Lot
- d. Sarai

Before the child was born, Hagar, puffed up by pride, became so insolent to her mistress that Sarai punished her. Hagar fled into the wilderness of Kadesh, southeast of Abram's abode. Here the angel of God appeared to her, and commanded her to return to her mistress. The angel encouraged Hagar by promising that she should be the mother of a great nation, and commanded her to name her child, when it should be born, Ishmael (which means "God shall hear"). He also foretold the character of the child and his destiny: "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the face of all his brethren."

25. What name is Hagar commanded to give her son?

- a. Abed
- b. Isaac
- c. Ishmael
- d. Moses

Hagar returned to her mistress, and in due time Ishmael was born. Abram was eighty-six years old when his firstborn son came into the world. The patriarch regarded the child as the heir God had promised him, and lavished upon him all a father's love. According to Islamic tradition, Abram (Abraham) was a prophet, and Muhammad was a descendant of Abram through Ishmael.

Thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael, when Abram was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to the patriarch by the name El-Shaddai ("God Almighty"), and renewed his covenant with him. God now promised the patriarch that he should be the father of many nations, and, in consequence of

this, changed his name from Abram ("exalted father") to Abraham ("father of a multitude"). God declared to the patriarch that he would be his god, and the god of his descendants.

26. According to Islamic tradition, what leading Muslim prophet was a descendant of Ishmael?

As a sign of this renewed covenant, God instituted the rite of circumcision, which was thenceforth to be performed upon all the males of Abraham's race. The uncircumcised was cut off from all the benefits of the covenant, while even the stranger who received circumcision was admitted to them. It was made the duty of the head of every family to extend this rite to his servants as well as his children. It was to be performed upon children on the eighth day after their birth (a ritual known as the *brit milah* in Hebrew or *bris* in Yiddish), and upon slaves immediately after their purchase.

The name of Sarai was changed to Sarah ("princess"), in token of her exalted dignity as the ancestress of a great race. God also informed the patriarch that at a certain time in the next year his wife, Sarah, should bear him a son, who should be his true heir. He was commanded to name the child Isaac, and was informed that the promises of the covenant should descend to Isaac and his seed forever. In response to the patriarch's prayer for Ishmael, God assured him that he would shower temporal blessings upon Ishmael, and would make him the father of a great nation. The higher, spiritual blessings, however, were reserved to Isaac and his

posterity. Abraham immediately caused himself to be circumcised, and performed the rite upon Ishmael, who was now thirteen years old, and upon all the males of his household.

27. What is Abraham is commanded to name the son he will have with Sarah?

Some time after this, Abraham was sitting one evening at the door of his tent, when he saw three men approaching. With true Eastern hospitality, he arose and welcomed them, and urged them to lodge with him that night. They accepted his invitation, and when they had partaken of the meal he set before them, revealed themselves to him. One was the angel Jehovah, the others two attending angels. They renewed to him the promise of God that Sarah should bear him a son within a year. Sarah was within the tent and heard them. Being ninety years old, she laughed at the prediction. The angel heard her, rebuked her unbelief, and assured Abraham that God would certainly keep his promise. They then departed in the direction of Sodom, and Abraham accompanied them a part of the way.

28. Why does Sarah laugh at the angels' prediction?



“Abraham and the Three Angels” (ca. 1900) by French artist James Jacques Joseph Tissot.

In consideration of the favor with which God regarded him as the progenitor of the chosen people, the angels informed Abraham of the purpose of God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain as a punishment for their desperate wickedness, and told him that they were on their way to warn Lot and his family to flee from the doomed cities. When the angels departed, Abraham in vain interceded for the cities. God promised, in response to the patriarch’s prayer, that if ten righteous men could be found in the cities, he would spare them. The requisite number could not be found, however.

29. intercede:

- a. to agree in spirit
- b. to argue against
- c. to plead for another
- d. to react strongly

Lot and his family obeyed the divine warning, and fled from Sodom. His wife disregarded the warning of the angels not to look behind her, and was destroyed for her disobedience. Lot and his daughters took refuge in Zoar, which was spared in answer to his prayer. Then

Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim were destroyed by a terrific convulsion of nature, not a soul of all their inhabitants escaping the dreadful doom.



This illustration depicts Lot and his daughters fleeing from Sodom. Lot's wife can be seen in the background, on the far right, pausing to look back upon the city. According to tradition, this disobedience of God's instructions caused Lot's wife to be transformed into a pillar of salt.

30. Which of the following cities was not destroyed at this time?

- a. Admah
- b. Gomorrah
- c. Sodom
- d. Zoar

Lot, fearing to remain in Zoar, fled to the hill country, and took refuge in a cave east of the Dead Sea. In this place occurred the incestuous births of Moab and Ammon (the sons of Lot by his daughters), from whom were descended the Moabites and Ammonites, whom Moses and Joshua found established in the country east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea.

Shortly after the destruction of the cities of the plain, Abraham journeyed southward and fixed his residence in the region between Egypt and Palestine. He

made a treaty with the king of that country, named Abimelech, beside a well, which he named, in honor of the occurrence, Beersheba (the “well of the oath”). While living at Beersheba, his wife, Sarah, gave birth to the long promised heir, who was circumcised and named Isaac, in accordance with the divine command. The patriarch was one hundred years old when his heir was born.



“Lot and His Daughters,” a 17th-century painting by the Italian artist Artemisia Gentileschi.

31. Where was Isaac born?

- a. Beersheba
- b. Egypt
- c. Hebron
- d. Palestine

When Isaac was weaned, Abraham celebrated the occasion by a feast. During the festival, Sarah saw Ishmael mocking or taunting her son, and her anger was aroused. She demanded of her husband that Hagar and Ishmael should

be sent away, in order that Isaac might have no one to dispute his position in his father’s house. The patriarch was tenderly attached to Ishmael, and hesitated; but God appeared to him and commanded him to do as Sarah had said, promising that he would bless Ishmael and make him the father of a great nation.

32. Why did Sarah demand that Ishmael be sent away?

The next morning, Hagar and her son were supplied by the patriarch with provisions and were sent away. Wandering in the wilderness of Beersheba, they were on the point of dying with thirst, when they were rescued by an angel. Ishmael grew up in the wilderness and became a skillful archer. His mother took him a wife from among the Egyptians, her own people, and according to tradition, Ishmael became the ancestor of the Bedouin Arabs.

The Koreish (or Quraysh) tribe, which ruled Mecca at the time of the birth of Muhammad, traced their descent directly from Ishmael. The principal sanctuary of the tribe was the Caabah (or Kaba), which they believed was built by Ishmael and Abraham. From this tribe was descended Muhammad, the great prophet of Islam.

33. What group ruled the city of Mecca at the time of Muhammad’s birth?

Abraham appears to have dwelt many years at Beersheba. While residing there, occurred the great trial of his faith. He was commanded by God to take his son, Isaac, and offer him up as a burnt sacrifice to God. (At this time, up until the destruction of the Second Jerusalem Temple in the first century C.E., animal sacrifice was a major ritual in Judaism.) Though his heart was nearly broken, Abraham unhesitatingly obeyed.



“The Sacrifice of Isaac” by the Dutch painter Rembrandt (1635).

Taking Isaac, Abraham went with him to “the land of Moriah,” which is believed to be the hill on which the temple at Jerusalem afterwards stood.

There he built an altar and prepared to offer up Isaac, when his hand was stayed by God, who informed him that he had meant only to try his faith, and was satisfied with the proof of his obedience.

A ram, caught by its horns in the bushes, was taken by the patriarch and offered as a sacrifice in the place of his son. As a reward of this obedience, God renewed his covenant with the patriarch and confirmed it with an oath.

34. Why did God command Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?

Some time after this, Abraham returned to his old home at Mamre, near Hebron, and here Sarah died at the age of one hundred twenty-seven years. Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah from the Hittites, of Hebron, then called Kirjath-Arba, and there buried Sarah. The cave became the place of sepulcher of his family.

35. Where did Sarah die?

Isaac

After the burial of Sarah, Abraham appears to have returned to Beersheba. He was now old and felt his end approaching. He therefore resolved to secure a wife for his son, Isaac. In order that the descendants of Isaac might be children wholly of his own people, Abraham decided to secure, as his son's bride, one of his own kindred. He therefore sent his steward, Eliezer, to Mesopotamia, and bound him by a solemn oath to choose for Isaac a wife from among his own family.



In this 19th-century depiction of Isaac meeting Rebekah, a camel is shown, although camels were not domesticated until several centuries after these events are reported to have taken place.

Eliezer reached Haran and there encountered the family of Bethuel, the son of Abraham's brother, Nahor. His choice was divinely directed to Rebekah, the youngest and most beautiful daughter of the house. Rebekah, upon learning Eliezer's mission, consented to leave her own family and become the wife of her cousin Isaac. She accompanied Eliezer back to Canaan, and was joyfully received

by Isaac and his father. Isaac was forty years old at the time of his marriage.

36. Isaac marries whom?

- Bathsheba
- Rachel
- Rebekah
- Sarah

After a union of twenty years, Rebekah gave birth to twin sons. The firstborn was named Esau, and also Edom ("the red") because of his ruddy color, and the second received the name of Jacob ("the supplanter").

Abraham, after the marriage of Isaac, took another wife, although he was one hundred forty years old. Her name was Keturah, and by her Abraham had six sons, one of whom was Midian, the father of the Midianites, who occupied the country between the Dead Sea and the Elamite gulf of the Red Sea, to the east of the Nabothians. Abraham gave liberal presents to these sons, but sent them out of Palestine that they might not interfere with the inheritance of Isaac.

To Isaac the patriarch bequeathed all of his immense wealth, and died, it would seem, at Beersheba, "in a good old age, and full of years," being one hundred seventy-five years old. This event took place fifteen years after the birth of Esau and Jacob. Abraham's sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him in the cave of Machpelah.

37. What were the names of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah?

38. What woman did Abraham marry after the death of Sarah?

39. In what cave was Abraham buried?

After the death of Abraham, Isaac continued to dwell by the well of Lahai-roi, in the extreme south of Palestine, and there his sons grew to manhood. Esau was a wild, reckless man, a skillful hunter, and his father’s favorite. He was rough and hairy in appearance, and was a source of great trouble to his parents. At the age of forty he married two Hittite wives, in opposition to the will of his father, and thus introduced what were seen as heathen alliances into the chosen family.

Jacob, on the other hand, was a peaceful, politic man, ready to gain by craft and diplomacy what Esau sought to accomplish by violence. He was smooth-skinned, and loved the peaceful pursuits of the shepherd and the quiet and repose of the tent. He was his mother’s favorite.

40. Why was Isaac angered by Esau’s marriage(s)?

41. Jacob was his father’s favorite son.

- a. True
- b. False

Coming in one day, tired and hungry from the chase, Esau beheld

Jacob preparing a savory mess of red lentils, and at once asked for “some of that red.” Jacob demanded the birthright of Esau as the price of the mess, and the hunter, intent only upon satisfying the hunger of the moment, consented to the bargain with a levity that showed how little value he set upon his birthright.

42. levity:

- a. frivolity
- b. redundancy
- c. sanctimoniousness
- d. seriousness

For this, the early Christian leader Paul (or Saint Paul) calls Esau “a profane person, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright,” and marks him as the pattern of those who sacrifice eternity for a moment’s sensual enjoyment. The justice for Paul’s judgment appears from considering what the birthright was, which Esau sold at such a price. Esau was, by right of birth, the head of the family, its prophet, priest, and king. To religious thinking, no man can renounce such privileges except as a sacrifice required by God, without despising God who gave them.

43. renounce:

- a. accept
- b. betroth
- c. reconsider
- d. relinquish

But more than this, Esau was the head of the chosen family. On Esau devolved the blessing of Abraham, that “in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.” In despising his birthright, Esau put himself out of the

sacred family, and so became, in the words of St. Paul, a “profane person.” The cunning of Jacob did not bring him gain alone; it brought with it a retribution, as we shall see in considering his history.

44. profane:

- a. characterized by contempt for what is sacred
- b. heathen in many attributes
- c. that which relinquishes power to carnal desires
- d. without incident



This illustration depicts Rebekah overhearing the plans of Isaac and Esau.

At length the one hundredth year of Isaac’s life approached. The great age and failing sight of the patriarch warned him that the time had come when he must solemnly transmit to his heir the blessing of Abraham, the irrevocable gift of the patriarchal power and authority. This blessing he designed for Esau, who very evidently had not confessed to his father the sale of his birthright. As Jacob would not dare to take advantage of his trick, the father was most likely in ignorance of the transaction. Isaac

informed Esau of his intention, and bade him prepare a feast for the occasion.

Esau set out for the chase to obtain venison, of which his father was very fond. During his absence, Rebekah revealed to Jacob the design of her husband. With her aid, the crafty Jacob succeeded in passing himself off upon his father as Esau, and obtained the patriarchal blessing, which made him the head of his family, and which, once given, could not be revoked. Esau now returned home and discovered the fraud of which his brother had been guilty. His indignation and grief were very great. “He cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, ‘Bless me, even me also, O my father.’”

45. Who warns Jacob about Isaac’s plan to formally pass the patriarchal authority to Esau?

The spiritual blessing had passed to Jacob and could not be recalled, but Isaac blessed his firstborn in a manner more in keeping with Esau’s character. Isaac promised Esau abundant worldly prosperity, qualified by submission to his brother, whose yoke he should at length break. According to tradition, this prophecy was fulfilled in the prosperity of the Idumaeans, their martial prowess, and their constant conflicts with the Israelites. The Idumaeans were subdued by the Israelites under David. They later triumphed over the Israelites at the Babylonian captivity. At last, to the Israelites, the Idumaeans gave a king in the person of Herod the Great.

Esau, from this time, resolved to kill Jacob. But, not wishing to grieve his father, postponed his vengeance until after the death of Isaac. Rebekah, becoming aware of this, induced Isaac to send Jacob to her kindred for safety. Isaac was all the more willing for this, as it would enable Jacob to obtain a wife of pure blood. With his staff in his hand, the heir of the promises set out for

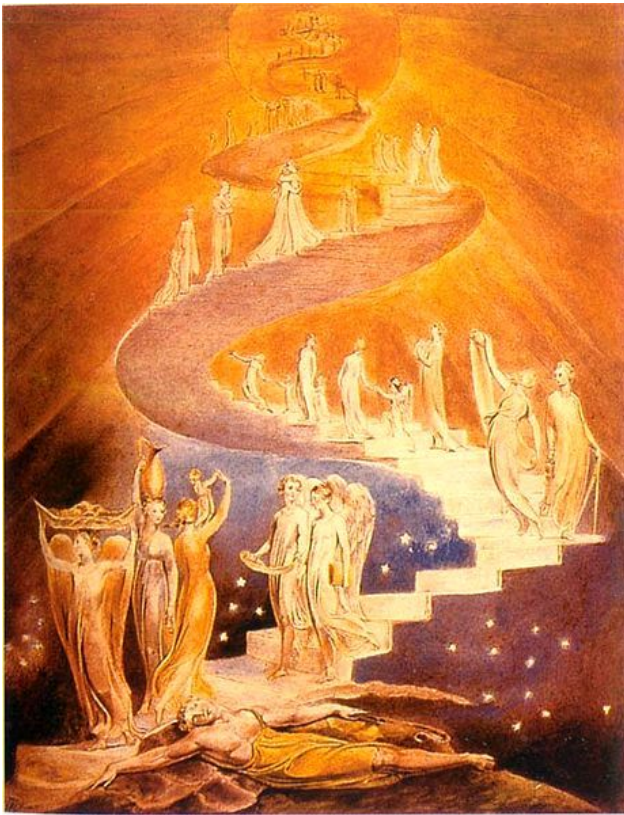
Mesopotamia, retracing the path by which Abraham had entered Canaan.

46. Where does Jacob go to escape Esau's wrath, as well as to find a wife?

- a. Egypt
- b. Idumaea
- c. Mesopotamia
- d. Palestine

Jacob

Reaching Abraham's old encampment at Bethel, Jacob passed the night there, taking for his pillow a stone—most probably one of those which had formed the altar of the patriarch. In the visions of the night he was visited by God, who showed him a radiant stairway reaching from the earth to the portals of heaven, along which the angels were ascending and descending upon their errands as ministering spirits upon earth. To crown the vision, God appeared to Jacob in his dream, renewed with him the covenant he had made with Abraham, and gave him a special promise of protection.



"Jacob's Ladder" by British artist William Blake, a watercolor painting made circa 1800.

Jacob awoke, and, in acknowledgment of the presence of God, erected an altar on the spot, which he

named Bethel ("house of God"), and solemnly dedicated himself and all that God should give him to the service of his maker. This important event, the turning point in Jacob's religious life, occurred when he was in his seventy-seventh year.

47. What did Jacob name the altar he erected?

Continuing his journey, Jacob reached the home of his uncle Laban, his mother's brother, at Padan-Aram. Jacob was warmly welcomed, and at once fell in love with his beautiful cousin Rachel, the youngest daughter of the house. He engaged to serve his uncle as a shepherd for wages, and demanded of Laban the hand of Rachel, offering to serve him seven years for her.

Laban, who was more than Jacob's equal in cunning, accepted the offer, but took advantage of the marriage customs of the country to give his elder daughter, Leah, who was afflicted with sore eyes, and therefore hard to dispose of in marriage, to his nephew. Jacob was indignant at the fraud, but was obliged to submit; and agreed to serve Laban seven more years more for his beloved Rachel.

48. What daughter of Laban was Jacob's first wife?

- a. Hagar
- b. Leah
- c. Rachel
- d. Rebekah

During these seven years, eleven sons and a daughter were born to Jacob. The sons of Leah were Reuben, Simeon,

Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. Rachel bore one son, named Joseph. Leah bore a daughter, named Dinah. Besides these, Jacob had four other sons by two concubines. Billah, Rachel’s handmaid, bore him Dan and Naphtali; and Zilpah, Leah’s handmaid, bore him Gad and Asher.

Complete the following outline indicating Jacob’s children by his wives and concubines.

- I) Jacob**
 - a. Leah**
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - iii. _____
 - iv. _____
 - v. _____
 - vi. _____
 - vii. _____
 - b. Rachel**
 - i. _____
 - c. Billah**
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - d. Zilpah**
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____

After the birth of Joseph, who was the youngest of these children, Jacob was anxious to return to his own country. But Laban persuaded Jacob to serve him still longer for a portion of his flocks, Jacob’s share to be distinguished by certain marks. Laban undertook to defeat this arrangement by unfair means, but Jacob, who was more expert at cattle-breeding, baffled him and secured the greater part of the produce of the flocks. At length he became very rich in “cattle, and

maidservants and menservants, and camels, and asses.”

After a sojourn of twenty years with Laban, Jacob was commanded by God to return to Canaan. Afraid that Laban would seek to detain him, he set out by stealth, and having crossed the Euphrates, passed through the desert by the great fountain of Palmyra, journeyed across the eastern part of the plain of Damascus and the plateau of Bashan, and entered the mountain region of Gilead, east of the Jordan, which forms the frontier between Palestine and the Assyrian desert. Here Jacob was overtaken by Laban, with a considerable force.

Rachel had carried off her father’s household gods, and now, by an ingenious device, succeeded in hiding them. Laban, who had been warned by God not to harm Jacob, failing to find his idols, made a treaty with Jacob and set up a heap of stones as a witness of it. Jacob’s eyes were now opened to see a company of angels, “the host of God,” sent to protect him, forming a camp near his own.

49. Why did Laban pursue Jacob?

Jacob now approached Mount Seir, of which his brother Esau had become the powerful chieftain. He was seriously alarmed, for he feared that Esau might now seek to avenge the loss of his

birthright by killing him and seizing his family and flocks. He sent him a conciliatory message, and Esau came to meet him at the head of four hundred warriors.

Jacob, now thoroughly alarmed, prepared to meet the danger which seemed to threaten him. He divided his people and his flocks into two parties, in order that the second might escape if the first was attacked. Then he turned to God in prayer, after which he sent forward presents to his brother, and then rested for the night. Rising before day the next morning, he sent his wives and children over the Jabbok, and remained behind to prepare himself by solitary meditation for the trial of the day.

50. How does Jacob attempt to assuage Esau?

While Jacob tarried there, “a man” appeared and wrestled with him until the day broke. And when “the man” saw “that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. And he said, ‘Let me go, for the day breaketh.’ And he said, ‘I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.’ And he said unto him, ‘What is thy name?’ And he said, ‘Jacob.’ And he said, ‘Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.’ And Jacob asked him and said, ‘Tell me, I pray thee, thy name.’

And he said, ‘Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?’ And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for ‘I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.’”

51. What new name does the angel give Jacob?

- a. Gabriel
- b. Israel
- c. Judah
- d. Zachariah

Jacob never recovered from the lameness produced by the touch of the angel, and in memory of this the Israelites, in after years, would not eat of the sinew in the hollow of the thigh.

Descending into the valley of the Jabbok, Jacob encountered Esau, who greeted him most affectionately. The rough soldier had long ago forgiven his brother for defrauding him of the spiritual blessing which he did not value, and was content with the worldly prosperity that had fallen to his lot. After a pleasant interview, Esau returned to Mount Seir, and Jacob continued his journey to the Jordan, which he crossed at Succoth.

Entering Canaan, Jacob (now Israel) went to Shechem, now a considerable town of the Amorites. From them he bought a piece of ground, the first possession of the chosen family in the promised land. There he built an altar to the “God of Israel,” and renewed his promise to serve him.

Jacob now began to experience the severest troubles of his life. Shechem, son of Hamor, prince of the Shechemites, carried off and outraged his daughter, Dinah, and though he afterwards

demanded her in marriage, the sons of Jacob determined to avenge the wrong done to their sister. They consented to the marriage, and when the Shechemites were thrown off their guard, treacherously fell upon them, slew all the males, pillaged the city, and carried off the women and children, and the flocks and herds.

Jacob was very indignant at this treacherous conduct, and, fearing that the Canaanites would seek to avenge the slaughter of their brethren, removed with his family and possessions to Bethel, from which he passed southward towards Mamre, where his father, Isaac, was still living.

In the vicinity of Bethlehem, his beloved wife, Rachel, died giving birth to Benjamin, and was buried there. Jacob then went on to Mamre and rejoined his father. Isaac lived a number of years after this, and died at the age of one hundred eighty. His sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him in the cave of Machpelah. His death occurred about thirteen years after the sale of Joseph by his brethren.

52. Why was Jacob angry with his sons?

Joseph

Joseph, the eldest son of Rachel, was his father’s favorite. Upon him Jacob lavished such constant and conspicuous marks of his affection, that the jealousy of the remainder of his sons was aroused. Joseph increased this feeling to a positive hatred by playing the spy upon his brothers and reporting their misdeeds to their father. When but a mere lad, he dreamed several very remarkable dreams, which seemed to him to foreshadow future greatness for him at the expense of his brethren, and very unwisely told them of these dreams. This filled the measure of his offenses in their eyes, and they determined to remove him out of their way.

their father and induced him to believe that Joseph had been slain by a wild beast. This was accomplished by dipping Joseph’s “coat of many colors,” a gift from father to son, in the blood of a goat and presenting it to Jacob.



In this 19th-century illustration, Joseph is cast into the pit by his brothers.

53. Why did Joseph’s brothers dislike him?

One day, Jacob sent Joseph to visit his brethren, who were feeding their flocks near Shechem. As they saw him approaching, they resolved to kill him. Reuben, the eldest son, persuaded the others not to kill their brother outright, but to throw him into a dry well, where he would die with hunger, meaning to rescue him afterwards. His suggestion was adopted, but during his temporary absence the other brothers sold Joseph to a caravan of Midianitish merchants for twenty pieces of silver, who were on their way to Egypt. They then returned to

Joseph was taken by his purchasers to Egypt, and was sold by them as a slave to Potiphar, an officer of the army of the king of Egypt, who is designated in the Scriptures only by his title of Pharaoh. Joseph quickly gained favor with his master, who made him the superintendent of his house.

The wife of Potiphar conceived an unlawful passion for Joseph, but was repulsed by him. Thereupon she brought an infamous charge against him, and he was thrown into prison by his master. His exemplary conduct soon gained him the favor of the authorities of the prison, by whom he was entrusted with important duties.

54. Joseph is sold as a slave in Egypt to whom?



In this 1630 painting by Spanish artist Diego Velázquez, Joseph's brothers ask their father, Jacob (Israel) to identify Joseph's blood-stained coat.

Among the prisoners were the chief of cupbearers and the chief of the cooks of the king of Egypt, who had been put in confinement in consequence of their complicity in some conspiracy at the court of the Pharaoh. These prisoners dreamed such a dream, prophetic of their fate. They related their dreams to Joseph, who interpreted them. His interpretation was verified in the pardon of the chief of the cupbearers and his restoration to office, and the execution of the chief of the cooks.

The fortunate man promised to intercede for Joseph, but forgot him until two years later, when, the king having had two dreams which troubled him greatly, and which the wise men of Egypt were unable to explain, the chief cupbearer remembered Joseph and told the king of the Hebrew's interpretation of his own dream and its fulfillment. Pharaoh at once sent for Joseph and related his dreams to him.

Joseph informed Pharaoh that his dreams were prophetic, and were sent by God to warn him that Egypt was about to be visited by seven years of abundant harvests, which were to be succeeded by

seven years of terrible famine. He urged the king to prepare for the famine by forming stores of grain at certain points in Egypt during the years of plenty.

55. Why does Pharaoh call for Joseph?

Egypt at this time was divided into two kingdoms. The upper kingdom, known as the Thebaid, was ruled by native Egyptian princes. Lower Egypt had been held for many centuries by conquerors of Canaanitish blood, known as the Hyksos, or shepherds. These had adopted the Egyptian manners and language. The king who sent for Joseph was one of this dynasty, and was known as Apophis, or Apepi. Being himself of foreign origin, he had not the native Egyptian dislike of strangers.

Apepi was impressed with Joseph's interpretation of his dreams and with the wisdom shown by the captive, and at once declared that Joseph was the best man in the kingdom to make provision against the famine he had suggested. He made him his vice-regent over Egypt, and gave him his signet ring, the indisputable mark of royal power. Joseph was magnificently clothed, was given the Egyptian name of Zaph-n-to, or "nourisher of the country," and all people were ordered to obey him implicitly. He was also given a wife in the person of Asenath, daughter of Petephra, the high priest of Heliopolis, by whom he had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

56. Who was pharaoh of Lower Egypt during Joseph’s time?

- a. Apepi
- b. Hyksos II
- c. Petephra
- d. Potiphar

57. implicitly:

- a. absolutely
- b. irrevocably
- c. reluctantly
- d. undeniably

Joseph collected in public granaries, which he constructed for the purpose, immense stores of grain from the superabundant harvest. He accomplished this by doubling the ordinary impost of one-tenth of the grain. When the years of famine set in he had stores enough to supply the people of Egypt, and to sell to the surrounding countries which were affected by the famine. He sold to the Egyptians on very hard terms, requiring them to surrender, in return for the food which kept them alive, the fee simple of their lands, and to pay a quit rent of one-fifth of the produce for the right of tenancy. This arrangement did not extend to the priests, who possessed the right of drawing supplies from the public stores.

58. Why do you suppose that Joseph sold grain to the Egyptians on such hard terms?

The famine having extended to that part of Palestine in which Jacob was living, he sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain. They failed to recognize Joseph in the powerful Egyptian viceroy, but he knew them at a glance. Joseph subjected them to a series of trials, partly to punish them for their treatment of him, and partly to test their affection for their father and their brother Benjamin. Joseph then revealed himself to them, forgave them the wrongs they had done him, and brought them and their father down to Egypt, where he could provide for them.

The king readily granted them lands in the province of Goshen, which lay between the Delta and the desert, northeast of Memphis. In so doing the king was simply carrying out a leading policy of the shepherd dynasty, which was to cultivate in their dominions the growth of a non-Egyptian element, which might sustain them against revolt of the native population. In the descent of the chosen family into Egypt, a portion of God’s promise to Abraham was fulfilled.

59. Why did the Hyksos pharaohs of Egypt encourage foreigners to live in the country?

Seventeen years later, Jacob died in Egypt, at the age of one hundred forty-seven years. On his deathbed he blessed his sons, and declared that the children of Judah should inherit the divine promises

of Abraham and should constitute the head of the chosen family—Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, the three elder sons of Jacob, having cut themselves off from the succession by their crimes. Jacob’s body was embalmed in the Egyptian manner, and was carried in great state by Joseph and his brethren, with a powerful escort of Egyptian troops, back to Palestine, and was buried in the tomb of Abraham at Hebron.

Joseph lived for fifty years longer, enjoying his high honors, and remaining the protector of the family. He died at the age of one hundred ten years, and on his

deathbed enacted a solemn oath of his brethren that his embalmed body should be carried up into the land of Canaan when the Israelites should leave Egypt.

60. Where was Jacob buried?

61. When was Joseph’s body to be taken to Canaan?

Word Search Puzzle

Abraham	N	S	M	U	P	I	E	Q	C	S	P	H	N	P	L	G	M	K	P	B
Adam																				
altar	O	A	U	G	Z	V	S	I	A	U	A	A	F	E	T	J	S	E	O	V
biblical																				
Canaan	R	R	H	I	E	Y	K	R	N	G	I	C	A	V	O	I	I	C	Z	L
Egypt	B	A	A	W	N	E	X	K	A	M	M	M	R	S	V	D	A	T	B	R
Esau																				
Eve	E	H	M	M	E	K	C	R	A	E	H	A	E	I	R	J	D	I	L	M
Garden of Eden																				
Hagar	H	U	M	G	D	R	S	T	N	S	L	P	D	G	F	Q	U	R	J	B
Hebron																				
Isaac	J	A	A	E	E	K	O	F	I	A	H	T	L	A	F	I	J	Z	I	F
Ishmael																				
Israel	D	S	D	H	F	P	M	O	N	O	T	H	E	I	S	M	C	B	D	L
Jacob																				
Joseph	M	E	W	S	O	R	E	B	E	K	A	H	U	L	O	O	L	E	V	X
Judaism																				
Mesopotamia	A	S	A	S	N	A	D	E	R	C	A	S	T	P	E	I	F	I	T	Z
monotheism	V	I	E	F	E	C	R	E	G	Y	P	T	F	T	C	H	X	R	T	M
Muhammad																				
Pharaoh	W	M	S	R	D	K	U	A	N	G	A	B	L	A	M	T	C	A	K	N
Rachel																				
Rebekah	M	A	H	A	R	B	A	J	H	J	Z	C	L	Y	A	J	G	A	R	H
sacred																				
sacrifice	I	G	D	O	A	N	U	Q	E	P	W	K	S	H	P	H	H	L	R	Z
Sarah	C	N	Z	R	G	C	G	M	Z	I	L	O	R	A	T	L	A	G	J	D

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Word Search Puzzle Answer Key

N S M + + I E + C S + H + + L + M + + B
O A U + + V S + A + A A + E + J S + O +
R R H + E + + R N G I C A + O + I C + +
B A A + N + + + A M M M R S + + A + + +
E H M + E + + R A E H A E I + J D + + +
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